

# Reasoning against statehood for the island was obnoxious

I have read with much scrutiny the column written by E. Robert Statham Jr. (Pacific Daily News, May 19) and I find the insinuation he made regarding Guam's chances for attaining statehood as part of its political self-determination repugnant.



**Eddie Duenas**

Yes, some skeptics have indicated, for one reason or another, that Guam will encounter much difficulty attaining that ultimate status with the United States.

Some believe that Guam is not "big enough" and does not have "sufficient resources" like some of the other states to qualify.

While this argument is debatable, I find the one offered by Statham, an associate professor of political science at the University of Guam, is obnoxious. I also sense that he is underestimating the resilience of the people of Guam.

In his column, he wrote in part:

"In the case of Guam (and the other offshore territories), there is not a large enough mainland American population to result in the petitioning of Congress for full inclusion into the American union (statehood).

"And this not likely to change in the future as most mainlanders that come to Guam are on limited-term contracts. Moreover, many of those who come to Guam eventually leave and return home for a variety of reasons, but largely because of social, cultural, economic and political differences."

If we were to follow this assumption, then I dare say that Hawaii pulled a rabbit out of a hat when it started petitioning Congress for statehood in the early 1900s and then attaining admission some 50 years later in 1959.

I say this because a comparative study from the Library of Congress estimated that in 1953, Hawaii's population comprised of 69,461 with 14.8 percent Caucasians (I am assuming these are "mainland Americans") and the rest — 399,377 or 85.2 percent — included 40.4 percent people of Japanese ancestry, 19.8 percent full or part Hawaiian, 13.4 percent Filipino, 6.9 percent Chinese and 4.7 percent others.

By Statham's reckoning, Hawaii, at that time, would stand very little chance, if any, of becoming the 50th state of the Union.

Now let me pose these questions:

▲ Is Statham saying that Congress will hear a statehood petition from Guam only if the island is dominated by a "large enough mainland American population?"

▲ Didn't the U.S. agree in the 1899 Treaty of Paris and then in the 1945 United Nations Charter to allow the "inhab-

itants" of Guam to exercise political self-determination in due time?

I would like to think that the American people (comprised of various ethnic groups and cultures) and the elected leaders in Congress will rise above the level of Statham's reasoning.

No one should underestimate the national law-making body. The experience of Alaska (with a population of 209,000 at the time of admission) and Hawaii (about 534,000 when it became a state) showed that Congress could change its collective mind even after giving the thumbs down more than a dozen times on legislation seeking statehood for both former U.S. territories.

Apparently, the opposition withered away as each new Congress with different perspectives took office.

After all, we live in a dynamic society, and so are the political winds of the time.

We should all keep an open mind. It is said that the symbolic American lady of justice, her eyes blindfolded and holding a scale, does not discriminate regardless of one's race, color, creed or national origin.

She only sees the merit of the case before her.

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