

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
APPOINTMENTS

DOCUMENT NO.	APPOINTEE	POSITION	AGENCY	APPT. DATE	TERM LENGTH	DATE REFERRED	COMMITTEE REFERRED	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	SESSION DATE	DATE CONFIRMED	NOTES
38GL-25-1503	Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)	The Adjutant General / Director	The Guam National Guard / Department of Military Affairs	11/18/25		11/19/25	Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard	12/3/25	12/23/25			




OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

December 15, 2025

The Honorable Frank F. Blas, Jr.
Speaker
I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

VIA: The Honorable V. Anthony Ada 
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

RE: Committee Report on the Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.

Håfa Adai Speaker Blas:

Transmitted herewith is the Report of the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard on the Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.

Committee votes are as follows:

- 5 TO DO CONFIRM
- TO NOT CONFIRM
- TO REPORT OUT ONLY
- TO ABSTAIN
- TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE




COMMITTEE ON RULES

RECEIVED:

December 15, 2025 4:40 p.m.
Marie Crisostomo

Revisions Received:
December 19, 2025 2:03 p.m.

Sincerely,

SHAWN GUMATAOTAO
Chairman
Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard



OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

COMMITTEE REPORT

The Executive Appointment of **Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)**, to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.



OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

December 12, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

From: Chairman Shawn Gumataotao

Subject: Committee Report on the Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.

Håfa Adai:

Transmitted herewith for your consideration is the Committee Report on the Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.

This report includes the following:

- Copy of COR Referral of the Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.
- Notices of Public Hearing;
- Copy of the Public Hearing Agenda;
- Public Hearing Sign-in Sheets;
- Copies of Submitted Written Testimony;
- Committee Vote Sheet and
- Committee Report Digest.

Please take the appropriate action on the attached vote sheet. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

SHAWN GUMATAOTAO

Chairman

Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard




COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
38th Guam Legislature

November 19, 2025

To: **Rennae V. C. Meno**
Clerk of the Legislature

Attorney Darleen Hiton
Legislative Legal Counsel

From: **Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada** 
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

Subject: **Referral of Appointment**

Håfa Adai,

As per my authority as Chairperson of the Committee on Rules and subject to §9.01, Rule IX of our Standing Rules, I am forwarding the referral of the following appointment:

Appointee: **Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)**

Position: **The Adjutant General/Director**

Please refer the following document:

“**Doc. No. 38GL-25-1503**– Office of the Governor - Appointment and Supporting Documents for Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), The Adjutant General, Guam National Guard, Director, Department of Military Affairs.”

Ensure the appointment is referred to the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard chaired by Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao. I also request that the same be copied to Management Information Services (MIS) for posting on our website.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Kamarin Nelson, Committee on Rules Director at 671-472-2461.



Note that the Legislature has taken steps to ensure that any protected personal identifying information has been redacted or excluded in whole or in part in order to protect the privacy of any individuals whose information has been included as part of this transmittal.

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
GOVERNOR



JOSHUA F. TENORIO
LT. GOVERNOR

UFISINAN I MAGA'HĀGAN GUĀHAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF GUAM

38GL-25-1503
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
FRANK F. BLAS JR.

November 18, 2025

NOV 19 2025

HON. FRANK BLAS JR., *Speaker*
I Mina trenta Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96932

Time: 3:57 pm
Received: [Signature]

**RE: Appointment as Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard, and
Director of the Department of Military Affairs**

Håfa Adai Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Organic Act of Guam, 10 GCA § 63201, and other applicable laws, I hereby transmit the following appointment and supporting documents:

APPOINTEE: Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)

**POSITION: The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard
and Director of the Department of Military Affairs**

The appointment is subject to the advice and consent of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*. Please schedule a hearing at your earliest convenience.

Senseramente,

Handwritten signature of Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero.

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
Maga'hågan Guåhan
Governor of Guam

cc: *Honorable* Joshua F. Tenorio, *Sigundo Maga'låhen Guåhan*, Lt. Governor of Guam



38GL-25-1503
Messages and Communications

RECEIVED
COMMITTEE ON RULES
November 19, 2025

4:18 p.m.

Marie Crisostomo

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
GOVERNOR



JOSHUA F. TENORIO
LT. GOVERNOR

UFISINAN I MAGA'HÅGAN GUÅHAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF GUAM

TRANSMITTED VIA HAND DELIVERY AND EMAIL TO: [REDACTED]

November 17, 2025

KARIN L. WATSON, COLONEL, U.S. ARMY (RET.)
[REDACTED]

Re: Appointment as Acting The Adjutant General and Acting Director of the Department of Military Affairs

Hafa Adai Ms. Watson:

Pursuant to my authority under the Organic Act of Guam, 4 GCA §§ 2101 and 2103.12, and 10 GCA § 63201, it is with pleasure that I appoint you to serve in the following capacity:

**ACTING THE ADJUTANT GENERAL (TAG), GUAM NATIONAL GUARD
ACTING DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS**

This appointment shall be effective immediately, and until confirmation of your appointment as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of Military Affairs by *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*.

Senseramente,

Handwritten signature of Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero in black ink.

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
Maga'hågan Guåhan
Governor of Guam

cc: *Honorable* Joshua F. Tenorio, *Sigundo Maga'låhen Guåhan*, Lt. Governor of Guam



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF GUAM Nomination and Appointment Information Form

The following information is required for submission to the
Speaker of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* in accordance with Title 4, Guam Code Annotated Section 2103

NOMINEE INFORMATION

<i>Last Name</i> WATSON	<i>First Name</i> KARIN	<i>Middle Initial</i> L
<i>Mailing Address</i> [REDACTED]		<i>Apartment/Unit #</i> [REDACTED]
<i>City</i> [REDACTED]	<i>State</i> [REDACTED]	<i>Zip Code</i> [REDACTED]
<i>Phone</i> [REDACTED]	<i>E-mail Address</i> [REDACTED]	
<i>Position to which Appointment is Made</i> ADJUTANT GENERAL		
<i>Are you a citizen of the United States?</i> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
<i>If no, are you authorized to work in the United States?</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

EDUCATION

SCHOOL (Name, City and State)	DATES OF ATTENDANCE	TYPE OF DEGREE	YEAR EARNED
<i>High School</i> JFK High School, Tamuning, GU	1989-1993	HS Diploma	1993
<i>College</i> University of Guam, Mangilao, GU	1993-1998	Bachelors Degree	1998
<i>Graduate School</i> Webster University, Fort Leonard Wood, MO	2006-2008	Masters Degree	2008
<i>Other Degree</i> National War College, Washington, DC	2019-2020	Masters Degree	2020

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Name of Present/Last Employer and Mailing Address Brush Creek Solutions 21740 Beaumeade Circle, Suite 148 Ashburn, VA 20147	Position Title Contract Investigator (1099 Employment)
	Dates Held April 2025 to present

Previous Employer and Mailing Address Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Information Technology 811 Vermont Avenue Washington, DC 20420	Position Title ICAM Program Analyst
	Dates Held May 2024 to September 2025

Previous Employer and Mailing Address U.S. Army Office of the Provost Marshal General 2800 Army Pentagon Washington, DC 20310	Position Title Military Police Officer
	Dates Held May 1998 to May 2024

Previous Employer and Mailing Address	Position Title
	Dates Held

Previous Employer and Mailing Address	Position Title
	Dates Held

PRIOR GOVERNMENT OF GUAM SERVICE

Agency or Department Name		Position Title
Address	Phone No.	Dates Held

Agency or Department Name		Position Title
Address	Phone No.	Dates Held

PRIOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE (EXCLUDING GOVERNMENT OF GUAM)

Agency or Department Name		Position Title	
Address	Phone No.	Dates Held	

Agency or Department Name		Position Title	
Address	Phone No.	Dates Held	

TRAINING

INSTITUTE/SEMINARS/ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	DATE
U.S. Army Military Police School (Officer Basic Course/Captains Career Course)	1998, 2002
Intermediate Level Education/Command and General Staff College	2010-2011
National War College	2019-2020
U.S. Army Force Management School	2014

AWARDS

List all educational, professional, civic awards, and recognition for public service:
Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Award, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Citation, Humanitarian Service Award, National Defense Service Medal, NATO Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service and Expeditionary Medals, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Marechaussee Medal in Silver, Honorary Order of St. Martin's, U.S. Army Captains Career Course Leadership Award recipient

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

List involvement on a local/national/international level. List organizations, activities participated in, and offices held:
Member, Guam Society of America, 2023 to present Member, Veterans of Foreign Wars, 2024 to present Federal Asian Pacific American Council, 2023, 2023 conference attendee/panel member Member, Military Womens Memorial, Women in Military Service Member, Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Member, U.S. Army Military Police Regimental Association, 1998 to present

COMMUNITY / CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

List organizations, activities participated in, and offices held:
Catholic Charities, Various Activities/SHARE food network, Volunteer Capital Area Food Bank, Volunteer Fort Myer MWR/Army Ten Miler, Annual Army Ten Miler, multiple years, Volunteer Special Olympics Kansas, Special Olympics, Volunteer U.S. Army MWR, Youth Coach for Soccer at various U.S. Army Bases, Volunteer

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

List any published articles, papers delivered at professional meetings, etc.:

MILITARY SERVICE (Please attach Form DD-214)

BRANCH	DATES OF SERVICE	RANK AT DISCHARGE	TYPE OF DISCHARGE
US Army	May 1998 to May 2025	Colonel	Honorable

OTHER INFORMATION

(1) Have you ever been found guilty of a felony in any court, whether within or without the United States?

Yes No If so, please specify in detail: _____

Address of the Court: _____

Date(s) of Conviction: _____

Specific Infraction Committed: _____

(2) Have you ever been declared mentally incompetent by any court, whether within or without the United States?

Yes No If so, please specify in detail the reasons and facts related to such declaration:

(3) Have you ever been found not guilty or not punishable in any criminal proceedings by reason of insanity?

Yes No

(4) Have you ever been confined to a mental institution for any reason?

Yes No If so, please specify in why the appointing authority believes you that you are not suffering from any mental illness or affliction:

AFFIDAVIT / DECLARATION UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY

I, the undersigned, do hereby depose and say that: (1) I have read and reviewed the information contained in the attached Appointment/Nomination letter from the Governor of Guam; (2) that the matters contained in the Appointment/Nomination letter, together with all attachments thereto, are true and correct and that I am competent to testify to said matters; and (3) that this Declaration is made for the purpose of complying with the requirements of 4 G.C.A. Section 2103.5.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of Guam (4 G.C.A. Section 4308) that the foregoing is true and correct.

Karin L. Watson Digitally signed by Karin L. Watson
Date: 2025.11.12 02:23:53 -05'00'

Print Name and Signature

11/12/2025

Date



Superior Court of Guam

Guam Judicial Center • 120 West O'Brien Dr • Hagåtña, Gu. 96910
Tel: (671) 300-7993 • Fax: (671) 475-0078



HON. ALBERTO C. LAMORENA, III
PRESIDING JUDGE

JANICE M. CAMACHO-PEREZ, ESQ.
CLERK OF COURT

VALERIE D. TENORIO
CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK

Name: **KARIN LABELLA WATSON**

Military ID

DOB: [REDACTED]

CERTIFICATE OF SEARCH

The undersigned Clerk hereby certifies the following results of a diligent search of the records of this Court:

Criminal Cases:
No Cases Found

Civil Cases:

Request for further information may be addressed at the Records Division of the Superior Court of Guam, Guam Judicial Center, 120 West O'Brien Drive, Hagåtña, Guam. Hours of operation are Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed Saturdays, Sundays and local/federal holidays. **Court Clearances are Non-Refundable.**

Dated: 10/20/2025

Janice M. Camacho-Perez
Clerk of Court

By: Christa Marie T. De Leon

Prepared by: Christa Marie T
De Leon
Deputy Clerk I



The absence of an
Original Court Seal
Invalidates this
document. 2660718

The Judiciary of Guam is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Note that the Legislature has taken steps to ensure that any protected personal identifying information has been redacted or excluded in whole or in part in order to protect the privacy of any individual(s) whose information has been included as part of this transmittal.

Government of Guam

**GUAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
RECORDS & IDENTIFICATION SECTION**

P.O. Box 23909
Guam Main Facility, Guam 96921



October 21, 2025

SUBJECT: CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD

NAME:	Karin Labella WATSON		
DATE OF BIRTH:		FINGERPRINT#:	NONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The individual has no record of criminal conviction(s) in the Guam Police Department files that are subject to Guam law.		

*****NOTHING FOLLOWS*****

THIS INFORMATION MAY BE LIMITED TO A LOCAL CRIMINAL OFFENSE ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR USE FOR ANY LOCAL STATE, OR FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

By Direction: priscilla

STEPHEN C. IGNACIO
Chief of Police

The absence of an original GUAM POLICE seal invalidates this police clearance.
REVISED 04/26/19



First Notice of Public Hearing – Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

3 messages

Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Nov 20, 2025 at 10:10 AM

To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov

Bcc: "Speaker Frank Blas Jr." <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>, "vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov"

<vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov>, "office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov"

<office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, "senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov" <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>,

Jesse Lujan <senator.lujan@guamlegislature.gov>, "officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov"

<officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>, "senatortelot@gmail.com" <senatortelot@gmail.com>, Office of Senator

Borja <contact@senatorvinceborja.com>, Senator Vince Borja <vince.borja@guamlegislature.gov>,

"senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com" <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>, "malafunkshun@guamlegislature.gov"

<malafunkshun@guamlegislature.gov>, "senator.perez@guamlegislature.gov" <senator.perez@guamlegislature.gov>,

Senator Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, "senator.parkinson@guamlegislature.gov"

<senator.parkinson@guamlegislature.gov>, "senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com" <senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com>, Joann

Camacho <joann.camacho@guamlegislature.gov>, Guam Legislature Clerks <clerks@guamlegislature.gov>, Legislative

Counsel <legislativecounsel@guamlegislature.gov>, Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>, news@guampdn.com,

publisher@glimpsesofguam.com, publisher@pacificislandtimes.com, reporters@postguam.com, newsdirector@kuam.com,

reporters@kuam.com, Troy Torres <troy@kanditnews.com>, news@kanditnews.com, raygibsonradio@gmail.com,

context@pasquines.us, guamwebsites@gmail.com, managingeditor@glimpsesofguam.com, editor@glimpsesofguam.com,

reporter2@glimpsesofguam.com, kyle@power98.com, patti@thewave105.com, dice@power98.com, reese@power98.com,

marc@postguam.com, fparedes@edisonresearch.com, dick.sheffield@abc.com, ready@guamwebz.com,

thomas.manglona@marianaspress.com, local@bayareanewsgroup.com, local@bakersfield.com, runner@csub.edu,

jimk@ebpublishing.com, tritonscalluog@gmail.com, nestor@postguam.com

November 20, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: **All Senators, Stakeholders, Media**

From: **Senator Shawn Gumataotao**, Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

Subject: **First Notice of Public Hearing – Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.**

Buenas yan Håfa adai! Please be advised that the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard (Committee) will conduct a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**, in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building in *Hagåtña*. The agenda includes the following discussion item:

2:00 p.m. Confirmation Hearing

- The **Executive Appointment** of **Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)**, to serve as **The Adjutant General** of the Guam National Guard and **Director** of the Department of Military Affairs.

Watch Live

The Public Hearing will broadcast on local television, GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117 and stream online via *I Liheslaturan Guåhan's* live feed. A recording of the hearing will be available online via Guam Legislature Media on YouTube after the hearing.

How to Participate

If you are interested in participating in the Public Hearing to provide testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Shawn Gumataotao at (671) 647-1409/1411 or via email at office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov no later than Tuesday, December 2, 2025, for further guidance.

If written testimonies are to be presented at the Public Hearing, testimonies may be submitted before December 2, 2025, and they should be addressed to Senator Shawn Gumataotao, Chairman of the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard. Testimonies may be submitted via Senator Gumataotao's mailbox located at the Guam Congress Building in *Hagåtña* or via email to his office.


Special Accommodations

Individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids or services are asked to submit their request to Ms. Diana Topasna at the Office of Senator Shawn Gumataotao at (671) 647-1409/1411, 120 Father Duenas Avenue Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103, *Hagåtña*, Guam 96910, or via email at office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'!

--

Office of Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard
38th Guam Legislature
120 Father Duenas Avenue Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103, Hagåtña, Guam 96910
(671) 647-1409/1411

 **11.20.25 First Notice of 12.3.25 Public Hearing.pdf**
57K

Mail Delivery Subsystem <MAILER-DAEMON@server215.appriver.com>
To: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Thu, Nov 20, 2025 at 10:11 AM

Failed to deliver to 'fparedes@edisonresearch.com'
SMTP module(domain edisonresearch-com.mail.protection.outlook.com:25) reports:
host edisonresearch-com.mail.protection.outlook.com:25 says:
550 5.4.1 Recipient address rejected: Access denied. For more information see <https://aka.ms/EXOSmtpErrors>
[MN1PEPF0000ECD6.namprd02.prod.outlook.com 2025-11-20T00:11:13.974Z 08DE244A9D212EBB]

Original-Recipient: rfc822;<fparedes@edisonresearch.com>
Final-Recipient: rfc822;<fparedes@edisonresearch.com>
Action: failed
Status: 5.0.0
Remote-MTA: dns; edisonresearch-com.mail.protection.outlook.com:25
Diagnostic-Code: smtp;host edisonresearch-com.mail.protection.outlook.com:25 says:
550 5.4.1 Recipient address rejected: Access denied. For more information see <https://aka.ms/EXOSmtpErrors>
[MN1PEPF0000ECD6.namprd02.prod.outlook.com 2025-11-20T00:11:13.974Z 08DE244A9D212EBB]

 **noname**
6K

Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>
To: Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Nov 20, 2025 at 10:45 AM

Hafa Adai,

Posted on calendar.

[Quoted text hidden]



Edward S. Pocaigue, Jr.
Sergeant-at-Arms

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
Guam Congress Building, 1st Floor
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910



1-671-969-3514



sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov

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OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

November 20, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: **All Senators, Stakeholders, Media**

From: **Senator Shawn Gumataotao** 
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

Subject: **First Notice of Public Hearing – Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.**

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2:00 p.m. Confirmation Hearing

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First Notice of Public Hearing - December 3, 2025 - 2:00 pm

First Notice of Public Hearing - December 3, 2025 - 2:00 pm

PUBLIC HEARING

📅 **Posted on:** 11/20/2025 10:00 AM

👤 **Posted by:** Diana Topasna

📅 **Public Hearing Date:** 12/03/2025 02:00 PM

🏢 **Department(s):**
GUAM LEGISLATURE (/notices?department_id=92)

📁 **Division(s):**
OFFICE OF SENATOR SHAWN GUMATAOTAO (/notices?division_id=294)

🔍 **Notice Topic(s):** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?topic_id=74)

📋 **Types of Notice:** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?type_id=7)

👥 **For Audience(s):** PUBLIC (/notices?public=1)

➡ **Share this notice**

November 20, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: **All Senators, Stakeholders, Media**

From: **Senator Shawn Gumataotao**
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency
Management, and Guam National Guard

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2:00 p.m. Confirmation Hearing

The Executive Appointment
(https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Mess_Comms_38th/Doc.%20No.%2038GL-25-1503.pdf) of **Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)**, to serve as **The Adjutant General** of the Guam National Guard and **Director** of the Department of Military Affairs.

Watch Live

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Si Yu'os Ma'åse!



600 Harmon Loop Road Ste 102
 Dededo, GU 96929
 Tel: 671.637.5826
 Mobile: [REDACTED]



COMMUNICATIONS

To: I LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN
 38TH GUAM LEGISLATURE
 120 Father Duenas Avenue
 Hagåtña, Guam 96910

DATE 11/20/2025
INVOICE NO. 2720-00025-0000M

SENATOR S. GUMATAOTAO

Date(s)	Service Details	Amount
11/20/2025	<p>COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, AND GUAM NATIONAL GUARD Public Hearing: 12.3.25 1ST NOTICE: 11.20.25</p> <p>Please make check payable to: KUAM</p> <p>PAYMENT IS DUE UPON RECEIPT OF INVOICE. THANK YOU.</p>	\$ 100.00
		\$ 100.00

Please pay amount stated above.

Should you have any questions please contact: 671-687-8879 or 671-635-5836.



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Second Notice of Public Hearing – Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

3 messages

Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 9:00 AM

To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov

Bcc: "Speaker Frank Blas Jr." <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>, "vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov" <vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov>, "office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, "senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov" <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>, Jesse Lujan <senator.lujan@guamlegislature.gov>, "officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov" <officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>, "senatorlot@guamlegislature.gov" <senatorlot@guamlegislature.gov>, Office of Senator Borja <contact@senatorvinceborja.com>, Senator Vince Borja <vince.borja@guamlegislature.gov>, "senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com" <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>, "malafunkshun@guamlegislature.gov" <malafunkshun@guamlegislature.gov>, "senator.perez@guamlegislature.gov" <senator.perez@guamlegislature.gov>, Senator Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, "senator.parkinson@guamlegislature.gov" <senator.parkinson@guamlegislature.gov>, "senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com" <senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com>, Joann Camacho <joann.camacho@guamlegislature.gov>, Guam Legislature Clerks <clerks@guamlegislature.gov>, Legislative Counsel <legislativecounsel@guamlegislature.gov>, Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>, news@guampdn.com, publisher@glimpsesofiguam.com, publisher@pacificislandtimes.com, reporters@postguam.com, newsdirector@kuam.com, reporters@kuam.com, Troy Torres <troy@kanditnews.com>, news@kanditnews.com, raygibsonradio@gmail.com, context@pasquines.us, guamwebsites@gmail.com, managingeditor@glimpsesofiguam.com, editor@glimpsesofiguam.com, reporter2@glimpsesofiguam.com, kyle@power98.com, patti@thewave105.com, dice@power98.com, reese@power98.com, marc@postguam.com, dick.sheffield@abc.com, ready@guamwebz.com, thomas.manglona@marianaspress.com, local@bayareanewsgroup.com, local@bakersfield.com, runner@csu.edu, jimk@ebpublishing.com, tritonscalluog@gmail.com, nestor@postguam.com, Jenna Blas <jenna.g.blas@ghs.guam.gov>

December 1, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: **All Senators, Stakeholders, Media**

From: **Senator Shawn Gumataotao**, Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

Subject: **Second Notice of Public Hearing – Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.**

Buenas yan Håfa adai! Please be advised that the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard (Committee) will conduct a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**, in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building in *Hagåtña*. The agenda includes the following discussion item:

2:00 p.m. Confirmation Hearing

- The **Executive Appointment** of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as **The Adjutant General** of the Guam National Guard and **Director** of the Department of Military Affairs.

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--

Office of Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard
38th Guam Legislature
120 Father Duenas Avenue Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103, Hagåtña, Guam 96910
(671) 647-1409/1411

 **12.1.25 Second Notice of 12.3.25 Public Hearing.pdf**
48K

Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>
To: Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 9:04 AM

Hafa Adai,

Calendar updated.

[Quoted text hidden]

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To: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 9:38 AM



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Action: delayed

Status: 4.4.1

Diagnostic-Code: smtp; The recipient server did not accept our requests to connect. For more information, go to <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/7720> [kuam.com 208.91.197.27: timed out]

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Will-Retry-Until: Wed, 03 Dec 2025 15:00:56 -0800 (PST)

 **noname**
3K



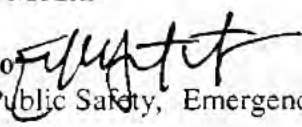
OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

December 1, 2025

MEMORANDUM

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From: **Senator Shawn Gumataotao** 
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

Subject: **Second Notice of Public Hearing – Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.**

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Second Notice of Public Hearing - Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Second Notice of Public Hearing - Wednesday, December 3, 2025

PUBLIC HEARING

 **Posted on:** 12/01/2025 09:00 AM

 **Posted by:** Diana Topasna

 **Public Hearing Date:** 12/03/2025 02:00 PM

 **Department(s):**
GUAM LEGISLATURE (/notices?department_id=92)

 **Division(s):**
OFFICE OF SENATOR SHAWN GUMATAOTAO (/notices?division_id=294)

 **Notice Topic(s):** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?topic_id=74)

 **Types of Notice:** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?type_id=7)

 **For Audience(s):** PUBLIC (/notices?public=1)

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December 1, 2025

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From: **Senator Shawn Gumataotao**
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency
Management, and Guam National Guard

Subject: **Second Notice of Public Hearing - Wednesday,
December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.**

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Si Yu'os Ma'åse'!



600 Harmon Loop Road Ste 102
 Dededo, GU 96929
 Tel: 671.637.5826
 Mobile: [REDACTED]

To: I LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN
 38TH GUAM LEGISLATURE
 120 Father Duenas Avenue
 Hagåtña, Guam 96910

DATE 11/25/2025
INVOICE NO. 2720-00026-0000M

SENATOR S. GUMATAOTAO

Date(s)	Service Details	Amount
11/25/2025	<p>COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, AND GUAM NATIONAL GUARD Public Hearing: 12.3.25 2ND NOTICE: 12.1.25</p> <p>Please make check payable to: KUAM</p> <p>PAYMENT IS DUE UPON RECEIPT OF INVOICE. THANK YOU.</p>	\$ 100.00
		\$ 100.00

Please pay amount stated above.

Should you have any questions please contact: 671-687-8879 or 671-635-5836.



OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

*Public Hearing (Confirmation Hearing) on the Executive Appointment
of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The
Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the
Department of Military Affairs.*

**Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Guam Congress Building, Public Hearing Room**

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Remarks
- III. Public Comment Section
- IV. Question – and – Answer Section
- V. Closing Remarks
- VI. Adjournment



Office of Senator

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO

Chairman

Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan • 38th Guam Legislature

PUBLIC HEARING

The Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.

Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.
Public Hearing Room, Guam Congress Building

SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION (IF ANY)	Please indicate with ✓		Contact Number	Email Address	Support	Oppose
		Written	Oral				
Roseanna Torres Yamashita				[REDACTED]		✓	
Steven Yamashita		X				✓	
① Mana LG			✓			✓	
② Ruth Fuentes			✓			✓	
③ VINCENT SANTANA			✓			✓	
Mark Scott	GUNCG					✓	
④ Perez Duane	GUNCG		✓			✓	



Office of Senator

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO

Chairman

Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan • 38th Guam Legislature

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NAME	AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION (IF ANY)	Please indicate with ✓		Contact Number	Email Address	Support	Oppose
		Written	Oral				
Isidro Orot						✓	
Matthew Orot						✓	
Chris Ineslita	GUNG					✓	
Scott Durvas II						✓	
⑥ Diron Cruz	GUNG (RET)					✓	
⑦ Pete Decupri							
Sulinda Fawcett							✓



Office of Senator

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO

Chairman

Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan • 38th Guam Legislature

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Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.
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NAME	AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION (IF ANY)	Please indicate with ✓		Contact Number	Email Address	Support	Oppose
		Written	Oral				
Manuel J. Duenas, Jr.	GUNG			[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	✓	
Rose Blend				[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Marlene Dumtanilla				[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	✓	
Genae Apuron				[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	✓	
Lawrence Alcaido (for Joseph Alcaido, GUNG (Ret.))		✓	✓	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	✓	
Emilyn Santos	GUNG			[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	✓	
Cyril Concepcion	GUNG / ACG-G			[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	✓	



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
63D READINESS DIVISION
230 RT JONES ROAD
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA 94043

August 25, 2025

Office of the Commanding General

The Honorable Frank F. Blas Jr.
Speaker, Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Buenas yan Hafa Adai Mr. Speaker,

It is with the highest degree of confidence that I recommend Colonel (COL) Karin Labella (Alba) Watson to serve as the Adjutant General for my native home, the beautiful island of Guam. COL Watson grew up on Guam and has had an almost 30 year distinguished career as an active duty Military Police officer in the U.S. Army.

Karin is uniquely qualified to lead the Guam Guard especially during this pivotal DoD expansion on island. Karin understands the cultural uniqueness but also understands how to navigate at the strategic level within the Army and other sister services. The TAG is not only the senior military leader for Guam but is also a key partner with the Governor's Office and the Guam Legislature in ensuring the defense of Guam, public safety, disaster response and community well-being.

COL Watson has a proven record in leading large organizations with complex missions and thrives in these positions and I have no doubt she will continue to excel in all aspects of this new role. Under Karin's leadership, she will enhance disaster preparedness and response working with multiple agencies, local and abroad, foreign and domestic. She will strengthen state and federal relationships with ease, while ensuring she supports the Soldiers, Civilian employees and families of those who serve in the Guam Guard.

As an island in the second island chain and in the theater of interest, Karin will ensure operational/regional competence, intellectual discipline, and cross-cultural fluency. She has the judgement required to represent the Governor's and legislature's interests intertwined amongst DoD's operational and strategic interests with integrity.

Karin is ready to operate in complex multinational environments. She will serve with distinction and will act with urgency to ensure efficient organizational process while building enduring security and advantages for Guam and her people. Si yu'us ma'ase.

Very Respectfully,

SMITH,TRACY.LEE.118 Digitally signed by
4849123 SMITH,TRACY.LEE.1184849123
Date: 2025.08.25 12:50:26 -0700

TRACY L. SMITH
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding



Guam Society of America, Inc.
1100 New Jersey Avenue SE, Suite 2187
Washington, DC 20003

November 5, 2025

Subject: Letter of Recommendation - Karin Watson's Confirmation as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard

38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Hafa A dai, Senators of the 38th Guam Legislature.

I am sending this letter of recommendation for Karin Watson's confirmation as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. I've known Karin personally for over three years and our history and background extends to the foundation of our leadership training in the University of Guam's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Program.

Karin's career in the United States Army spans 26 years and she has proven herself in company, field grade, and senior leadership positions in the U.S. Army. Her experience in command at all levels; especially in her position as the Garrison/Installation Commander of the U.S. Army Garrison in Fort Lee, Virginia during the COVID pandemic, is a testament to Karin's ability to manage, lead and take charge of soldiers and civilians at all levels of responsibility and challenges. Karin's active-duty career in the U.S. Army provides the foundation needed to serve as Guam's Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard. Her experience in combat deployments, domestic and international missions, is beyond reproach.

Her leadership will ensure that whatever mission comes before Guam's National Guard will be successful accomplished and fulfilled. As a career Army Officer with over 22 years on active duty – it is definitely a proud day as University of Guam ROTC alumnus to see Karin's abilities be recognized in her selection to lead the Guam National Guard. Her confirmation will be exactly what the Guam National Guardsmen deserve and need to continue their success in support of our island and our nation.

As the President of the Guam Society of America, Inc. in our nation's Capital and Guam's oldest Guam Club in the continental United States – I have seen Karin step forward and demonstrate the cultural traditions of our people at many of our events held throughout the year in Washington, D.C. She has great ties and networks that will benefit Guam's National Guard in her role as The Adjutant General. You will definitely be taking care of Guam's sons and daughters serving the Guard with her confirmation.

