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September 14, 2012

The Honorable Frank Blas Jr.
Minority Leader
I Mina'trentai Unu Na Liheslaturan Guahan
238 Archbishop Flores Street
Suite 908, DNA Building
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Dear Senator Blas,

I write in response to your letter dated September 14, 2012 regarding a recent hearing of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs on H.R. 6040, the Continued Free Association with Palau Act of 2012.

I appreciate you expressing your views regarding Medicaid coverage for FAS migrants. I have already been in contact with Governor Calvo regarding this matter, and in May, I wrote to inform him that FAS migrants legally residing in Guam are eligible to receive Medicaid coverage for emergency services, including dialysis, provided on island. I recommended that the costs of these services be shifted from the locally-funded Medically Indigent Program (MIP) to Medicaid so that our government can better utilize the additional \$268.3 million in Medicaid funding provided to Guam through a provision I sponsored in the Affordable Care Act.

Additionally, in June I encouraged the Governor to explore exercising an option that permits states and territories to cover FAS migrant children and pregnant women lawfully residing in the United States under Medicaid or the federally-funded Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). A recent amendment to the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 removed a prior five-year waiting period for coverage for children and pregnant women who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid and CHIP if not for their migrant status.


I am informed that the Calvo Administration has already taken steps to seek the federal reimbursements I have recommended. I believe that shifting these costs to Medicaid would result in significant costs savings to our local government, and I continue to work to find ways that would decrease the costs incurred by the Government of Guam for providing social services to FAS migrants on Guam as a result of the Compacts.

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Further, I continue to be in contact with officials in the Obama Administration to discuss ways to offset local debts owed to the federal government with past Compact costs incurred by the Government of Guam. However as a Member of Congress, my work must also address issues that have larger implications for our country and our relationships with foreign nations. I am very concerned that the United States has yet to approve an agreement with the Republic of Palau, which was finalized in January 2011. The lack of an agreement with Palau could have serious repercussions for the security dynamic in Micronesia as well as the greater Asia-Pacific region.

I appreciate you raising your concerns with me. I will continue to work with the Legislature, Governor Calvo, and local stakeholders to address issues regarding the Compacts and other issues important to our community.

Sincerely,


MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
Member of Congress