



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement
I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN
35TH GUAM LEGISLATURE

Senator Perez Responds to Firing of USS Roosevelt Captain

Hagatna, Guam, April 4, 2020 - Senator Sabina Perez releases the following statement regarding the USS Theodore Roosevelt:

I am troubled by the firing of Captain Crozier of the USS Theodore Roosevelt because it highlights the lack of military preparedness to respond appropriately to the coronavirus pandemic. This firing has demonstrated that the proper and normal response to this pandemic will challenge institutional norms. To survive this pandemic, we must change our ways in order to adapt. As such, leaders must make tough decisions, and must place safety concerns above all else. This includes evacuating the USS Roosevelt immediately, as well as increasing measures to protect public health.

In my April 1 letter to Governor Leon Guerrero, I urged military leadership to mobilize their resources for necessary treatment and care and to evacuate the USS Roosevelt to the greatest extent possible and disinfect the ship. I continue to stand by these demands. It is reckless to continue to leave sailors in such a vulnerable position. They must be removed from this unsafe situation in order to protect lives.

I also continue to urge the military to maximize on-base containment of all exposed sailors from aboard the USS Roosevelt. Currently, multiple facilities are vacant or underutilized within the base. The military has the capability to quickly and effectively establish safe, comfortable temporary housing units. Rear Admiral Menoni confirmed that not all military buildings were used prior to the transfer of sailors to various hotels.

Although transfer of sailors is limited to those testing negative for the coronavirus, military leadership is unable to provide assurances that those testing negative were not in contact or in close proximity with those who are positive. Given the weeks they have spent in tight quarters, it is not unreasonable to anticipate hundreds, if not thousands, of positive tests among the ship's 5,000 person crew.

With transfer of sailors to hotels, I urge greater measures to ensure the public health:

- Expedited testing and monitoring for all.
- Increase medical capacity and supplies.
- Expediting Covid negative patients to designated non-Covid facilities.
- Biohazard and other safety training, and proper healthcare for hospitality workers.
- Greater protections for those in our vulnerable populations, our manamko and those with comorbidities.

I thank Governor Leon Guerrero for being receptive to my concerns for protecting hospitality staff, for rejecting plans to place those with positive Covid-19 tests in hotels and to have hospitality staff provide direct services to them. Her request to have non-USS Roosevelt military personnel as a buffer between staff and sailors is wise.

These are difficult times, and we must take every precaution to protect our manamko, those with comorbidities or who are immunocompromised, those on the medical frontlines, the hospitality workers at the hotels if they become sick, our military personnel and the community at large.

To this end, it is essential to evacuate sailors from the USS Roosevelt immediately, and quarantine them within the base. With the superior logistic capabilities of the US military, over 38,000 acres of Department of Defense controlled lands, and underutilized barracks and schools, we can honor Captain Crozier's request for landed areas sufficient for quarantine, while sailors recover and the ship is decontaminated. We can achieve the health and safety of all our people, both in the military and the community at large, by pursuing this measured path.

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