Un Dangkalu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase for taking the time to read this letter of recommendation and more importantly to confirm Karin in this position. Thank you for all that you do for our people and our island.

Senseramente,

Mike Blas
President, Guam Society of America, Inc.
president@guamsocietyinc.org / (202) 525-9021





Guam Society of America, Inc.
1100 New Jersey Avenue SE, Suite 2187
Washington, DC 20003
crm@guamsocietyinc.org

November 5, 2025

38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Dear Honorable Senators:

This letter is to highly recommend Army Colonel (Retired) Karin Watson for appointment as the Guam Army National Guard Adjutant General. I support my recommendation along two lines: (1) her distinguished career in the Regular Army and (2) her sense of service in a civic capacity.

As a retired Army major, I can share that less than 5% of Army officers achieve the rank of Colonel. This means that Colonel (Retired) Watson is in the top 95th percentile of her peer group, as evidenced by her selection from a centralized promotion board chaired by Army generals of all grades. Her selection alludes to her potential to perform at this rank, and the same board further selected her to attend the prestigious Army War College, a discriminate factor in being eligible for promotion to General Officer in the Army of the United States. This is no easy feat, and even the governor's confidence in her abilities underpinned her nomination.

As the former Treasurer of the Guam Society of America (GSA), Inc., a civic society organization whose mission is to "promote the culture and traditions of Guam, the native language of the indigenous people of Guam, and the welfare of Guam and its people," I can also attest to her *inafa'maolek* spirit all the way here in the nation's capital. I actually came to know Colonel (Retired) Watson not through her Army service but rather, her volunteer service with the GSA. As the nation's oldest Guam club which has beginnings in congressional law, we have a constant need for volunteers to sustain our mission in supporting Guam's sitting Representative to Congress. Colonel (Retired) Watson answered this call selflessly and with enthusiasm because of her love of our culture and people. She volunteered consistently without any expectation of recognition or compensation, something that the society needed at a time when there was a huge turnover in our volunteer base. This is at the heart of who she is -- a servant who answers the call when there is a need, and there is certainly a need now.

Once again, I am honored to provide my personal testimony and recommendation for Colonel (Retired) Watson. She is a patriot and daughter of Guam, and I can find no one else more fitting and capable of this tremendous responsibility.

Sincerely,

Anthony "Ton" Weilbacher
Former Treasurer

Visit the Guam Society of America at www.guamsocietyinc.org

November 6, 2025

John S. DeJesus

Dear Honorable Senators of the 38th Guam Legislature,

My name is John S. DeJesus, and it is my pleasure to highly and strongly recommend, for your confirmation and approval, for the appointment of Karin L. Watson, COL, U.S. Army, for the position of Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. I was born, raised and grew up on Guam, and I have known Karin for over 30 years now, and I can support my recommendation. We are both alumni of the University of Guam and had journeyed together through the Senior Army ROTC Commissioning Program. She consistently excelled throughout the journey all the way through Commissioning.

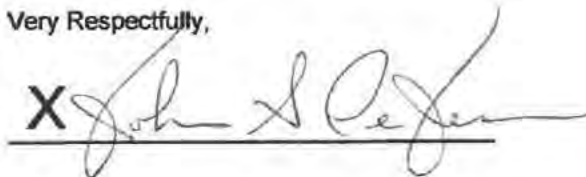
Upon Commissioning, Karin excelled and successfully upheld and served in a myriad of Command Level Positions from Company Commander to Brigade Level Commander, leading the U.S. Army Garrison at Fort Lee, VA. Karin was the commander that helped oversee the reception and integration of Afghans as part of Operation Afghan Welcome (OAW). Additionally, she successfully upheld and served in a multitude of Staff Level Positions all the way to serving as a Senior Staff Officer at The Pentagon. Karin possess the leadership attributes, skills and experience and is truly qualified to lead soldiers and airmen of the Guam Army and Air National Guard.

As a retired U.S. Army Major, I know that it is tough and challenging to achieve a Field Grade Rank and Grade. Only 5% of commissioned officers from our year group has been selected for promotion to the rank and grade of O-6/COL, and Karin was one of them. Therefore, it is evident that Karin has proven herself to the U.S. Army as worthy of high-level Command and Staff Positions. Furthermore, she was selected to attend the National War College at Fort McNair, DC which is a very prestigious institution and is very competitive to be selected. Her selection to command at the Brigade level is also noteworthy.

Karin cares not only for the welfare of Soldiers and their families, but also of her colleagues/friends and their families. As an example, when we were Captains at Fort Lewis, WA, I was in command of a company and had to deploy for OPERATION ENDURING and IRAQI FREEDOM. During that time, Karin consistently took time off her busy schedule and assisted my wife for whatever assistance she needed, while I was gone. She assisted us again when we moved to Fort Bragg, NC even though she herself was preparing for a deployment. She is truly a Leader that can be trusted and counted on. She will not disappoint. I am very humbled, honored and proud to recommend Karin L. Watson, COL, U.S. Army for appointment as Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. She is a daughter of our Island of Guam and a patriot of the United States of America. Thank you for your time in this very important matter.

Very Respectfully,

X



JOHN S. DEJESUS
Major, U.S. Army, Retired

November 7, 2025

38th Guam Legislature
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagatña, Guam
96910

Dear Members of the 38th Guam Legislature,

It is with great honor and pleasure that I provide Colonel (Retired) Karin Watson my highest of recommendations. I have known Karin personally for over 30 years; she is highly intelligent, articulate, and demonstrates exceptional leadership and interpersonal skills. She is a devoted wife and mother. Her loving children reflect the love, care and selfless devotion that she and her husband provide for their family.

Karin and I both served in Afghanistan. She dedicated her personal time to ensure fellow Guamanians deployed were cared for during special occasions, such as birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. I fondly remembered her generosity, always cooking during our "Spam Fried Rice Thursdays", improving morale during a demanding deployment.

I can state, without reservations, that Karin will selflessly and exceptionally serve our island of Guam as the National Guard Adjutant General with excellence. She brings a unique set of skills, training, education, and experience serving with distinction at all levels in leadership positions. She can confidently and competently work with local and national/strategic civilian and military leadership to bring Guam to the forefront in military readiness. She can build the National Guard's capability, capacity, and interoperability by coordinating and leveraging partners in other governmental agencies. She is a strategic leader who can bring Guam's National Guard to the highest of excellence in support of any emergency, contingency, and humanitarian assistance to serve her fellow Guamanians, the Governor, the U.S. Indo-Pacific area of operation, and our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fely O. Andrada', written over a horizontal line.

Fely O. Andrada
U.S. Army (Retired)
Dededu

**THE JOINT STAFF
WASHINGTON, DC**

November 7, 2025

38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Dear Honorable Senators,

I am honored to strongly recommend U.S. Army Colonel (Retired) Karin Alba Watson for appointment as the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. I have known Karin since 1993, when we were both students at the University of Guam and cadets in the UOG Army ROTC program. From the beginning, she stood out as a high-performing leader—an attribute she carried throughout her distinguished Army career. She has commanded at every level, from company to brigade, and especially her duty as Garrison Commander at Fort Lee, Virginia. Few leaders have faced the challenge of commanding a brigade-sized organization during the COVID-19 pandemic, and Karin did so with exceptional professionalism and deep care for the thousands of Soldiers and families under her charge and living on the installation.

I am a native of Guam, from the village of Santa Rita, “Familian Bulee.” My father is Francisco Cruz, a Vietnam veteran, retired from the U.S. Navy, and we returned to Guam in 1985 when I was in fifth grade. I completed my education on the island and was commissioned into the U.S. Army in 1997. I am currently serving my final active-duty assignment with the Joint Staff Directorate for Logistics and retire on December 1, 2025, after 28 years of service.

I can personally attest to Karin’s tireless work ethic, not only as a senior Army leader but also as a devoted mother. She has raised two outstanding children—JonChristopher, a West Point graduate and Army officer, and Alex, who is currently attending college in Virginia. Despite her demanding career, Karin has always made time for family. She is also the godmother to my two grandsons and has never missed a chance to support our family milestones, no matter the distance. Karin’s character is beyond reproach. As a mother, friend, and Army officer, she exemplifies integrity, empathy, and strength. Professionally, she is an expert in the Military Police branch and a respected senior leader. Her counsel was often sought by peers and subordinates alike for navigating complex leadership challenges. She combines strategic insight with exceptional interpersonal skills, and she consistently leads with humility and purpose.

Karin is exactly the kind of leader the Guam National Guard needs—principled, capable, and deeply committed to service. I have no doubt she will quickly earn the trust and respect of those she leads. When I learned of her nomination, I was thrilled. She is the right leader at the right time, and I am confident she will make a lasting, positive impact on our island.



FRANKIE J. CRUZ
COL, SC
JS J-45 OCSD Chief

07 NOVEMBER 2025

38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Dear Honorable Senators:

This letter is to highly recommend Army Colonel (Retired) Karin Watson for appointment as the Guam Army National Guard Adjutant General. I have known Colonel (Retired) Watson for over 35 years, as we first met during the start of our high school years at John F. Kennedy High School, and I can attest that she always has the best interests of our island in mind.

I have known Colonel (Retired) Watson before, during, and after her distinguished active-duty Army career, and throughout all those years she has always shown true passion and love for our island and our country. She is a distinguished officer who has the necessary skills and background to be appointed as the leader of our Guam Army National Guard.

As someone who has also spent time away from Guam after finishing school, I understand it could be a difficult choice to come back when there could be better opportunities elsewhere. Just like I made the choice to come home to try and do my small part to make the island better, Colonel (Retired) Watson has made that same choice now, even after retirement and turning down other possible opportunities elsewhere. She is a true patriot and daughter of Guam, and it is my humble honor to provide my support for her appointment. It is my hope that all of you will come to the same conclusion.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Eileen G. Flanagan

EILEEN G. FLANAGAN

Hawaiian Dredging Construction Company
eflanagan@hdcc.com
[REDACTED]

QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER

674 Harmon Loop Road, Suite 212
Dededo, Guam 96929

John W. Quinenc

08NOV2025

The Honorable Members of the 38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Watson, U.S. Army –
Nomination for the Guam National Guard Adjutant General.

Dear Senators,

It is with the utmost respect and confidence that I recommend Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Watson for consideration as the next Guam National Guard Adjutant General. Having served alongside and observed her distinguished career over many years, I can attest that she embodies the finest traditions of military leadership, public service, and personal integrity. She is, without question, the ideal leader to guide our Guam National Guard through the challenges of the future.

As someone who was raised in the village of Malesso', I commissioned through the University of Guam, served four years in the Army Reserve, and ultimately retired from the United States Army, I am proud to recommend Colonel (Retired) Watson with full appreciation of her dedication and service. Colonel (Retired) Watson displays the very attributes that have defined our paths—respect, perseverance, principled leadership, and an unwavering commitment to service. Her character and conduct exemplify the highest standards upheld both within our community and in military service.

A daughter of Guam, Colonel (Retired) Watson was raised in our communities and commissioned through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at the University of Guam where she first answered the call to serve her island and nation. Her deep roots in Guam have shaped her into the principled and compassionate leader she is today. She represents the best of our citizens—those who dedicate their lives to service and who never forget the values instilled by the families and communities that raised them.

From her commissioning as a young officer to her service in combat and her rise to senior leadership, Colonel (Retired) Watson has consistently demonstrated that leadership is not about position, but about purpose and people. Throughout her distinguished career, she has served at every echelon of the Army—from the tactical level to the Department of the Army—earning a reputation for excellence in both command and staff positions.

Of particular note, Colonel (Retired) Watson's joint qualifications and operational experience uniquely position her as the best-qualified candidate to lead our National Guard to greater levels of protection, readiness, and security. As the Plans Chief for the 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) deployed to Afghanistan, she developed and executed complex operational plans in demanding joint environments, ensuring mission success under austere

conditions, working with all the Army's three components and the Navy. Later, while serving on the Joint Staff as Division Chief, Detainee Operations under the Deputy Director for Special Operations and Detainee Affairs, she coordinated interagency policy, oversight, and operational integration at the highest levels of national defense. These experiences reflect her ability to lead across service lines, synchronize diverse elements of national power, and enhance security for both the nation and the island Territory she represents.

Colonel (Retired) Watson is also a graduate of the U.S. National War College, an accomplishment that not only underscores her strategic acumen but also represents the professional milestone prerequisite to general officer service. Her academic achievements complement her extensive field experience, equipping her with the strategic insight necessary to navigate complex organizational, interagency, territorial and interstate challenges. In every setting, she has proven her ability to combine vision with execution—qualities indispensable to the role of Adjutant General.

Beyond her impressive credentials, what truly distinguishes Colonel (Retired) Watson is her unwavering dedication to people. She is a caring officer, Soldier, and mother, whose leadership philosophy is grounded in empathy, accountability, and respect. She has mentored countless junior officers and NCOs, ensuring that the next generation of leaders is better prepared than the last. Her genuine concern for Soldiers and their families has created cohesive, mission-ready teams wherever she has served. She understands that readiness is not only measured in equipment or training but also in the well-being of those who serve.

Colonel (Retired) Watson's experience at the Department of the Army level has also given her a unique understanding of policy, resource management, and intergovernmental coordination—skills essential for an Adjutant General responsible for synchronizing Territory and federal missions. She possesses the balance of vision, discipline, and diplomacy required to advocate effectively for our Guam National Guard while strengthening its bond with the communities it serves.

In every respect, Colonel (Retired) Watson exemplifies the character, competence, and commitment that define true leadership. She has worn the uniform with distinction, and she continues to live by the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. Her selection as Adjutant General would not only recognize her lifetime of service but would ensure that our Territory's military forces are led by someone whose devotion to mission and people is beyond question.

Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Watson embodies the requisite experience, strategic judgment, and moral authority to serve with distinction as the next Adjutant General of The Guam National Guard. She is, quite simply, the leader our Soldiers deserve and the steward our Island needs.

I am honored to offer my strongest recommendation for this exceptional officer and leader.

Respectfully,

John W. Quinene
John W. Quinene
U.S. Army, Major
Retired
[REDACTED]



**DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY
HEADQUARTERS
8725 JOHN J. KINGMAN ROAD
FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA 22060-6221**

20 November 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR Honorable Senators of the Guam Legislature

SUBJECT: Letter of Recommendation for Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Watson

1. I am the current Director of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). DLA has a significant footprint in Guam and the surrounding area. It is with great pride that I highly recommend Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Watson as the Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard.
2. Colonel (Retired) Karin Watson served as my garrison commander when I commanded the Combined Arms and Support Command, Fort Lee, Virginia and was the senior commander of the installation. Shortly after I took command, Fort Lee was identified as the first installation to receive Afghans as part of then-Operation Allies Refuge and later Operation Allies Welcome. I recall distinctly Karin's calm demeanor as I informed of her the mission and our responsibilities for reception, staging, integration, and onward movement of our Afghan guests. Karin immediately brought her team together with external agencies and developed a plan which became the gold standard for this operation. Her leadership under pressure was simply exceptional! Karin was also responsible for collaborating with the Marines on Fort Lee to assist with the growing security mission and coordinating with Northern Command for additional security assets. Karin's tireless work ethic, sturdy demeanor, competence, and understanding of the strategic environment contributed to our Nation's success during a time of international turmoil.
3. I am confident that Karin will bring those characteristics and more to Guam and the surrounding area. I have no doubt that she will lead with the island's interests as a priority and will be committed to ensuring the success of the organization and the people for whom she serves. She repeatedly demonstrated throughout 26 years of service her ability to handle complex problems, collaborating with key stakeholders, and always taking care of Service Members, Civilians, and families.
4. Colonel (Retired) Karin Watson is ideally suited to lead the Guam National Guard. Her experience as a Military Police Officer has prepared her to face the island's challenges, from natural disasters to preparing for threats against the homeland. Karin will lead with integrity, competence, and an understanding of the local and regional culture. She is a proud daughter of Guam, and I am confident that Karin will excel in the role as the Adjutant General, Guam National Guard. I wholeheartedly endorse Karin.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark T. Simerly", is positioned above the typed name.

MARK T. SIMERLY
LTG, USA
DLA Director



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Colonel Karin Watson: Provide Testimony Adjutant of the Guam National Guard

1 message

Roger Deluna <roger@grgsa.com>

Fri, Nov 21, 2025 at 2:13 PM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Senator Gumataotao,
Hafa Adai.

Thank you for serving the People of Guam.

I am writing you this email in regards to Colonel Karin Watkins (retired), on being selected as the next appointed/permanent Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard, for the next 2 years.

I have known Karin since 1992, at the University of Guam ARMY ROTC program.

Karin was always focused, kind and a team player.

She served in the U.S. Army for 26 years on active duty (only a few ROTC cadets get selected to serve active duty).

She obtained the rank of Colonel, deployed several times and served in multiple command leadership positions.

She is a daughter of Guam and a product of the University of Guam Army ROTC Program.

She has lived in many places in the US Mainland but she chose to move back to Guam & work again.

That says a lot about her love, for the Island of Guam.

If your office did confirm Karin's appointment, as the permanent/appointed Adjutant of the Guam National Guard, the Guam NG will be led by a qualified, no nonsense, combat tested, yet caring leader.

The Guam NG will be in very good hands for the next 2 years and beyond.

"Proud to be From UOG"

Rogelio R. De Luna Jr. (Roger)

Lived in Latte Heights, Mangilao

Father Duenas graduate 1988

UOG ARMY ROTC graduate 1993

Retired Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (25yrs)

Realtor, Global Realty Group in San Antonio TX

President Lunar Homes LLC in San Antonio TX

roger@grgsa.com

[REDACTED]

--

Roger De Luna

Realtor, Global Realty Group LLC

[REDACTED]

roger@grgsa.com

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[Consumer Protection Notice](#)

November 21, 2025

38th Guam Legislature
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagatña, Guam
96910

Dear Members of the 38th Guam Legislature,

Hafa adai! It is with distinct pleasure that I endorse the nomination of Karin L. Watson (Alba) as the Adjutant General of Guam, a position that demands outstanding leadership for our island. I have the privilege of knowing and serving with Karin since 1993 as an ROTC cadet at the University of Guam. She is one of several hundred officers I have observed in my 30-year career on active duty as an Army officer. I can assure you that she ranks at the top. I am proud to call her my sister-in-arms and a fellow Guamanian.

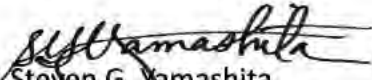
Karin, as a proud daughter of Guam, represented our island in service to our nation. She did this through superior performance, impeccable character, and through sharing our island culture at every opportunity. She remained engaged with Guam clubs and associations at every camp, post, or station she was assigned. Even while serving 26-years on active duty, she always had a burning desire to return to our island to continue to serve. This is her opportunity to serve her island home with the skillsets gained through years of proven leadership experience. Karin has a stellar reputation and is highly respected in the Military Police Corps Regiment, and in the organizations throughout the Army where she has served and made tremendous positive impact. I have no doubt she will lead the Guam National Guard with integrity, courage, compassion, and respect.

Karin is a leader who has effectively led large organizations to the highest state of readiness while increasing morale, accountability, discipline and efficiency. She commanded at the company, battalion, and brigade levels culminating as the Garrison Commander of Fort Greg-Adams (formerly Fort Lee), VA where she was responsible for over 63,000 servicemembers, civilians, and family members. She also served at enterprise-level organizations to include the Department of Defense, Joint Staff and at the Headquarters Department of the Army Staff where she worked on national-level problems. As a Military Police Officer, Karin is no stranger to contingency operations or emergency response operations. A highlight of her career is serving as the supported commander for Operation Allies Refuge/Allies Welcome at Fort Greg-Adams, VA where she was responsible for receiving, housing, and providing care for over 1,500 Afghan refugees as they awaited resettlement. Operations at Fort Greg-Adams were lauded as the "Gold Standard" by leaders across the State Department, Department of Homeland Security, and various non-governmental organizations.

Karin is a master problem-solver and team-builder, though perhaps her strongest characteristic is her exemplary leadership ability. She has the drive to succeed and consistently challenges herself and others, making the organization and all around her better. Leadership and team building come naturally to Karin. She thrives in the most challenging situations and only gets better as pressure increases. These strengths enable her to overcome any obstacle in order for the success of the mission. She is a thoughtful and charismatic leader who inspires trust in others, a proven Soldier and scholar who naturally grasps concepts over a diverse range of subjects.

I give my highest recommendation for Karin L. Watson (Alba) to lead and serve in positions of great responsibility on our island. Should you have questions or concerns about this extraordinary leader, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,


Steven G. Yamashita
Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)

24 November 2025

38th Guam Legislature
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Dear Honorable Senators,

I proudly and strongly recommend COL Karin Watson for the position of Adjutant General of the Guam Army National Guard. No one is better than this *Dededo Grel*.

I am U.S. Army Major (Retired) J.D. Guerrero Hooks from the Deso family of Dededo and the Nyarak family of Sumay and Santa Rita. My service consisted of staff and leadership positions in the Air Defense Artillery branch supporting joint and combined operations in the Pacific and Central Commands' area of operations. After retirement I served homeless Veterans in the Hawaiian Islands, Guam, and American Samoa for five years.

I am honored to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of COL (R) Karin Watson. Having known her for thirty years and collaborated directly with her for the first two. I have observed COL Watson's professional development and command presence grow stronger through the years from before she scored top of the 1997 University of Guam's Reserve Officers Training Corps Class while remaining a humble Guam girl to the present.

While I did not work with COL Watson directly after graduation, we maintained close communication throughout COL Watson's leadership milestones. This includes graduations from the United States Army (USA) Military Police basic and advanced courses; the USA Airborne School; the USA Command General and Staff College; the USA War College; and most importantly successful completion of Company, Battalion and Brigade Commands. COL Watson's tenure as a powerful leader of America's sons and daughters in combat proved exemplary when selected as the Brigade Garrison Commander of Fort Lee, VA.

COL Watson's strongest traits are her ability to maintain a rock-solid professional bearing while remaining focused under intense pressure in hostile environments; and most importantly, her deep appreciation for her life, education, and opportunities in Guam. Her passion to give back and serve the island is unrivalled.

Very respectfully,


JUNICE DAWN G. HOOKS
MAJ (R), USA

Major General (Ret) Donald J. Goldhorn



25 November 2025

RE: Testimony on behalf of Colonel Karin Watson
To: The thirty-eighth Guam Legislature

It gives me great pleasure to provide written testimony on behalf of Colonel Karin Watson in regard to her appointment as the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. Although I do not know Colonel Watson personally, her military record and accomplishments speak volumes as to her technical competence and leadership abilities in assuming the responsibilities of the Adjutant General. Of particular note is her command time and her duties within the Pentagon to include serving as the Executive Officer for the Provost Marshall General. A requirement of an Adjutant General is to engage at the highest levels within National Guard Bureau and the Pentagon to fulfill the needs of the organization to include adequate funding, resourcing of equipment, and training opportunities, to name a few. Her past experiences, as mentioned, will assuredly fulfill this requirement.

Colonel Watson's appointment should not only be based solely on her merit, but also on the needs of the Guam National Guard. Soldiers and Airmen need and deserve continuity in senior leadership. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to commend former Adjutant General Brigadier Michael Cruz for his exceptional service to our Guam National Guard. I am confident that Colonel Watson will continue in this tradition of excellence and insure that much-needed continuity.

In a recent phone conversation with Colonel Watson, I asked her why she wanted to become the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. She quickly replied, "I want to return to Guam and give back to the island." Her compassion to serve Soldiers, Airmen, their families, and the island were evident throughout our conversation. This is the officer that I recommend, without reservation, to be our next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald J. Goldhorn", written over a horizontal line.

Donald J. Goldhorn
Major General (Ret)
Former Adjutant General, Guam National Guard

Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

191 North First Street
San José, California 95113
(408) 882-2700

Chambers of
HON. JOHNNY CEPEDA GOGO, Judge



November 29, 2025

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for Colonel Karin Watson

Dear Senators of the 38th Guam Legislature:

Buenas yan Hafa Adai! I am writing in strong support of the appointment of Colonel Karin Watson as Adjutant General, Guam National Guard. I have spoken with other highly respected military and community leaders both on Guam and in Washington, D.C. regarding Colonel Watson who also strongly recommend her appointment.

As a Superior Court Judge, I am constantly reviewing the history and records of people that come before me; and, a review of Colonel Watson's history and record reveals, beyond a shadow of any doubt, that she is "Extremely Well Qualified" for Adjutant General. Colonel Watson's 26-year career in the Military Police Corps; master's degree in national security strategy from the National War College; deployments in Operation Bright Star, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom; and serving as executive officer to the provost marshal general at the Pentagon illustrates a distinguished record of service, experience and leadership.

Equally important, Colonel Watson also understands the customs and culture of Guam having grown up on the island and graduating from the University of Guam in 1998 via the Reserve Officer Training Corps. Guam is in her heart and returning home to serve underscores Colonel Watson's deep personal commitment to the island and its people.

In fact, Colonel Watson's own words — "It's a special honor for me to return home to Guam and continue my service to our beautiful island and her people. The Guam National Guard has a reputation for being the best, and I look forward to working with these incredible Citizen Soldiers, Airmen, and families."— demonstrate a genuine and personal mission that aligns with the core purpose of the Guam National Guard.

Based on her extreme qualifications, unwavering dedication to duty and exceptional professional competence, I strongly recommend her confirmation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johnny Cepeda Gogo".

Johnny Cepeda Gogo



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Letter of Support for Col. Karin Alba-Watson

1 message

nelson pascua [REDACTED]
To: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Sat, Nov 29, 2025 at 10:25 AM

Nelson Pascua
[REDACTED]

Subject: Letter of Support for Colonel Karin Alba-Watson

Hafa Adai Senator Gumataotao,

I am writing to wholeheartedly support Colonel Karin Alba-Watson for the position of Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

Having had the pleasure of knowing her for 35 years, as an alumnus of JFK High School and the University of Guam, I have had the privilege of observing and experiencing her outstanding leadership skills firsthand.

As her classmate and tennis teammate at JFK High School, I witnessed her exceptional competitiveness and remarkable ability to work collaboratively as a team player, demonstrating camaraderie both on and off the court.

I distinctly recall her active participation in the University of Guam's Charter Day celebrations, where she proudly represented with her ROTC cadets, showcasing her unwavering dedication to her military career, a trait that continues to define her to this day.

I am confident that Colonel Karin Alba-Watson will be a valuable asset and contributor to the Guam National Guard in her leadership position, and I strongly endorse her for this role.

If you need more information and insights, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nelson Pascua

November 29, 2025

The Honorable Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao and Members of the
Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management and Guam National Guard
Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103
120 Father Duenas Avenue, Hagana, Guam 96910
E-mail: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for Colonel Karin L. (Alba) Watson for the TAG GUAM

Dear Senator Gumataotao,

Si Yu'os Ma'ase for accepting this letter of recommendation for Colonel (COL) Karin (Alba) Watson. Guam is very fortunate to have a daughter of Guam & University of Guam graduate return home with the eagerness and willingness to lead and serve our Guam National Guard as its Adjutant General (TAG).

In my twenty-five years of military service between the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army, I have always known COL Watson to be qualified for every senior level position she was challenged with, in both garrison and wartime environments. She has proven credentials and experience in military education, leadership development, strategic management and COL Watson has deployed to Egypt, Iraq and Afghanistan. Her in-depth military experience includes Military Policing (at all levels), Garrison Commander (Ft. Gregg-Adams, formerly Ft. Lee), and various senior level Pentagon assignments. These are the criteria which qualifies her to serve as the TAG GUAM and I must also highlight that she is a successful graduate of the National War College. No military officer can be federally recognized, as a general officer, without first completing a Senior Service College.

Having completed her education on Guam, COL Watson is very familiar with natural disasters and how the Guam Guard must always be ready to work alongside Guam officials when responding to disaster recovery missions. Her experience, as a Garrison Commander in Virginia, helped foster strong military-civilian working relationships, that enabled local community leaders to better understand how to work and co-exist with the local military.

I close by emphasizing how important it is to confirm COL Watson as the next Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard. She has the leadership and experience necessary to lead the Soldiers & Airmen of the Guam National Guard and the civilians of the Department of Military Affairs during these very challenging and unpredictable times. This is especially important because of Guam's critical role as the pivotal point of the Department of War as it focuses on China, North Korea and the Asia-Pacific region.

Should any of the committee members need to contact me, I am available via my cell at [REDACTED] or through e-mail at [REDACTED]

Respectfully,



Dennis J. Santo Tomas, COLONEL U.S. ARMY (Retired)

[REDACTED]



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Public Hearing in Support of Karin Watson

1 message

Devon Blake <Devon.Blake@nextechsol.com>

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 9:54 AM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Dear Senator Gumataotao,

I hope this email finds you well. As reflected in the attached signed letter, I am writing to express my full support and endorsement of Karin Watson, whom I have known personally and professionally since 2009 when we deployed together to Afghanistan. From the earliest days of that deployment, Karin distinguished herself as a steady, principled, and mission-focused leader - someone who could be trusted in the most demanding environments and who consistently put her teammates, community, and mission above herself. Her character, judgment, and commitment to service have only deepened in the years since.

Today, I have the privilege of continuing to serve in critical national-security and community-support roles through NexTech Solutions (NTS). While our work spans the broader Indo-Pacific, Guam is one of our most important locations. NTS provides Guam's National Guard with resilient communications, deployable kits, and network capabilities that ultimately can support not only the military and emergency-response, but whole of government and community partners. Our focus is simple: ensure Guam has reliable, survivable, and ready-to-deploy communications via our technology - regardless of storms, typhoons, or regional disruptions.

We work closely with local partners, first responders, and federal stakeholders on Guam to strengthen the island's readiness and to support the community's ability to respond quickly and effectively during crises. It is work we take seriously, and it is work that people like Karin make possible through their leadership, integrity, and unwavering service mindset.

Karin embodies the best qualities of Guam's servant-leaders: disciplined, humble, community-oriented, and committed to building lasting, meaningful solutions for the people she represents. Having served beside her in uniform and watched her continued impact over the years, I can say without hesitation that she approaches every challenge with courage, empathy, and the ability to bring people together.

For these reasons, I offer my strongest endorsement of Karin Watson and respectfully encourage your consideration and support of her endeavors. I would be glad to speak further if it would be helpful. I can be reached via email at devon.blake@nextechsol.com or via phone at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and for your continued service to the people of Guam.

