

Where's education campaign for vote on political status?

Well, it's finally official. The Commission on Decolonization has formally petitioned the Guam Legislature to move the Guam political status vote, previously scheduled for July 1, to the November General Elections.

We agree with the delay and urge lawmakers to support this request. Obviously, there's not enough time between now and July 1 to hold an islandwide registration for Chamorro voters, let alone verify people's claims to ancestry.

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And the Legislature has yet to come up with the funding it will take to hire people to do the registration and help conduct the election.

But those are just mechanical restrictions of holding the plebiscite.

What Chamorros and non-Chamorros alike should be concerned about is that the commission has failed to provide a

substantive education campaign on each of the status options.

That is the most important reason to delay this vote. How can anyone go to the polls and intelligently pick from one of the political options — independence, statehood or free association — if they don't fully understand the pros and cons?

All the public has been exposed to so far are opinions, campaign signs and advertisements.

That doesn't qualify as an education program.

For that matter, where are the research papers that each of the political-option task forces gave to the commission three weeks ago? Residents have a right to see what the groups came up with.

The Legislature has a duty to push the education campaign as well. After all, the requirement to hold this plebiscite was enacted into law at the hands of lawmakers.

There's no doubt that it's going to take more time and money to hold this status vote. But providing that support is secondary to the real need.

Until a comprehensive education program is developed and presented — complete with a financial, social and security analyses of each option — this plebiscite must be canceled.