

FRANK LEON GUERRERO/DEMOCRAT

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The deadline to submit written answers is September 30th, 2020

### Legislative Candidate Interview

#### Vying For Election To The 36th Guam Legislature

##### A. Real Estate Industry Related

1. The Governor's office has upgraded the classification of the real estate industry as an essential service during COVID-19 "Condition of Readiness" operating restrictions. However, the Government of Guam agencies that are part and parcel of the real estate industry remain either closed or inactive. (The real estate industry encompasses private sector real estate activities as well as Government of Guam agencies that are involved in the processing of real estate transactions including taxation, recordation, land management interaction, construction and land use permitting, building inspections, building occupancy, and document recordation.).

Will you support the preparation and passage of legislation to classify the whole of the real estate industry encompassing both the private sector and related Government of Guam agencies as TRUE ESSENTIAL SERVICES?

While I am aware of their being a distinction between "essential services" and "true essential services". This crisis has forced the awareness of being able to operate the government by implementing a complete digital transformation of distinction government. In many communities across the country obtaining a mortgage and buying a home are processed entirely online. If elected I will work closely with the Association on legislation that will address these concerns. Real Estate is a critical part of our locally grown economy.

2. The Guam Land Use Commission (GLUC) application processing system has been rendered inactive by GovGuam COVID restrictions since March 2020 with no apparent urgency to restore the system to full operation. The estimated value of development projects currently awaiting Department of Land Management and GLUC-related action since March is nearly \$2 billion. Will you support the classification of the GLUC application processing system (critical to improving Guam's economic well-being) as an essential service during the COVID-19 Condition of Readiness operating restrictions?

COVID 19 has changed the way we live work and play. We need to move forward with being able to operate entirely in a way that is principally contactless. Digital transformation is key. If elected I will work close with the Guam Real Estate Association to ensure that all aspects of this sector of our economy has the tools that it needs from our government to not only survive but also, to expand and thrive.

##### B. General Government

1. Will you support the creation, introduction, and passage of a bill to change the operation of the Guam Legislature from full time to part-time?

If am chosen by the people of Guam during this upcoming election and given the opportunity to serve as a member of the 36th Guam Legislature. It would be my obligation and responsibility to weigh each piece of legislation that comes before me.

2. Will you support the repeal of the 1% increase in the Business Privilege Tax/Gross Receipt Tax rate, i.e. restoring the BPT/GRT rate to 4%?

I support the rollback of the gross receipts tax for island businesses. Families and businesses are suffering because of the pandemic. Tax revenues fall as businesses close or shrink and the CARES Act is subsidizing workers and businesses, but it is temporary and even the millions rolling into Guam will not save the government from a deep fiscal hole. A rollback will hopefully entice consumers to spend during these tough economic times and give local businesses some relief as they mitigate the disastrous impact, as a result of the pandemic. I understand that this would also mean lost revenues to the government coffers. But during this pandemic, if GovGuam saves and doesn't spend all its revenue coming in, I have hope that we will pull through, and saving every penny would help mitigate a financial crisis. Long term, I would like to review and evaluate the possibility of putting an end to the GRT and adopt a sales tax on goods and services. It's just an idea that I would like to explore which would require the guidance of experts. I'm open to new ideas that will help our government balance the budget and help our people without compromising quality government services.

3. Are you in favor of increasing taxes and/fees to deal with the Government of Guam revenue shortfall caused by COVID-19 imposed restrictions on private sector business operations?

I believe that there are ways to increase efficiencies through outsourcing and the digital transformation of government rather than simply raising taxes to address solutions.

4. Will you support a significant reduction in Government of Guam expenditures including payroll during COVID-19 lockdown and PCOR2 periods in order to keep the Government solvent?

Cash flows to our island have dropped dramatically as we see non-essential businesses close, and over 30,000 workers stay at home in order to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. In a fairly short time, COVID-19 has led to layoffs and job losses in the private sector. This is a tragedy. As leaders, we must make the best use of our resources. We know that all sectors of our economy will take a hit; this means that some economic pain is inevitable and needs to be shared, and this includes our government.

There is the reality that in the near future, many experts say that robots, automation, and artificial intelligence will perform more tasks, leading to a massive disruption of jobs in government. Something to think about. I would explore the possibility of voluntary early retirement to those government workers who are of retirement age and want to retire early. This would put a dent in the workforce and save money by attrition; after this, place a hiring freeze to save money, and until such time the economy is stable and sustainable.

There are many places to look to reduce costs without threatening public services. Reducing government costs by cutting jobs doesn't necessarily involve doing less; it usually involves doing better. With the help of the administration and our senators, I would form a working task force that would meet with employees of every department and agency on a regular basis until we've got a workable plan. The public thinks of GovGuam employees as being lazy. I tend to think that most GovGuam employees are conscientious and can tell us exactly how to make government work better and more

efficiently. I would reach out to them and encourage them to talk freely without fear of retribution. This is where innovative cost savings ideas come from. It'll take an open mind and the cooperation of all department heads to tackle this. It's a new thought that I think, can help save money.