Respectfully,

Devon M. Blake
Colonel (Retired)
U.S. Army



Devon Blake | Chief Strategy Officer
NexTech Solutions

Phone: +1.571.895.6937

Email: devon.blake@nextechsol.com

Address: 6701 S. Dale Mabry Hwy, Tampa, FL 33611

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [X](#)



2025_12_01_Karin Watson Endorsement.pdf
1075K

TO:

Senator Shawn Gumataotao
36th Guam Legislature
Hagåtña, Guam
office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov
[REDACTED]

FROM:

Colonel (Retired) Devon Blake
Chief Strategy Officer
Nextech Solutions
devon.blake@nextechsolutions.com
[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Public Hearing in Support of Karin Watson

Dear Senator Gumataotao,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my full support and endorsement of Karin Watson, whom I have known personally and professionally since 2009 when we deployed together to Afghanistan. From the earliest days of that deployment, Karin distinguished herself as a steady, principled, and mission-focused leader - someone who could be trusted in the most demanding environments and who consistently put her teammates, community, and mission above herself. Her character, judgment, and commitment to service have only deepened in the years since.

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years, I can say without hesitation that she approaches every challenge with courage, empathy, and the ability to bring people together.

For these reasons, I offer my strongest endorsement of Karin Watson and respectfully encourage your consideration and support of her endeavors. I would be glad to speak further if it would be helpful. I can be reached via email at devon.blake@nextechsol.com or via phone at [REDACTED].

Thank you for your time and for your continued service to the people of Guam.

Respectfully,



Devon M. Blake
Colonel (Retired)
U.S. Army



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Letter of Endorsement for Colonel (retired) Karin A. Watson from CW5 Bernard L. Aguon - [UNCLASSIFIED]

2 messages

Aguon, Bernard Larry CW5 USARMY NG NGB ARNG (USA) <bernard.l.aguon.mil@army.mil> Sat, Dec 6, 2025 at 4:59 PM
To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>
Cc: "Karin Labella (Alba) Watson" [REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hafa Adai Senator Gumataotao!

Attached is my Letter of Endorsement for Colonel (Retired) Karin A. Watson.

Thank you for considering my endorsement of Colonel Watson.

Please give my very best to the Familia.

V/r,

Bernard



CW5 BERNARD L. AGUON

10TH COMMAND CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

111 S. GEORGE MASON DR.

ARLINGTON, VA 22204

OFFICE: 571-714-6003

MOBILE: [REDACTED]

MS TEAMS: 520-671-7513

bernard.l.aguon.mil@army.mil

UNCLASSIFIED

 **Guam TAG Endorsement.pdf**
171K

Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov> Tue, Dec 9, 2025 at 8:24 AM
To: "Aguon, Bernard Larry CW5 USARMY NG NGB ARNG (USA)" <bernard.l.aguon.mil@army.mil>
Cc: "Karin Labella (Alba) Watson" [REDACTED]

Hafa adai CW5 Aguon,

Our office confirms receipt of your email and attachment.

Si Yu'os ma'ase'!

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Office of Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard
38th Guam Legislature
120 Father Duenas Avenue Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103, Hagåtña, Guam 96910
(671) 647-1409/1411



NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

111 SOUTH GEORGE MASON DRIVE
ARLINGTON, VA 22204-1373

November 30, 2025

The Honorable Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
Senator, 38th Guam Legislature
120 Father Duenas Avenue
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Hafa Adai Senator Gumataotao and esteemed Members of the 38th Guam Legislature,

I am pleased to strongly endorse Colonel (Ret.) Karin A. Watson for confirmation as Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. As the 10th Army National Guard Command Chief Warrant Officer with over 36 years of military experience, I have seen the highest standards of character, integrity, and dedication in senior officers – qualities Colonel Watson possesses. Colonel Watson stands out for her ability to lead with empathy and strategic insight. Her exceptional leadership style not only highlights her character and dedication but also sets her apart as a leader truly capable of driving positive change in any organization.

Colonel Watson demonstrates strategic vision, operational expertise, and a strong commitment to service member welfare. She exemplifies senior military leadership through sound judgment, courage, and the ability to inspire excellence. As U.S. Army Garrison Commander at Fort Lee, Virginia, she led a community of over 92,000 military and civilian members and managed custody, control, and rehabilitation programs for up to 500 military inmates at all custody levels.

At Fort Lee, Colonel Watson managed an annual operational budget exceeding \$145 million. Her fiscal oversight optimized resources and improved efficiency. She identified cost-saving measures that funded upgrades to essential service facilities supporting Soldier welfare. In an era of evolving budget constraints, leaders with her innovation and financial stewardship are vital to organizational success.

As a Soldier from Guam, I am encouraged by the prospect of the Guam National Guard having an Adjutant General eligible for federal recognition at the rank of Brigadier General. Achieving this recognition requires exemplary leadership, strategic capability, and compliance with national defense standards. Colonel Watson's experience and record in operational readiness and resource management make her well-qualified. Federal recognition would improve Guam's military readiness. It would also provide better access to resources, training, and joint exercises with other military branches.

Federal recognition may also increase funding and support for the Guam National Guard. This could strengthen the Guard's effectiveness and morale. Under previous leadership lacking federal recognition, the Guard missed opportunities to secure resources and collaborate. In contrast, Colonel Watson's leadership paves the way for gains in these areas. Federal recognition is crucial to the organization and its members' future. This recognition will enhance service members' quality of life and operational capacity. It will offer improved facilities, better training, and increased support for military families. These advancements will also improve morale and ensure a well-supported National Guard for Guam.

Colonel Watson is recognized for her professional achievements and approachability. She is a mentor committed to an inclusive and effective culture within the armed services. She has led complex missions and earned trust and respect at all levels. I am confident in her vision, experience, and ethical foundation. I respectfully invite this committee to confirm her as Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. She will serve Guam and our Nation with honor.

Thank you for considering this endorsement. I am available to provide further insights or information as needed. Please feel free to contact me at bernard.l.aguon.mil@army.mil or [REDACTED], regarding Colonel Watson's qualifications or character. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

"Ready for Combat, This We'll Defend"

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernard L. Aguon". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left and a distinct "A" at the end.

Bernard L. Aguon
Chief Warrant Officer Five
Command Chief Warrant Officer,
Army National Guard

cc:
Colonel Karin A. Watson
Senators, 38th Guam Legislature

**Testimony of Mayor Jesse L.G. Alig
in support of the appointment of COL Karin L. Watson**

I offer my testimony in strong support of the appointment of Colonel Karin L. Watson as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

I write not only as the Mayor of Piti and President of the Mayors' Council of Guam, but also as someone who has known Karin since our high school days. Even then, she carried herself with a sense of purpose, discipline and compassion that set her apart. Over the years, her distinguished military career has only deepened the qualities we all recognized early on - integrity, leadership and a steady commitment to serving our island.

The Guam National Guard plays a vital role in our community, responding to emergencies, supporting federal missions, and protecting the welfare of our people both at home and abroad. The position of Adjutant General demands not only technical expertise and military readiness, but also the ability to work collaboratively with civilian leadership across Guam's municipalities.

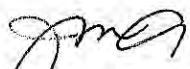
That is where I believe Karin is particularly well-suited. She understands that the strength of our Guard lies in its relationship with the community it serves. As mayors, we stand on the frontlines of village needs, especially during natural disasters, emergencies, and times of uncertainty. We rely on a strong, open partnership with the Adjutant General to ensure our people receive timely support, clear communication and coordinated response efforts.

I am confident that under her leadership, this partnership will not only continue, but it will also grow. Colonel Watson has always led with humility and approachability. She listens before she speaks, collaborates rather than commands, and brings a balanced vision that aligns military readiness with community resilience. These values are essential for the Guam National Guard's continued success and for maintaining meaningful dialogue with the Mayors' Council of Guam.

I fully trust in her capability to guide the Guard with honor, professionalism and foresight. Her appointment will strengthen the bridge between the Guard and the villages of our island, ensuring that our people remain safe, supported and prepared for the challenges ahead.

For these reasons, I offer my full support and respectfully urge this Legislature to confirm her appointment as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse' for your time and consideration!



JESSE L.G. ALIG

Mayor of Piti

President, Mayors' Council of Guam



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Public Testimony on the Appointment of Colonel Karin L. Watson

1 message

Roger G <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 7:26 AM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Senator Shawn Gumataotao
Chairman of the Committee on Public Safety,
Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

It is with great pride and admiration that I recognize (Ret.) Colonel Karin L. Watson for her outstanding achievement as the former Commander of the U.S. Army Garrison at Fort Lee, Virginia. Growing up on the island of Guam, Colonel Watson attended public schools where she built the foundation of her academic and leadership skills. Her early experiences in Guam shaped her values and determination, preparing her for the challenges of military service.

Her accomplishment is a testament to her unwavering dedication, exceptional leadership, and steadfast commitment to the values that define our Armed Forces. Rising through the ranks from her beginnings as a University of Guam ROTC cadet, she has consistently demonstrated resilience, professionalism, and an unyielding pursuit of excellence throughout her career.

Her appointment to this prestigious position—one attained by only a select few—reflects not only her personal accomplishments but also the strength of the ROTC program in developing leaders of character and competence. Colonel Watson's journey serves as an inspiration to Soldiers, cadets, and leaders across the force, reminding us that determination and integrity pave the way to success.

Sincerely,
Roger Gulac



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Letter of Support - Karin Alba Watson

3 messages

Gabriel Cruz [REDACTED]

Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 6:30 AM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Honorable Senator Gumataotao,

I'm writing in support of COL (Ret) Karin Alba-Watson's confirmation as the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. COL (Ret) Alba-Watson has the necessary military, leadership, and personal experience to be the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

I write this letter of support in my capacity as a son of Guam who has served in the Guam Army National Guard, commissioned from the University of Guam into the Regular Army, and has continued to serve in support of our great nation and island for the past 22 years. I also have a personal connection to COL (Ret) Alba-Watson as we are alumni of the University of Guam Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and are active members in the Guam Society of America.

From a military experience perspective, it is my belief that COL Alba-Watson has all the necessary credentials to serve as the senior military official. She has held multiple commands and is no stranger to burdens that come with a guidon. She has served at every echelon in the military, most recently at Pentagon.

From a leadership perspective, COL (Ret) Alba-Watson leads and mentors like no other. She maintains extremely close ties with the University of Guam and its ROTC program. She publicly spoke at the University to illustrate a pathway to success after college. She held multiple leadership professional development sessions with ROTC cadets throughout the years.

From a personal experience perspective, Karin is a daughter of Guam. She embodies the island culture and everything I know to be good about growing up on Guam. She understands the importance of family and community; she serves as a tether to the Guam for many of Guam's military sons and daughters serving in the United States and abroad by gathering us together at every opportunity.

In closing, please consider my unwavering support of COL (Ret) Watson as the next TAG. I know she will lead with distinction and work tirelessly for the Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilians who do the best to keep our island safe!

Best,

Gabriel Cruz
Son of Gabriel and Celerina Cruz of Dededo
FDMS Class of 1999
University of Guam 2007

Gabriel Cruz [REDACTED]

Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 6:36 AM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

[Quoted text hidden]

Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 10:00 AM

To: Gabriel Cruz [REDACTED]

Hafa adai Mr. Cruz,

This email is to confirm receipt of your testimony in support of Col. Karin L. Watson.

Si Yu'os ma'åse!

[Quoted text hidden]

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Office of Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard
38th Guam Legislature
120 Father Duenas Avenue Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103, Hagåtña, Guam 96910
(671) 647-1409/1411



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Letter of Testimony for Col. Karin Alba Watson

2 messages

Mary Lou SN Pangelinan [REDACTED] >
To: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 10:04 AM

Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
Capitol Plaza Building Suite 103
120 Father Duenas Avenue
Hagåtña, Guam 96910
Phone: (671) 647-1409/1411/1410/1412
email: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Re: Testimony for the new Appointed Adjutant General of The Guam National Guard, Col. Karin Alba Watson.

Dear Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao, Chairman of the **Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard**.

It is with great pleasure to strongly support the confirmation hearing for Col. Karin Alba Watson, for the new Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard.

I have known Karin Alba-Watson for 34 years. We graduated at the same high school that we attended at, John F. Kennedy High. Although I graduated a year before her. In High School, I was the Girls Drill Team Commander and the Group Commander for the AFJROTC.

I will be able to attest to the outstanding character, dedication and determination that Col. Karin Alba Watson presents. She has always conducted herself with the highest moral and ethical values. She has possesses all of the qualities and characteristics to be a great leader for the Guam National Guard.

I am truly honored & proud of her and all her accomplishments & achievements she's had while being in the Army and to continue to serve our island and our people.

Sincerely,

Mary Lou SN Pangelinan

Letter of Recommendation

December 1, 2025

Eloise G. Camacho


SUBJECT: Letter of Recommendation for retired U.S. Army Colonel Karin L. Watson

Hafa Adai,

My name is Eloise G. Camacho. I am a resident of Dededo and a small business owner living on Guam for the past 50 years. It is with great honor to write this recommendation letter for my good friend, retired U.S. Army Colonel, Karin L. Watson. Karin and I have known each other since John F. Kennedy High School. She was a freshman and I a senior in the ROTC program in the late 80's. She showed exemplary leadership skills in leadership trainings, proven to be one of the toughest female cadets in physical fitness training and competitions, and one of the most academically versatile freshmen I knew. She was well rounded, gifted. I had no doubt that one day she was going to be someone special.

She has proven me right. After joining the Army, she took on many important roles while climbing the ladder such as the Battalion Commander of the 705th Military Police and facility commander for the Midwest Joint Regional Correction Facility in Leavenworth Kansas. I am amazed at this as I can only imagine running a battalion while also being responsible for a facility with people who committed crimes. In addition to her deployment and combat experience, if this doesn't show how impressive she is, I don't know what else would. She was also Chief of Detainee Affairs Division of the Joint Staff J-37 Directorate of Special Operations and Counterterrorism to include the branch chief of the Deputy Chief of Staff G-8 Programs of the U.S. Army responsible for a huge portfolio. With the latter naming the few positions she held, I hope that this newly appointed position can be added to her belt for it will be the most meaningful because it's on our island of Guam. Karin is of Guam, knows Guam, and loves Guam. I have confidence that she will uphold all expectations as the newly appointed Adjutant General of Guam and that she will work hard to take care of our people and our island.

I wholeheartedly recommend Colonel Karin L. Watson for Guam's next adjutant general of the Guam National Guard.

Sincerely,


Eloise G. Camacho



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Colonel Karin L. Alba-Watson Appointment as Adjutant General

1 message

Fred Fuentes [REDACTED]

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 5:43 PM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Senator Gumataotao,

I would like to recommend Colonel Karin L. Alba-Watson for Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. I've known Karin for over twenty years, ever since I was a child through my mother, my grandparents, and my aunts. Following my graduation from Okkodo High School in 2020 and enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, Karin continued to offer guidance. She supported my educational pursuits during technical school and gave insightful advice as I began my career in military service.

Karin earned her degree from the University of Guam in 1998 and participated in Army ROTC during her studies. She later enlisted in the Army to further her career and pursued additional education to enhance her professional development.

During her military career, Karin earned respect for her effective leadership among peers and subordinates. She showed perseverance, integrity, and commitment to service. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Karin also displayed compassion and a keen sense of responsibility towards her community.

The appointment of Colonel Karin L. Alba-Watson as Adjutant General would be a significant development for the Guam National Guard. Her proven leadership and dedication will set a standard and motivate future leaders to strive for excellence in their roles.

Sincerely,
Fred V. Fuentes, SRA, USAF

Dear Senators,

I am happy to support retired Colonel Karin L. Alba-Watson as a candidate for Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

I have known Karin for about 40 years, from the days we were growing up together, through her time in school here in Guam, and all the way into her service in the U.S. Army. It has been amazing to see how much she has grown, both personally and professionally.

Karin has shown outstanding leadership and skills as a military police officer, reaching important milestones during her career. She attended public schools in Guam from middle school through college and graduated from the University of Guam in 1998. While serving in the Army, Karin pursued and advanced her education.

On the contrary, during her personal leave to visit her home in Guam, she shared cultural traditions with her family and taught her children the customs of daily life. Karin's ties to her heritage have given her a keen sense of identity and respect for Guam's values.

Throughout her term in the United States Army, Karin has received multiple achievements and commendations for her exceptional service. Her ability to lead diverse teams and adapts well to changing environments has earned her respect among both her peers and her subordinates. In addition, she provides mentorship to junior officers, encouraging the values of excellence and integrity within their professional responsibilities. Her progression from humble beginnings to a respected officer proves both resilience and integrity. Her dedication and leadership inspire those she worked with.

Furthermore, I am confident that appointing her as Adjutant General would strengthen the Guam National Guard and encourage future generations to pursue service and leadership values.

Respectfully,
Ruth Fuentes

Dear Senators,

My name is Fernando Fuentes, a proud resident of Dededo, Guam. I am writing to you today to express my heartfelt support for the appointment of Karin L. (Alba) Watson as the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

Karin is like a daughter to me and my late wife, Felicula Fuentes. She grew up in our home and was a significant part of our family. My eldest daughter, Rhoda, and Karin have been best friends since childhood, attending Finegayan Elementary School, Benavente Middle School, John F. Kennedy High School, and the University of Guam together. Karin's journey from humble beginnings to her current success is a testament to her inner strength and resilience. Raised by her grandfather, a man of great integrity who made many sacrifices for his grandchildren, Karin has never forgotten her roots. She comes home to Guam, maintaining her ties with family and friends. Her commitment to our island community is unwavering. Karin ensured that her children also spent time living in Guam to learn and appreciate their cultural heritage.

Karin's professional achievements in the Army are truly commendable. She has risen through the ranks and possesses all the qualifications we desire in a leader for our National Guard. In my opinion, she surpasses the qualifications of the recent Adjutant Generals. As a Military Police Officer, Karin has the expertise to assist our island during emergencies. It is crucial that political considerations do not obstruct her appointment. I am confident that Karin will serve our island with dedication and excellence.

Thank you for considering my endorsement.

Sincerely,
Fernando Fuentes
Retired Resident of Dededo

December 2, 2025

Honorable Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
Senator 38th Guam Legislature
Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard
Capitol Plaza Building Suite 103
120 Father Duenas Avenue
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Re: Executive Appointment of Colonel Karin L. Watson, U.S. Army (Ret.) – Favorable Testimony

Hafa adai Senator Gumataotao and Members of the Committee:

I am Roque Salas, U.S. Army (Ret.) former Battalion Commander or Professor of Military Science (PMS) for the University of Guam's Senior ROTC Program from 1995-1998. Colonel Karin (Alba) Watson was a SROTC cadet during this period and commissioned as a second lieutenant in the US Army Military Police Corps in May 1998.

I started to write this letter with vivid recollection of cadet Karin Alba, visibly exhausted, sitting on the ground, sipping water from her canteen during one of our field training exercises in preparation for Advanced Camp at Fort Lewis, WA. She and the rest of the MSIII cadets in the squad were in battle dress uniforms (BDU), combat boots, patrol caps, and their "ruck" that weighed approximately 25 pounds and assigned weapon M16A1 by their side. It was typical Guam weather, hot and humid at around 85 degrees F. The Bn SGM and senior training NCO, K. Leon Guerrero, had just gone through at least 3 strenuous training iterations in small unit infantry tactics which involved short but quick running spurts, low crawling through brush and grass, coupled with other physically challenging squad maneuvers necessary to execute a mission with near perfection. The training was tough and deliberate, designed to train for proficiency but also to wear down the cadets and identify which cadet will reach their limitations but also see who will push past them. I can recall most of my cadets' performance that final training day prior to their departure for 6 weeks of graded performance evaluations at the Advanced SROTC Training Camp. As a third-year cadet and SROTC scholarship recipient, cadet Alba did not falter. I knew then that she was ready to tackle and excel at the Advanced Camp- and that she did. Her look of extreme determination to finish her day of training, despite the heat and her exhaustion, was truly indicative of her true grit and intestinal fortitude. These two attributes, one of stamina and resilience in the face of failure and the other of courage and mental toughness inherently is Colonel Watson today. She is prepared and ready to take the helm armed with confidence, competence and experience after a very successful Army career.

She was assigned as a qualified parachutist in the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC, prepared to rapidly deploy with the 82nd and be in the mix as a battalion operations officer and executive officer. She was deeply involved in her support battalion's battle operations planning and execution in a challenging environment in order to sustain her unit's rapid deployment and combat readiness. Moreover, not only did she earn her Army parachutist wings or badge, she also challenged herself to earn the Chilean paratrooper jump wings and the German Armed Forces Efficiency Badge. These proficiency badges tested her level of physical fitness and

endurance and practical knowledge in various levels of soldier skills to qualify. The badges are worn as a visible symbol of the bearer's grit and enduring state of mind to be the best that they can be.

She is one tough soldier.

She earned her esteemed rank as colonel not because she was occasionally an outstanding performer but rather as a consistent performer within the band of observable and quantifiable excellence. Her performance entrusted her Army leaders to catapult her to positions of higher responsibilities and to progressively complex, difficult and sensitive assignments commensurate with her rank.

She has extensive experience in command and leadership, plans and future operations, mission analysis, knowledge of coordination for overseas unit deployments, interfacing with sister services and the functionality between military and civilian affairs, all noted in her military resume.

Colonel Watson was indeed qualified to be promoted to her next higher rank as brigadier general (BG) while in the active Army having completed all prerequisite schools and operational assignments at all required levels. She was assigned to high level departments in the Pentagon with the trust and confidence of the Military Police Corps and the Army based on her outstanding performances and the potential to excel.

Colonel Watson is a strong well-rounded, well-educated officer with solid leadership credentials. Her military experience has demonstrated she will accept and tackle all challenges head-on with positive end results. Once confirmed, there is no doubt she will be a great leader and commander as The Adjutant General (TAG), Guam. She definitely will make our island very proud.

I respectfully recommend that Colonel Karin L. Watson be confirmed as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of Military Affairs.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase,

//S//

MAJ Roque T. Salas (Ret.)
US Army, AD

██████████ (cell)

2 December 2025

To: Senator Shaw Gumataotao, office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Subject: Letter of Endorsement for Karin Watson

Dear Honorable Gumataotao:

My name is Thelma Flores, and I have known Mrs. Watson for the past three years, both during her tenure as the Executive Officer and in my current capacity as the Executive Assistant to the Provost Marshal General at Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Provost Marshal General (OPMG), at the Pentagon, Washington, DC.

I can personally attest to her exceptional talent as an officer and leader. Karin distinguished herself through her ability to remain calm under pressure, unwavering professionalism, and independent approach, not only in supporting a wide variety of law enforcement operations but also in her critical role as the Provost Marshal General's right-hand advisor. She demonstrated a strong commitment to mission accomplishment complemented by superb interpersonal skills. I have personally witnessed Karin earn the deep respect of both peers and senior officers. Our Provost Marshal General, her colleagues, and subordinates consistently sought her guidance, mentorship, and expertise, placing complete trust in her judgment.

Karin possesses all necessary requirements and the qualities necessary to excel in this Military Affairs position. She displays the intellect, professional competence, and superior attributes you seek in leadership. Her drive, passion for learning, and critical thinking skills will enable her to succeed in leading any type of role now and in the future.

Beyond our professional relationship, our friendship is something I hold dear. On a personal level, Karin consistently demonstrates genuine compassion and a direct honest approach to friendship. She is thoughtful and possesses a remarkable instinct for identifying and responding to the needs of others. Her empathy is deeply felt, and her humanity is a true gift. She is the type of person who fights for people, and when injustice occurs, she advocates fiercely for what is right.

I offer my strongest endorsement of Karin Watson for selection into her Military Affairs position. I am confident that she will make an immediate and lasting positive impact.

Respectfully,



Thelma Flores
400 15th Street South
Arlington, VA 22202
[REDACTED] (mobile) / (703) 695-4036 (office)



HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
300 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20310

FOR Senator Shawn Gumataotao

02 December 2025

SUBJECT: Letter of Endorsement

I am honored to offer my strongest support for COL(R) Karin Alba Watson's selection as the next Guam National Guard Adjutant General. She is a seasoned leader with over 25 years of active-duty service. She has built an incredible reputation and consistently delivered results founded on her competence, commitment and character. There is no reservation that Karin will invest all she has to ensuring Guam and her people have the best trained and equipped Soldiers ready when called.

Karin has always been a strong advocate for the Guam National Guard encouraging Active-duty Soldiers (officers and enlisted) to reach out to our Guam guardsmen whenever deployed. When we're in mixed company with Army colleagues, her pride in our island, its culture, and its history always takes center stage in our chats.

Karin exemplifies the quality, resiliency, and capacity we need in an Adjutant General leading the Guam Guard. Her emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and team building skills make her a prime candidate. Her performance throughout multiple missions is a testament of her leadership acumen. I am confident that she will bring the same level of excellence, discipline, and initiative while leading the Guam National Guard and be a steward of Guam's resources and she will unquestionably be an asset.

Karin's confidence and problem-solving skills is indicative of her leadership and intellectual acumen. It is for this reason that I have no doubt that those same traits make him a prime candidate to excel if selected with the honor of being the Adjutant General of one of the Army's most prized National Guard.

Please feel free to contact me at gina.d.sannicolas.mil@army.mil or at [REDACTED] if you require further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina", is written over the typed name "GINA D. SANNICOLAS".

GINA D. SANNICOLAS
Strategic Initiatives Chief to the Under Secretary of the Army

December 2, 2025

Honorable Shawn Gumataotao
38th Guam Legislature
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagatna, Guam 96910

Dear Senator Gumataotao and the 38th Guam Legislature,

Buenas yan Hafa Adai. My name is Nick Legaspi and I am a Retired Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army, having served 30 years as both an enlisted Soldier and commissioned Officer. I was born on Guam and raised in the village of Hagat. I graduated from the University of Guam and received my Army commission from the UOG Senior Army ROTC Program. I have served on Active Duty, the Army Reserves, and the Guam Army National Guard and deployed to Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan. I have worked with many great leaders at all the different levels throughout my career.

I fully support the nomination of Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Alba-Watson for the position of the Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard/Director of Military Affairs. I have full confidence in her ability to lead this great organization and all its Soldiers, Airmen, and civilians. Karin is also a graduate of the UOG Senior Army ROTC program and has proven herself as a great leader serving on Active Duty as a Military Police officer at all levels during her 26-year career. She is also a daughter of Guam and knows about our culture and our traditions, which will be key to her success.

We've known Karin for many years and met when she was a Battalion Commander at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. We also share many similarities in life with regards to family and the military. My wife is currently service in the Guam Army National Guard, our two daughters are serving in the Guam Air National Guard, and our son is in the Individual Ready Reserves, while attending school. Karin's husband is a retired Army Officer who graduated from West Point and their son who also graduated from West Point is currently serving on Active Duty, and their daughter is currently attending college. We both fully understands the importance of taking care of families, so that the servicemembers can focus on completing their assigned missions without having to worry about their families.

Karin will bring a wealth of experience working with different branches of services, Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, state/local agencies, and Federal agencies as well. Her success as the Installation Commander of the former Fort Lee, Virginia, now Fort Gregg Adams proves her character and work ethics to be above the best. Her leadership skills were effective in taking care of over 60,000 servicemembers, civilians and all their families. During an Army Officer's career, there are many

requirements that we need to complete as we progress in rank. One very important requirement is called Professional Military Education (PME) which is needed for promotion to the next higher rank. Karin has completed all the necessary PME such as the US Army War College. This qualifies her to be promoted to the next higher rank of Brigadier General/O7, which will eventually result in her Federal Recognition as a General Officer.

Again, it is with great honor and pride to support the nomination of Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Alba-Watson as the Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard/Director of Military Affairs. We have full confidence in her abilities to lead this great organization. "Proud to Be, UOG!!" If you have any further question/concerns or concerns about this nomination, I may be contacted at

████████████████████ or ████████████████████

Very Respectfully,

Nicanor A. Legaspi

Nicanor A. Legaspi
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (Retired)



Testimony of Support for COL Karin Watson

1 message

Rachel Taumomoa [REDACTED]
To: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 12:54 PM

Dear Senator Shawn Gumataotao, Chairman of the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management and Guam National Guard,

My name is Rachel Taumomoa. My mother was one of the many soldiers that served in the 705th Military Battalion/Joint Mid-West Regional Correctional Facility, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I've always been proud to call myself an "Army Brat." It is no secret that coming from a single parent household is not easy, harder still when that parent is a service member. To provide me stability during my formative years, I spent the first half of my mother's career with my Nana and Tata here in Hagat. The first time my mother would be stationed in the Continental US would be the first time I got a taste of military life when I joined her and my younger brother in Leavenworth, Kansas. This would also be the first time I experienced first hand just what a difference good leaders would make to the morale and welfare of those they lead and to their families as well.

I lost my beloved Nana when my mother was part of the 705th Military Police Battalion the same year I was set to graduate from high school. In less than 48 hours of finding out she had passed, our little family was on their way home to Guam. Things like that do not happen so quickly in the Army unless the commanders smooth the way for them. Four months later, I would graduate without my Nana there, but there in the stands was, at the time, LTC Karin Watson, with the rest of the islanders in Fort Leavenworth with leis for me and the rest of the Army brats graduating that year. Three months later, my mother would find out she had cervical cancer and once again, our family would be supported physically, emotionally, and spiritually through this trying time by our 705th family.

I have learned that no family makes it through the unique difficulties of life in the service without support from every level of leadership in the units that your parent or parents belong to. Units, sections, and teams end up being family through the example of leadership — the type of leadership COL Watson will provide. Morale starts at the top and makes its way down the ranks.

It is always exciting when someone returns home to the island. I am sure COL Watson will bring the same supportive and dynamic leadership to the Guam National Guard as she did the 705th Military Police Battalion. I am equally certain that under her leadership, she will provide the same level of concern and care to the families entrusted to her command.

Respectfully,

Rachel C. Taumomoa



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Virtual introduction

Alethea Cruz <acruz@allnativegroup.com>

Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 1:34 AM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Cc: "gabriel.j.cruz.mil@mail.mil" <gabriel.j.cruz.mil@mail.mil>

Hi Shawn!

Thanks again for meeting with me and my friend Keone in September. I wanted to do a virtual introduction with you and my ex-husband Gabriel Cruz (CCd, from Dededo). He will be heading to Guam next week to support JTF Micronesia.

Additionally, I wanted to send my support of Karin Watson as the new Adjutant General. Her years of active duty service will serve the readiness of the Guam Guard, especially as tensions in the region escalate. She has the connections to support Guam's interests as a daughter of Guam, as well as a well-respected officer in the US Army. Gabe and I discussed her nomination over Thanksgiving, and he suggested that I reach out to you to show my support.

I look forward to seeing you the next time in Guam. Hopefully we can grab lunch next time (if your schedule allows)!

Thanks for everything!

