

Pangelinan Informs Students about De-colonization Registry

Written by Barry Hernandez

Volunteer registrars recently visited the University of Guam campus to register qualified individuals for the Guam De-colonization Registry during the Chamoru Language Senatorial Forums on October 19th through the 21st.

The Guam De-colonization Registry is a list of inhabitants of Guam who became United States citizens as a result of the 1950 Organic Act as well as their descendants. The registry was originally drafted and written into law in 1996 by the 23rd Guam Legislature. The list of individuals in the registry will be used for the vote on Guam's political status for statehood, independence, or free-association.

Senator Ben Pangelinan, who has recently taken the lead in compiling the registry, expresses the impact it has on not only the students at UOG, but the people Guam as a whole. "Engagement in this process is essential and critical to the fulfillment of this process and the exercise of the most basic of human rights—self-determination," The senator said.

Initially, The Guam Election Commission was supposed to provide a place for individuals to register, but Pangelinan explains, "I saw that the Election has not been doing anything with the registry and without the registry; the process of self-determination could not proceed." The senator also believes that with the proposed military buildup closing in, now is the best time to re-define our political relationship with the United States.

With the recent law that adds the list of Chamorro Land Trust applicants to the registry, the estimated amount of individuals who have signed on are about six to ten-thousand. The registry must attain 75% of the total voting population. The registry must register 20 thousand more as Senator Pangelinan clarifies.

The registry recently garnered interest from the public at the Guam Micronesia Island Fair. Pangelinan has said there are more efforts in progress and they will be announced once finalized.

Pangelinan is trying to create a more detailed plan to register individuals. By including registry centers in government agencies, schools, village mayor's offices, and commercial establishments, the registry process can accelerate even more than in recent events. "The University will be part of this and we look forward to the assistance and involvements of the students at the University," Pangelinan said.

Pangelinan stresses the importance of the registry to the people of Guam, "I truly believe that now is the time to define our destiny and maximize our benefits by re-defining our political relationships, which would elevate our status and thus our ability to deal as equals."

There are training and registration for volunteer registrars, Pangelinan states. Interested students who want to become volunteers can contact Senator Ben Pangelinan's office at 473-4236 or visit <http://www.senben.com> to receive information on how to be a volunteer registrar.

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