

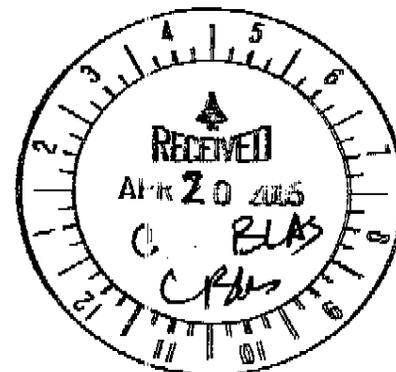


Office of Vice-Speaker  
**Joanne M. Salas Brown**  
*MINA' BENTE OCHO NA LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN*  
*28<sup>th</sup> GUAM LEGISLATURE*

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April 19, 2005

The Honorable Richard W. Pombo, Chairman  
The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6201



Dear Chairman Pombo and Ranking Member Rahall:

Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony on **H.R. 1595** "The Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act."

The House Resource Committee's consideration of this measure is the continuance of the journey to bring long awaited justice to the injustices endured by the patriotic people of Guam during World War II. For more than 60 years, those of our people who remained loyal Americans despite being imprisoned in their own island, brutalized, victimized and killed, may finally be able to receive what they have wanted: recognition for their pain and suffering at the hands of enemy forces, and their unfaltering dedication to the United States of America.

Sixteen years ago, in 1989, I served as Executive Director of the Guam War Claims Commission, and staffed the Commission members that attended the Congressional Committee hearing on H.R.2024, introduced by former Guam Congressman the Honorable Ben Blaz regarding this very same issue. Among the commissioners were three individuals who were survivors of World War II. They were Ms. Beatrice Elmsley, who was just a young girl at the time of the war, whose riveting and emotional account of her near-beheading at the hands of an enemy soldier, brought tears to all those who witnessed

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her testify, the two other commissioners – who traveled thousands of miles and waited for 45 years since the end of the war– were Mr. Pete Cruz and Mr. Vicente Bernardo.

Unfortunately, Ms. Elmsley and Mr. Cruz have since passed on before ever seeing resolution to an issue that has to be undeniably laid to rest. Sadly, in the time that it has taken to get to this point where legislation is before your committee, many of our people who are eligible for reparation have since passed away and were not able to receive the recognition and justice they so rightfully deserve for their patriotism to the United States throughout their lifetime.

There is no doubt that there has been a considerable injustice against our people by the United States Government in dealing with post World War II compensation for victims, as stated in the report presented last year by the Guam War Claims Review Commission. The fact that this issue has remained unresolved all these decades has been a disservice to those of our people who suffered the most during the enemy occupation of Guam.

My grandparents, the late Jesus Lujan Salas, who died in 1985, and the late Maria Ignacio Perez, who died in 1950, survived the brutalities of the war, endured forced labor under enemy rule and were forced marched to Manengon Concentration camp. Unfortunately, they did not live to see the day for justice and reparations for their suffering. As a grandchild, my heart is heavy with grief dealing with this issue because of all the pain and suffering that our people re-experience every time they are asked to retell their horrific experiences during the war – the rape, torture, forced labor, humiliation, being forced to watch their loved ones killed in front of their eyes – all because they were patriotic Americans.

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The people of Guam have been persistent over the past 60 years in pursuing this issue of reparations because at a fundamental level, we are deserving of having our war experience acknowledged by the United States Government – our government. The fact that this issue has lingered for so many long years, and has not been resolved by Congressional actions, is an affront to our loyalty and patriotism.

There is much controversy in how reparations should be addressed and who should be compensated. It is even more difficult to deal with this issue, as decades have passed, because so many people who suffered during the war have passed away. For those survivors that are still alive today, time is running out, as so many attested to during the Review Commission's hearings conducted on the anniversary of the invasion of Guam at the beginning of World War II. For them, it would be a continual and grave injustice not to support reparations legislation. Our nation, our leaders, espouses the ideals of fair and moral treatment of all people of countries throughout the world. It would be inhumane and unethical if we cannot practice this with **our fellow Americans**.

Through the efforts of Guam's past Delegates to Congress; the Honorable Antonio Won Pat, the Honorable Ben Blaz and the Honorable Robert Underwood who laid the foundation for this monumental legislation; and most especially, our current Congresswoman, the Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo, who impressively gained bipartisan support, this legislation has now come before your esteemed committee.

H.R. 1595 is an historic legislation that, when passed, will be another step toward bringing resolution to this emotional issue. Once again, thank you for the opportunity afforded me to present this testimony on H.R. 1595.

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It is hoped that the commitment of the People of Guam to the United States during that long ago war, and our continued commitment during the present war being battled in the Middle East, is recognized and that we, the loyal and patriotic people of Guam, will be rightfully acknowledged with the commitment of our honorable legislators in Congress and the Administration.

Sincerely,



Jeanne M.S. Brown  
Vice Speaker  
28<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature