

# Free association meets Guam, federal needs

Writers in Thursday's Pacific Daily News (J. Murphy and L. Maquera) raise important points about the political status of Guam. They point out that the federal government's influence should be considered as Chamorros make their decision.

I almost agree with them, except I think we need to first consider the interests of Guam, and then see how to make the federal interest work with our interests.

Murphy and Maquera miss the most important point about the federal government's relationship to Guam. The federal government is here because they need something from tiny Guam.

And even though we do receive benefits from the federal government, unfortunately, with our status as a territory, the United States can decide and change the benefits of that relationship by themselves. That's why they can take our land, let in thousands of immigrants and lay off local workers and we have no say.

Yes, we need to consider the federal inter-

est in Guam. But more importantly, we need to look to the status that allows Guam's interest and the federal interests to be matched up. That status is free association.

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## Forget the pugua, just help save our jobs

My cousin's family left Guam to keep his federal retirement, breaking up our family and his mother's heart. Why is Guam the only place actually implementing the A-76 program? Other places are stopping it.

Over 1,000 federal employees are losing their jobs, are taking a cut in pay or are forced to move off-island at lower salaries.

Guam's congressman speaks about "pugua" when we lost a thousand federal jobs to feed and raise our children and federal money to educate them. Our economy is hurting. He should be less concerned about smuggling in pugua and more concerned about smuggling out jobs and funding for our people.

Being in the minority is no excuse. Del. Blaz was in the minority, but got DOE money, federal jobs and even federal health care.