



Sen. Dennis Rodriguez, author of Bill 413-31, said there were still some outstanding issues the Guam Election Commission didn't address when the bill was submitted. Variety file photo

## Election law reform bill sent back to committee

By Zita Y. Taitano  
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BILL 413-31 has been sent back to committee for further review and possible resubmission.

Sen. Dennis Rodriguez, author of the bill, said there were still some outstanding issues that the Guam Election Commission didn't address when the bill was submitted.

"I think one of the issues required a legal opinion from their legal counsel and they don't meet until next week Tuesday. We talked to Maria Pangelinan, Guam Election Commission director, if they can address those issues and then resubmit another version that would take into consideration those concerns," Rodriguez said, adding those issues included the "Citizens United" ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court.

"That's something their legal counsel was still reviewing and was not considered when they were putting that bill together," Rodriguez said.

Another matter was the proposed 30-day timeline for

GEC to verify signatures on petitions for people running for office. The current timeline is 10 days.

"They're looking at hopefully revising that to give them a longer time to review the signatures. That would take into consideration one of the issues during the 2010 elections challenge, which included the allegation that people from the CNMI voted here. Ten days is not enough for GEC to verify these signatures," the senator said.

Once the bill has been revised and resubmitted, Rodriguez said Speaker Judi Won Pat will call for a special session so the Legislature can act on it right away.

"But if there are substantial changes to the existing bill, we can also have a public hearing on it to get the public's input," Rodriguez said.

Meanwhile, Pangelinan confirms the commissioners will discuss the federal ruling at their upcoming meeting: "It'll be on the commission agenda on Tuesday next week during their regular meeting at 4 p.m."

## Navy seeks comments for firing range

By Zita Y. Taitano  
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PUBLIC comments on the supplemental environmental impact statement scoping process for a live fire training range complex on Guam are being sought by the Department of the Navy.

"The Navy appreciates the community taking the time to submit comments in the SEIS scoping process," Joint Guam Program Office Forward Director Capt. Dan Cuff said in a statement.

"We look forward to reviewing their input."

The comments will be accepted for the scoping meetings scheduled for next month. The meetings will be held on Saturday, March 17 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the University of Guam Fieldhouse in Mangilao; Monday, March 19 from 5 to 9 p.m. at Southern High School in Santa Rita; and Tuesday, March 20 from 5 to 9 p.m. at the

*The meetings will be held on Saturday, March 17 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the University of Guam Field House in Mangilao; Monday, March 19 from 5 to 9 p.m. at Southern High School in Santa Rita; and Tuesday, March 20 from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Yigo Gymnasium.*

Yigo Gymnasium.

Meanwhile, those who use the site should be advised that the site is public and that users may receive an error message when attempting to visit. The error is a common occurrence among many government websites, however, the Navy assured that logging on to the site is completely safe.

Users may also see a message when they reach the site reading "Certificate Error: Navigation Blocked. There is a problem with

### SEIS COMMENT INFO

Residents who wish to submit their comments can go to:

[http://bit.ly/Guam\\_LFTRC\\_SEIS](http://bit.ly/Guam_LFTRC_SEIS)

There will be comment forms available which can be electronically submitted.

this website's security certificate. The security certificate presented by this website was not issued by a trusted certificate authority." According to the Navy, accepting the certificate is completely safe and will allow access to the site.

To submit comments online, just send them to [Guam\\_LFTRC\\_SEIS@navy.mil](mailto:Guam_LFTRC_SEIS@navy.mil).

Residents who wish to submit public comments by regular mail can send them to the following address: Joint Guam Program Office (JGPO) Forward; P.O. Box 153246; Santa Rita, Guam 96915.

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# Decolonization committee continues talks on self-determination

By Geraldine Castillo  
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STIRRING awareness and reigniting discussions of Guam's political status has been the mission of Edward Alvarez for over a year as the executive director of the Committee on Decolonization.

Alvarez spoke before members of the Rotary Club of Northern Guam during their weekly meeting yesterday about the work and plans of the Committee on Decolonization and how it's important to continue those discussions as they determine Guam's future political status.

Over the course of the new Calvo administration, the primary agenda had been all about raising awareness. According to Alvarez, the Committee on Decolonization sought to raise awareness through outreaches, school visits, veteran groups and populating the decolonization registry.

"When I first came into office, there wasn't anything being talked about on decolonization or political status – it was a dead issue," Alvarez said. "So we began reigniting this issue. I began going around to schools ... I talked to over 500 kids last year and got them to know the basics – about why we are doing this, why it's important and how it affects their daily lives."

Alvarez said such discussions are important because of Guam's need to modernize its relationship with the United States. He also noted that under the United Nations Charter, it's important for all people to exercise self-determination.

## Opportune

"So that's why we want to modernize this relationship – because we're in the midst of a military buildup," Alvarez stated. "But it's also an opportune time for us get this done. We want to have the ground rules of engagement in place before we negotiate a military buildup with the U.S. Gov. Calvo has made it clear that it needs to happen – we need to be partners in this buildup instead of being told what to do."

With the resurgence of discussions on political status, Alvarez has seen its evolution to becoming a centerpiece discussion and wants to continue the talks this year.

He said the overarching goal of the governor's Committee

on Decolonization is to hold a plebiscite vote no later than 2015, ratify a constitution, and to gain Congress' approval and finally be delisted off the colonization listing.

This year, Alvarez said, the committee will be focusing on building advocacy in order to raise awareness. Those efforts include gaining international attention through networking with celebrities.

"Now that the awareness is raised, it still needs to be reinforced constantly," he stated.

"We're looking to do this – to

get advocacy – because it makes no sense for us to go every year to the United Nations and tell [them] everything that has happened here and just go home and wait for the next conference," Alvarez said. "This effort is going to take international and national attention to get it done, the attention it deserves; and hopefully we will discuss that."

► Edward Alvarez, the executive director of the Committee on Decolonization, said his group is seeking to raise awareness through outreaches, school visits, veteran groups and populating the decolonization registry.



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