



Territory of Guam
Territorio Guam

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
UFISINAN I MAGA'LAHI
AGANA, GUAM 96910 U.S.A.

MAY 17 1991
REFER TO
LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to the Legislative Secretary mentioned in the stamp.



The Honorable Joe T. San Agustin
Speaker, Twenty-First Guam Legislature
155 Hessler Street
Agana, Guam 96910

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Transmitted herewith is Bill No. 161, which has been signed into law this
date as Public Law No. 21-36.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Frank F. Blas, the Governor of Guam.

FRANK F. BLAS
Governor of Guam
Acting

Attachment

210234



Commonwealth Now!

TWENTY-FIRST GUAM LEGISLATURE
1991 (FIRST) Regular Session

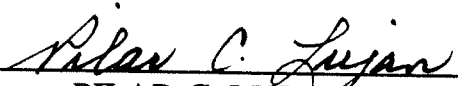
CERTIFICATION OF PASSAGE OF AN ACT TO THE GOVERNOR

This is to certify that Substitute Bill No. 161 (COR), "AN ACT TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY AS TO THE CAUSES OF THE HIGH RATE OF SUICIDE ON GUAM PROPOSING A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION THEREFOR," was on the 2nd day of May, 1991, duly and regularly passed.



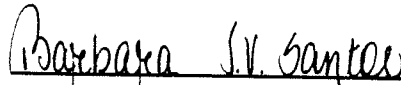
JOE T. SAN AGUSTIN
Speaker

Attested:




PILAR C. LUJAN
Senator and Legislative Secretary

This Act was received by the Governor this 7th day of May,
1991, at 2:00 o'clock p.m.



Assistant Staff Officer
Governor's Office

APPROVED:



FRANK F. BLAS
Governor of Guam
Acting

Date: MAY 17 1991

Public Law No. 21-36

TWENTY-FIRST GUAM LEGISLATURE
1991 (FIRST) Regular Session

Bill No. 161 (COR)

As substituted by the Committee
on Rules and further substituted
on the floor.

Introduced by:

J. G. Bamba
D. L. G. Shimizu
E. P. Arriola
J. P. Aguon
M. Z. Bordallo
H. D. Dierking
C. T. C. Gutierrez
P. C. Lujan
G. Mailloux
D. Parkinson
J. T. San Agustin
F. R. Santos
A. C. Blaz
D. F. Brooks
E. R. Duenas
E. M. Espaldon
M. D. A. Manibusan
M. J. Reidy
M. C. Ruth
T. V. C. Tanaka
A. R. Unpingco

AN ACT TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY AS TO THE CAUSES OF
THE HIGH RATE OF SUICIDE ON GUAM PROPOSING A
SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, AND MAKING AN
APPROPRIATION THEREFOR.

1 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE TERRITORY OF GUAM:**

2 **Section 1. Legislative finding.** It is the finding of the Legislature
3 that there has been a sixty percent (60%) increase in suicides in Guam from
4 1989 to 1990. The Guam Chief Medical Examiner has reported that the

1 number of suicides -26- for 1990 is an "incredible figure". Furthermore,
2 there has been a major increase in the number of young people committing
3 suicide with ages such as 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20. The Planning,
4 Research and Development Section of the Guam Police Department has
5 determined there is a pattern where a person will make two or three
6 attempts on his life, then either get help or complete the suicide.

7 **Section 2. Creation of task force.** In order to find solutions to the
8 poignant and pressing problem described in Section 1 the Director of Public
9 Health and Social Services shall create a task force to draft a program to
10 address this suicide crisis. Members of the task force shall include
11 representatives from the Department of Public Health and Social Services; the
12 Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse; the Department of
13 Education; the Department of Law; the Guam Police Department; and the
14 Superior Court of Guam; which members shall be appointed by their
15 respective directors or agency heads. The task force shall forward to the
16 Governor, the Legislature, and the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court a
17 program proposal within sixty (60) days from the effective date of this Act,
18 since a timely response to this problem is essential, considering the
19 frightening trend of increases in the rate of Guam suicides.

