

*I MINA'BENTE NUEBI NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN*  
2008 (SECOND) REGULAR SESSION

Resolution No. 178 (EC)

Introduced by:

B.J.F. Cruz  
F.F. Blas, Jr.  
J.P. Guthertz  
R.J. Respicio

Relative to urging Congressional Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-Guam), and Congressional Delegate Eni Faleomaveaga (D-American Samoa) to request from the Comptroller General of the United States a report on the status of claims and an update on the service delivery of healthcare to veterans in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and American Samoa.

2008 AUG 22  
11:50 AM

1           **BE IT RESOLVED BY I MINA'BENTE NUEBI NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN:**  
2           **WHEREAS,** since the United States government began allowing the people of  
3 Guam to become members of the United States Armed Forces, a tradition of service has  
4 grown among the young adults of our island, and many Guamanians have  
5 distinguished themselves by serving their country, island and people with great  
6 distinction; and  
7           **WHEREAS,** the people of Guam strongly support all of the many veterans of  
8 American wars, and our island has the singular distinction of having suffered more  
9 casualties on a per capita basis than any other territory, state or insular area of the  
10 United States in both the Korean conflict and the Vietnam War; and  
11           **WHEREAS,** the growing number of active duty, guard, and reserve service  
12 members from Guam who have toured or are serving tours of duty in the War on  
13 Terror will continue to correspond to an increase in the number of veterans who will be  
14 eligible for and who will be seeking veterans services; and  
15           **WHEREAS,** the Honolulu Regional Office of the Department of Veteran Affairs  
16 is responsible for administering VA benefit programs under the leadership and

1 direction of the Under Secretary for Benefits for the Veteran’s Benefits Administration;  
2 and

3 **WHEREAS**, the Honolulu Regional Office serves the veterans of Hawaii and the  
4 Western Pacific insular areas of the United States which include American Samoa,  
5 Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and

6 **WHEREAS**, in November 1998 the U.S. General Accounting Office conducted a  
7 study entitled “Veterans’ Healthcare: Service Delivery for Veterans in Guam and the  
8 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands” (GAO/HEHS-99-14); and

9 **WHEREAS**, the report was made at the request of then Guam Congressional  
10 Delegate Robert A. Underwood, who asked GAO to (1) describe how VA currently  
11 meets Guam and CNMI veterans’ healthcare needs, (2) estimate future demand from  
12 veterans, and (3) estimate the cost a veterans’ inpatient ward at the U.S. Naval Hospital  
13 in Guam; and

14 **WHEREAS**, it was noted in the report that while veterans in Guam would prefer  
15 more medical services based in Guam thereby avoiding the need for medical  
16 evacuations to Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu and other medical facilities in  
17 the U.S. Mainland, there is an insufficient workload reported by U.S. Navy officials in  
18 Guam to warrant providing such services in Guam; and

19 **WHEREAS**, while the report evaluated the quality of care given to veterans in  
20 Guam and the CNMI, it did not evaluate the processing of related claims at the  
21 Honolulu Regional Office, such as the average length of time it takes claims to be  
22 resolved and whether there is disparity in the level of attention or amount taken to  
23 resolve claims for veterans in the U.S. Pacific insular areas versus those who are within  
24 driving distance of the VA’s medical center and regional office in Hawaii; and

25 **WHEREAS**, veterans in Guam routinely raise their frustrations with the claims  
26 process, and because of these frustrations they instead choose not to seek the VA  
27 services to which they are rightfully entitled, and discourage other veterans from  
28 seeking such services; now, therefore, be it

1           **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'Bente Nuebi Na Liheslaturan Guahan* does hereby, on  
2 behalf of the people of Guam, request the Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Guam  
3 Delegate to Congress and the Honorable Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin Faleomavaega, Jr.,  
4 American Samoa Delegate to Congress to request Acting Comptroller General Gene L.  
5 Dodaro to direct the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study and report  
6 on the status of veteran claims from American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth  
7 of the Northern Marianas Islands, to include a comparison of the claims processing for  
8 Hawaii veterans vs. those from American insular areas; and be it further

9           **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'Bente Nuebi Na Liheslaturan Guahan* does hereby, on  
10 behalf of the people of Guam, further request the Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo,  
11 Guam Delegate to Congress and the Honorable Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin Faleomavaega, Jr.,  
12 American Samoa Delegate to Congress to request that Acting Comptroller General  
13 Dodaro direct the Government Accountability Office to update and include American  
14 Samoa in GAO's November 1998 report "Veterans' Healthcare: Service Delivery for  
15 Veterans in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;" and be it  
16 further

17           **RESOLVED**, that the Speaker and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee  
18 certify, and the Secretary of *I Liheslatura* attest to, the adoption hereof, and that copies of  
19 the same be thereafter transmitted to Administrator Fred Gofigan of the Guam Office of  
20 Veterans Affairs; to the Guam Veterans Commission; to Veterans Affairs Officer  
21 Paogofie Fiaigoa, American Samoa Office of Veteran Affairs; to the Honorable  
22 Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Guam Delegate to Congress; to the Honorable Eni Fa'aua'a  
23 Hunkin Faleomavaega, Jr., American Samoa Delegate to Congress; to the Honorable  
24 Lolo Letalu Moliga, American Samoa's Senate President; to the Honorable Savali  
25 Talavou Ale, Speaker of the American Samoa House of Representatives; to the  
26 Honorable Togiola T.A. Tulafono, Governor of American Samoa; to the Honorable  
27 Pedro Agulto Tenorio, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)  
28 Washington Representative; to the Honorable Pete P. Reyes, President of the CNMI  
29 Senate; to the Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Speaker of the 16<sup>th</sup> CNMI House of

1 Representatives; to the CNMI Office of Veterans Affairs; to the Honorable Benigno R.  
2 Fitial, Governor of the CNMI; to the Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne; to the  
3 Secretary of Veterans Affairs James B. Peake; to Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
4 Insular Affairs Doug W. Domenech; to the Honorable Congressman Bob Filner,  
5 Chairman of the House Committee on Veteran's Affairs; to the Honorable Mitch  
6 McConnell, Senate Minority Leader; to the Honorable Congressman John Boehner,  
7 House Minority Leader; to the Honorable Robert Byrd, President Pro Tempore of the  
8 United States Senate; to the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States  
9 House of Representatives; to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United  
10 States; and to the Honorable Felix P. Camacho, *I Maga'Lahen Guåhan*.

11 DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY *I MINA'BENTE NUEBI NA*  
12 *LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN* ON THE \_\_\_\_TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2008.

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JUDITH T. WON PAT  
Speaker

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TINA ROSE MUÑA BARNES  
Senator and Legislative Secretary