5. Are you in favor of increasing the local minimum wage and Why?

As a result of colonial economic policies like the Jones Act, Guam's economy remains unsustainable and dependent upon foreign powers. Cycles of economic depression have especially impacted Guam's tourism, restaurant, and construction workers that are chronically underpaid and may now face increasing health risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, how would you advocate for policies that resolve economic and labor inequalities? How would you advocate for migrant workers that are a crucial part of our island community, but may not have the same legal and economic protections? \*

I believe that everyone is equal under the law, but huge economic disparities exist. Families and individuals working in low-wage jobs make insufficient income to meet minimum standards given the local cost of living. If we were to calculate and estimate the cost of living on Guam, I believe that a majority of our people would be placed at the poverty level. The United States has talked about a living wage, as opposed to a minimum wage. The living wage is the amount of income determined to provide a decent standard of living. It should pay for the cost of living in any location. It should also be adjusted to compensate for inflation. The purpose of a living wage is to make sure that all full-time workers have enough money to live above the poverty level.

I don't believe that it's impossible to provide a decent living wage for our people. But this is going to take the commitment and the courage of lawmakers to make it happen. Many people will oppose it. As your senator, I will be a part of that conversation.

6. Are you in favor of reducing taxes and fees to assist in the start of small businesses and in maintaining their viability?

Yes. I will continue to support the David Santos Act. This year the law was updated to allow for a GRT of 3 percent up to \$250,000 dollars.

7. What functions of the Government of Guam do you believe should be privatized?

I would support a government-wide professional assessment on improving government efficiency and reducing red tape - privatization in of itself may not reduce the cost. The goal of every business is to make a profit. The government can be made more efficient but, often the goals of government are above and beyond profit. We have to work together to understand how best to make government serve the community more effectively and more efficiently.

8. Are you in support of the impending military buildup and the Marine relocation?

The military buildup is expected to bring in big federal government projects that will provide local jobs. I am hopeful that in a Biden Administration that we are able to work with the White House and the Department of Defense to establish a high-level working group that will ensure that support of our Nation's defense doesn't compromise the natural systems that sustain life in our oceans and upon our lands. I believe that the people of Guåhan are proud and fierce American patriots; some of whom have served and are serving our nation's armed forces, courageously, all over the world, and sadly those who

gave the ultimate sacrifice. However, the protection and safekeeping of our natural resources are non-negotiable.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are there current laws that you believe are not useful and should be repealed? If yes, what are they?

2. Will you support legislation that will repeal the increase in (doubling of) property taxes levied on improvements on land property valued at \$1 Million dollars or more?

Given the situation with COVID 19 I think we need to do a thorough examination of ways to support the real estate and the industry. I look forward to working with the Guam Real Estate Association to support this critical economic sector.

3. What new industries should Guam pursue?

We are in a position to tap into the market of developing Guam as a telecommunications hub in the region and around the world, as Guam currently has telecom submarine cables that pass through our island. Further, last year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a permit for RTI Solutions' submarine fiber optic telecommunications cable to pass through the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. RTI is a San Francisco based cable business. RTI will install the cable connecting Japan, Guam, and Australia. This will provide small and large businesses a fast and reliable communications network throughout the world. GTA is in partnership with RTI and has already invested in new cables. According to a local news article, the new set of undersea internet cables that will be laid over the next years will not only allow GTA to provide super-fast internet connections for Guam's businesses and residents but could also speed up the digital connections between customers in Asia and data centers in the United States. I would like to review Senator Telo Taitague's Substitute Bill NO. 56-35 (COR), which established a task force to review the information, conduct a feasibility study, and develop policy recommendations concerning submarine cables connected to Guam. This is a huge economic opportunity for our people and we must stay committed and work hard to make it happen.

4. Will you support an increase in the number of law enforcement (the police) personnel and attendant equipment and facilities?

Supporting our men and women in Blue is critical at this time. I absolutely look forward to supporting the Guam Police Department. As a former GPD Major I know how crucial it is to have the financial support required to continue to keep our community, safe.

5. Do you support the right to protect one's home and property with a firearm?

As an American I support the constitution of the United States of America. As law enforcement officer I am also a strong supporter of protecting the 2nd amendment.

6. How do you plan to address drug abuse on the island?

As a former chief marshal of the Judiciary of Guam and having been appointed to serve as the United States Marshal by President Obama I look forward to being involved with improving public safety by working with law enforcement, probation services, and all joint task force to stem the flow of drugs into Guam and into our communities.