20 **Section 3. Appropriation.** Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) are
21 hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public
22 Health and Social Services to fund the operation of the task force created in
23 Section 2 of this Act.



TWENTY FIRST
GUAM LEGISLATURE

Dr. David L.G. Shimizu

SENATOR

Chairman: Committee on Health, Ecology & Welfare

April 30, 1991

The Honorable
Joe T. San Agustin
Speaker, 21st Guam Legislature
Agana, Guam

via: Committee on Rules

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Health, Ecology & Welfare, to which was referred Bill No.161 AN ACT TO PROVIDE A STUDY AS TO THE COURSE AND SOLUTION OF THE HIGH RATE OF SUICIDE OF PERSONS LIVING ON GUAM, herein reports back and recommends that **Bill 161 be Passed.**

Votes of committee members are as follows:

<u>11</u>	To Pass
<u>0</u>	Not To Pass
<u>0</u>	To The Inactive File
<u>0</u>	Abstained
<u>0</u>	Off-Island
<u>0</u>	Not Available

Sincerely,

Dr. David L.G. Shimizu

attachments



VOTE SHEET
 Bill No.161

Committee on Health, Ecology & Welfare
 AN ACT TO PROVIDE A STUDY AS TO THE
 COURSE AND SOLUTION OF THE HIGH RATE OF
 SUICIDE OF PERSONS LIVING ON GUAM.

SENATOR	TO PASS	NOT TO PASS	ABSTAIN	INACTIVE FILE
Shimizu, David L.G. <i>Shimizu</i>	✓			
Aguon, J.P. <i>John P. Aguon</i>	✓			
Arriola, Elizabeth P. <i>E. Arriola</i>	✓			
Brooks, Doris F. <i>D. Brooks</i>	✓			
Blaz, Anthony <i>Blaz</i>	✓			
Dierking, Herminia <i>H. Dierking</i>	✓			
Duenas, Edward R. <i>E. Duenas</i>	✓			
Gutierrez, Carl P.C. <i>C. Gutierrez</i>	✓			
Mailoux, Gordon <i>G. Mailoux</i>	✓			
Manibusan, Marilyn D.A. <i>M. Manibusan</i>	✓			
Reidy, Michael <i>M. Reidy</i>	✓			
<i>Martelaine J. Baidello</i>	✓			

Committee on Health, Ecology And Welfare

Committee Report

Bill No. 161

AN ACT TO PROVIDE A STUDY AS TO THE COURSE
AND SOLUTION OF THE HIGH RATE OF SUICIDE OF
PERSONS LIVING ON GUAM.

Background:

Bill No. 161 was introduced by Senator J.G. Bamba to establish a Suicide Task Force within the Department of Public Health and Social Services for the sole purpose of developing a program to address the crisis of suicide on Guam.

Public Hearing and Testimony:

The HEW Committee conducted a Public Hearing on the Bill March 3, 1991 at 9:00 am in the Legislative Public Hearing Room. The Public Hearing was chaired by Senator D.L.G. Shimizu. Also present during the Public Hearing were the following Senators:

Senator Reidy
Senator Brooks
Senator Blaz

Senator Arriola
Senator Manibusan
Senator Lujan

Appearing before the HEW Committee were the following individuals:

1. Joan Glang, Crisis Hotline Project, Governors Office.
2. Barbara S.N. Benavente, Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse.
3. William Melendez Jr., Private Counselor
4. Marilyn Wingfield, Director, Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse.
5. Julie Blaz, Crisis Hotline Project, Governors Office.

