



# **NEWS** from the Democrats

## **Committee on Resources**

*U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall, Ranking Democrat*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Remarks of U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall  
Ranking Democrat - Resources Committee  
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1595 - Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act**

**Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing on important legislation offered by the gentlelady from Guam.**

**We are here this morning to take yet another step in trying to close a very painful chapter in Guam's history. The Committee is well aware, from proceedings convened over the past three decades, that Guam and her people suffered unimaginable atrocities during its occupation by Japan during World War II. For nearly three years, the idyllic paradise became a land of panic, horror, suffering, and death.**

**The record is clear in this regard, as the Committee has had the honor of hearing the personal testimony of numerous survivors of Guam's occupation. Regrettably, however, those survivors who appeared before this Committee to re-tell and, in essence, re-live the pain of occupation have since passed on. There are very few of the estimated 22,000 Guamanians alive today who survived this era, and it is my hope that we can give them closure before none remain.**

**There now have been two federally appointed Commissions that have reviewed the implementation and the parity treatment of Guam's experience - the Hopkins Commission in 1947, and the Review Commission in 2004. Both concluded that the people of Guam were either misinformed or mistreated. Either way, their recommendations to Congress - be it in 1947 or in 2004 - are that something needs to be done to make this right.**

**I want to acknowledge that the Guam war claims issue has been advocated by each Guam delegate elected to Congress. Mr. Won Pat, Guam's first delegate, was the first to carry this torch for Guam. And of course, in our presence, Congressman Blaz and Congressman Underwood continued fighting for this issue throughout their service in Congress. We welcome them back to the Committee and look forward to their testimony.**

**There is little doubt that the tenacity of these men has helped to keep this issue alive. But we are here today, with momentum on this issue, because of the gentlelady from Guam.**

**In her three years as Guam's delegate, on this issue alone:**

- she garnered the support of the Administration to fund the establishment of the Guam War Claims Review Commission, which I would note was Congressman Underwood's legislation,**
- she worked closely with the Commission to ensure it issued a timely final report to Congress,**
- she secured a Full Committee oversight hearing in the last Congress on the Commission's final report,**
- she worked collaboratively with the Administration to prepare legislation with broad bi-partisan support that reflects the Commission's recommendations,**
- and she worked closely with Chairman Pombo and myself to have this hearing held today.**

**And I am certain that she will not be satisfied until she and her fellow Guamanians are granted closure on this issue.**

**If the term "Super Delegate" were ever ascribed in this House, clearly she would be deserving of such a title.**

**The weight of history has now fallen on the shoulders of this Committee, some sixty-one years after Guam's liberation. We have the opportunity to correct a great injustice for those patriotic Americans who withstood brutal occupation.**

**The issue has been studied to exhaustion and the recommendations have remained the same. We should never forget their sacrifice for our country, nor should we allow for this inequity to continue.**

**Again, I welcome all who have come to testify before this Committee and I look forward to assisting the gentlelady from Guam see this issue through.**