



Office of the Speaker **THERESE M. TERLAJE**

I Mina'trentai Sais na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 36th Guam Legislature
Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture

Speaker attempts to include all Guam war survivors in local claims bill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (September 29, 2021 – Hagåtña, Guam) In an effort to make whole Guam's War Survivors, Speaker Therese Terlaje introduced an amendment to Bill 130-36 (LS) "AN ACT TO ADD A NEW ARTICLE 13.2 TO CHAPTER 1 OF DIVISION 1, TITLE 5, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO ESTABLISHING THE "GUAM WORLD WAR II RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2021" TO COMPENSATE CLAIMS OF THE GREATEST GENERATION OF GUAM FOR THE ATROCITIES SUFFERED DURING THE WORLD WAR II OCCUPATION OF GUAM" that would expand the eligibility for War Claims to include those who survived war atrocities, but were excluded from receiving compensation by the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act because they passed away prior to December 23, 2016.

The arbitrary eligibility date of the federal law created a gap that excludes many Guam war survivors who suffered under Japanese occupation from December 8, 1941 to August 10, 1944. Speaker Terlaje stated, "My amendment would have included many of our parents and grandparents who suffered forced march, forced labor, and personal injury but did not qualify for the federal program. Our *manamko* fought for these war claims and testified in Congress but did not survive to see federal recognition of their suffering," said Speaker Therese Terlaje.

The effort to expand the program was inspired by Jose Garrido who, at Bill 130's public hearing, testified in support of the inclusion of all war survivors, regardless of their date of death. Speaker Terlaje agreed with Mr. Garrido stating that, "I join Mr. Garrido and the others who testified on this bill in believing that excluding those who survived the war and all its atrocities is not true justice. They survived, and showed us their resilience, courage, and fortitude when they testified before Congress and the Guam Legislature. Excluding those who died before this arbitrary date is not logical when you think about what war claims should be. War claims are not about the money, they are about justice and recognition. We the people of Guam should always have it on record that we include them, even if Congress excludes them."

After some discussion on the amendment, Appropriations Chairman Joe San Agustin ruled it out of order, believing it was materially different from the bill's intent. Speaker Terlaje made a motion to overrule the Chair's decision, but the attempt failed with only four votes from the Speaker, Senator Sabina Perez, Senator Telo Taitague, and Senator Jose "Pedo" Terlaje.

Another amendment passed by the Speaker would require that any related transfers made by the Governor be reported to the Guam Legislature no later than five days prior to the transfer. The reporting should indicate where the funds were transferred from.

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