All of the testimonies presented by the aforementioned individuals were not in favor of establishing a Task Force within the Department of Public Health and Social Services. The rationale for their objections to Bill No. 161 stem from an existing Suicide Task Force created by Governor Ada. As a result of the Governors Task Force a :

1. Suicide Crisis Hotline of Volunteers was created.
2. The Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Prevention Branch assisted the Dededo Drug Free Organization initiate a six month suicide prevention project.
3. A research project is in progress headed by Dr. Don Rubenstein, Director of the Micronesian Area Research Center. This project is being funded by the Governors Office for a six month period. This project, according to testimonies is a beginning for developing a comprehensive suicide prevention program. Although testimonies were in opposition to mandating a task force, there was support for the intent of Bill 161.

Recommendation:

The HEW Committee finds that existing arrangements as presented by those present at the Public Hearing need to be supported by the Legislature in its efforts to combat the increasing incidents of suicide. Therefore, the Committee recommends the passage of Bill 161.

Attachments

TWENTY-FIRST GUAM LEGISLATURE
1991 (FIRST) REGULAR SESSION

Bill No. 161
Introduced by:

J.G. BAMBA 

AN ACT TO PROVIDE A STUDY AS TO THE COURSE AND SOLUTION
OF THE HIGH RATE OF SUICIDES OF PERSONS LIVING ON GUAM.

1 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE TERRITORY OF GUAM:

2 Section 1. Legislative Finding. It is the finding of
3 this Legislature that there has been a 60% increase in
4 suicides from 1989 to 1990. The Guam Chief Medical Examiner
5 has reported that the number of suicides (26) for 1990 is an
6 "incredible figure." Furthermore there has been a major
7 increase in the number of young people committing suicide
8 with ages such as: 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20. The
9 Planning, Research and Development Section of the Guam
10 Police Department has determined there is a pattern where a
11 person will make 2 or 3 attempts on their life, then either
12 get help or complete the suicide. In order to find
13 solutions to these poignant and pressing problems the
14 Director of Public Health and Social Services is called upon
15 to create a task force. The task force will have a mandate
16 to create a program to address this crisis. A program
17 proposal will be forwarded to the Governor, the Legislature,
18 and the presiding Judge of the Supreme Court within 60 days
19 from the effective date of this act. A timely response to
20 this problem is essential considering the drastic and rapid
21 trend.

new



From the Office of
WILLIAM MELENDEZ, JR.

GASW

Suite 600D, G.C.I.C. Bldg.
414 West Soledad Ave. • Agana, Guam 96910
Phone: 477-1389~92 • Fax: (671) 477-1077

We came by different ships, but we're all in the same boat!

Senator David L.G. Shimizu
Chairperson, Committee on Health
Welfare and Ecology
P.O. Box CB
Agana, Guam 916910

March 10, 1991

Dear Senator Shimizu,

On behalf of the consumers who may be unaware of the efforts being addressed on **Bill 161**, "An Act to Provide a Study as To The Course and Solution of the High Rate of Suicide of Persons Living on Guam" introduced by Senator J.G. Bamba, I wish to submit this written testimony in opposition of Bill 161.

While I agree with the idea that a solution is required to suicides, I do not agree with the idea that yet another task force must be created, especially when those efforts are already in existence. Task forces are an excellent instrument, than when coupled with an empirical process, produce a conclusion, thus allowing the opportunity for strategies development. However, they are yet another ineffective approach when they duplicate efforts and continue to ask the same questions over and over, and typically with the same people involved as their membership.

The Dededo Drug Free Organization (with guidance from the Prevention and Training Branch Staff, Dept of Mental Health & Substance Abuse), initiated in October 1990 a six month suicide prevention project for Guam. This project involves:

1. Research on the incidents and prevalence of suicide and suicide attempts on Guam for the period of 1988, 1989, 1990, and its correlation with drugs and alcohol abuse. This research has an empirical process and it seeks to develop a profile of a person potentially contemplating a suicide, a proactive action. It also seeks to allow us the visibility of effectiveness or lack of, in the programs currently in existence;
2. Training of parents, youths, health service providers, community volunteers, and other significant impactors in the prevention of suicide, drugs/alcohol abuse and in increasing their awareness of available mental health and substance abuse services in the government and private sectors;

3. Developing audio and visual resources on suicide prevention for use in activities focused on community awareness and education, and implementing strategies for prevention.

