

Senators continue work on status-vote measure

By Lloyd Jojola

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Line by line, lawmakers continued to make their way through Bill 391 yesterday, legislation that would, in part, create a registry that will determine who are qualified to vote in the political-status plebiscite scheduled for July 1.

The recent Rice vs. Cayetano decision — a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that disallowed the state of

Hawaii from holding elections limited to native Hawaiians — has prompted Guam lawmakers to revamp a law relevant to the Guam plebiscite. Their goal is to move away from a race-based classification of voters to one based on a clearly defined political class of people.

"We did have to kind of switch gears in mid-stream because of the Rice vs. Cayetano case," Sen. Mark Forbes, R-Sinajana, said yesterday.

Chamorro

Plebiscite

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"We just want to be careful."

The proposed legislation also would appropriate money to the Guam Election Commission to carry out the plebiscite. And it would appropriate money to the proposed

Guam Decolonization Registry Board and approve the Guam Decolonization Registry regulations that are necessary for the board to carry out its duties.

The Decolonization Registry Board, established under the election commission, would establish, administer and maintain the Guam Decolonization Registry.

Senators spent most of the afternoon going over the Guam Decolonization Registry regulations.

By late yesterday afternoon, senators were going over the sections of the bill that dealt with appropriating money to the Guam Decolonization Registry Board and the Guam Election Commission to conduct the plebiscite.

Despite all the political movement to assure that the vote is carried out, it's still uncertain whether or not that will happen on the July 1 date.

"Speaking as an administrator, I don't know if the July 1 date is feasible," Joe Borja, the chairman of the Chamorro Registry Advisory Board said yesterday.

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