All the best,

Alethea Cruz

Program Manager

All Native Synergies

Office: 202-261-8635

Cell: [REDACTED]

Clint Castro



To the Honorable Select Committee:

I am writing in support of Karin Alba Watson, Retired Colonel, United States Army, as the next Guam National Guard, Adjutant General (TAG). As a proud CHamoru, son of Guam, and former member of both the Guam Army National Guard and United States Army, it is my duty to acknowledge Karin's strong leadership and her willingness to unite our community and armed forces together to accomplish Guam's dual mission "protecting communities at home and supporting the nation when called upon."

Born and raised on Guam, I come from a family enriched with our culture of respect, dignity, and humility. I learned the characteristics that shape our CHamoru culture of who we are today and that is to treat others with respect and to treat others how we wanted to be treated in return. I grew up knowing that family is everything from generation after generation. I learned that when the "going gets tough, the tough gets going" and that we rise up to the occasion and support one another to overcome challenges and roadblocks that stand in our way. I understood that with limited resources available to us during hard times because of power and water outages we find alternatives and solutions to be resourceful to get us through day by day.

I share some of my traditional upbringings because living on the southern part of Guam (Talofofo) it is not that lap of luxury and the life style of the rich and famous that drives us to thrive and to do the best we can with what we have in front of us to accomplish the mission to survive and to get the job done. I was just someone looking for solutions, and together with my family, we sought how to find a means to an end to the difficult times that we were often were confronted during inclement weather and natural disasters. These difficult times were temporary and that they would improve over time. To recognized temporary challenges and having a positive attitude, these traits instilled in me by my parents, grandparents, and immediate family members.

Why do I share my upbringings when supporting Karin Alba Watson?

The connection I am demonstrating and explaining with my upbringings mentioned above to that of Karin Alba Watson is that Karin shares the CHamoru vision, mission, and values. Karin is CHamoru and as mentioned above demonstrates the CHamoru culture instilled in her dedicating her time and efforts to our beautiful island, which she has never forgotten given her post military career.

I have known Karin for 20 plus years as I've served both my beautiful island as an Army Guardsman, and our countries most lethal organization in the world the "United States Army". Karin's characteristics are akin to that of my CHamoru elders, family members, and parents. She thrives to appreciate how family is important and how our men and

women in the armed forces are imperative towards their well-being, culture, and work ethic and to unify both Guam Army National Guard and Guam Air National Guard together that make up the Guam National Guard to accomplish the mission at hand.

Karin Alba Watson is a workhorse and will not stop working for our Guam National Guard, which includes our neighboring residents Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Please consider Karin Alba Watson, Retired Colonel, United States Army, for the position of The Adjutant General. I am in support with her appointment, and I know that she will be successful with the many accolades she brings to the table. I need not to regurgitate her accomplishments as they have been made know for your review and consideration for her upcoming appointment.

Si Yu'os Ma'ase (Thank you)

Clint Castro

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Wayne Leon Guerrero Blas, and I am a U.S. Army Retired Lieutenant Colonel. I was born and raised in Guam and currently live stateside in Elizabethtown, Kentucky with my family (spouse Lisa, and kids Soleia, Revere and Braven). I own and operate a health and nutrition business with my wife in Elizabethtown.

Growing up in Guam I lived in the villages of Tamuning and Ordot, where my parents have deep roots in and still reside. I graduated from John F. Kennedy High School, as well as from the University of Guam. I became an Army Officer after graduating and getting commissioned from UOG Army Reserve Officer Training Corps in 2001.

I first met Karin Alba-Watson many years ago while attending the Army ROTC at UOG. We served together in many Army installations to include Fort Bragg, NC and Fort Leavenworth, KS. Karin consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and served as a mentor to countless number of cadets and soldiers. She was always willing to share her knowledge, guide her peers, and inspire those around her to strive for excellence. Her leadership fostered strong teamwork and camaraderie throughout her military career.

Given her exemplary leadership, unwavering dedication, and deep connection to our island and its people, I am confident that Karin would be an outstanding choice to serve as the next Adjutant General of Guam. Her proven track record makes her uniquely qualified to lead and inspire our National Guard with distinction and integrity. I am confident that Karin will continue to bring positive change wherever she goes.

If you require any further information, please feel free to reach out to me at wayneblas@usa.net or [REDACTED] Thank you for considering my recommendation for Karin Alba-Watson.

Sincerely and Si Yu'os Ma'ase' ,

Wayne Blas

U.S Army Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Letter of Support- COL (Ret) Karin Watson

1 message

LW [REDACTED]
To: office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov

Wed, Dec 3, 2025 at 3:09 AM

LovieAnn WarnerPalacios

Fort Knox US Army Employee Assistance Professional & Risk Reduction Program Coordinator

94 Pershing Drive, Bldg. 1224, Fort Knox, KY 40121

2 December 2025

Senator Shawn Gumataotao, Chairman of the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

Hafa Adai Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to provide information and perspective regarding COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson, who is under consideration for the role of Adjutant General of Guam. My purpose in sharing this letter is to outline the professional qualities and experience I have personally observed during her career.

I've known COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson since she was a cadet at the University of Guam. I've had the privilege and honor to watch her make our island proud through her distinguished career of service, integrity, and commitment. She has served in many key leadership positions including garrison commander at what is now Fort Gregg-Adams (formerly Fort Lee, Virginia), division chief of Detainee Affairs on the Joint Staff J-37 Directorate of Special Operations & Counterterrorism at the Pentagon, facility commander at the Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas), and executive officer to the Provost Marshal General at the Pentagon.

In every role, COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson remained professional with steadfast leadership and integrity. As the Garrison Commander during the COVID pandemic, she courageously made unprecedented decisions to ensure the community's safety and mitigate inherent risks. I'm confident that, if confirmed, COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson will serve the Guam National Guard, our national defense, and the broader defense community with the same leadership values.

Throughout her service, COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson has demonstrated exemplary leadership, professionalism, and a deep dedication to the welfare of Service Members and their Families. Her proven ability to lead with steadiness, vision, and respect has earned the confidence of colleagues, subordinates, and community partners alike.

As Guam continues to play a vital strategic role in regional security, the steady guidance of a leader like COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson, who understands both the operational demands of the mission and the human needs of our Service Members is essential. COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson understands both our island needs and military strategic requirements. COL (Ret) Karin Alba brings the experience, character, and commitment needed to uphold the highest standards of the office of Adjutant General.

I am confident that under COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson's leadership, the Guam National Guard will continue to excel in readiness, resiliency, and service to our island and broader defense community. With your support, I look forward to seeing the positive impact COL (Ret) Karin Alba Watson will make in this role.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase,

LovieAnn



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Letter of Support for Colonel Karin Alba Watson

1 message

Ain Fitzpatrick <[REDACTED]>

Wed, Dec 3, 2025 at 12:16 PM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honored to write in strong support of Colonel Karin L. Watson's confirmation. Her distinguished 26-year career in the United States Army exemplifies leadership, integrity, and unwavering dedication to service. Colonel Watson's record of accomplishments demonstrates her readiness to excel in any role entrusted to her.

Colonel Watson hails from Guam and earned her commission through ROTC after graduating from the University of Guam with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She has since completed advanced military education, including the Military Police Officer Basic and Captains Career Courses, Command and General Staff College, and the National War College, where she earned a Master of Science in National Security Strategy with a concentration in Cybersecurity Leadership. She also holds a Master of Arts in Management and Leadership from Webster University.

Her **key leadership assignments** include:

- **Instructor for Military Police Lieutenants**, training both Army and Marine officers.
- **Dual-hatted as Battalion Commander and Warden** at the Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.
- **Garrison Commander at Fort Lee, Virginia**, where she oversaw critical missions, including supporting Afghan evacuees during the fall of Bagram.
- **Executive Officer to the Provost Marshal General** at the Pentagon.
- Previous roles as Platoon Leader, Battalion Executive Officer, Chief of Plans and Future Operations, and Division Chief for Detainee Affairs on the Joint Staff.

Colonel Watson is **combat-tested**, having deployed in support of **Operation Bright Star, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom** in Egypt, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Her operational experience reflects resilience and strategic acumen in complex environments.

Her **decorations and awards** include the **Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal**, multiple Meritorious Service Medals, and foreign badges such as the **Chilean Paratrooper Badge** and **German Armed Forces Efficiency Badge (Silver)**.

Beyond her military service, Colonel Watson has made a lasting impact on her community. She has **coached youth soccer**, volunteered at **food banks**, and supported **Catholic Charities events**, embodying the values of service and compassion that strengthen both our military and civilian communities.

Colonel Watson's career reflects exceptional leadership, operational expertise, and a deep commitment to service. I strongly endorse her confirmation and am confident she will continue to serve our nation with distinction.

Thank you for considering this recommendation. Please feel free to contact me for any additional information.

Respectfully,

Ain A. Fitzpatrick (she/her)

pronounced: Ay-n Fits-pat-rik

Accounting Specialist

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Testimony for Retired Colonel Karin Watson

A Reflection on Service, Dedication, and Leadership

Good afternoon, Senator Gumataotao and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about the exemplary career and character of retired Colonel Karin Watson.

It is a privilege to speak about Colonel Watson because through her service in the U.S. Army, she has demonstrated her unwavering commitment to our nation. I had the honor to participate in her retirement ceremony, and I am grateful to see the impact she has made throughout her career. In my remarks at Colonel Watson's retirement ceremony, I commented that we have a few things in common. Today, I will share with you some of the things we have in common to reinforce to you that I know some of the challenges that Colonel Watson endured.

The first thing we have in common is that we both received our commission and bachelor's degree from the University of Guam, but I was 10 years ahead of her. And here we are today, the year 2025, I was appointed as the Adjutant General in the year 2015.

My connection with Colonel Watson started almost 30 years ago. The University of Guam has U.S. Army personnel on active duty running the Army ROTC Program. I was assigned to the University of Guam ROTC program in the latter part of last century as the Assistant Professor of Military Science when I met **Cadet Karin Alba**.

Colonel Karin Watson's military journey began as a cadet in the University of Guam ROTC program. Her dedication as a full-time student and a cadet was evident from the start, and she quickly distinguished herself as a leader among her peers. The Triton Warrior Battalion at the University of Guam is run by the cadets under the guidance of the army cadre. Cadet Alba was always successful in her assigned duties in the Triton Warrior Battalion. In 1998, she was awarded a bachelor's degree in psychology and simultaneously fulfilled U.S. Army commissioning requirements, earning her commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Military Police Corps, setting the stage for a distinguished military career.

Starting her commissioned officer career in Army Military Police Corps is one of the things Karin and I have in common. We both commanded Military Police Companies. Military Police Officers are known for their integrity, discipline, and leadership skills. They possess a strong sense of responsibility, attention to detail, and the ability to make quick, sound decisions under pressure. Military Police Officers' commitment to upholding military law and protecting both personnel and property is matched by maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism.

In one of her challenging assignments, Colonel Watson was a Battalion Commander for the 705th Military Police Battalion, and as she was commanding the Battalion, she was also doing the job as a warden for the Joint Regional Correctional Facility in Fort Leavenworth. The Joint Regional Correctional Facility at Fort Leavenworth is a military prison operated by the United States Army. The prison is designed to hold military prisoners from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. It is responsible for the confinement, rehabilitation, and reintegration of service members who have been convicted of offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

As the warden, Karin oversaw operations including staff management, inmate welfare, security protocols, and rehabilitation programs. This role requires strong leadership, attention to detail, and a commitment to

maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism. The position is demanding, as it involves balancing military discipline with the needs of both staff and inmates, ensuring compliance with regulations, laws and fostering an environment conducive to rehabilitation.

LONG PAUSE

I would say Colonel Watson's biggest accomplishments in her career was a humanitarian mission that THE WHOLE WORLD WAS WATCHING. Her worked affected thousands of lives. As the Garrison Commander at Fort Lee, Virginia, Colonel Watson led the efforts to help over 3,000 Afghans who were forced to leave their country. They left Afghanistan with almost nothing to live in the United States.

Colonel Watson had to work with military and civilian authorities to find and develop infrastructure to receive the Afghans, house them, provide critical life support and quality of life services. In addition to helping the Afghan transition into life in the United States, Colonel Watson was responsible for ensuring the citizens in the area were safe.

Another thing Karin and I have in common is that she has earned an Airborne Badges. Let me explain to you what it means to be Airborne. (PAUSE) To be qualified airborne, you had to jump out of an airplane while in flight at least 5 times (PAUSE) and one of those jumps was a night jump. This achievement demonstrates that she has undergone rigorous physical and mental training and is qualified to conduct parachute jumps from an aircraft. The badge is a mark of courage, discipline, AND A WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ON CHALLENGING ASSIGNMENTS, often serving in elite units that require airborne operations.

Bronze Stars medals are awarded only in combat operations, and I was awarded a Bronze Star for my service in Afghanistan, and I am happy to testify that Karin doesn't have a bronze. She was awarded two Bronze Stars. (PAUSE) One for her deployment in Iraqi and the other for her deployment in Afghanistan. Being awarded two Bronze Stars means that Colonel Watson has CONSISTENTLY demonstrated acts of bravery, outstanding leadership, and exceptional performance under hazardous conditions during military operations against an armed enemy. This distinction is a testament to the Karin's courage, dedication, and commitment to duty in the face of danger.

Colonel Watson's education, character and extensive experience have contributed to her exemplary service to our nation. Her unwavering dedication and commitment have shaped her into the exceptional leader our island needs. Consider the invaluable contributions she brings to our community. Her efforts to aid Afghan citizens—individuals who arrived in the United States with almost nothing—mirror the compassion and resolve required to support typhoon victims rebuilding their lives. Furthermore, her proven ability to collaborate with multiple government agencies, both local and federal, underscores the leadership qualities essential for a successful Adjutant General.

Colonel Watson has proven herself on and off the battlefield. She exceeds educational and military requirements to do the work as the Adjutant General for the Guam Guard. Most importantly she has the willingness to take on this tough assignment. I ask that you confirm her as Guam's 14th Adjutant General.

Roderick Leon Guerrero



J. Goodman

Trust J. Goodman

2 December 2025

To: 38th Guam Legislature
Subject: Letter of Support
RE: Col. Karen Watson

Buenas Yan Hafa Adai!

Good afternoon honorable senators of the 38th Guam Legislature. My name is Dwayne San Nicolas, a former senator with the 37th Guam Legislature, a former Customs Supervisor, a former School Guidance Counselor, a US Army Combat Veteran, a Disabled American Veteran, a small business owner and your friendly neighborhood jolly person.

I am here today to provide my support for the confirmation of Col. Karen Watson who I fondly remember as Karen Alba and my classmate at the ROTC program at our very own University of Guam. Karen and I were both in the same class. She rose through the ranks in ROTC and I remember us calling our company, "The Alba Company" a fun little twist of the version of Alpha Company to imply who was in charge. As a cadet, Karen was there motivating us and always was a bridge between us and the leadership. She ran faster than me, and anyone who knows great leaders, after they completed their time, they run back to motivate us stragglers. I wasn't a very fast runner in those days. Though we were young, Karen's leadership was evident. The lord eventually took us down different paths. I ended up leaving the program and eventually enlisted as an infantry soldier with the Guam Army National Guard.


Eventually, Karen would go on to graduate and lead a very distinguished military career. I recently reached out to our mutual friend, Col. Frankie Cruz who also was a classmate of ours and he also provided a written testimony on Karen's confirmation. We reminisced a bit about "the good ol days" and we agree that Col. Watson is the right person for the job.

Karen has always been a leader. You don't reach the heights in the military without developing compassion for those you lead, humility to know that we are all part of one team. And the courage to wake up every day knowing that your decisions affect lives of those you lead.

I want to thank you for the honor to give my support to Col. Watson. Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

Your kind support and understanding regarding this matter would be greatly appreciated. Thank you and God bless!


Sincerely and very respectfully,


Dwayne T. D. San Nicolas

Creative Director

J. Goodman LLC.

RONALDO S. ABA GATNAN JR



Good afternoon, Senators and ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to testify to you and the People of Guam.

My name is Ronaldo Abagatnan, and I am a resident of Dededo. I am a Supervisory Customs and Border Protection Officer with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security where I have served for 23 years. Before my career in federal service, I was a commissioned officer in the Army's Military Police Corps, serving on active duty and briefly with the Guam Army National Guard.

Karin and I have been friends for over 30 years, and I rise today in strong support of her confirmation as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

Karin's military achievements are significant. I'm sure you that most of you have seen her resume.

So, instead of going down a list of her military accomplishments, I would like to speak about Karin, the person—her character, her upbringing, her love of Guam, her island home, and the Karin that I've known for over three decades.

Karin and I share similar beginnings. We both immigrated from the Philippines to the United States as children. We were raised here. We are both products of our island's Public School System- she graduated from JFK and I graduated from Oceanview High. We are both University of Guam alumni. Guam has our home for over 40 years.

Karin did not come from wealth. As a matter of fact and to put it plainly, she was "poor" growing up. As a child, Karin lived with her family in what can only be described as a shack—one that was repeatedly destroyed by typhoons. When her *lolo*—Filipino for grandfather—finally built a sturdier home, Karin was put to work, laying cement blocks and helping with construction. Her resilience was forged early through the need to survive and a responsibility to keep her family safe.

Karin graduated from JFK High School at only 16 years of age—too young to enlist in the Army as she had wanted. Excelling in academics and sports, especially soccer, she applied for and won a Board of Regents ROTC scholarship to the University of Guam that paid for 4 years of college.

We met through the ROTC program, became friends, and later college roommates with two other cadet friends. Attending college alone is hard enough. Simultaneously training to be an Army officer made things even more

demanding—early morning Physical Training, leadership labs, weekend field exercises and more.

I was also a scholarship cadet back then. Our ROTC stipends were only \$300 a month! We used that money to pay rent and cover basic necessities. It obviously wasn't enough. To make ends meet, Karin worked multiple jobs—at Subway, a Vietnamese restaurant, and at Kmart.

Imagine having to balance college, ROTC training, and work while trying not to lose your scholarship.

It was a hard life. There were no shortcuts. There was no safety net. Everything we achieved during those years came from hard work, sacrifice, and faith that the struggle would one day be worth it. And by God's grace, we made it!

I do have to add that Karin was a terrible roommate. Of course I mean that in jest. We didn't have cell phones back then. The other roommates and I would stay up all night waiting for her to get home from school or work safely, so we hardly slept. We always worried about her. She was the youngest, after all. To make things worse, she'd wake up early and beat me to the daily crossword puzzle in the Pacific Daily News. Thankfully, she always left one or two clues for me to figure out.

Karin's drive and ability to succeed do not come from privilege—they come from lived experience. And I am proud to have witnessed this first hand

She carried that same determination into her military career. Her résumé speaks for itself. She has been to war. She has jumped out of airplanes in full combat gear. She's volunteered to get chased down by military police K-9's and refused to leave the "fun" of going through the gas chamber to her soldiers. Not normally something that field grade officers do. But, again, that's Karin! She leads from the front and with presence!

She has taken care of the soldiers, civilians, and other personnel under her charge. She has held positions of increasing responsibility—often in demanding environments and under tremendous pressure. And through all of it, she remained a devoted wife and mother.

Despite the distance and the cost of travel, Karin always made it a point to come home, bringing her family with her so they would know Guam, our people, and our culture. I first met her husband, Rufus, at Ft. Hood, TX when

we were young lieutenants. I was always happy to see in Guam. He supported the idea of having their two kids, JC and Alex, live in Guam for a few years. Their children attended Dominican Catholic School in Yigo. Her son J.C. played football for the Manhã Yigo Jets, and her daughter Alex was baptized at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Yigo. JC graduated from WestPoint and currently serves as an Armor officer in the Army. He recently got married. Alex was back in Guam last year to accompany Karin came home for her retirement ceremony held at the Guam National Guard Readiness Center. She subsequently graduated from high school and is now in college.

On every visit home, Karin made it a priority to speak with the University of Guam ROTC cadets, offering guidance, mentorship, and encouragement to the next generation of military leaders. And, most importantly, she never failed to meet with family and friends.

Before I close, I have a message to the haters. Those on social media and elsewhere who carelessly comment about Karin without even knowing her. Those who have called her an "outsider" a "statesider," and made remarks like "it's who you know, not what you know."

SHAME. ON. YOU!

We complain about kids leaving the island for better opportunities. Our best and brightest leave for college and don't return home to share their talents and experience with the island.

Karin was educated here. She left to serve our nation. She has returned home after over 26 years, bringing leadership experience to share along with masters degrees in management, leadership, and national security. Instead of welcoming her with open arms, some have bashed her and tried to bring her down. Even some distinguished members of our community have had the audacity to make disparaging remarks about Karin on social media, for the whole world to see, without even knowing her. I'll say it again. Shame on you!

Who is Karin?

Someone who fought her way through struggle.

Someone who never forgot where she came from.

Someone who carried Guam with her no matter where the Army sent her.

Someone whose service never came at the expense of her family.

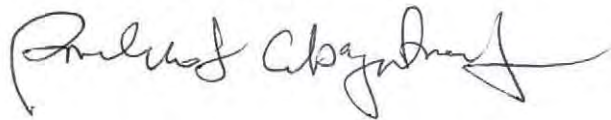
She is someone who started with so very little and earned her way to the top.

Her connection to this island is lived, real, and unwavering. She has a experienced the same sacrifices, the same challenges, and the same hopes as the soldiers, airmen, and civilians that she will lead.

For these reasons, and with great pride, I support Colonel Karin Watson's confirmation as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

Dorris, AJ, and I love you, Karin. And we are damn proud of you.

Thank you, everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paulus Abayudney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.



Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Letter of Support to Karin Alba-Watson for Adjutant General Candidacy

2 messages

Binh Wong [REDACTED]

Mon, Dec 8, 2025 at 7:34 AM

To: "office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Dear Senator,

I am writing to express my strong support for Karin Alba Watson in her candidacy for the position of Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

As a friend and a proud resident of Guam, I have had the privilege of witnessing Karin's dedication, strength, and integrity over the years. She is someone who truly cares about people and leads with both heart and purpose. Her commitment to service and her ability to inspire those around her make her an outstanding candidate for this important role

With 26 years of service in the U.S. Army and her deep Guam roots, Karin will bring a unique perspective that blends experience, cultural understanding, and strategic thinking. She has always been passionate about finding solutions that make a real difference, and I believe she will bring fresh ideas and strong leadership to the Guam National Guard.

Karin is known for her ability to inspire confidence, build trust, and create meaningful connections within the community. She understands the challenges Guam faces and is committed to ensuring that our service members have the support and resources they need to succeed.

I have no doubt that under Karin's leadership, the Guam National Guard will continue to thrive and uphold its mission with excellence. For these reasons, I wholeheartedly endorse Karin Alba-Watson for the position of Adjutant General. She is not only a capable leader but also a person of integrity who will guide our service members into the future.

Respectfully,

Binh Wong

Friend and Supporter

MEMORANDUM TO: The Honorable Members of the 38th Guam Legislature
FROM: Colonel (Retired) Karin L. Watson

DATE: December 1, 2025

SUBJECT: Read Ahead – Colonel Karin L. (Alba) Watson – Nominee for Adjutant General, Guam National Guard

I. INTRODUCTION: This memorandum serves as a read ahead to provide you, the Honorable Members of the 38th Guam Legislature, with information regarding my qualifications and experience as the nominee for the position of Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. I am a proud daughter of Guam, and it would be an honor to serve in this capacity.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: I bring 26 years of active-duty service as a U.S. Army Military Police Officer to this nomination. My experience includes command and staff assignments at various levels, strategic planning, resource management, force protection, interagency collaboration, and policy development. These experiences have prepared me to lead the Guam National Guard effectively.

III. BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS:

A. Personal History:

- Born in the Philippines and raised in Dededo, Guam; attended Finegayan Elementary School and Dededo Middle School (now Benavente Middle School).
- Represented Guam as part of all girls soccer team (1992).
- Graduated from the University of Guam in 1998 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and commissioned as a Military Police Officer through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC).
- UOG ROTC alumni support and mentorship.

B. Education (Civilian and Military):

- University of Guam, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology (1998).
- U.S. Army Military Police Officer Basic Course (1998).
- U.S. Army Military Police Captains Career Course (2002).
- Webster University, Master of Arts in Management and Leadership (2007).
- Command and General Staff College - Intermediate Level Education, with a Defense Support of Civil Authorities certification (2011).
- National War College, Master of Science in National Security Strategy, with a concentration in Cyber Security Leadership (2020).

C. Military Experience: My military career reflects increasing responsibility and diverse assignments. Key assignments include:

- **Platoon Leader:** 188th Military Police Company, Camp Walker, Republic of Korea.
- **Detachment Executive Officer and Battalion Logistics Officer:** 720th Military Police Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas (deployed to Operation Bright Star, Egypt).
- **Battalion Personnel Officer and Adjutant:** 504th Military Police Battalion, Fort Lewis, Washington (deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq).
- **Company Commander:** C Company, 508th Military Police Battalion, Fort Lewis, Washington.
- **Instructor, Military Police Basic Officer Leader Course:** Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

- **Brigade Plans Officer, 16th Military Police Brigade:** Fort Bragg, North Carolina (deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan).
- **Battalion Operations Officer and Executive Officer, 10th Military Police Battalion (Criminal Investigations Division):** Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
- **Staff Synchronization Officer and Branch Chief, HQDA G-8:** Pentagon.
- **Battalion Commander and Warden:** 705th Military Police Battalion (Detention) and Facility Commander, Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.
- **Division Chief, Detainee Affairs, Joint Staff J-37 Directorate of Special Operations and Counterterrorism:** Pentagon.
- **Garrison Commander:** U.S. Army Garrison –Fort Lee, Fort Lee, Virginia.
- **Executive Officer (Chief of Staff) to the Provost Marshal General:** Pentagon.

D. Skills and Expertise:

- **Leadership & Management:** Led organizations ranging from platoon to garrison level, managing personnel, resources, and operations.
- **Strategic Planning & Resource Management:** Developed and implemented strategic plans, managed budgets (including an \$.85 billion portfolio) and allocated resources effectively.
- **Military Police Operations & Corrections:** Extensive experience in military police operations, detention operations (authored updated operations order for detention operations in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba), and correctional rehabilitation.
- **Interagency Coordination:** Collaborated effectively with various military, government, and international agencies.
- **Policy Development & Congressional Liaison:** Developed policy recommendations and prepared military senior leaders for engagements.

E. Awards and Decorations:

- Legion of Merit
- Bronze Star Medal
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Army Commendation Medal
- Army Achievement Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Afghanistan Campaign Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Korean Defense Service Medal
- Humanitarian Service Medal
- Army Service Ribbon
- Overseas Service Ribbon
- NATO Medal
- Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge
- Army Staff Identification Badge
- Parachutist Badge
- Chilean Paratrooper Badge

- German Armed Forces Efficiency Badge (Silver)
- Joint Meritorious Unit Award
- Meritorious Unit Citation
- Army Superior Unit Award
- Order of the Marechaussee (Military Police Regimental Association)
- Honorable Order of Saint Martin (US Army Association of Quartermasters)

IV. MEMBERSHIPS/COMMUNITY SERVICE:

- Member, Guam Society of America
- Member, Federal Asian Pacific American Council
- Volunteer/Supporter, UOG ROTC Alumni Association
- Volunteer Youth Soccer Coach, MWR (various military installations)
- Volunteer, Special Olympics, Kansas
- Volunteer, SERVE Food Network, Washington DC
- Volunteer, Capital Area Food Bank, Virginia and Washington DC
- Volunteer, Catholic Charities, Washington DC

V. KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- US Army Military Police Captains Career Course Leadership Award Recipient.
- Successfully established the Next Generation Advanced Bomb Suit (NGABS) as a Program-Of-Record and programmed R&D, Procurement and Sustainment funding; the NGABS is the current bomb suit developed and used by EOD today.
- Achieved 100% ratings and accreditation of the Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility by the American Correctional Association.
- Led the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Lee in receiving and providing quality-of-life requirements for over 3,000 Afghans.
- Instituted a Project Search program at Fort Lee, providing job training for youths with disabilities.
- Panel member, 2024 Federal Asian Pacific American Council.

VI. CONCLUSION: My career has been dedicated to serving our nation, and I am eager to bring my experience and leadership skills to the Guam National Guard. I am committed to its mission and the people of Guam.

VII. ATTACHMENTS:

- Military Biography of Colonel Karin L. Watson (nee Alba)
- Resume of Colonel Karin L. Watson (nee Alba)

Respectfully,
 Karin L. Watson Colonel,
 U.S. Army (Retired)
 Nominee for Adjutant General, Guam National Guard



Office of Senator

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO

Chairman

Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan • 38th Guam Legislature

Record of In-Person Inspection of the DD-214 (Digital Copy) and Retirement Orders (Digital Copy) provided by Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), The Adjutant General-Select of the Guam National Guard and Director-Select of the Department of Military Affairs.

Office of Senator Shawn Gumataotao

120 Father Duenas Avenue Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

SIGN-IN SHEET (Page 1 of 5)

Senator	Signature			Date	Time		
1. T. Terlaye	T. Terlaye			12/7/15			
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							

NOTHING FOLLOWS



OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

COMMITTEE VOTE SHEET

The Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.

Committee Members	Signature	TO DO CONFIRM	TO NOT CONFIRM	TO REPORT OUT ONLY	TO ABSTAIN	TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE
Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao <i>Chairperson</i>		X				
Vice-Speaker V. Anthony Ada <i>Vice-Chairperson</i>						
Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr. <i>Committee Member</i>		✓				
Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <i>Committee Member</i>		✓				
Senator Tina R. Muña Barnes <i>Committee Member</i>		✓				



OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

38th Guam Legislature | *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST

I. OVERVIEW

The Governor's letter dated **November 18, 2025**, appointing Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs was received by the Speaker's Office on **November 19, 2025**. On **November 19, 2025**, the Committee on Rules referred Ms. Watson's Appointment to the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard.

The Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard convened a public hearing on **December 3, 2025**, at 2:00 pm. in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building. The Public Hearing served as the Confirmation Hearing required by the Guam's Legislature's Standing Rules for the Executive Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs.

Public Notice Requirements

Public Hearing Notices were sent via email to all Senators and all main media broadcasting outlets on **November 20, 2025** (5-Day Notice) and again on **December 1, 2025** (48-Hour Notice). The notices were also published via television advertisement and on the Guam Public Notices Website on the aforementioned dates pursuant to the Open Government Law.