7. What political status option (remain a U.S. Territory, become a state, be independent) draws your support, and Why?

Political self-determination affects all aspects of one's current and future dealings with the United States and other nation-states. It's the difference between having equal say in the future of our island and sitting at the table, or being told by the powers that be, that decisions were made without having a say. It affects every decision we make as a people and as an island nation. It affects our economy, our jobs, and our education--all aspects of our daily lives. Guam's quest for self-determination and decolonization is very important because it sets the rules of engagement in our relationship with the United States, on an equal footing and the right to decide if we're going to adopt federal mandates or not.

We must lobby Washington for more allies to work with us as we push through this important issue. Many generations have come and gone, and each has contributed to this journey. We must carry their accomplishments and forge our own as we move forward. I stand in support and as an advocate for our people, to choose our destiny with dignity and courage. I also support the United Nations charter of self-determination for all people.

Within the United Nations Charter is a set of principles that include respect for self-determination of all peoples. There are 17 non-self-governing territories in the world today. Guam is one of them.

The U.N. monitors progress toward self-determination of these remaining territories. In 1960, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a Declaration on Decolonization, stating that all people have a right to self-determination. It proclaimed that colonialism should be brought to a speedy and unconditional end.

In early October 2017, Governor Eddie Calvo and sixteen petitioners, including Vice Speaker Therese Terlaje and Senator Telena Nelson, appeared before the U.N.'s Fourth Committee to urge the adoption of a resolution which would force the U.S. to cooperate with Guam's path to self-determination.

In November 2017, the resolution came up for a vote. A United States representative voted against the United Nations resolution which recognized and supported Guam's right to self-determination, stating the resolution contains language that appears to attack the United States.

The resolution resulted with 80 votes in favor, nine against, and 62 abstentions.

The U.S., Japan, United Kingdom, France, Iraq, Israel, Morocco, Malawi, and Ukraine voted against the resolution.

The resolution, which has changed since it was first approved by a smaller committee in June, includes the call for the U.N. Assembly to conduct the following, among other resolves:

- encourage Guam and the U.S. to negotiate on self-determination efforts;
- call on the U.S. to cooperate fully with the committee to help promote Guam decolonization;
- request that the U.S. transfer lands back to original landowners on Guam;
- request that the U.S. acknowledge and respect the cultural and ethnic identity of the indigenous Chamorro people;

- plan a visiting mission to Guam; and
- ask the U.S. and Guam to protect the environment against the harmful impacts of militarization.

8. How has your background prepared you to serve in the 36th Guam Legislature?

I am asking the people of Guåhan to support my candidacy and to allow me to serve them as a Senator in the 36th Guam Legislature. I am a proud Democrat. I have been inspired by the grassroots movement of Governors' like Ricky Bordallo and Carl Gutierrez. I spent many years serving as Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo's Director of Constituent Services. My father was 11 years old when Guam was invaded by Japanese imperial forces. His experience led him to serve proudly in the Korean War. It was an honor for me while working in Congress to advocate for our brave veterans on behalf of the people of Guåhan. I also served as a budget analyst for Senator Frank Aguon Jr., and supported responsible budget management. My career is in law enforcement; I retired as a major in the Guam Police Department. Thereafter, I was called to service and became chief marshal in the Judiciary of Guam. And finally, I was sworn in under President Barack Obama's administration as U.S. Marshal, District Courts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). My island has given me deep and abiding friendships. The benefit of those amazing years is that those who know me, know my work ethic and the credibility, honor, integrity, empathy, and faith that I will bring to the Legislature. I will give this work my all as I have with all my other professions.

9. Do you believe Guam needs a NEW public hospital and if yes, how would you fund its design and construction?

Guam does need a new Public Hospital. I think a public private partnership could be a very useful way of approaching this important issue.

10. How would you improve the Government of Guam procurement law so as to avoid the frequent protests involved with the solicitations of major procurements?

Making procurement more sensible is critical. There is too much inconsistency from agency to agency. I would start with complete streamlining, decentralization and standardization of the entire process. So that the process is fair and transparent.

11. Do you prefer smaller or larger government?

I prefer a more efficient, more effective, and more customer-friendly government, both nationally and locally. I believe this goal can be powered by technology and training.

12. What are your top two (2) legislative priorities?

Business Development. I intend on working with the business community and the administration to bring new capital resources to the island's economic development. Government Efficiency and harnessing technology to improve government service delivery. Through legislation, provide relief in any way I can to our people during this time of crisis, while understanding that our government is in a delicate financial position; must implement policies that provide financial relief to our citizens who are experiencing difficulties in making ends meet, while simultaneously maintaining the functional arm of government that must survive this crisis.

Through legislation, ensure that our people have access to basic government services and that these services continue to be funded during this crisis. I understand that difficulty may arise in balancing competing objectives which is why I will work with my colleagues and the administration to provide short-term and long-term flexibility or incentives to get us safely to the other side.

I prefer a more efficient, more effective, and more customer-friendly government, nationally and locally. I believe this goal can be powered by technology and training.