



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 increase SHPO allocation, colleagues only allow status quo

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (August 27, 2021 – Hagåtña, Guam) Speaker Therese M. Terlaje tried to pass an amendment this afternoon to improve operations for Guam's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) by increasing its budget by \$110,000 but received little support from her colleagues on the session floor. This year's proposed allocation for SHPO was approximately \$50,000 less than FY 2021, despite the division repeatedly requesting \$400,000 more for six additional positions.

"All I am trying to do with this amendment to the budget is get SHPO back up to their FY 21 budget and allocate an additional \$60,000 more to them," said Speaker Terlaje. "I've attended past hearings where we called SHPO out for not enforcing the way they should be, why we aren't getting their reports like we should be, why the public can't be notified of the human remains they are discovering on military construction sites like they should be. They continue to tell us that it's because they are understaffed. This extra allocation is not enough to fund another needed position for their division, but it will give them a fighting chance at preserving our island's resources better."

The amendment to increase funding by \$110,000 to the SHPO failed with only 5 votes in favor from Senators Sabina Perez, Joanne Brown, Telo Taitague, and Christopher Duenas. The nine senators who voted against the increase were Senators Amanda Shelton, Telena Nelson, Joe San Agustin, James Moylan, Tony Ada, Frank Blas Jr., Mary Torres, Pedo Terlaje, and Clynt Ridgell.

The Speaker subsequently introduced another amendment to bring SHPO's budget back to its FY 21 allocation. This amendment passed, bringing the division's budget to at least status quo.

"This was the Legislature's opportunity to prioritize the protection of our history and culture by increasing the SHPO's capacity to protect our historic and cultural sites. More resources are needed especially when precious cultural artifacts and human remains continue to be discovered and removed as a result of the increasing number of federal and local projects undergoing construction at this time," stated Speaker Terlaje.

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