2. The project's training component focuses on empowering individuals in the community to take personal responsibility for the prevention of suicide and the promotion of healthy drug free styles. This process has already begun as 132 participants received the training with 40 being trained as trainers. Several presentations in the school system have already been provided by some of the trainers and more are being scheduled with the ultimate effort to reach into the villages. I am personally aware of the training component and so is Senator Arriola who also attended.

The research component is headed by Dr Don Rubinstein, Director of the Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC) and is well under way. I have knowledge of Dr Rubinstein's past tasks and feel confident this project will be equally rewarding in knowledge.


3. This project has been funded by the Office of the Governor for a six month period. I am optimistic that the scope of the work will go beyond this funding period and is the beginning for development of a comprehensive suicide prevention program for this territory.

4. Additionally, a three year mental health plan for the territory was just completed by the Guam Mental Health Planning Council. Strategies have been formulated with objectives that can be tracked and measured for effectiveness. The plan also addressed our tendency to duplicate efforts and instead forms an efficient network that conjointly address all mental ills that afflict our people. Mental health issues are best addressed by the agency that is tasked with doing so. I do not consider Public Health and Social Services to be the best equipped to manage a task force of this nature. A prevention task force is already called for in the mental health plan and I urge the 21st Guam Legislature to recognize such by tasking the Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse with the responsibility to address suicide. I further urge the Guam Legislature to properly fund this effort to ensure a success for our citizens.

5. Once again, I urge restraint in our tendency to duplicate efforts and divide our forces. Familiarity with what is in existence and

conjointly addressing the needs will produce the most efficient results.
I thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,


WILLIAM MELENDEZ JR., E.A.C.
Counselor/Consultant

TESTIMONY ON BILL NO. 161

On Behalf of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, I wish to submit this written testimony in opposition of Bill 161, "An Act To Provide A Study As To The Course and Solution of The High Rate of Suicide of Persons Living on Guam."

Several months ago Governor Joseph F. Ada created a Suicide Task Force. The decision of the Task Force was to create a Crisis Hotline. This Hotline has been in operation for three months and is providing a needed service. It was decided that it would be more effective to have the Hotline function out of the Governor's Office instead of Mental Health. Unfortunately, the community still views Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse as a psychiatric hospital, not a treatment center that has an array of services.

In October, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse's Prevention Branch assisted the Dededo Drug Free Organization in initiating a six-month suicide prevention project for Guam. This project involves:

1. Research on the incidences and prevalence of suicide attempts on Guam for the period of 1988, 1989 and 1990, and its correlation with alcohol and other drug use;
2. Training of parents, youth, health service providers, community volunteers and other significant impactors in the prevention of suicide, and alcohol and other drug abuse, and in increasing their awareness of available mental health and substance abuse services in the government and private sector;
3. Developing audio and visual resources on suicide prevention for use in activities focused on community awareness and education, and implementing strategies for prevention.

This project's training component focuses on empowering individuals in the community to take personal responsibility for the prevention of suicide and the promotion of healthy, drug-free lifestyles.

In November through December, 1990, a series of three suicide prevention workshops were conducted by Mr. William Melendez, Jr., a nationally certified addictions counselor, for one hundred thirty-two (132) participants; forty (40) of which were trained as trainers. Currently, this pool of trainers are responding to the requests in the community for workshops on suicide prevention.

The research component of this project, headed by Dr. Don Rubinstein, Director of the Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC). focuses on collecting

FEB 16 '91

TWENTY-FIRST GUAM LEGISLATURE
1991 (FIRST) REGULAR SESSIONBill No. 161 (COR)
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