Senators Present

Senator Eulogio S. Gumataotao, Committee
Chairperson
Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Committee Vice
Chairperson
Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr., Committee Member
Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane, Committee Member
Senator Jesse A. Lujan
Senator Vincent Borja
Senator Christopher Duenas
Senator Telo T. Taitague
Senator Therese Terlaje
Senator Chris Barnett
Senator Sabina F. Perez

Attendees

Roseanna Torres Yamashita
Steven Yamashita
Maria Leon Guerrero
Ruth Fuentes
Vincent Santiago
Mark Scott, GUNG
Duane Perez, GUNG Dwayne San Nicolas
Ron Abagatnan
Ron Delfin
Rod Leon Guerrero
Esther Taumomoa
Isidro Orot
Matthew Orot
Chris Iwashita, GUNG
Scott Duenas II
Diron Cruz, GUNG (Retired)
Pete Decipu
Sulinda Fawcett
Manuel O. Dueñas, Jr., GUNG
Rose Blend
Marlene Quintanilla
Geneve Apuron
Lawrence Alcairo (for Joseph Alcairo, GUNG (Retired))
Emilyn Santos, GUNG
Cyril Concepcion, GUNG/ACE-G
Rowena Santiago
Rey Villaflor
Peter Guerrero, GUNG

Written Testimony Provided by

Tracy L. Smith – Major General, U.S. Army Commanding
Mike Blas – President, Guam Society of America, Inc.
Anthony "Ton" Weilbacher - Former Treasurer, Guam Society of America, Inc.
John S. DeJesus – Major, U.S. Army (Retired)
Fely O. Andrada – U.S. Army (Retired)
Frankie J. Cruz – COL, SC, JS J-45 OCSD Chief
John W. Quinene – Major, U.S. Army (Retired)
Mark T. Simerly – LTG, USA DLA Director
Rogelio R. De Luna Jr. – Lt. Col., U.S. Army (Retired)
Junice Dawn G. Hooks – Maj (R), USA
Donald J. Goldhorn – Maj. General (Retired)
Dennis J. Santo Tomas - Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)
Hon. Johnny Cepeda Gogo – Judge, Superior Court of California,
County of Santa Clara

Nelson Pascua – Classmate, JFK
Gabriel Cruz – UOG Alumni
Hon. Jesse L.G. Alig – Piti Mayor
Mary Lou SN. Pangelinan – Classmate, JFK
Roger Gulac, Personal Friend
Steven G. Yamashita – Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)
Wayne Blas – Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)
Eileen G. Flanagan – Personal Friend, Classmate
Althea Cruz, Personal Friend
Eloise G. Camacho, Personal Friend
Devon Blake, Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)
Clint Castro, Personal Friend
Rachel Taumomoa, Personal Friend
Fred Fuentes, Personal Friend
Fernando Fuentes, Personal Friend
Colonel Gina San Nicolas, U.S. Army
Nicanor A. Legaspi, Lt. Col, U.S. Army
Ruth Fuentes, Personal Friend
Roque T. Salas, Major (Retired)
Thelma Flores, Personal Friend
LovieAnn Palacios, Personal Friend
Dwayne T. D. San Nicolas, Personal Friend
Roderick Leon Guerrero, Maj. General (Retired) U.S. Army
Ronaldo S. Abagatnan Jr., Personal Friend
Ain Fitzpatrick, Personal Friend
Binh Wong, Personal Friend
Bernard L. Aguon, CWO Five, Army National Guard

II. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY & DISCUSSION

Confirmation Hearing for Colonel Karin L. Watson - December 3, 2025, 2pm

Chairman Senator Shawn Gumataotao: Buenas and hafa adai everyone, today's public hearing by the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management and your Guam National Guard is hereby called to order. Today is Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025 and the time is now 2 o'clock p.m. Chamorro Standard Time.

For the record, and in accordance with our open government law, notices for today's public hearing were sent, on November 20th, 2025 and again on December 1st, 2025. This public hearing was also published on the Guam Legislature website and the Guam Public Notices website. Joining us here this after are the members of the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and your Guam National Guard and our fellow senators. Let me begin with the Vice Chair of the committee and the Vice Speaker Senator Tony Ada's here with us, also joining us this afternoon is my colleague Senator Vince Borja, Senator Telo Taitague and Senator Chris Duenas. Si Yu'os ma'ãse colleagues for joining us this afternoon. Before we proceed with the

discussion today, I'd like to first provide some general rules of conduct for today's public hearing, which shall be as follows. Written comments or presentations shall be submitted to the committee. Please provide my legislative staff with your written comments for photocopying. Comments may be read and lengthy presentations should be summarized to about five minutes. There's a clock over there so I'll just kind of gently say. Those offering comments will be allowed to present written or oral testimony. And once you are done, please remain in the room for questions or any additional comments that may be desired by members of the Committee on Public Safety Emergency Management and your Guam National Guard and other members of the legislature. Questions and comments shall be confined to the nature of the agenda. The agenda for today's public hearing is the confirmation hearing required by the Guam legislature's standing rules for Miss Karin L. Watson, Colonel U.S. Army retired, the governor's appointee to serve as the next adjutant general of the Guam National Guard and director of the Department of Military Affairs.

For the record, the committee invited the adjutant general-select to participate in today's public hearing and I want to welcome you, Colonel, to our to our house if you will. The committee encouraged the adjutant general-select to invite her family and friends to attend today's public hearing and to offer verbal and or written testimony regarding her appointment to this post. And for the record, the committee received testimony from 34 individuals as of this morning, December 3rd, 2025, all in support of Miss Watson's appointment to serve as the next TAG and Director of Military Affairs. For the record, the governor's letter dated November 18th, 2025, appointing Miss Karin Watson, Colonel U.S. Army retired, to serve as the next adjutant general of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs, was received by the Speaker's Office on November 19th, 2025. On the same date, the Committee on Rules referred Miss Watson's appointment to the Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard. For the benefit of my colleagues and those that are following today's confirmation hearing, the committee reviewed the qualification requirements for the adjutant general pursuant to 10 GCA Section 63201, as amended by Public Law 38-68. Guam law provides that the adjutant general shall be appointed by the governor of Guam, subject to the advice and consent of the Guam legislature. The adjutant general shall have such rank and qualifications as the governor of Guam may prescribe, and he or she shall be or have been a federally recognized commission officer in the United States Army or the United States Air Force, or the reserve components in the grade of at least Lieutenant Colonel O5 promotable, pursuant to Army or Air Force promotion regulations and policies at the time of the appointment. The adjutant general shall be promoted in the Guam Army or Air National Guard as appropriate, at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, to a grade not to exceed Lieutenant General or O9.

Pursuant to Guam Public Law 38-68, which became effective on October 17, 2025, the adjutant general shall be a citizen of the United States and shall have Guam as his or her home of record, or served in the Guam National Guard at least for a term of not less than five years prior to appointment. Based on the committee's review of the qualification requirements for the adjutant general, pursuant to 10 GCA Section 63-201, and upon inspection of the DD-214 and retirement orders provided by the appointee, Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army Retired, the committee has determined, subject to further review by the legislative council, that the adjutant general select meets the qualification requirements that are established by Guam law. Recognizing the confidential nature of the DD-214 and the retirement orders provided by the tag

select, the committee invited all senators to inspect the information in person at my legislative office earlier this week.

The adjutant general is an extremely important position overseeing the Guam Army and Air National Guard, as well as the Guam Department of Military Affairs. Since 1975, the guard's role has changed immensely, in that time. With the U.S. Department of War relying heavily on the men and women of your guard in so many efforts over the last 50 years to include humanitarian missions in the region, missions at home, to include every major disaster in that time, the global war on terror after 9-11, and the efforts to defend our homeland since, Guam consistently ranks as number one among all U.S. states and territories for having the highest number of National Guard members per capita. Guam is a patriotic American community. I do not see that changing any time soon. I want to publicly commend the work of the outgoing adjutant general, former lieutenant governor of Guam, my former boss, Dr. Michael W. Cruz, for his service to our island and to our nation.

I look forward to and as good or even better working relationship with Colonel Karin Watson, who I had a chance to meet with on November 21st, 2025. I understand that she's also making her rounds across our branch of government. Those meetings, I am sure, are far from complete. Again, thank you again for meeting with the Guam legislature for your service to our island and to our nation. At this time, before we hear from the governor's appointee, as chair, I would like to invite individuals who wish to testify on the executive appointment and I would ask that you would take a seat before the committee and then we will hear from the tag-select after those that are present to testify on our appointment have completed their presentations.

So let me just do this. I'm gonna go in and read the names and I'm going to do it in the order, but first off, I'd like to recognize our former Senator Dwayne San Nicolas. If you want to come up, sir, are you providing oral testimony today? Can I ask you to please come up to the front if you could? Thank you. And I would like to ask if, is Rosanna Torres-Yamashita, are you going to be providing oral testimony today? You can say yes or no. No? Okay, that's fine. Okay, so I have also, is it Maria Leon Guerrero? Please come forward. Also, Ruth Fuentes, if you can please come forward. Vincent Santiago, please come on up. Marks, no, Dwayne Perez, please come on up. Sorry, there's a check mark that says written or oral, so I just make sure I'm not missing anybody out.

But I'm gonna go down to my second page here because I do have two seats. Is Isidro Orot, are you gonna be providing oral testimony today, if you're here? Are you gonna be providing the oral testimony? Or Matt Orot? How about Chris Iwashita, are you gonna be providing? I know you're here for so far. It's, you guys didn't indicate written or oral, so I thought then, okay. Scott Dwayne is the second. Are you gonna be providing testimony today? Okay, thank you. Diron Cruz, are you gonna be providing oral testimony? You are? Please come up. Pete Decipu, are you here? Are you providing testimony, oral testimony? Okay, no, no, okay, that's fine. You can say no. So, Linda Fawcett, are you gonna be providing oral testimony today? No? Okay, thank you. And then, finally, Ron Abagatnan, how do you, how do you pronounce your name? Okay, you're in the second seat next to Mr. Diron. Thank you all for, for being with us, and if we can, I'd like to be, I'm sorry?

Vice Chair Tony Ada: Why don't we just go ahead and use the last one, the general, General Roderick. You can come up. Just have him come sit next to Dwayne, if you like.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: General, you want to come up? General? Are you testifying today? Yes, I have two more. I have, no, there's two more. There's two more. Okay, all right. Thank you. Thank you, General. Okay, I'll go ahead and begin, and welcome back, Senator, to your house, and I'll go ahead and give you the floor. Thank you again for being with us.

Mr. Dwayne San Nicolas, Former Senator: Thank you. Thank you, Senator. It's a great honor to be in the same room with all my, got some of my classmates here, and, and, you know, former, former colleagues. Buenas yan hafa adai. Good afternoon, Honorable Senators of the 38th Guam Legislature. My name is Dwayne San Nicolas, I'm a former Senator with the 37th Guam Legislature, a former Customs Supervisor, a former school counselor, a U.S. Army combat veteran, a disabled American veteran, and a small business owner, and your friendly neighborhood jolly person. I am here today to provide my support for the confirmation of Colonel Karin Watson, who I fondly remember as Karin Alba, and my classmate at the ROTC program, our very own, at the very own, our very own University of Guam. Karin and I were both in the same class. She rose through the ranks in ROTC, and I remember us calling our company the Alba Company. A fun little twist on the version of Alpha Company. Back then, I knew her as Karin Alba, right? As a cadet, Karin was there motivating us, and always a bridge between us and leadership. She ran faster than me, and everybody who knows a great leader always, after they're done with their PT tests, they come back for a stragglers, and I was one of those stragglers. I could never run fast. I never claim. She ran faster than me, and anyone who was a great leader, after they completed their PT test, they would run back and motivate us stragglers. I wasn't a very fast runner in those days, though we were young. Karin's leadership was evident. The Lord eventually took us down different paths. I ended up leaving the program and eventually enlisted in the infantry as an infantry soldier with the Guam Army National Guard, so I understand the gravity of the office she's being appointed to. Eventually, Karin would go on to graduate and lead a very distinguished military career. I recently reached out to our mutual friend, Colonel Frankie Cruz, you know, one of my heroes, too, who also was a classmate of ours, and he provided a written testimony of Karin's confirmation. We reminisced a little bit about the good old days, and we agree that Colonel Watson is the right person for the job. Karin has always been a leader. You don't reach the heights in the military without developing compassion for those you lead, humility to know that we are all part of one team, and the courage to wake up every day doing the same things over and over again, knowing that your decision affects lives of those you lead. I want to thank you for the honor to give my support to Colonel Watson. Thank you, si Yu'os ma'ase'.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Senator, for being with us this afternoon. I also want to recognize my colleagues that joined us as well, Senator Chris Barnett and Senator Therese Terlaje. Thank you for being with us at this confirmation hearing this afternoon. Moving on right now, if I'd like to ask Maria, if you can, the floor is yours.

Ms. Maria Leon Guerrero: I'm sorry. Thank you. I'll be reading a recommendation letter from Junice Dawn Leon Guerrero-Hooks, major retired in the USA. Dear Honorable Senators, I am

proudly and strongly recommend Colonel Karin Watson for the position of Adjutant General of the Guam Army National Guard. No one is better than this Dededo Grel.

I am a U.S. Army Major retired J.D. Guerrero-Hooks from the Deso Guerrero family of Dededo and the Nyarak family of Sumay Santa Rita. My service consisted of staff leadership positions in the Air Defense Artillery Branching Support, oh sorry, Supporting Joint and combined operations of the Pacific and Central Command's area of operations. After retirement, I served homeless veterans in the Hawaii Islands, Guam, and American Samoa for five years.

I am honored to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Colonel retired Karin Watson, having known her for 30 years and collaborated directly with her for the first two. I have observed Colonel Watson's professional development and command presence grow stronger through the years from before she scored top of the 1997 University of Guam's Reserve Officers Training Corps class while remaining a humble Guam girl to the present.

While I did not meet, while I did not work with Colonel Watson directly after graduation, we maintained close communication through Colonel Watson's leadership milestones. This includes graduating from the United States Army, Military Police Basic and Advanced Courses, the USA Airborne School, the USA Command General and Staff College, USA War College, and the important successful completion of Company Battalion and Brigade Commands. Colonel Watson's tenure as a powerful leader of America's sons and daughters in combat proved exemplary when selected as a Brigade Garrison Commander of Fort Lee, Virginia.

Colonel Watson's strongest traits are her ability to maintain a rock-solid professional bearing while remaining focused under intense pressure in hostile environments and most importantly her deep appreciation for her life, her education and opportunities in Guam. Her passion to give back and serve the island is unrivaled. Very respectfully, Janice Don Guerrero-Hooks, Major Retired. Thank you.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Maria. At this time I also want to welcome my colleagues that also joined us today, also a member of the committee, Sabrina Salas-Matanane, Senator Jesse Lujan, thank you for being with us this afternoon and Senator Shelly Calvo, thank you for your attendance at this confirmation hearing this afternoon. At this time can I ask Ruth, if you can proceed. Thank you. The floor is yours.

Ms. Ruth Fuentes: Hafa adai, senators. My name is Ruth Fuentes. I'm here on behalf to give my testimony to Colonel Karin Alba Watson. I will also be reading on behalf of my father, who is presently not here, and of course on behalf of my son as well, ok? On my behalf I am happy to support retired Colonel Karin Alba Watson as a candidate for the general of the Guam National Guard. I have known Karin for about 40 years, from the days we were growing up together, through her time in school, from here in Guam and all the way into her service into the U.S. Army. It has been amazing to see how much she has grown both personally and professionally. Karin has shown outstanding leadership and skills as a military police officer, reaching important milestones during her career. She attended public schools in Guam from middle school through college and graduated from the University of Guam in 1998. While serving in the Army, she also pursued and advanced her education.

On the contrary, during her personal leave to visit her home on Guam, she shared cultural traditions with her family and taught her children the customs of daily life. Karin's ties to her heritage have given her a keen sense of identity and respect for Guam's values. Throughout her term in the United States Army, Karin has received multiple achievements and, of course, commendations from her exceptional service.

Her ability to lead diverse teams and adapt well to changing environments has earned her respect among both her peers and her subordinates. In addition, she provides mentorship to junior officers, encouraging the values of excellence and integrity within her professional responsibilities. Her progression from humble leadership inspired those who those she worked with.

Furthermore, I am confident that appointing her as the general would strengthen the Guam National Guard and encourage future generations to pursue service and leadership values. I will also be reading on behalf for my son, Fred, who is currently overseas, ok?

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Yes, please proceed.

Ms. Ruth Fuentes: So he respectfully recommends Colonel Karin L. Watson for the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard, and he's also known her for over 20 years. Ever since, he was a child through myself, my grandparents, and my aunts. Following the graduation from Okkodo High School in 2020 and enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, Karin continued to offer guidance, a lot of guidance. She supported his educational pursuits during technical school and gave, of course, insightful advices as he began his career in the military service. Karin earned her degree, again, from the University of Guam, and also participated in the Army ROTC during her studies. She later then enlisted in the Army to further her career to enhance her professional development. During her military career, Karin, of course, earned her respect from the effective leadership among her peers, and she showed perseverance, integrity, and commitment to service.

The appointment of Colonel Karin Alba Watson would be a significant development for the Guam National Guard. Her proven leadership and dedication will set a standard and motivate future leaders to strive for excellence in their roles. And lastly, sir, I'm going to read off on behalf of my father, Fernando Fuentes.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Oh yes, please proceed.

Ms. Ruth Fuentes: So his name, my father's name is Fernando Fuentes. He's a proud resident of Dededo, and he's writing to express his heartfelt support for the appointment for Karin Alba Watson.

He says that Karin is like a daughter to him and my mother, Felicula Fuentes. She grew up in our home, and she was a significant part of our family. My older sister Rhoda and Karin have been best friends since childhood, and, of course, attended the public schools here on Guam.

Her journey from her humble beginnings to her current success is a testament to her inner strength and resilience. Raised by Karin's grandfather, a man of great integrity who made many

sacrifices for his grandchildren, Karin has never forgotten her roots. She comes home to Guam, maintaining her ties with family and friends. Her commitment to our island community is unwavering. Karin ensured that her children also spent time on Guam to lead and appreciate their cultural heritage. Her achievements in the Army is, of course, truly commendable, and she has risen through the ranks and possesses all the qualifications she desires as a leader for our National Guard. As a military police officer, Karin has her expertise to assist our island during emergencies, and he is confident that Karin will service our island with dedication and excellence. Thank you.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Ruth, for providing your testimony and that of your son and your father this afternoon. Thank you again. Vincent Santiago, welcome to the People's House. You can proceed.

Mr. Vince Santiago: Good afternoon, Chairman and Senators. My name is Vince Santiago. I'm a retired Marine Sergeant Major of 31 years, and 17 years of that as a command senior enlisted leader.

So I've known Colonel Watson a very short time, and why is that significant? It's significant because of the impression that she left on me, just the very few hours that we had in contact. We were speaking, and I had no idea she was from Guam, but once we identified that she was from Guam, we spent an additional four more hours talking about what it means for U.S. service members retiring and coming home and serving our island. We spent four hours talking about that.

So I'm here to say her resume and her bio definitely precedes her, but let's discuss this. Getting promoted in the military is no small feat, specifically as a commissioned officer, no matter what branch of service you're in. As a command senior enlisted leader, I can tell you what I expect of our officers.

One, care. Two, do your job. Three, be ruthless in protecting your people. And four, always represent yourself with dignity, honor, and courage, and pride. In that few four hours that I've spoken with Colonel Watson, and days later we continue to meet at venues, she continues to imbue those attributes which we, as enlisted members, and as I, as a command senior enlisted leader, seek and expect, but more importantly, demand of our commissioned officers. Because that's the beauty of a commissioned officer. They are held responsible for everything that happens and fails to happen within their organization. And I can tell you, just by her presence alone, she owns it. She owns it. She's not even in the seat yet, and she's already looking after her people. And that speaks volumes, not only as a person, but as a leader. And that's exactly what we want.

So I talk about being promoted in the military service. To achieve the rank of colonel is no small feat, but then to understand the billets in which she held, again, a tremendous, tremendous leap for a single person. And then you look at the billets of where she served, at all levels, at multiple positions, across the continuum of the military service.

So if there's any doubt of her ability to serve as the adjutant general for Guam, it's probably going to be dispelled after the second or third iteration of people speaking on her behalf. So some may say, why is a Marine Sergeant Major speaking on behalf of an Army dog? I can tell you this, it doesn't matter. And I normally don't come and speak on anybody's behalf, I'll tell you that right now. I won't do it. If you don't deserve it, you can keep on walking. But Colonel Watson is a person, I believe, that can take any organization she belongs to, in no matter capacity, from good to great. From good to great. I wish her the best of luck in what she does, because I know she's going to take care of her soldiers, her airmen, and her civilians. But more importantly, the families of those service members under her charge. Thank you very much for your time, and good afternoon.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Vince. Mr. Perez, Duane, you're up next.

Mr. Duane Perez, GUNG: Good afternoon, my name is Duane Perez, and I'll be reading a letter of recommendation written by Donald Goldhorn, former Adjutant General, Guam National Guard. It gives me great pleasure to provide written testimony on behalf of Colonel Karin Watson in regard to her appointment as the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. Although I do not know Colonel Watson personally, her military record and accomplishments speak volumes as her technical competence and leadership abilities in assuming the responsibilities of the Adjutant General.

Of particular note is her command time and her duties within the Pentagon to include serving as the Executive Officer for the Provost Marshal General. A requirement of an Adjutant General is to engage at the highest level within National Guard Bureau and the Pentagon to fulfill the needs of the organization, to include adequate funding and resourcing of equipment and training opportunities, to name a few. Her past experience, as mentioned, will surely fulfill this requirement.

Colonel Watson's appointment should not only be based solely on her merit, but also on the needs of the Guam National Guard. Soldiers and Airmen need and deserve continuity in senior leadership. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to commend former Adjutant General Brigadier General Michael Cruz for his exceptional service to our Guam National Guard.

I am confident that Colonel Watson will continue in this tradition of excellence and ensure that much needed continuity. In a recent phone conversation with Colonel Watson, I asked her why she wanted to become the Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard. She quickly replied, "I want to return to Guam and give back to the island".

Her compassion to serve Soldiers, Airmen, their families and the island were evident throughout our conversation. This is the officer that I recommend without reservation to be our next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. Signed Donald J. Goldhorn, Major General Retired, Former Adjutant General Guam National Guard.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Duane and I know that the General is probably watching, so I'm hoping that when he returns to Guam, he can call me up and he owes me coffee. So I want to make sure he does that. Okay, Pete, you're up next, if you can. Thank you for joining us here in the Guam Legislature.

Mr. Ron Abagatnan: So good afternoon, Senators, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to testify before you and the people of Guam. My name is Ronaldo Abagatnan. I am a resident of Dededo. I am a Supervisory Customs and Border Protection Officer with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, where I have served for 23 years. Before my career in federal service, I was a commissioned officer in the Army's Military Police Corps, serving on active duty and briefly with the Guam Army National Guard. Karin and I have been friends for over 30 years, and I rise today in strong support of her confirmation as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard.

Karin's military achievements are significant. I'm sure most of you have seen her resume and have heard others speak of her today, speak of her accomplishments today. So instead of going down a list of her military accomplishments, I would like to speak about Karin, the person, her character, her upbringing, her love of Guam, her island home, and a Karin that I've known for three decades.

Karin and I share similar beginnings. We both immigrated from the Philippines to the United States as children. We were raised here in Guam. We are both products of the island's public school system. She graduated from JFK, and I graduated from Ocean View High School. We are both University of Guam alumni.

Guam has been our home for over 40 years. Karin did not come from wealth. As a matter of fact, and to put it bluntly in conversations with her, she was poor as heck. She didn't use the word heck, but she was poor growing up. As a child, Karin lived with her family in what could only be described as a shack, one that was repeatedly destroyed by typhoons. When her Lolo, Filipino for grandfather, finally built a sturdier home, Karin was put to work laying cement blocks and helping with construction.

Her resilience was forged early through the need to survive and a responsibility to keep her family safe. Karin graduated from JFK High School at the age of 16, too young to enlist in the Army as she had wanted. Excelling in academics and sports, especially soccer, she applied for and won a Board of Regents ROTC scholarship to the University of Guam that paid for four years of her college. We went through the ROTC program together. She was a year behind me. We became friends and later we became college roommates with two other cadet friends. For those who don't know, attending college alone is hard enough, but simultaneously training to be an Army officer made things even more demanding. Early morning physical training, leadership labs, weekend field exercises and more. And I should mention late night briefings.

Those were pretty terrible. I'm sure you remember those, Karin. I was one of her trainers and sometimes I would schedule briefings at 10 p.m. So I was also a scholarship cadet back then and our ROTC stipends were only \$300 a month. We used that money to pay rent and cover basic necessities. It obviously wasn't enough. To make ends meet, Karin worked multiple jobs.

She worked at a Subway in Yigo, Subway in the Micronesia Mall, a Vietnamese restaurant Tamuning somewhere, forgot the name, and at Kmart. Imagine having to balance college, ROTC training and work while trying to pay rent, buy the necessary basic necessities and food to survive. All at the risk of losing your scholarship. We lived that life. It was hard. There were no shortcuts, there were no safety nets.

Everything we achieved during those years came from hard work, sacrifice and faith that the struggle would one day be worth it. And by God's grace, Karin, we made it. We did make it. I do have to add that Karin was a terrible roommate. Of course I mean that in jest, but I just want to share with you. We didn't have phones back then, no cell phones. Being that she was the youngest of the four of us, the other roommates and I would stay up all night waiting for her to get home from school or work safely. So we hardly slept. We always worried about her.

She was the youngest after all. To make matters worse, despite coming home late, she would wake up early and beat me to the PDN's daily crossword puzzle. Thankfully she always left me one or two clues to figure out.

Karin's drive and ability to succeed do not come from privilege. They come from a lived experience and I am proud to have witnessed this firsthand. She carried that same determination into her military career. Her resume speaks for itself. She has been to war. She has jumped out of airplanes in full combat gear. She's volunteered to get chased down by military police canines and refused to leave the quote unquote fun of going through the gas chamber to her soldiers. These were done at higher level ranks, Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel. She wasn't a young officer back then, but she stepped up. Why? It's because she leads from the front and she leads with presence. She has taken care of the soldiers, civilians, and other personnel under her charge. She has held positions of increasing responsibility, often in demanding environments and under tremendous pressure.

And through all that, she remained a devoted wife and mother. Despite the distance and cost of travel, Karin always made it a point to come home, bringing her family with her so they would know Guam, our people and our culture. I first met her husband Rufus at Fort Hood, Texas, when we were young lieutenants. I was always happy to see Rufus come to Guam. It's like, hey, welcome. Welcome, Rufus. Welcome to Guam. It was great to see him because I know they were busy. Rufus supported the idea of having their two kids, JC and Alex, live in Guam for a few years. JC and Alex attended Dominican High School, sorry, Dominican Catholic School in Yigo. Her son JC played football for the Manha Yigo Jets. And her daughter Alex was baptized at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Yigo. JC graduated from West Point and currently serves as an armor officer in the Army, and he has recently gotten married. Alex was back home last year to accompany Karin, home for her retirement ceremony at the National Guard Readiness Center. It was good to see her. She subsequently graduated from high school and is now in college at Virginia Tech. On every visit, Karin made it a priority to speak with the University of Guam ROTC students, offering guidance, mentorship and encouragement to the next generation of military leaders. And most importantly, she never failed to meet with family and friends.

And before I close, and I have to share this, I have a message to the haters out there. I didn't see anyone dissenting, thankfully, but those on social media and elsewhere who carelessly comment about Karin without even knowing her, they called her an outsider, a statesider, make remarks like, it's who you know and not what you know. I got three words for y'all. Shame on you. They can hear me out there. Shame on you. We complain about our kids leaving the island for better opportunities. Our best and brightest leave for college and don't return home to share their talents and experience with Guam. They stay out there. I have a 17-year-old daughter who's going to study nursing in Seattle. She doesn't want to come back.

But Karin was educated here. She left to serve our nation. She has returned home after 26 years, bringing leadership experience to share along with master's degrees in management, leadership, and national security. Instead of welcoming her with open arms, some have bashed her and tried to bring her down. Even some distinguished members of our community have had the audacity to make disparaging remarks about Karin on social media for the world to see without even knowing her. So I'll say it again. Shame on you.

Who is Karin? Karin is someone who fought her way through struggle. Someone who never forgot where she came from. Someone who carried Guam with her no matter where the army sent her. Someone whose service never came at the expense of her family. She is someone who started with so very little and earned her way to the top. Her connection to this island is lived, real, and unwavering. She has experienced the same sacrifices, the same challenges, and the hopes, the same hopes as the soldiers, airmen, and civilians that she will lead. For these reasons and with great pride, I support Colonel Watson's confirmation as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. Karin, I just want to say Doris, A.J., and I love you and we are damn proud of you. Thank you everyone.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much for your testimony. Diron, welcome to the Guam Legislature. You can proceed.

Mr. Diron Cruz: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon to all the esteemed Senators here today. I'm here, my name is Diron J. Cruz, retired Brigadier General, former Assistant Adjutant General for the Army of the Guam National Guard. I strongly support the nomination of Colonel Karin Watson for the position of Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard in order to maintain the continuity of leadership for our citizens, soldiers, and airmen. Although I've not known or not served with or known Colonel Watson for as long as many have, her vast military experience and background in peacetime and combat has convinced me she is the right leader right now.

Colonel Watson's successes in command at all levels, up to brigade equivalent, coupled with a myriad of challenging Army and Joint Staff positions, including at the Pentagon, uniquely qualifies her to command our Guam Guardsmen. Moreover, it is worth noting that Colonel Watson not only emigrated to Guam and the U.S. mainland to pursue the American dream, but she sacrificed 20 years, 26 years of her life to this country and island to protect and preserve that same opportunity for countless others. Mission readiness of the Guam National Guard critically depends on bold and compassionate leadership. Leadership that is impartial, assertive, and firm but fair. In this global environment we live in that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous, it is imperative that our Guam Guardsmen be dynamic, resilient, and mission

focused, always. And I believe that Colonel Watson not only understands this, but has proven time and again that she's willing and capable to set the example and lead from the front.

I strongly urge this body of esteemed senators to rally behind Colonel Watson, grant your collective consent to this nomination, and give our brave men and women of our Guam National Guard the leader they deserve. I thank you for your attention to this matter.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Diron. If I can, you can be excused. I'm going to have this, I'm going to start within the order as well. General, are you going to come up and testify? Please come on up. Let's see, I have, oh is Esther here? Esther, please come on up. You can come on down. Thank you. Let me see, Peter Guerrero, are you going to testify this afternoon? Peter Guerrero, are you going to testify? Okay, thanks, thank you so much for that. Let's see. Manny Duenas, are you going to testify? You're not checking? Okay, gotcha. Rose Glenn, are you going to testify this afternoon? Where's Rose? I just saw her. No, you're okay? Thank you so much. Marlene Quintanilla, are you going to testify this afternoon? Oh, you are? Okay, please, please come up. Geneve Apuron, are you going to testify this afternoon? Yes? No? Okay. Is Lawrence here? Okay, Lawrence, come on up. There's some room here. Emilyn Santos, are you going to also testify this afternoon? Cyril Concepcion, are you going to testify this afternoon? No? And I guess, have a seat. All right, thank you guys so much. And what I will begin with, and welcome back to the Guam Legislature General, and you can proceed. Thank you for being with us this afternoon.

