



**OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ**

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement

*I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN*

35<sup>TH</sup> GUAM LEGISLATURE

April 3, 2020

Governor Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero  
513 West Marine Corps Drive  
Ricardo J. Bordallo Complex  
*Hagatña*, Guam 96910

RE: CARES Act Application to Guam

Dear Governor Leon Guerrero,

The details of H.R. 748- CARES Act allow for a multitude of assistance opportunities for our people. In reviewing the methods our people have to avail of the assistance, it is apparent that the only method available is to process or receive aid in person. This is of great concern as it puts our people as well as our government employees in danger of contracting COVID-19, and leaves little to no room for social distancing measures.

I feel it imperative to ramp up our technology efforts and create an opportunity for our people to remain at home and register for benefits online. I believe the costs associated with our technological efforts are provided for under the CARES Act.

There are a few areas of great importance that need immediate technological attention and online registration. The SNAP Program facilitated by the Department of Public Health and Social Services Division of Public Welfare, can serve the community who have had a recent reduction in works hours or are unemployed due to COVID-19. This will put food in their mouths in a timely manner.

These same individuals applying for SNAP benefits and more members from our community will also be applying for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. With no unemployment program in place, creating a system that allows for online applications and processing will build a strong foundation should we evolve to providing unemployment benefits for the community beyond this pandemic.

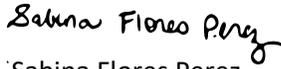
I anticipate direct payments to our people, afforded through the CARES Act, will be facilitated by the Department of Administration at the confirmation of recipients from the Department of Revenue and Taxation. Should paper checks be distributed, the flood of lines at the limited local banking institution locations that remain open will only increase, and further risk the public of contracting COVID-19. I suggest payments to our people be made electronically through a direct deposit to bank accounts, much like our IRS counterparts. I understand that not all individuals have bank accounts or choose to have a physical check, but this direct deposit effort will reduce the risk of crowds forming by reducing the number of people at banks.

On another note, I wanted to highlight our community with disabilities. These individuals tend to receive disability income or some other supplemental income, and they do not meet the threshold in order to file income taxes. As a result, these individuals might be missed in the direct payments benefit outlined in the CARES Act. Our community with disabilities is a community in need and should be able to avail of the direct payments benefit.

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I appreciate the hard work of yourself, the Lieutenant Governor, and all the staff at Adelup in managing this pandemic for our island, and for our people. I implore you to view my technological recommendations in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and flatten the curve. If there is any way, I or my office can assist you in these efforts, please reach out to me.

Sincerely,



Sabina Flores Perez  
Senator, 35th Guam Legislature

cc: Edward Birn  
cc: Linda DeNorcey  
cc: David Dell'Isola  
cc: Dafne M. Shimizu  
cc: Speaker Tina Muña Barnes, 35<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature