



Office of the Speaker
TINA ROSE MUNA BARNES
I Mina' Trentai Singko Na Liheslaturan Guahan



05/03/2020

The Honorable Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero

Governor of Guam

Transmitted via Electronic Mail

RE: Transparency and Accountability

Hafa Adai! I want to start off by saying that just this weekend, as I watched an individual who had been on a ventilator for over a month get discharged from GMH – I was grateful for the countless COVID heroes on our island who made this happen. It took a team effort, and I am grateful for all that you've done to flatten the curve.

As you may be aware, our People of Guam lack a sense of trust in our government. Given that hundreds of millions of dollars will be pouring into our Government of Guam to respond to COVID-19, to administer the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, as well as the Economic Impact Payments, I implore you to allocate a small fraction that you have received from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Office of Public Accountability.

Under the recently issued guidance by US Treasury, funds may be used if they are “reasonably necessary to the function of government that satisfy the Fund’s eligibility criteria.” The criteria is as follows:

The CARES Act provides that payments from the Fund may only be used to cover costs that

1. are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
2. were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
3. were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

In my capacity as Chairwoman on the Committee on Public Accountability, I am aware that the Office of Public Accountability was established to Audit all of the Government of Guam expenditures, as well as perform performance audits of numerous Government of Guam entities. Auditing federal funds from the Coronavirus Relief Funds, other COVID-19 related programs, and conduct performance audits would significantly impact their ability to perform its day-to-day functions.

I have seen firsthand the work of the OPA - restoring the dignity of this Government based on the work he and his team have done – and we must continue to allow them to do so. That being said, as you are be aware, should these funds be misused, the Government of Guam would

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need to reimburse the Federal Government for any discrepancies – something we cannot afford. Ensuring the Public Auditor be given the necessary resources he needs to hire additional auditors, or contract out auditing services, would serve as an insurance policy for our Government, and more importantly, restore the People's trust in this Government – something we all campaigned on, and something I consider the utmost priority for myself. I hope you are amendable to my request, and I continue to hope that we can continue to work together for our People of Guam. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Saina Ma'ase,

Tina Rose Muña Barnes
Speaker, 35th Guam Legislature



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