Mr. Roderick Leon Guerrero: Good afternoon, Senator Gumataotao and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about the exemplary career and character of retired Colonel Karin Watson.

My name is Roderick Leon Guerrero. I'm a retired general with the U.S. Army. I'm also the 11th Adjutant General for the Guam Army National Guard. I'm here to testify in support of Colonel Watson's confirmation. It is a privilege to speak about Colonel Watson because through her service in the U.S. Army, she has demonstrated her unwavering commitment to our nation. I had the honor to participate in her retirement ceremony. Now, I'm grateful to see the impact she has made throughout her career.

In my remarks at Colonel Watson's retirement ceremony, I commented that we have a few things in common. And today, I will share with you some of those things we have in common to reinforce to you that I know some of the challenges that Colonel Watson endured. The first thing we have in common is that we both received our commission and bachelor's degree from the University of Guam. But I was 10 years ahead of her. And here we are today, the year 2025. I was appointed as the Adjutant General in 2015. My connection with Colonel Watson started almost 30 years ago. The University of Guam has U.S. Army personnel on active duty running the Army ROTC program.

I was assigned to the University of Guam ROTC program in the latter part of the last century as the Assistant Professor of Military Science when I met then Cadet Karin Alba. Colonel Watson's military journey began as a cadet in the University of Guam ROTC program. Her dedication as a full-time student and a cadet was evident from the start. And she quickly distinguished herself as

a leader among her peers. The Triton Warrior Battalion at the University of Guam is led by the cadets under the guidance of the Army cadre. Cadet Alba was always successful in her assigned duties in the Triton Warrior Battalion. In 1998, she was awarded a bachelor's degree in psychology and simultaneously fulfilled U.S. Army commissioning requirements in earning her commission as a second lieutenant in the Military Police Corps, setting the stage for a distinguished military career. Starting her commission officer in the Military Police Corps is one of the things Karin and I have in common. We both commanded military police companies. Military police officers are known for their integrity, discipline, and leadership skills. They possess a strong sense of responsibility, attention to detail, and the ability to make quick, sound decisions under pressure. A military police officer's commitment to upholding military law and protecting both personnel and property is matched by maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism.

In one of her challenging assignments, Colonel Watson was a battalion commander for the 705 Military Police Battalion. And as she was commanding the battalion, she was also doing the job as a warden for the Joint Regional Correctional Facility in Fort Leavenworth. The Joint Regional Correctional Facility at Fort Leavenworth is a military prison operated by the United States Army. The prison is designed to hold military prisoners from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. It is responsible for the confinement, rehabilitation, and reintegration of service members who have been convicted of offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. As a warden, Karin oversaw operations including staff management, inmate welfare, security protocols, and rehabilitation programs.

This role requires strong leadership, attention to detail, and a commitment to maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism. This position is demanding as it involves balancing military discipline with the needs of both staff and inmates, ensuring compliance with regulations, laws, and forcing and fostering an environment conducive to rehabilitation. I would say Colonel Watson's biggest accomplishment in her career was a humanitarian mission that the whole world was watching. Her work affected thousands of lives. As a Garrison Commander at Fort Lee, Virginia, Colonel Watson led the effort to help over 3,000 Afghans who were forced to leave their country. They left Afghanistan with almost nothing to live with to go to the United States. Colonel Watson had to work with military and civilian authorities to find and develop infrastructure to receive the Afghans, house them, provide critical support and quality of life services. In addition to helping the Afghan transition into life into the United States, Colonel Watson was responsible for ensuring the citizens in the area were safe.

Another thing that Karin and I have in common is that she has an Airborne badge. Let me explain to you what that means. To be qualified Airborne, you have to jump out of an airplane while in flight at least five times, and one of those jumps was at night. This achievement demonstrates that she has undergone rigorous physical and mental training and is qualified to conduct parachute jumps from an aircraft. The badge is a mark of courage, discipline, and the willingness to take on challenging assignments, often serving in elite units that require Airborne operations. Bronze Star medals are awarded only in combat operations. I was awarded a Bronze Star medal for my service in Afghanistan, and I'm happy to testify that Karin doesn't have a Bronze Star. She has two Bronze Stars. She was awarded Bronze Star for her service in Afghanistan and Iraq. Being awarded two Bronze Stars means that Colonel Watson has

consistently demonstrated acts of bravery, outstanding leadership, and exceptional performance under hazardous conditions during military operation against an armed enemy. This distinction is a testament to Karin's courage, dedication, and commitment to duty in the face of danger. Colonel Watson's education, character, and extensive experience has contributed to her exemplary service to our nation. Her unwavering dedication and commitment have shaped her into the exceptional leader our island needs. Consider the invaluable contributions she brings to our island. Her efforts to aid Afghan citizens, individuals who arrived in the United States with almost nothing, mirror the compassion and resolve required to support typhoon victims rebuilding their lives. Furthermore, her ability to collaborate with multiple government agencies, both local and federal, underscore the leadership qualities essential for a successful Adjutant General. Colonel Watson has proven herself on and off the battlefield. She exceeds educational and military requirements to do the work as the Adjutant General for the Guam National Guard. Most importantly, she has the willingness to take on this tough assignment. I ask that you confirm her as Guam's 14th Adjutant General. Thank you for your time.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, General, for being with us this afternoon. Esther, you can proceed. Thank you. You have the mic.

Ms. Esther Taumomoa: Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Esther Taumomoa. I'm from Agat, Guam. I am a retired Staff Sergeant from the United States Army. I first met Colonel Watson in an environment much like this. It was during the in-briefing when she was to join the 705th MP Battalion at the Joint Regional Correctional Facility as our Battalion Commander and our Facility Commander.

I think of everybody here, I am in a unique position to let you know, because let you know that she is the person to take care of our service members and their families, because that is what she did for me and mine. They say that leadership is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those you are in charge of. She did that every day, that quiet presence every day in the facility. She gave us the confidence to pass our first PREA inspection. We went through the American Corrections Association, the very first one, because the JRFC was a new facility, passed that with a 99 percent.

All of that was done because she gave us the space, the training, and the confidence to do our jobs. And then she did another first. She decided she was going to take half the Battalion out to Fort Riley in the middle of the summer for the first ever field exercise. That's a daunting task in a Correctional Facility to take all of that personnel out. But she had the idea, she gave us the time, she gave us the leeway, and we made it happen.

She saw me through the hardest year of my life. I lost my mom, and I was diagnosed with cancer in this space of 10 months. Within 48 hours, actually, sir, less, of finding out that my mom had passed away, my two children and I were on a plane home to Guam. That is no easy feat in the military for that to happen. You have to have leaders who care to pave the way for you, to get that paperwork signed, to get those loans taken out, to make sure that the mission goes on. The mission went on.

My mother passed away in January. I was diagnosed with cancer in August. There was always somebody to take me to the doctor, to see me through those biopsies, the operation, to finally rid the cancer. When we were on our way from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Irwin, she made sure that she put in a call to Colonel Cruz to let him know that we were on our way, so that we would have the support of more Chamorros, of more Guamanians, so that we were not alone.

She came home to retire, and I was there, having retired the year before. And as every leader I've ever had said to me, if you ever need anything, just let me know. And I remember telling her, ma'am, encourage people to come home. We need people to come home. I know this, because I play a small part in GovGuam. I continue my service as a psychiatric technician at Guam Behavioral Health Wellness Center and she kind of just got quiet and looked at me. Man, I thought I put my foot in it, but I didn't, because she's here. Senators, she's home now. Please, let's put her to work.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much. Marlene, you have the mic. Please proceed.

Dr. Marlene Quintanilla: Hafa Adai Chairman, Senators, my name is Dr. Marlene Quintanilla. I'm here in strong support of the confirmation of Colonel Karin Watson as the next Adjutant General of Guam. I'm actually going to read a letter by Major General Tracy L. Smith.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Please proceed.

Dr. Marlene Quintanilla: Buenas yan Hafa Adai, Mr. Chairman. It is with the highest degree of confidence that I recommend Colonel Karin Labella Alba Watson to serve as the Adjutant General for my native home, the beautiful island of Guam. Colonel Watson grew up on Guam and has had an almost 30-year distinguished career as an active duty military police officer in the U.S. Army.

Karin is uniquely qualified to lead the Guam Guard, especially during the pivotal DOD expansion on island. Karin understands the cultural uniqueness and also understands how to navigate at the strategic level within the Army and other sister services. The tag is not only the Senior Military Leader for Guam, but is also a key partner with the Governor's Office and the Guam Legislature in ensuring the defense of Guam, public safety, disaster response, and community well-being.

Colonel Watson has a proven record in leading large organizations with complex missions and thrives in these positions, and I have no doubt she will continue to excel in all aspects of this new role. Under Karin's leadership, she will enhance disaster preparedness and response, working with multiple agencies, local and abroad, foreign and domestic. She will strengthen state and federal relationships with ease while ensuring she supports the soldiers, civilian employees, and families of those who serve in the Guam Guard.

As an island in the second island chain and in theater of interest, Karin will ensure operational regional competence, intellectual discipline, and cross-cultural fluency. She has a judgment required to represent the Governor's and Legislature's interests intertwined among DOD's operational and strategic interests with integrity. Karin is ready to operate in complex multinational environments.

She will serve with distinction and will act with urgency to ensure efficient organizational process while building enduring security and advantages for Guam and her people. Si Yu'os Ma'åse', very respectfully, Tracy L. Smith, Major General, U.S. Army Commanding.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much. Lawrence, please proceed.

Mr. Lawrence Alcairo: Hafa Adai, Senators. My name is Lawrence Alcairo. I'm here to read a letter on behalf of my father, Joseph Alcairo. Mr. Chair, Honorable Senators and members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Colonel Karin Watson's confirmation as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. My name is Joseph Alcairo, and my military career began in the United States Marine Corps, where I enlisted in October 1989 after graduating from Simon Sanchez High School.

After completing my term of service and transitioning out of the Marine Corps in October 1993, I found myself at a crossroad. I had just begun raising a family, that's me, and I knew I wanted to continue serving this nation while remaining present at home. The Guam Air National Guard provided that opportunity.

When I joined, I was welcomed with open arms and it became the foundation of a career that has shaped my life and values. I would go on to become the first Filipino immigrant to rise to the position of Command Chief Master Sergeant in the Guam Air National Guard, retiring in 2012 after decades of dedicated service. Although I have been retired for many years, I maintain close ties with my fellow Guardsmen, and the Guard continues to be an important part of my life.

I first met Colonel Karin Watson during her initial swearing-in with the Governor. Although that was the only time that we met, the impression she left was unmistakable. I saw in her the humility, professionalism, and steadfast commitment that define a strong military leader.

Her story resonates with me on a personal level as well. Like me, she's an immigrant from the Philippines who rose through the ranks of the United States military through perseverance, discipline, and a deep commitment to service. Her accomplishments are extraordinary, culminating in her selection as the first Filipino immigrant Adjutant General in the history of the Guam National Guard.

For many in our Filipino community, including myself, her achievement is both historic and profoundly inspiring. During my service in the Guam National Guard, I had the privilege of working under two Adjutants General, Major General Donald Goldhorn and Major General Benny Paulino. I also served three years of active duty status with the Guam Army National Guard as the Joint Operations Center Sergeant Major, where I gained invaluable first-hand experience in Army operations and joint service coordination.

That experience allows me to speak with confidence about what effective leadership in the Guard requires. Colonel Watson embodies those qualities. She brings not only operational competence but also compassion and cultural understanding, traits that are essential in leading a force rooted in service to our island and its people.

I believe she will serve with integrity, unity, and an unwavering commitment to both the Army and Air components of the Guam National Guard. Because of our shared heritage and parallel journeys as Filipino immigrants who devoted our lives to military service, I feel especially compelled to support her. But above all, I support her because she is the right person for the job.

For those reasons, I respectfully urge this body to confirm Colonel Karin Watson as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and for your continued support of our service members and their families. Very respectfully, Joseph Alcairo, Command Chief Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force Retired, Guam Air National Guard. Thank you.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Lawrence, for providing that testimony on behalf of your father. Sir, you're next.

Mr. Steve Yamashita: Hafa Adai Senators. I'm Steve Yamashita, born and raised on Guam. And like several in this room, I'm a product of the University of Guam Army ROTC program.

I went on active duty in 1994, retired in 2024, and moved back to Guam in 2024. So it is with distinct pleasure that I endorse the nomination of Karin Watson as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. Certainly a position that demands outstanding leadership for our island.

I've had the privilege of knowing and serving with Karin since 1993 as an ROTC cadet at the University of Guam. She is one of several hundred officers I observed in my 30-year career on active duty as an Army officer. I can assure you she ranks at the top.

I am proud to call her my sister in arms and fellow Guamanian. Karin, as a proud daughter of Guam, represented our island in service to our nation. She did this through superior performance, impeccable character, and through sharing our island culture at every opportunity. She remained engaged with Guam clubs and associations at every camp, post, or station she was assigned. Even while serving 26 years in active duty, she always had a burning desire to return to our island and continue to serve. This is her opportunity to serve her island home with the skill set she gained through years of proven leadership experience.

Like Karin, I'm also a career military police officer and she has a stellar reputation and is highly respected in the Military Police Corps Regiment and in the organizations throughout the Army where she has served and made tremendous positive impact. I have no doubt she will lead the Guam National Guard with integrity, courage, compassion, and respect. Karin is a leader who has effectively led large organizations to the highest states of readiness while increasing morale, accountability, discipline, and efficiency.

She's commanded at the company, battalion, and brigade levels, culminating as the Garrison Commander of Fort Greg Adams, formerly Fort Lee, where she was responsible for over 63,000 service members, civilians, and family members. She also served at enterprise-level organizations to include the Department of Defense, now the Department of War, the Joint Staff, and at the Headquarters Department, the Army Staff, twice where she worked on national level problems. As a military police officer, Karin is no stranger to contingency operations or emergency response operations.

A highlight of her career is serving as a supported commander for Operation Allies Refuge slash Allies Welcome at Fort Greg Adams, Virginia, where she was responsible for receiving housing and providing care for over 1,500 Afghan refugees as they awaited resettlement. Operations at Fort Greg Adams were lauded as the gold standard by leaders across the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and various non-governmental organizations. Karin is a master problem solver and team builder, though perhaps her strongest characteristic is her exemplary leadership ability. She has the drive to succeed and consistently challenge herself and others, making the organization and all around her better. Leadership and team building come naturally to Karin. She thrives in the most challenging situation and only gets better as pressure increases.

These strengths enable her to overcome any obstacle in order for the success of the mission, and as you know, cannot be done without giving your soldiers and families your best. She is a thoughtful, charismatic leader who inspires trust in others. She's a proven soldier and scholar who naturally grasps concepts over a diverse range of subjects. I give my highest recommendation for Karin Watson to lead and serve in positions of great responsibility on our island, but especially as a tag of the National Guard. Thank you.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Steven. I know that you guys are all complete. I know I have a couple I'm going to go ahead and ask. Rowena Santiago, are you going to testify this morning or this afternoon? Okay, how about Ray Villaflor? Are you going to testify this afternoon? No? Yes, you are? Please. Oh, okay. And I think there was one more person that was going to testify. Oh, please. Are you going to be okay? Okay. Okay, no problem. Okay, thank you so much for that. So as mentioned earlier, the committee received testimony from 34 individuals, all in support of Miss Watson's executive appointment. The testimonies were submitted via email or personal delivery to my legislative office, and the individuals include Tracy L. Smith, Major General, U.S. Army. Mike Blas, President, Guam Society of America, Incorporated. Anthony Ton Weilbacher, former Treasurer, Guam Society of America. John S. DeJesus, Major, U.S. Army, retired. Fely O. Andrada, U.S. Army, retired, Frankie J. Cruz, Colonel, S.C.J.S., J45, O.C.S.D. Chief, John Quinene, Major, U.S. Army, retired, Mark T. Simerly, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army, DLA Director, Rogelio R. DeLuna, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army, retired, Junice Dawn G. Hooks, Major, U.S. Army, retired, eleven, oh sorry, Donald J. Goldhorn, as we heard earlier, Major General, retired, our friend, the former Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard, our other friend, Dennis J. Santo Tomas, Colonel, U.S. Army, retired, The Honorable Johnny Cepeda Gogo, Judge of the Superior Court of California in the County of Santa Clara. Nelson Pascua, a classmate from John F. Kennedy High School. Gabriel Cruz, a UOG alumni, The Honorable Jesse L.G. Alig, the Mayor of the Municipality of Piti. Mary Lou San Nicolas Pangelinan, another classmate from John F. Kennedy High School.

Roger Gulac, a personal friend of the TAG Select. We also just heard from Steven Yamashita again. Thank you for being with us this afternoon. Colonel, U.S. Army, retired. Wayne Blas, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army, retired, Eileen G. Flanagan, personal friend and classmate of the TAG Select. Althea Cruz, a personal friend also of the TAG Select. Eloise G. Camacho, another personal friend, Devon Blake, Colonel, U.S. Army, retired. Clint Castro, a personal friend of the TAG Select as well, as we also heard from Rachel. Fred Fuentes, who else we heard from, Fernando Fuentes, Gina San Nicolas, Colonel, U.S. Army. Nicanor Legaspi, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army, retired. We also heard from Ruth Fuentes, thank you for providing your testimony today. Roque T. Salas, Major, U.S. Army, retired. Thelma Flores, a personal friend and finally LovieAnne Palacios, a personal friend of the TAG Select.

At this time, I wish to invite the Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army, retired, to present her testimony today for her confirmation hearing. And again, to you, Karin, welcome to the People's House and you may proceed when you are ready to go.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Good afternoon, Honorable Senators of the 38th Legislature. To my family and friends, again, I am really humbled. Everyone's presence here, all the testimony, but it reminds me of one of the reasons why I come home is because this is what our island is about, right? This is our culture and this is the experience I have had my entire life and I'm really overwhelmed. So this is just really amazing.

And again, thank you all. Shirley's on me. Grapes? I did have remarks prepared, but because of time, I really don't want, it's almost a repeat of what everyone said. I did just want to give some homage, if you will, to my family. As had been mentioned, I was born in the Philippines, but grew up on Guam. I was raised by my grandfather, the late Sen Labella, and we lived in Machananao Dededo.

My grandfather was the warehouse manager at the Jack Peters Corporation. Those of you who were around at that time, it's right up there on Upper Tumon. It was right next to the Chinese school. Outside of work, he was a civic leader. He was a member of the Guam Visayas and Mindanao Association, and then he was also the president of the Circulo Boholano Association. My parents are divorced. My mom retired as a nurse from GMH. So, you know, I know General Cruz and his lovely wife, Jennifer, know my mom. Some of you might have even been taken care by her, or your families might have been.

My father worked as a sous chef at the Dai Ichi Hotel, and then also at the Palace Hotel. My brother, sadly, was one of Guam's COVID casualties in 2022, but he worked as a security guard over at the Micronesian Mall. My sister Catherine, my older sister Catherine, she's a nurse, but she also proudly served our country and our island. She's a veteran, and she served as part of the Army Reserve's 368th MP Company here on Guam. She's since, I guess, not retired, but she did her time, and she's also married to an Air Force Master Sergeant, retired. My younger sister, Kim Alba, was a teacher at the Academy of Our Lady of Guam, and she was also, I think she's going to get me when she watches this, because I always get it wrong. I say she's a copy editor, but I think she's just an editor. But she worked at PDN, and I have to give special props to her, because

when I asked her to leave the island and help me with taking care of my kids, she did. And I could not have done this career, really, again, without the support of my family and friends, and especially her. I have a younger brother who also served, and he served in the Navy. He's a Navy veteran. And a younger sister, Sheila, who's an elementary school teacher.

My stepmother currently resides in Guam and Yigo, and she also was an accountant, retired accountant, at the Dai Ichi Hotel. So that's my family. I think my friend Ron went into a lot of the detail. I don't really speak too much about it, but I will acknowledge that, you know, my life was not easy. But I'm still grateful for the lessons that I learned from it, because I believe that it's what shaped me into the person that I have been, and in how I have led as an Army officer, and even today, and as well as a parent. I am very proud to be from Guam. Everywhere I go, I always try and connect. You know, when you're on the mainland, the best way to do that is just have the, you know, your Guam Seal sticker, or, you know, whatever the case may be. And my pari, actually, we found each other in Fort Leavenworth, or yeah, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He saw my truck. He didn't know that was me, but he saw the Guam Seal, so he tailed me, and then we linked up, and that's how we do it back there. Or, as one of my other good friends from Guam does, you know, he had access to a roster, and he just looked for all the 586 numbers. But I've always made sure that I found a connection with Guam everywhere I went, and that even included on deployments. My family, you know, my husband and my kids, I have their full support for this assignment. They love Guam just as much as I do. As an example, I will share that when we came home for my brother's funeral, my son, again, because he had lived here for a short bit, went and he got a tattoo. I didn't know what he was going to get until his session was over, and when he came out, he had a large arm sleeve of the Guam Seal. So, that is my family, ladies and gentlemen. I'm not going to go into my, you know, my military bio and what I've done. I think I know I provided your offices all with a copy, and all the support, the village that I have that has raised me all this time and throughout my career has already spoken on it. So, that concludes a little bit about myself that I want to share, and I'm open to questions.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Karin, and let me first off, I'd like to recognize those Senators that joined us today, our colleague Sabina Perez, thank you for being with us this afternoon, and also another member of the Committee of the National Guard and the Speaker of the Guam Legislature, Frank Blas, Jr., is also with us this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, thank you for being with us. So, the order of questioning will begin with our Senators.

Each will have five minutes to ask their questions. The time allotted to each Senator will not include the responses that are provided by our tag select. And again, I'll remind everyone that the personal inferences about the character or motive of any Senator or any individual commenting is not permitted.

And with that said, I'm going to begin the questioning, and I just want to just start with this. I saw you at the State Funeral today for our friend, Mr. Calvo, and I noticed two things when you, or three things, when you walked into the building this morning. The first is over your right shoulder, because I saw you when you were going up to the, and obviously there was an explanation about jumping out of a plane. But probably more importantly are the two buttons that sit below the pockets, and people can't see it, but one, if I'm not mistaken, looks like the Joint Chiefs, basically all of those who ever served for one year have that, showing your role as

serving the Joint Chiefs of Staff to our great country. So I want to thank you for your service. But probably more importantly is the one on the other side, which is serving at the highest levels of the United States Army. That, and very few people, those who do, have that, and you will have it after, it will be on your uniform until, you know, you're into the ground at this point. But I noticed those today, Karin, and I just want to say, first off, thank you for your service. And those things are big symbols, and not just of symbols of those organizations, but of your commitment to serving the United States of America. So I just want to say that at the very beginning.

So I guess let me just ask my very first question, and where you see it from, what are the priorities of the Army and Air National Guards in Guam as you see it, Karin?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Senator, so coming in, I, it's only been a few weeks, but I'm, a lot of my focus is trying to figure out, understand the organization and see where it's at. So some of my priorities, I think, has to deal with the personnel that are in the Guard. What I have found thus far is that we, there is a gap amongst the ranks, there, where we are not going to be able to fill some positions as we would normally like. And, but I mean that with, with, with officers, for example, who have gone through the right professional military education, the job experiences and so that's something that is a priority of mine, because it's, it's not really even about now, it's about the future. So it's building that bench of talented individuals, which we have a lot of in the Guam National Guard, and making sure that there is future leadership in the organization and so I, that's my focus areas for both the officer and the enlisted side. Another priority is, of course, homeland defense. That's why we're here. That is our purpose and I firmly believe that we have a short opportunity, a short window of opportunity, where the attention of the Indo-Pacific area is going to shift and, and so what I would like to do is try and take advantage of that as much as possible so that Guam can benefit, the Guam National Guard and our island can benefit from that, and making sure that we're able to protect our island from threats, whether it's, you know, the People's Republic of China, whether it's, you know, a natural disaster, we have to be ready for that. Recognizing also that many of our guardsmen also have critical roles within our community. So trying to understand and come up with a feasible and viable plan where we can, in fact, protect and defend our people with what we have.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Karin. Our state partnerships with folks like the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and our longtime friends in the Republic of the Philippines, where do you see these relationships in the near future?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I would like to see them grow. I think we have a strong relationship with the Philippines, and we just need to continue that. Again, part of the ability to protect ourselves from any future threats has to come from our partnerships. When you think about the, you know, our national framework on how we do things, you know, there's, there's the diplomatic efforts, there's the, you know, military and the, you know, economic aspects, and so it's really important that we maintain these critical partnerships. So what we have in the Philippines is strong, and we just need to continue to build it. I think we're, we need to continue to improve our relationship with Palau and with the RMI and I, we just had a visit with the Tennessee TAG and one of the things that I had asked him was if he would be interested in having his air capabilities, you know, support us, in turn supporting them with some of their exercises, their need for flying hours, etc., where we can then, you know, expose their National

Guard service members, international guardsmen to this area, this regional area, rather than towards Europe, where they have been focused at. But that, in turn, gives us potential, right, to be able to train somewhere else, do some collective training, because we do have constraints on the island. So one of the things that I had discussed with him was, if he would be interested in, and, you know, and of course, we would have to work this with National Guard Bureau is, is maybe we could add them to the state partnership program. Because we are, we do have some limitations on what we can do. But we have, you know, we're part of the 54. So trying to leverage those assets to make to make and build those partnerships and make it better, so that again, we can benefit as an island.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Colonel. Where do you see the National Guard in their leveraging of artificial intelligence as you look into innovation in your army and your air workforces? And maybe there's some things you're looking at already, maybe it's classified, you're not going to tell us or you might have to do some damage to the people at this panel. Maybe can AI be leveraged to support the mission of the Guam National Guard?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: So I think we have to be very careful with AI and that was one of the things that I that I did study when I was at the National War College and even in when I worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Technology is a great tool. But if not handled with responsibly, can often go the wrong way and while it's a great tool, and there's so many things that we can do, we can leverage, we really have to be careful. I'm hesitant to really discuss much of the AI that I know that the Department of Defense has been working on again, for classified reasons and maybe my information might be dated a bit since it's, it's been a while since I've had a briefing on that. But that is also something that I'm working on with the team is to be able to be included in some of those working groups or briefings, you know, at the highest levels, so that we can have awareness, and then as possible, maybe be recipients of some of the, the technology and well, and also being part of the decision making. There are some there are some things that I am not yet quite familiar with. I do have briefings planned with my J six division. We're talking cybersecurity, AI and so, you know, I told you when we met, I firmly intend to have more interaction with you, Senator, and let you know what we are doing in the guard, and keep you aware of what we're doing.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: All right. Thank you so much, Colonel. Recruitment and retention always a focus I think of us as lawmakers and policymakers. But what about when our men and women are done in the Guam National Guard, now that they're a veteran, what are some ways you plan to support the planning post service to these folks who choose to leave your organization while you are the adjutant general? For one, I'm going to give you an example. We have Sergeant Major Leonin, you know, the, the last Sergeant Major, the previous not last, the previous Sergeant Major, who is now working on his retirement. I was asked if he could be by the team to, to be used in a in another capacity and I turned them down flat. And I told them, I said, here is here is a man who has devoted much of his life to our country and he's got less than a year to retire and we're still asking him and expecting him to do things for the organization. You know, we need to give him the time to prepare for that next chapter. I've gone through it. I had a year. It was not enough and here he is, he has less than a year and oh, by the way, he has to go to Hawaii for some of his appointments. So one of the things that I want to make sure that we do is to protect our, our transitioning is once you are retiring, give you the time and space to take

care of that and I know there's going to be resistance because change is always hard to, to accept. But that's where things like saying no, don't come into work right now. Go make your appointment. Go speak to a veteran services officer who can help you with your disability efforts. Right. All of those things, I think we are allowing them to go to tap as early as possible, even as often as possible. I went twice because I, I walked away with a binder and some information and then two weeks later, I was like, oh, I don't remember what the heck they said. So I found some of those, you know, like the financial class, for example, where they talk to you about, you know, your retirement pay is a lot different than your than your active duty pay, for example and I went back to that and I want to encourage our transitioning service members to be able to do that because it is a big change. It's very different than when you're serving in active duty or, you know, whatever whatever capacity you have in National Guard, you know, title, whether you're on. Sorry, I'm stumbling now. The different titles that we have, if you're a AGR soldier, you know, and so that's a really big thing for me. That's an emphasis that I have. And I've already started that within the organization, again, as an example, the command center major.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: OK, Colonel, I only have a few more questions, but training needs. What are your immediate and long term goals with respect to developing or strengthening the National Guard's current capacity to facilitate internal and joint training requirements and how do you do your expectations align with the Guard's facilities master plan or maybe some similar plan of action?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, I think I'm also to start off, I'm glad that the secretary of war has actually reduced a lot of our training requirements. You know, some of the administrative stuff. It makes it easier both for our active duty, our reserve and National Guard soldiers and it's probably even worse. Not probably. It is worse for National Guardsmen because you don't have as much time. You're not training 365 like an active duty soldier is. So that reduction in training is important. I have always been throughout my time on active duty to focus on the basics. Shoot, move, communicate. Whether you're, I mean, everyone should be a soldier, should know how to or an airman and be able to operate their assigned weapon. But within your specialty, you know, being able to shoot just doesn't mean a weapon. It's your radio. It's your computer. It's, you know, your medical skills if you're a medic. You know, the job that you are supposed to be doing. How do we move? Is our equipment, you know, ready whenever we are called on to respond and then also communication. That's really important. Not just speaking on a radio, but how we interact with each other, how the public perceives us, for example. Those things are all important. So I always go back to the basics. And I think one of my plans is to assess training. I do have the commanders preparing to give me a brief on their training plan and how we build up to that collective training. I understand there might be some restraints or constraints on the island with collective training. And that's one of the things that we will have to address and put together a plan that we can present both through the Army channels and through our leadership channels here on the island for how we can get training done to support a National Guard so that we can do our mission. And that's everything from, you know, ranges, land to train on, all those different things. That's really important that we become proficient in our craft. I'm also looking at out-of-the-box ways, again, as I mentioned with the Tennessee TAG, Major General Russ, opportunities to achieve that collective training through collaboration and partnership with other states.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: State-provided education and medical benefits. Recognizing that there's a measure before this legislature, Bill 202-38, that my colleague and U.S. Army veteran, Senator Borja, has introduced establishing a free college tuition program for qualified veterans and dependent children or spouses or qualifying veterans. What specific ideas can you share from your experience regarding additional state-provided support that should be considered to help address the education and healthcare needs of our National Guard members in order to fill any gaps in military-provided benefits?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: First of all, I think that's wonderful. Just because of the cost of, you know, education has just skyrocketed, and it's very hard and I think I spoke with Senator Lujan on this, is where oftentimes we have our young, you know, young adults, young men and women who are graduating from high school. They're not really sure what they want to do in life, but they also can't afford college and so it becomes the last resort to join the military. And so that becomes a risk when you think about the quality of service member that we're getting. Now, there's goodness to it because a lot of times, you know, you find that passion, you find your heart, once you don't know what the military life is like, and then you find it, and you go on to bigger and better things. So I think that's a really great initiative, and I applaud that, and I absolutely support that. I think one of the things we have to consider is not just tuition, but how you can help a student, for example, someone who is actively going to school, with still being able to manage their quality of life. Again, you heard it from Ron Abagatman, you know, went through school, I had a scholarship, but that wasn't enough. And our stipend wasn't \$300, Ron, it was \$150. I remember my, you know, my girlfriends and I, we would meet in the UOG cafeteria, someone would go buy, you know, that \$0.35 can of tuna, and we would collect \$2, and go to the kitchen staff and ask for rice. And that's how we survived, rice and tuna at the UOG cafeteria on about \$2.35, \$0.40. Because a lot of times, you're focused on paying tuition, but everything else kind of gets forgotten. So, so any effort to, you know, on that initiative, I think needs to include that sort of assistance as well, because it really is hard to balance education, any other activities, and then still trying to live and if you don't live at home, you know, how do you, you know, living in an apartment and just being able to survive.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: All right. Thank you, Colonel. Okay, I'm going to now turn the questions over to my colleagues. Again, colleagues, you have five minutes, and I want to go ahead and begin with Senator Borja. Thank you, Senator, for being with us today.

Senator Vince Borja: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, ma'am, for accepting the governor's appointment to serve as the Adjutant General and as the Director of Military Affairs and I'll, you know, also thank you for coming home after your time in the military. You know, it is one thing that I, I was in the Army as well, and I, you know, that was one of the things that I wanted to do when I got out. Although there were other opportunities, right, the military, with federal contracting, I still opted to come home. So I'm happy that you decided to do that and to come home. You know, one of the things about this position, and it's no secret that, you know, the, this position, the Adjutant General has kind of been a position that has been on the, in the news for maybe the last six, seven months and I think one of the, and I don't think there's a question in regards to your, your capability. I mean, with the testimony today, the written testimonies that have been submitted, it definitely canceled a lot of my questions, because of course, even before

today, and when your nomination came up, I mean, I don't know you, and that doesn't mean you're not qualified. But of course, we have to deal with public perception and trying to ease that. So I guess my question to you, and maybe this could speak to the community in regards to, you know, you, not that you're not from Guam, but coming home after serving in the military, not too many people know you, and that's not a bad thing. But what are some things that you can, or what can you say to those in regards to how, I guess, to put into more perspective, like we hired, you know, a superintendent that was from Off Island, and of course, everybody was, why do we skip our, you know, what's wrong with the talent that we have on Guam? So what makes you different, not that you're better than everybody, but what makes you different in regards to what you plan to bring to the Guam National Guard to, and into its community?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Thank you for that question. I agree with you. I am not better than anyone else that's currently serving in the National Guard. I just have a different set of experiences and that's what I bring in. I'm pretty sure it's not a secret, you know, amongst the community, you know, even within the National Guard and with you all, that oftentimes, you know, in the Guard, there is that perception of favoritism. And that can hurt an organization. It's, I would venture to say it's hurting the organization now. Right? And so someone might say that I'm not from Guam and again, contrary to that, I am from Guam. But because I have been gone, and now coming back, I don't have the biases that everyone else who's been here, who's been in the organization brings. I believe I bring in a fresh perspective. It's neutral. My desire to implement processes that may be missing, and also provide full transparency to the organization. I think that is what makes it different.

Senator Vince Borja: And what message would you then, would you want to say to leaders, maybe who, not because, who maybe felt passed over, not necessarily because of qualifications, but maybe because of timing or even politics? How would you, I mean, what message would you send to those in regards to assuring that under your leadership that there's other, you know, there's still room to develop and grow within the Guam National Guard?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, first of all, that's almost been like the story of my life, right? Again, trying to come home, even while on active duty. For example, I wanted to come home and be the, an assistant professor of military science, a professor of military science and I just never could. You know, I was selected for battalion command and was in my first year of command when the PMS position finally opened up. And so I always missed those opportunities to come home. And so I think for those in the Guard, if you're in here, please listen up. Again, it goes back to what I said about processes, right? I can't fix the past. I can only focus on the future and moving forward and so, and I told my command team, my commanders this, I believe it was day two or day two of when I first started. I'm not going to make everybody happy, but I'm going to look at the process and then I will, you know, work with the team to properly align the talent where they need to be. Some folks might not be happy with that move, but it's going to be part of the process, right? Or it will, you know, it will follow a process. It will be standardized. It's not going to be a, I picked this person because I know them and I think that's the best way to do it. That's fair.

Senator Vince Borja: Thank you for that. You know, coming from active duty and then to the Guam National Guard, which is obviously a smaller organization, what do you see as your biggest challenges in regard in transitioning from active duty to a smaller community-centered Guard environment? And how do you plan to address those challenges?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I think transitioning from active duty into the National Guard really isn't a challenge, especially when you're coming home, right? It's, you know, there are, there's just that, I don't know how to say it, but ever since I've been home, I think my white hair kind of grew back to being black because you just, you know, it's just great to be home. You know, so I think it's just, there's no difference. There might be challenges that, again, in every organization, whether you're in the civilian side, whether you're federal, whether you're active duty or not, there's always the same challenges with resources. There's always not enough money. There's not enough people. We're multi-heading so many within the organization, for example and so it's really not that different, but it's just how we tackle those challenges and as I said earlier, I think Guam has a small window of opportunity. Again, while this region is a focal point, to be able to try and obtain some of those resources to help our island out.

Senator Vince Borja: Thank you for that. What are some of your, or what is your strategic vision for the Guard over probably the next three, well, I mean, there's only like a year left in this, you know, and maybe you'll sit over, but at least over the next year or two in regards to your vision for the Guam National Guard.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Yeah. And so I just want to say that in much of my experience on active duty, it's never really been about short-term. It's always been about long-term. So again, as an example, as a Garrison Commander, you know, our public works projects, those are things we looked at, we identified, we planned, but it's things I was never going to see during my time as a Garrison Commander. You know, it was things that would come to fruition and benefit the community three, four, 10 years later. You know, another example, when I was in the Army G8, for example, I was responsible for successfully programming the EOD advanced bomb suit, the next generation advanced bomb suit, basically from start to finish. And that is now, so I was in the G8 in 2016. So nine, well, it just came out in 22, I think, but several years later was when that bomb suit was finally gone through all the art, you know, research and development, the production, and it now has a maintenance tail, you know, so our explosive ordinance units, they have a way to fix things. So I'm not even worried about just being here for a year. I think it's a blessing if I were to be able to stay longer than that. But again, it's what can I do now to help the Guam Guard and to help our island for the future? Going back to what I said earlier about talent, I need to grow the next TAG, right? The next sergeant major. So what I can do now is get people through schools, put them in the right position so they can gain the experience and help them get set up so that they can, you know, one day be in my seat. I don't want them necessarily have to go through what I'm doing, but you know what I mean? So those are things that I think can be done in the short term, but the focus has to be on the long term and how do we get there.

Senator Vince Borja: I appreciate that. And you know, thank you for your openness today in regards to answering some of my questions. And again, thank you for your service and thank you for coming back and being a part of the community. I have no further questions, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the opportunity.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Senator and thank you again for your service. And again, thank you for answering the questions. Now I'm gonna move over to Senator Telo Taitague. Ma'am, you have five minutes. Thank you again for being with us this afternoon.

Senator Telo Taitague: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon to my colleagues and especially good afternoon to you, Colonel, for being here and all your family and friends who are here supporting you. Believe me, this support is not just in this room. I've been getting phone calls coming into my office, you know, advocating for your appointment. And one of them especially was something I just like to read because I thought it was very touching. I mean, you're obviously very well qualified.

You have a lot of experience and medals to prove it. But this was something I thought was very touching. It said, so Karin is best friends with my sister. And she's the only friend that ever really checked up on me in my humbling times, especially when I was homeless. I thought that was very touching as well as another individual came up and talked about the humanity side of you. Because that's one of the concerns I have too with our service members, you know, and thank you so much for your service as well as everyone in this room, you know, that served. Thank you so much for your service. One of the concerns I have is when it comes to PTSD and some of your members who are acting members who go through PTSD and even ones who've retired and what are you going to do to address this concern?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Thank you, Senator. You know, PTSD is a problem. I think our country and those who serve, I think maybe there's a better understanding of it now than what it was before. I certainly know that I'm a huge advocate for our service members seeking help and for their leaders to advocate for them seeking help. I have lost a soldier through suicide and I certainly do not want to have to repeat that again. So, I mean, I'll admit I probably suffer from PTSD from that experience myself, right? I think it's very important that we both as an organization but also as an island to come up with the resources where we can help our people, especially our veterans for everything that they have done, you know, in service to their country. You know, we go places where we're not even asked to go, we're just told to go and some of us have seen some really horrific things. We've lost our brothers and sisters in arms and that is not something that I take lightly and I don't think, you know, any leader should.

So, it's really important for us, one, within the organization where I have responsibility and what I can affect is making sure that we continue to educate our service members about the resources that they have and pushing for it, giving time for people to go to their appointments, you know, that's important because it's so easy to put work first, right, rather than to make that, even that first appointment with a provider to just tell them what you're facing because we don't want to

admit that we're suffering. I mean, what do you say in that first appointment, right? And so, that's just something that I know that I can do, what I can do, what I can affect. It's also, I think, important that for those who are transitioning, so there's a level of personal accountability, personal responsibility.

They do cover that in their transition briefing, the assistance that the military will provide for them if they are suffering and I'll admit to it because when I went through it, that was probably one of the folders that I just set aside and I never looked at and then when I needed it, I couldn't find it because again, we don't want to admit to ourselves that we need help. So, maybe it's something we're on the transition roll or it's got to be continuously fed to our veterans, our transitioning service members. It's not just a one-time brief or giving them a magnet so that they can hopefully put it on their fridge and find it when they need it. It's the outreach and the community support where, you know, they know that if they need help, here's where they can go and not have a lot of red tape, you know, the bureaucratic red tape to prevent them from getting assistance. But it also, again, as you've just seen in the support that I have here, it's just letting people know that you're suffering because, again, in our culture, that's what we do. We help, right? We help uplift and that's been my experience and so I think if it just is finding the right person, you know, maybe one person might hear you say, hey, I'm a little troubled and then they, you know, they kind of just leave it alone but the second or third person might be the one, hey, let me take you over to so-and-so or, you know, whatever the resource is and that's that first step because that first step is always often hard.

So, to sum it all up, you know, there's things I can do at my level and that is an emphasis that I have but there's also things that we as a community and as an island that we can do for our service members.

Senator Telo Taitague: Well, thank you. Is there somebody at the guard now that's a counselor, an office that can be, you know, open right away to these individuals who want to, you know, instead of having to wait at the VA and trying to get, you know, seen?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: We do and actually just in the first week we had a, I already forgot the name of that event we had where we took the picture but that was one of, you know, the efforts again within the organization to just kind of highlight the assistance that's there, you know, suicide prevention, things of that nature. So, we do have that within the guard and, you know, I think part of the issue, not within the guard is depending on how you are, how you transition out of the military, that maybe has an effect on the kind of service you can get when you're no longer in the service and but then again that's something that we as a community need to be able to identify and tackle.

Senator Telo Taitague: Also, with regards to addressing issues related to military sexual trauma, MST and ensuring the safe environment for all your service members, how are you going to address that?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: A lot of that again is outreach and communication. I will tell you that I do not stand for any harassment or assault within my organization. That is just absolutely uncalled for and nobody should ever have to suffer through

that kind of trauma and so that is something that should be taken very seriously. It should not be seen as a tasking if we had to go and, you know, someone makes a report of an assault or, you know, of a harassment. That should be something that every commander and every leader looks into and puts the right amount of effort into and making sure that our service members are taken care of.

Senator Telo Taitague: Thank you and how are you going to ensure that the State National Guard is prepared for both its federal mission as well as the state mission, which is to respond to domestic emergencies?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Senator, and I think that's part of the collective training plan that the commanders owe me, you know, is how do we build up from individual level tasks to collective tasks, you know, focused on, you know, our mission, whether it's deployed somewhere, you know, under Title 10 or something that happens here on Guam, whether, you know, state active duty or, you know, Title 32, you know, responding to storms. For example, the good thing about a lot of training is there is a lot of overlap. So, you know, we might be able to accomplish some things and it, don't take this around, but checks the block for other, you know, training activities. So because, again, we have our constraints with training space and things like that, we have to come up with out of the box ways of training being able to fulfill our mission. But it also goes with partnering, again, whether it's with, you know, our SBP partners or even with local agencies. I think one of the benefits of being the National Guard is we already have folks working for GPD, working for the fire department, right? And so we have folks who have skills and talents that certainly align with our mission.

Senator Telo Taitague: You know, I greatly appreciate you coming to my office and we meet, you know, we met earlier and, you know, I asked you a couple questions that had to deal with your qualifications for being. Well, it's obvious you have all the backing needing as a military individual and very proud of a daughter of Guam to accomplish what you did. But, you know, I'm notorious for asking the tough questions and also doing my research when it comes to this. So I have to ask, you know, because there's a lot of constituents too who have also brought this to our attention. And that is when, first and foremost, the important things about, you know, your confirmation to me is trust and confidence that you're going to do the job that's deserving of our people and our service members. So the question I have is, can you tell me where your home of record is?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: My home of record right now is Guam.

Senator Telo Taitague: Right now is Guam. Okay. When did you retire? You left the military.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I retired May 31st, 2024. So effectively off active duty on June 1st, 2024.

Senator Telo Taitague: What does your current driver's license say?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: It's a Guam driver's license.

Senator Telo Taitague: Do you have a Virginia driver's license?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: No, I do not.

Senator Telo Taitague: So you never got a Virginia driver's license?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: No.

Senator Telo Taitague: Do you pay taxes in Guam or do you pay taxes in Virginia?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Because I claim Guam as my home of record, I paid federal taxes. Yeah, that's been it. It's just been federal. I have not yet. I have not paid any state taxes.

Senator Telo Taitague: So you've been only paying taxes for Guam?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I'm sorry?

Senator Telo Taitague: You've only been paying taxes in Guam? For Guam taxes?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, I filed federal taxes.

Senator Telo Taitague: Okay. Which means?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I'm sorry, Senator. I'm a little lost on that. I think everybody has to file federal taxes and I file federal taxes. But because when I was on active duty and my home of record was Guam, there was no requirement for me to file state taxes.

Senator Telo Taitague: Right.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Right. And then when I retired, I also didn't have to pay state taxes because at the time my husband and I were in Florida. So I was and what we had talked about was I was working in D.C. in the Virginia area. Thankfully, I was able to work remote, but I was in Florida.

So I did not have to pay Florida state tax either for that last part of 2020 or for the 2024 fiscal year because it was Guam for five, six months and then Florida for the rest of the year. Okay. So you file federal, which means that you don't pay taxes in Virginia?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: No, I do not pay Virginia tax.

Senator Telo Taitague: Okay. So that's a tough question. Here's a much easier one. I mean, this is it needs to be clarified too, you know, because there are questions on it, you know, and I was I told you when I met you, you had me at hello, because, you know, I'm a little bit biased because

you're female, you know, and hoorah there. But it's also, again, about trust and confidence in your ability, which I do have now. Are you familiar with the assistant tag and the requalifications that's needed for an assistant tag? And have you already decided who that's going to be?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I am familiar with the qualifications of the assistant TAG. It's, for the most part, similar to the TAGS. At this time, the current assistant or the AAG is Colonel Charles Douglas for the Army. I do not believe we currently have one on the air side. And that's something that I will certainly look at and be willing to provide a recommendation to the governor.

Senator Telo Taitague: Well, the governor's recommendation is for the assistant TAG on the Army side. Now, the air side, right? Yeah, that side is strictly on you.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Yes, you're right.

Senator Telo Taitague: It's strictly on you. So have you had anybody in mind for the...

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I actually do and she is and she is also a daughter of a...*(Senator Telo) yay*. She's also a...*(Senator Telo) again brownie point*. Yes, I have discussed it with her and it's it is certainly something that she is willing to step up and do. I think that's just a matter again, it's important that we follow the process. So you know, following the messages for promotions and things of that nature. That is something that we are working on.

Senator Telo Taitague: Okay. And again, the assistant TAG has different a little bit different qualifications than, than your, your qualification that has to do with residency, you know, on Guam or being here for a while on Guam and you said there's someone currently in that position right now. Was that appointed by you or recommended, recommended by you? Or is that someone who's been there before you came?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I believe Colonel Charles Douglas was appointed in May.

Senator Telo Taitague: Okay, so before you came?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Before I came, yes.

Senator Telo Taitague: Okay, so you still have that option to make a recommendation, right?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Yes, but I don't think it would be appropriate to do that right now without giving him a fair assessment. I'm sure he is he is, you know, he is right for the job.

Senator Telo Taitague: Well, I'm pretty sure you're going to be doing that. Because one of the things that you mentioned earlier was the gap in officers, you know, and trying to fill those areas. So I think I am confident that you're going to make sure that whoever you do recommend, whether to keep the same person or recommend it's going to be somebody that has to basically

follow your lead, that's going to be very difficult, you know, with all your background. So again, I appreciate you coming back home to answer the call of the governor to serve in this position. But in the event, something should happen that you're not able to serve in this position, do you plan on staying on Guam or or go back to Virginia?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: So that's something that, you know, it's a personal decision my husband and I have to make, because our focus so far has been moving to Guam. You know, he is he's currently still in Florida, but we are making the plans to move for him to come here, which includes...so my husband and I also take care of his mother, she lives with us. And so we cannot bring her to Guam. So one of our considerations, one of the reasons why he's not here is because we have to take care of her. And so how are we going to do that so that he can come here, we have a plan, we just have to execute it. So to just kind of jump and say, well, okay, stop, we're not going to do that. What are we going to do next? That has not been our focus. You know, our focus, again, it's coming here to Guam, doing the best job that I can do in whatever time I have in this position. And then and then if anything changes, then we would have to then refocus on that. But we have not.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Senator, your time is up.

Senator Telo Taitague: Yes, I just wanted to say thank you again so much. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Senator, for your questions and thank you again, Colonel for answering. I'll move on to Senator Chris Duenas. Senator, thank you for being with us and you have five minutes.

Senator Chris Duenas: Si Yu'os ma'åse' Mr. Chair, and I first want to start by saying welcome home, Colonel Watson. You certainly have brought out the who's who today in your support. And so I want to start by saying, first of all, you had me at being an Islander. Go Islanders. I know we have at least one fellow 85 in the group here. We're a little older than you. And the second is once again, like I said with General Diron Cruz, General Leon Guerrero, and also as we affectionately call him General Goldie, to have written General Goldhorn in your behalf, certainly speaks well in terms of your qualifications and the impression that you have made on others in terms of serving in this capacity. Thank you for accepting the Governor's nomination. I also got to say knowing that you're you described your family very affectionately and your mother having been a nurse. My wife is a critical care nurse at GMH. So, so many points are being ticked up here in terms of my vote for your confirmation. But most importantly, I just wanted to tell you that today I came here to listen and to learn. I don't have a lot of questions and one of the reasons why is because like with General Cruz and Goldie and General Leon Guerrero, I've spent a lot of time with the Guard and so I really have a very adept, you know, knowledge of the inner workings and the professional organization that it is. And I got to say, I'm very, very proud of the Guam Guard and I'm sure you are too. They serve honorably and they're very, very good at what they do. So I'm just going to ask a couple questions from my perch in terms of and also kind of go off of something that you mentioned that I think is really, really, really critical. One is, and I want you to maybe go a little bit more in depth. I'm so happy and proud that you've talked about succession planning because I think that it's so critical. In the

briefings that we've had, the two briefings that we've had with the outgoing and once again, a very wonderful individual, Dr. Mike Cruz, General Cruz, and the briefings that we had and from all the command staff that have come in, it's been very clear the mission and they've talked that about, and many of them were talking about their movement towards retirement. So could you just go in a little bit more depth in terms of what you've been able to see so far and what some of your plans are in terms of that succession planning and how you see the readiness at this point?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: So full disclosure, I do have my personal lay down scheduled for December 15th with my J1 team. And that's because at least this first couple of weeks, it's just been the here's a gap, here's a gap, here's a gap. And I think it would be the wrong approach would be just, hey, let's put this person in this spot, not realizing the second and third order effects of that move. So I think it's really important that I do a complete lay down of where we're at on our officers in our enlisted positions and then again, following processes, identify a way to fill those gaps and then at the same time, encouraging our officers and NCOs to go through their professional military education, so that it ties in with the experience that I'm trying to give them in the different positions within the Guard, so that again, they can advance and hopefully, you know, achieve, you know, whether it's the Senior Enlisted Advisor, you know, the TAG, the AAG, you know, there's, you can, being a Colonel or being a Command Sergeant Major, yes, that's success. But even just, even being a Lieutenant Colonel is a success. Being a Staff Sergeant Major is a success. As Sergeant Major Santiago had said, it's not easy. So again, we have the talent. I saw that day one and like a lot of folks, I've heard about it, and I met people all along the way. So I know the talent is there. It's just making sure we make the moves correctly and the right way.

Senator Chris Duenas: Yeah, I ask you this question because I think many are looking to what they might expect of your leadership. And that's jumped out at me, because I know it's just so important. I think what I've seen is when you're looking at your soldiers and you're looking at, you know, the opportunities, when you have a plan, and when you look at how you got to build out the organization for continuity in the future, it gives a lot of incentive to those that are in the younger ranks, that they see promise of not only promotion, but the buy-in and their capability for them to continue in the organization. So I wanted to say that that's a hallmark of what you've mentioned. Your immediate predecessor had a very important role as a Lieutenant Governor prior, and that was the creation of the Civilian-Military Task Force. And it was done in reaction to the potential, and that now is a reality. Actually, in that time, it was build-up one, and it was huge. I was part of the build-out of the task force, and I led public safety. The chairman here also did a lot of work with the Camacho Cruz administration with regard to that. How do you view civilian-military relations? And I'm glad you brought up also during your testimony that you look forward to your national position as well in terms of Guam's role in the Indo-Pacific and all that we're being asked to do, and how that translates not only to the team and the Guard, but also in terms of the community as a whole.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, again, we can't do it alone, right? The Guard cannot do it alone. So we have to rely heavily on our partners, whether it's the civilian agencies, our sister partners on the island, sister service partners on the island. So I think that civil-military relationship is really important. That's the only way we're really going to be able to defend our homeland the right way. Again, I'm cognizant of the fact that many in the Guard are

part of the civilian agencies, the civilian infrastructure on the island. So it's having that relationship with the leaders in those agencies because we're going to rob from Peter to pay Paul. And so how do we manage that? And one of the things is I was reviewing our homeland defense plan without giving information that's not classified. When you look at personnel strength, for example, too often I think commanders will come up with a plan that starts with your personnel at 100 percent. And I believe that that's flawed because you're not going to get 100 percent. If something were to happen, you know, there's a portion of your Guard population that's going to be affected by it and can't respond. And also you have that population, you know, they're filling the critical need within our agencies, our GFD, our GPD, you know, Guam Power Authority, all of that, you know, first responders. So the Guard can never operate from 100 percent. So one of the things I know I've already tasked to my three is what is that number, and then that's how we start our plan from that percentage. Even if it's 50 percent, again, it's feasible. You know, that's the real way we should be coming up with a plan on how we serve our island, not a lofty goal, because it's not going to work and there's going to be gaps and holes. And so I'd rather start knowing that we're in the red and trying to get to green rather than saying we're green and then realizing we're really red.

Senator Chris Duenas: Very impressed by your answers. I just want to end with a few comments and an encouragement. You know, as the Director of Youth Affairs, I had a lot of soldiers that were deployed, and during Goldhorn's time and even General Cruz's time, that was a time, and I know you know the time, where really the challenge was deployments, and it was significant, multiple deployments from a lot of individuals. But I want to share with you, and I think you already know, you're absolutely right, you have a strong overlay with regard, particularly in the paramilitary organizations of civilian and military service. So you have institutional knowledge of that government interchange between the Guard and what we're doing in the government. You know, as being a brother of a commissioned naval officer who graduated from the Naval Academy, and also a nephew who's also a commissioned officer and actually preparing to serve in Japan under command, you know, I gotta say that for all those who are listening, I'm glad you've had a lot that have stepped up for you, because the truth is, service is tough. And I hope someday, if one of those gentlemen wants to come home to serve, that they feel welcome, and that they feel as though it is going to be their qualifications and their service that they're going to be judged on. And right now, I gotta tell you, I'm extremely impressed, and I look forward to deliberating some more on your confirmation, but it looks very, very promising. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Senator. And again, obviously, as the chairman on government operations, he has a big say in PATHWAVE, especially for the Department of Military Affairs. So again, Senator, thank you again for your being here this afternoon. Let me now turn it over to Senator Chris Barnett. You're next. You have five minutes, and thank you again for being with us this afternoon.

Senator Chris Barnett: Si Yu'os ma'ase', Mr. Chair and you don't gotta worry about me. I'm just a lowly minority senator, but very grateful to hear your testimony this morning and a lot of people that I support have testified in support of you, and I think that's easy to do. Your record is exemplary. Thank you for your service, the two bronze stars. Very, very impressive. In fact, when I say this, I don't mean any disrespect to anybody who's currently serving in the Guard, but we're

very lucky to find you. But I did want to ask, just because like a lot of other senators, I have received concerns from constituents, really, relative to your, I guess, residency.

I know your home record is in Guam, but we had recently passed a bill, which is now public law, dealing with the qualifications for the Adjutant General and the bill, as introduced, had read one of the qualifications, was that the nominee shall have maintained residency in Guam or served in the Guam National Guard for a term of not less than five years prior to appointment. But the bill was amended in committee, and so when it was amended, it was amended to read, the appointee shall be a resident of the United States and shall have Guam as his or her home of record or served in the Guam National Guard for at least a term of no less than five years prior to the appointment. So I guess my question, TAG select, is if the bill had not been amended, would you still be qualified to serve as the Adjutant General?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Senator, I believe that I do. Again, Guam has been my home of record the entire time that I was on, on active duty. I also believe the intent of the, the law was to ensure that whoever takes the position of the tag is someone who knows the island, who knows our people, who knows our culture and so I believe that I fit that.

Senator Chris Barnett: Because the bill prior to amending, as I said, said you shall have maintained residency, and residency is described in our law as where that person lives for a period of at least 30 days, maintains that person's home, and to which whenever that person is absent, the person has the bona fide intention to return. So do you feel you have met the definition of residency?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I believe I do, just because of the home of record and, you know, how the military allows you to maintain that, because they know that you are going, you know, all over and not having to change residency everywhere that you go.

Senator Chris Barnett: Thank you. Thank you for that. I appreciate that clarification. Actually, you know, this was something that was being brought up to me by multiple constituents, but in the opening when I heard the testimony and I heard you talk about your family and all your family members who, you know, your mom's a GMH nurse, your father was a chef at Dai Ichi, might have eaten there a couple times. I get the feeling that you're from Guam, and I just wanted to clarify that, because, you know, it's not just enough to be from Guam. We have to meet the parameters that's set forth in the law, and it just seems to me like the bill was amended.

I don't think it was amended to specifically allow you to be able to serve as the tag, but something in your testimony when you talked about building the bench, right, because I believe we have, there are a couple members of the Guard currently serving who are qualified to be appointed as TAGs, so when you talk about building the bench, do you foresee a future in the Guam National Guard where we could maybe move these qualifications so that we promote the TAG from within, and we make it that the qualifications go to shall have maintained residency or served in the Guam Guard prior to five years? Is that one of your goals maybe when you talk about growing the bench?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, to be perfectly honest, Senator, I wasn't really concerned. When I talk about growing the bench, it wasn't so much on a focus on where that person lives, but based off merit that they have the right qualifications to be able to be the next tag, to be the next AAG, next Chief of Staff, and so it's getting them ready for those senior level positions, higher level positions that I'm concerned with. I think it's sort of, it's inherent that they're, again, with the spirit of the law, that they know our culture. There's a part of me that thinks we may not need that because sometimes you do want to get talent elsewhere, but I'm not a legislator, so I don't, I'll put that back on you guys.

Senator Chris Barnett: Thank you, thank you. You know, one of the individuals who testified in support of you is my uncle, General Diron Cruz, who is from Malesso, and there was recently a bill introduced, Bill 182, was introduced by the chair of this committee, and this bill would take acres upon acres out of the Chamorro Land Trust inventory and give it to the Guam National Guard for the purpose of training in the village of Malesso.

However, your predecessor had asked the committee chair to, I believe, pause on the bill or withdraw it. Do you have any intention in seeking forward movement on this issue, this, you know, taking of Chamorro Land Trust lands in Malesso for the purpose of National Guard training? So, I think I have to do an analysis of what our requirements are first. Again, I already do know that we do have some constraints with training space, and that, you know, even with our collaboration and partnership with, you know, the Air Force, Marines, and Navy, we may still be lacking, but I can't say much about that proposal because I don't know, I haven't been well-versed on the efforts at planning it, and again, that's, as I told Senator Gumataotao when we met, I think it's important that what comes out of the TAG's office is, pardon my language, not half-assed. So, if anything, if that is something that is a need, it's going to be well planned out. We're going to make sure that we talk with, you know, whatever village it is that has the land that we might need. It's going to be coordinated. It's not something that we're just going to drop and ask for without really planning and looking into the impacts to, you know, the community. Land is scarce on the island, so we have to be very careful and protected.

Senator Chris Barnett: Thank you, and I think that's why the Mayor of Malesso and the residents of Malesso overwhelmingly have opposed that legislation, and that's why I was kind of hoping to get a little bit more of a firm commitment from you that that idea or that bill would not move any further forward.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Yeah, this time I don't have any, again, I have not seen any plans for it, so I think it would be a little premature for me to try and ask for it to be pushed if we don't have any real analysis into it.

Senator Chris Barnett: Okay, in your testimony you had discussed favoritism and it being an issue currently based on your observation. Can you elaborate on that a little bit more?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, it's my observation, but also within the first week of starting, I had numerous office calls with many of the senior enlisted leaders within the organization, and they expressed concern on how things were done, and they did not feel that the processes were in place, and so I take that very seriously, and again, as I mentioned earlier, I

told them that my plan was always to take a look at the processes, fill the gaps where we have them, but that it be done following those processes and not just because arbitrarily someone said, hey, this is the right person for the job. I don't know that they're the right person for the job.

Senator Chris Barnett: Was there any transition from the prior TAG, General Cruz and yourself?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: No, there was not. I made attempts to communicate with General Cruz, and it did not happen. That was specifically the intent for the governor was for us to have a transition.

Senator Chris Barnett: Is that in any way, the lack of that transition in any way going to present challenges for you if you're confirmed as the TAG? No, because it happens all the time even on active duty. You know, the timing of things. Sometimes someone has to leave early. You know, family matters obviously are a huge priority for many of us, and so we often make decisions based off that, so not having a transition I don't think is a huge impact, not to mention, again, the talent that we have in the Guard. I'm surrounded by just some really smart people who love the Guard, who care for the Guard and our island, and they will be what helps me, you know, what bridges that gap with not being able to do a transition.

Senator Chris Barnett: You know, there's a lot in the news lately about unlawful orders, and I don't think I could get this off in five seconds, but would you disobey orders that were given to you that you deem to be unlawful?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: And so, you know, I think someone had mentioned it. One of the tenets of being a not saying for the other branches that you're not, okay? Don't get mad, guys. But I think that's also, you know, a responsibility and a role that I take on fully as the TAG. It stops at me, and I have to clearly provide direction for everyone else that works for me before they go off on any mission, and if there is any vagueness, then that's on me. It's not on the soldiers or the airmen that go out to do a mission. So I have to make sure that the orders that we're following are clear, are lawful, and if they're not, it's going to be up to me to make sure that we get that fixed before we execute.

Senator Chris Barnett: Well Si Yu'os ma'ase, Colonel, and thank you, Mr. Chair. Congratulations on your appointment. I really wish we had more time. I mean, this is a very significant appointment, so I'm hoping that we can touch base and catch up offline because I did have more questions to ask. So, Si Yu'os ma'ase, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you so much, Senator, and I think if you're also on her list, I think she's going to come visit your office at some point.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, I was supposed to have an office call with him this morning.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Yeah, yeah, okay. All right. Thank you so much. Senator Terlaji, again, you are recognized. You have five minutes, and thank you again for being with us this afternoon.

Senator Therese Terlaje: Si Yu'os ma'ase, I want to thank all of you who came to testify and to support this nominee. Some of this testimony came from some of our very trusted leaders in Guam, and so it makes a big difference to us because, like for myself, I don't know you personally. Very glad to have met you and to be going through this, but their testimony is very helpful, and so thank you. And they talked about things that, you know, we worry about and are concerned about and assured us of your character, your abilities, and how you can be trusted. And these are coming from some of our trusted leaders, so I take that very seriously. And some of them who we're very, very proud of, just as we are very proud of all of our National Guard and our active duty personnel from Guam, and we're very proud of you as well.

So, congratulations to you. Thank you for accepting this nomination and being willing to serve in this capacity. You know, it's not straightforward. Sometimes it's going to do like this because it's a political appointment part. Of course, it's based on criteria, which they say you are far above the criteria, so that's excellent. I very much appreciated your testimony, Colonel, on your priorities, the building the bench of leadership, assessing training needs, taking a look at the processes. I'm a process person. I love that, so I feel like that's where the fairness is going to come in, and so I wish you the best at that. And I want, I don't know, I've been looking over your resume and your bio. It's very long, very detailed, but very impressive, and I feel like the National Guard would be in good hands because of some of the experience that you've had, particularly, I mean, you are briefing the Joint Chiefs of Staff. You are briefing senior people at the Pentagon on huge scale of things, not just one, you know, like these are large. Some of it, I think it's army-wide, right? And so that's very, very, very impressive, and I feel like those are great skills for our Guard, and I think you know exactly what to do regarding personnel. It seems from your record you were charged with that several times, and very recently at the Pentagon to brief them on what is, how to manage personnel, and how to manage supplies, finances, technology, many, many things. So you've also, in addition to this, you're a planner, it looks like. So planning, leading, it looks like legal analysis that you would have had to do in order to come up with policies that you did. For example, this is army policy or Department of Defense policy, in fact. So I very much appreciate that. Of course, I appreciate the testimony that says you are driven, but you've got compassion, and you are a proven solution, problem solver, proven soldier, and leader, and that you inspire trust. I find that very compelling. You're also a volunteer with nonprofits and civilian communities, and so I really want to wish you the best in this. I really very much look forward to working with you and to seeing the changes or just boosting our very, very hard-working National Guard, and we rely on them so much and very, very proud of them. They've excelled, and we want them, I think you bring to them the opportunity for increased advancement, training, and other things to just enhance what they've already done. Will you be, how long do you intend to serve in this position?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Until I'm fired.

Senator Therese Terlaje: So you're open to a longer term?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Yes, I am.

Senator Therese Terlaje: And will you be needing to go back to Florida or Virginia very often or for long periods of time?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: No. Again, as I said earlier, Senator, we're making plans for my husband to move here. You know, it is the holiday season. I would like to go and spend Christmas with my family. You know, and as I've told my staff, this is kind of a, again, a crappy time to be in because we had Thanksgiving and we had Christmas, you know, and then trying to balance it with coming in and learning the organization, it can be tough. But I have the full support of my family. My husband is aware of it. Again, we're making plans for him to move here, you know, put his mom in a place where she is comfortable so that he can come here and we can live here. My daughter is at Virginia Tech. So are there plans for me to go back to the mainland? Yes, it would not be long term. If anything, it would just be for visits. As I also said earlier, my family loves Guam. My daughter is already like, yeah, mom, spring break on Guam. Heck yeah. So it's just going to be maybe a bit of a pinch in the wallet. But yeah, no long term plans or no plans to stay long term in the mainland. Our plans are to be here.

Senator Therese Terlaje: All right. Thank you for your answers. A lot of our discussion in one of the previous bills that my colleagues talked about are the laws that were passed recently. The goal and the governor's signing of that into law also confirmed the goal was that we want, you know, leadership at the Guam Guard to be someone who understands the culture, the sacrifices and the hopes of the Guam National Guard members and in their service to Guam and the United States. So I think testimony is very clear. And your testimony as well is convincing to me that that you have all of those traits. And so I'm very proud and very thankful.

And again, I'm hopeful that the guard members, because I know how it is, like you said, there maybe they they're. You know, there's a period of transition for them as well or but I don't know, I just want I want them all to see all the work that you've done and to see all the possibilities that really come from, from what you have done so far in your career or over your entire career that you bring to this capacity and in this capacity will bring to them, I think. So I very much appreciate that and good luck and thank you. Si Yu'os ma'ase.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Senator, for being with us this afternoon. Senator Sabrina Salas-Matanane, you have five minutes. And again, thank you for being with us this afternoon.

Senator Sabrina Salas-Matanane: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Colonel Watson, for accepting this nomination. Thank you to everybody that came here and testified. I think it's clear that you have a tremendous amount of support, not just from those that are in the room, but from all the people that submitted their written testimony. And throughout today's hearing, I heard so many different adjectives describe you personally and professionally, respectful, compassionate, you have a stellar reputation, you're caring, assertive, you're committed to excellence, and you're humble. There was one word that stood out to me because it was actually years ago when I interviewed someone that had submitted written testimony. And it was, what does it take to be a good leader? And this person said, presence. And that was Major General Donald Goldhorn. And

I heard today from Ronaldo, I think your roommate, he said, you lead from the front and you lead with presence. And it's the same thing that I heard from Mr. Santiago that, you know, she owns it, she's present and he's only known you, kind of just met you and even me, I just met you, and I can feel your presence and just reading through your qualifications, we're so lucky that you accepted this nomination. So thank you so much for coming home. There is, though, one word that I didn't hear, but it means a lot to me because it's something that I do every day as a senator and that is listen. So how can you assure the panel, as well as the people that you will be leading, that you will be a good listener? One that those under you won't have to fear any sort of retribution?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I think, Senator, you know, being able to be an effective listener is part of being that effective leader. Because if you're not listening, then the only thing you're really doing is managing, right? And so one of the things that, you know, and I've told my team this is, I'm not just going to, you know, make a decision without listening to their input. You know, I think that's important, right? Again, recognizing that there are, there's talent out there, there's different experiences out there. And if I'm not willing to listen to what they have to provide, then I'm stupid, right? And then that blades even further down to our, you know, younger soldiers and airmen. If I'm not emphasizing it, I'm not doing it, then my subordinate commanders aren't going to do it. They're not going to make time for their subordinates. They're not going to be present, right? So they won't really understand what is going on within their organization. So some things can be, you know, from the top down, but there are some things that come from the bottom up. So when a soldier or an airman has a problem and they bring it up the chain, I would expect that my subordinate leaders bring it up the chain as well, so that we have an awareness of what is going on, and then we can tackle that problem together and take care of our subordinates. So it's part of leadership.

Senator Sabrina Salas-Matanane: That's really all I wanted to ask. I think I've heard a lot from my colleagues. So, Mr. Chair, I don't need the full five minutes. I think the only bad thing that I heard today about you was that you were a terrible roommate. So I'm just kidding. But thank you. Thank you for accepting the nomination.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Senator, and thank you for your continued service on the committee, for your National Guard, and talk about a good listener, especially this committee. That's what you get from us, at least in terms of policymaking. So again, thank you, Senator, for that. Moving on now, Senator Jesse Lujan, thank you for being here with us this afternoon. You have five minutes again. Thank you again.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Colonel. Again, thank you for your service. Had a great conversation yesterday. Thank you for stopping by the office and actually, we had a pretty lengthy conversation yesterday. Answered a lot of the questions and all that. So I'm glad not to know you. And of course, maybe, Chairman, I move to adjourn because, you know, she's a JFK graduate, right? So enough said.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Senator, I still got two more speakers.

Senator Jesse Lujan: But again, thank you for your service. Merry Christmas to you and your family as well. You know, of course, your home's record, of course, is Guam, right? And the question being asked of that, whether you're from Guam. And, you know, to answer that question, you know, you've been paying your taxes, big company to Guam, probably longer than some of the folks sitting up here who have been started working, you know? So that being said, that's, you know, again, an on starter with that. But again, one question I'm going to ask you, and you talk about the gaps, of course, in regards to personnel and, you know, the ranks and all that, right? But let me ask you this. Guam is, of course, a strategic location. What new capabilities or units do you believe we should pursue, like missile defense system, cyberspace or air defense enhancement? I mean, you know, this has been talked about. We talked yesterday about, again, the downsizing. And, you know, you have to do with what you had to do in the downsizing of maybe personnel. And I said, man, you know, with the buildup of Guam being the tip of the spear and the buildup that we're having here, there's one thing we cannot accept, that our Guam National Guard will be asked, again, to downsize, and that should never happen.

And so what can we do to be able to help you to be able to, again, advocate for, again, be given the, again, the resources to strengthen our Guam National Guard, again, to be in par. I mean, you know, and our citizen soldiers shouldn't be any less equipped than other men and women that serve in, you know, international services.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Right. No, I absolutely agree with you, Senator. And again, we're in this just really fine period. Understanding how the military, their approach to force structure, it takes a while. It's not something that happens in a year or two years. It's longer than that, that whole cycle. So again, as while this region, the Indo-Pacific is a focus area, this is prime opportunity for us to argue for our growth, to not have to cut positions, because it's vital. You know, and one of the things we talked about was, you know, for example, with the missile battery, with that mission, I think that's something that our people in Guam can fill. Right? But again, it comes back to how are we advocating for that? We don't necessarily need to have people PCSing into Guam. We have people here on Guam, you know, ready to take on that mission. But it's not a simple, the process for it is not simple. It's lengthy. But we've got to start somewhere and fight the good fight to make sure that, you know, if we can get more AGR positions, for example, that would be really helpful. And that's one of the ways that we can grow. That's one of the ways we can meet our mission for defending the island. I really believe we have a good argument for it. We just need to put the attention and the focus behind that effort.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Thank you for that. And again, I don't have any more questions. You've answered all my questions yesterday. Thank you very much for that. And I hope you're able to be able to again visit your family for Christmas and New Year. We're in the same boat. My family lives in the Philippines as well. My wife is an elected official as I am as well. We have an understanding. She's currently here visiting. So I'll go over there once we recess for Christmas and I'll spend Christmas and New Year's with them. So I wish you the best again. Merry Christmas to you and your family and hope to get to visit with them. And again, the decision has to be made in what your husband is going to do, but it can still work in both places.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: That's true. That's true. Yes.

Senator Jesse Lujan: Well, thank you. Thank you very much again for accepting the nomination. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Senator Lujan, for being with us this afternoon. Senator Sabina Perez, thank you for being with us today. You have the mic now. You have five minutes, ma'am.

Senator Sabina Perez: Thank you Mr. Chair, and good afternoon, Colonel, and thank you for accepting this nomination. In reviewing your resume, it's very, very impressive. And it just shows not only the depth, but also the breadth of experience that you've had. And I think one of the things you'd mentioned in your accomplishments, and there are many, there are many of them that you didn't include as one of your top accomplishments, but it had to do with the accreditation for the correctional facilities. And so, I mean, it obviously shows that you have the capacity to manage and lead a whole network of people. And so I am really eager to see how you're going to leverage these networks, if that's possible. Or maybe you can talk about that, you know, with all your experience, is, do you see that you are able to leverage your knowledge in the national scene and, and bring some resources to Guam?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Thank you, Senator. And yes, you know, I think that's, again, has been really my approach at every, every assignment that I've had, is going into an organization and understanding its strengths and weaknesses, and then identifying that path forward and how we can improve on the weaknesses and maintain the strengths. And that's what we did with our, when we were facing our accreditation, was we put time and effort into identifying what those weaknesses are. It wasn't easy, it was a hard or long late nights for everybody. But everybody knew what was at stake. And in the end, it was, it, I know, Esther Taumamoa said it was 99. I was like, girl, that was 100. But yeah, so we can't, which was, which was just absolutely fantastic. But it requires that sort of effort. And, and, you know, one of the great things, again, and this isn't any, not just in the militaries, but your, your ability to make friends and, you know, have those networks everywhere you go. So I know that there are people that I can reach out to if I don't understand or understand something, or if we're lacking in resources and need a little bit of assistance. You know, it might be a bit of a, a heavy lift, to get it to Guam, for example. But again, it starts with just one identifying those weaknesses, and then working again, I've got a great team, you know, how has it been done before I have the knowledge of, again, the respected leaders, you know, that that are were in this room or are still here in the room, who've, who've done this. And they've all, you know, opened their arms wide and said, Karin, if you need anything, call me. Right. And, and the same thing with the rest of the the other tags in all the states. You know, General Russ was here. And the first thing he said was, don't think that this is something that you can do by yourself. At some point in time, one of us has gone through, you know, a similar challenge may not be the same, but there are some things that you can pull. So leveraging those networks, those partnerships, that is absolutely crucial to being able to close those, those gaps, close those weaknesses, and build on those strengths so that, you know, we're able to do our mission.

Senator Sabina Perez: Okay, thank you for that response. And so part of in the the statute that we have for the Guam National Guard, one of the responsibilities is to promulgate regulations when it comes to disciplinary actions. And have you had any chance to look at the current

regulations? And if I mean, with your background, you have a PhD, I think in this, as far as experience goes, but have you had an opportunity to look at the regulations that we currently have? And if there's opportunities for change, because I see that you also were able to take a lead in some of the changes in how, you know, I think in this case, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that you actually implemented changes to that. So have you had a chance to look at the regulations here?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: No, not yet. I actually have the team putting together, for example, all of the policies, so that I can review them. And again, it's going to go through a process that's not just, you know, a piecemeal effort. It's everyone going through, identifying, you know, what's right, wrong, that it meets all the service regulations, whether it's Air Force or Army, and looking through it together. So I do still need to do that. And, you know, there are also challenges with the Guard, right? Because there are some things that, you know, maybe I don't have the authority for, because based off the title, the authority that the service member is falling under. So those are things that I have to balance. I do also have a sit down or an office call planned with our legal team, for them to give me a briefing on all the cases, which not something I need to discuss in this room with the people around.

Senator Sabina Perez: Okay, thank you. One of the things that I'm interested in is environmental policies and practices. And I know you've implemented best practices. Again, I guess maybe it's too preliminary, but have you looked at the current practices when it comes to implementing more green practices within the Guam National Guard?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Just to let you know, sorry, the echo with the mic. I'm really a big proponent for going green. One of the things that we did in the jail was we implemented a recycling program for the food waste, which in the past had not been done. You know, again, it's just looking, planning forward. It's not just about now. It's about years from now and, you know, the effects it has on our children and their children. So that is important to me. I haven't looked specifically at what the Guard's policies are on that, but that is something that is near and dear to my heart. Because again, you know, my son right now is on active duty. You know, many of the folks in the room have kids who could one day join the Guard. So I think we need to make every effort to make sure that the environment, the facility, I mean, everything is there and it's sustainable for next several generations. So we have to really make sure that we take a look at that, you know, new construction, things like that. We certainly don't want to destroy our environment, you know. And so thank you for that question, but that is very important to me.

Senator Sabina Perez: Thank you. And I just want to maybe follow up some questions regarding one of the responses you had earlier about your priorities. And you mentioned that there's a sharp window of opportunity where attention will shift, and we must take advantage of this small window of opportunity. Maybe if you can expound on that.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Well, you know, during my time in the military, you always saw how, you know, whenever there's a new national strategy, things will shift. For a while, the Indo-Pacific was not an area, or not that it was an area of concern, it just wasn't in the top. Now we have it. And when you look at things that are going on in the mainland, I think the focus is going to shift a little bit more that way, would focus mostly, you

know, in the American region, and not so much in this area. I mean, we're still going to be a priority, a threat will always be there. But when you look at where funding might go to, for example, it may not necessarily be to this region. And I don't think we should wait. And we need to go ahead and just jump on it and make use of, again, the attention that we have now. I mean, you know, if you look at everything that's happening in the news, you know, focus on Venezuela, drugs, they're not really talking about, you know, this region as much. So I think there will be a shift, I just don't know when it will be.

Senator Sabina Perez: So one of the locations that the Guam National Guard are deployed to is the THAAD mission that's located here on Guam. And so I guess, perhaps, what are your thoughts in regards to, you know, promoting more green practices when it comes to that particular installation?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: So, Senator, that's something that I will have to take back and get back to you with. But again, that's, I'm all about taking care of our environment, because it's going to be important. So I don't have an answer for you right now. But I know that I will get back to you when we discuss it with my team and really look at it and see if there are any issues and how we can put some attention on that and bring it up to the appropriate levels where those things can be taken care of if there are any issues.

Senator Sabina Perez: Yeah, thank you for that. And the other issue, too, that might be coming on the horizon, although it's not mentioned in the National Defense Authorization Act, is the microreactors. That is a big concern for us here. I know that there are some sites that are already identified. Guam wasn't one of them, thankfully. But that's always a big concern. And so, yeah, just interested to know how you would be able to respond to something like that.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: No, I understand. And again, we'll have to take it. I'll take it back and look into it. And I will make sure I get on your calendar so that we can further discuss it.

Senator Sabina Perez: Okay, thank you. I appreciate your responses. And thank you to all those that provided testimony today. Yes, I see that you are very qualified to be in this position. And thank you for your commitment.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Thank you.

Senator Sabina Perez: Si Yu'os ma'åse'.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you, Senator, for being with us this afternoon. I appreciate your presence with us today. Now I want to call on the Speaker of the Guam Legislature and also a member of the committee, Speaker Blas. You have five minutes. Thank you again for being with us today, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Frank Blas: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Colonel, first for your service and for your willingness to be able to continue to serve coming out of retirement. You ready for the tough questions?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Sure, bring it.

Speaker Frank Blas: All right. You know where the deck is at?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I'm sorry?

Speaker Frank Blas: You know where the deck is at?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Yes, I do. I've been invited to it. I haven't gone yet.

Speaker Frank Blas: Okay, enough of the tough questions. You know, first off, very impressive, not just your military service, your career, but also your letters of recommendation and support from a wide variety of individuals. But let me ask you now, what should we expect from Colonel Watson, from the Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard? What should Guam expect from you in your time as the leader of that important organization?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I think two things. You can expect presence. I will be there. I want to be where our soldiers and our airmen are. You can't, I don't believe that you can, you know, lead an organization and not have awareness of what is going on. So being, and I learned this back when I was a cadet, you know, I made a mistake and, you know, I realized, well, that's what happens when you don't show up when you're not around. And so that has left a really, it's a big lesson learned for me. So I always try to be where things are happening and understand what it is that my subordinates are going through, because if I don't, then how can they expect me to make a decision on it when I don't have the information or I don't have awareness of what it is they're doing? And then you can also get transparency from me. I often have a problem saying, you know, not having a filter, it just comes out, but I'm going to tell you how it is. You know, and the same thing that I had told, you know, the command teams when I came in, I'm going to do my best to, you know, implement the processes and you're going to know about it. And some of you may not be happy, but you can, I can assure you that it's going to be done as fairly as possible. So I'm not one to hide anything.

If you ask me, you know, I'll tell you. If you want me to show you, I will. I have no problem with that. I've always been an open book and that's, I will definitely bring that to the organization and to all of you and to the governor.

Speaker Frank Blas: Okay. On behalf of the guard, the soldiers and the airmen that will be under your command, what kind of a leader will you be for them? What should they expect from you or how? What's, I don't want to say compare, but what is it that they can look forward to under your leadership with the National Guard?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: I think it's just, they can expect me to give them a hundred percent of me. You know, and I think it's evident that I came home without my husband so that I could serve them. I absolutely believe in servant leadership. I work for them.

I don't work for me. And so I will work, you know, there's no real such thing as 110%, even though we all say it, but they will get a hundred percent from Karin Watson.

Speaker Frank Blas: Okay. Appreciate that. Lastly, and appreciate that you brought up that there is a shift in focus, you know, whereas at one point in time, the flavor of the day was Indo-Pacific. Now it's more like you said, in the Americas. Recognizing that, and you're right, eventually there is going to be that shift. We're just waiting for it and what happens. How do you...what are some of the things you're going to want to do to prepare, not just for the shift, but for the challenges that that shift is going to make, that that shift is going to do for the preparation? You've already got the challenges on your own and as far as your logistics, your manpower, you mentioned earlier that you've got to take into account that many of your guardsmen, your airmen, have roles in emergency management on the local side, on the government side. And so you've got to be able to fill those gaps. So how do you prepare and how do you plan to address that?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: So again, it's having that understanding of how the processes work. So for example, for the Department of War, Department of Defense, having an understanding of that lifecycle process for budget, for example, on how we request for milk on and how we lock that in, because at some point you can't change it. And having all of that done and set in a timely manner, so that unless something drastic happens, they really can't change it. And we're on a forward path, even though it's not going to be something that we see short term. It's going to be a few years from now. So having an understanding of that cycle and then really making sure that we put the attention and we get that going, that's really key. And then going back to just working with agencies, working within the team, because we don't ever want to be stagnant. So all of our skills, all of our capabilities, we have to continue to build on it. And we've got to keep growing more. And I was, again, talking to the team, for example, on our lieutenants coming out of the University of Guam ROTC program. They're going active duty and it's like, hey, we're here. OK, I know I went in active duty. But there's still another way you can serve. And I think maybe it's because they're not really exposed to it. The outreach maybe wasn't quite there, for example. So it's going out and having that kind of conversation, for example, in that specific audience, trying to get the talent on our enlisted side. I spoke to Sergeant Major Santiago. It's a lot of the young kids are coming up, and they don't have family who've served. Right? I mean, if you look at it, it's less than 1% of the population. It might be a little bit more on the island, but less than 1% of the population serves. So how are we going out there to encourage our youth to serve? And not even just the military, but within the community. I know COVID has a huge effect on that, and we're still kind of struggling to come out of it. But there's got to be this really proactive approach and emphasis on building our future generations. And again, in the Guard specifically, that's recruiting. And don't let joining the military be your last resort, because you don't have any other plans. All right? But if we educate people and really get them passionate about serving, then I think we'll bring in some really good quality young men and women, and again, grow that bench. So it might not be the next Lieutenant Colonel. All right? But maybe in 20 years, we'll have that next Lieutenant Colonel. Again, understanding there's going to be a gap, but that's just the pain we have to go through because of the situation that we're in. But at some point, I think if we put the right emphasis on it, we have the right outreach, we have the right collaboration, you know, I think we'll be able to move it forward.

Speaker Frank Blas: Great. You know, I know that our schedules have been conflicting so that we can actually have that meeting that we were supposed to have. But I'm sure that we can schedule something at the deck so that we can continue the conversation. Just let me know what case to bring, what kind of beer. I'll just wait for the two gentlemen that are sitting there that have to make sure that happens. Congratulations, Karin.

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: Thank you.

Speaker Frank Blas: All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again for all your support of the committee. Now I want to turn it over to the Vice-Chair of our committee and the Vice-Speaker of the Guam Legislature, Senator Tony Ada. You have five minutes, and again, thank you for being with us this afternoon.

Vice-Chair Tony Ada: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Colonel Watson. Thank you for answering the Governor's call to step up and become your nomination for TAG of the Guam Army, or the National Guard. You know, so far we've got two things in common. We're both Army. We're both MPs and I won't hold airborne against you if I was air assault. It's okay, we're good. We're good. But, you know, your impressive career that's brought you 26 years of service to our country, and now you want to bring service to our island, and that's admirable and I thank you for that. And I think that many things can be, many questions have been asked, and you've answered a lot of the questions. Where do you see, knowing that this is such a short period between now and let's just call it what it is, the next gubernatorial election that's coming up, where do you see taking the National Guard from now until that point or even beyond? And I think it's, you know, are you looking for just the next 12 months? Are you looking for the next five years? What is your vision for the National Guard?

Adjutant General Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson: So again, my focus is, as I think was pointed out, is I'm a planner. And so most of it is in long-range planning, right? So I'm trying not to focus on, it's a fact, I could potentially only be in this job for a year, and I'm okay with that. But I think we have to focus on beyond that. And then by doing that, knowing that, you know, we can set conditions for the next five, 10 years or beyond, that's got to be how we go about doing it. So again, when I mentioned like that short, what I believe to be, you know, that short window of opportunity to get resources for our island, it's making sure that even within that year, you know, I've been able to obtain commitment from whatever agency, the National Guard Bureau, you know, anything like that, that they will support Guam. And it's not something that I would be doing on my own. It's also advocacy from you all. It's advocacy from the governor's level. It's advocacy from Congressman Moylan's office. All of that plays in together to just get the ball rolling. You know, in football terms, I just need to, you know, it's not always about just getting that touchdown right away. It's can we at least get to, you know, first down. And then eventually we do make that goal.

Vice-Chair Tony Ada: Yeah, thank you for that. Because I think that's important, right? And I think you're not just looking at a short-term that is remaining, but you're looking at how is it that you're going to be able to plan for the future for the National Guard and perhaps maybe just like

the speaker said, we can set a time where we can sit down and speak more about it. I just wanted to let you know that there's some people that wanted to come down and testify for you. Eileen Flanagan wanted to, but she submitted and she also texted me saying, hey, can you submit this? And I said, yeah, I'll submit it to the chairman. I know Danny wanted to also mention, you know, but he had to go work today. So, but I know you got a lot of people supporting you. A lot of the general crews that came out, General Leon Guerrero and General Goldhorn. So it goes to show that your support base is strong and all the testimonies have been submitted. I look forward to having your confirmation move on the January session and hopefully we'll be able to get you confirmed and move you on to leading the National Guard so that you can start taking the helm and working your way through and look for those long-term goals. But thank you for your service to our country. And now that you're coming into our island, thank you for your service to our island. And we look forward to voting on your confirmation. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Shawn Gumataotao: Thank you again, Vice Speaker. And again, thank you for your continued support of the committee. I just want to say that publicly and especially in all of this process today. Again, I want to thank you, Colonel, for being with us and taking the questions and I mean, it's an impressive thing to see all of your friends and family that came out in support. And I think that was pretty evident in this confirmation hearing. So again, thank you, thank you, thank you on behalf of the committee.

The Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management and Guam National Guard appreciates the attendance and participation of all senators and community stakeholders in this confirmation hearing for Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army Retired, to serve as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. The committee will continue to accept written testimony on the confirmation of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army Retired, for the next five business days or until Wednesday, December 10th, 2025. Testimonies may be submitted via email to my office at office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov, that's S-H-A-W-N, through the legislature's mailroom here at the Guam Congress Building, or they may be delivered directly to my senatorial office here in Hagana, just right down the road. With that, today's public hearing, which serves as the confirmation hearing required for Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army Retired, to serve as the next Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard, is hereby adjourned. The time is now 5:08 p.m. tomorrow standard time.

Have a great day and great evening, everyone.

III. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard finds that The Adjutant General (TAG) serves as the Senior Military Officer of the Guam National Guard (GUNG) and Administrative Head of the Department of Military Affairs. Through United States Public Law 96-600 enacted on December 24, 1980, Guam was officially authorized to establish the Guam National Guard. Title 37 of the United States Code provides that in time of peace, Guam may maintain no troops other than those of its National Guard and defense forces. Guam may, as provided by local law, organize and maintain defense forces.

The Committee finds that the eligibility requirements for the position of The Adjutant General are provided in 10 GCA § 63201, as amended by Guam Public Law 38-68. Guam Law provides that The Adjutant General shall be appointed by the Governor of Guam, subject to the advice and consent of the Guam Legislature.

The Adjutant General shall have such rank and qualifications as the Governor of Guam may prescribe, and he shall be, or have been, a Federally recognized commissioned officer in the Army or Air Force or their Reserve components in the grade of at least Lieutenant Colonel (O-5, Promotable) pursuant to Army or Air Force promotion regulations and policies at the time of appointment.

The Adjutant General shall be promoted in the Guam Army or Air National Guard, as appropriate, at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, to a grade not to exceed Lieutenant General (O-9).

Pursuant to Guam Public Law 38-68, which became effective on October 17, 2025, the TAG shall be a citizen of the United States and shall have Guam as his or her Home of Record or served in the Guam National Guard at least for a term of not less than five (5) years prior to appointment.

In response to a request made by the Committee on November 21, 2025, the TAG-Select, Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), provided the Committee and the Legislative Counsel's Office with a digital copy of her DD-214 on November 21, 2025, and her Retirement Orders on November 25, 2025. The TAG-Select advised the Committee that her DD-214 is going through the process of a correction. Recognizing the confidential nature of the DD-214 and Retirement Orders provided by the TAG-Select, the Committee invited all Senators to inspect digital copies of TAG-Select Watson's DD-214 and Retirement Orders in-person at Chairman Gumataotao's legislative office between December 1, 2025, and December 2, 2025.

Based on the Committee's review of the qualification requirements for The Adjutant General pursuant to 10 GCA § 63201, as amended, and upon inspection of the DD-214 and Retirement Orders provided by the Governor's Appointee, Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), the Committee has determined that The Adjutant General-Select meets the qualification requirements established by Guam Law.

According to information the Committee received from TAG-Select Watson, she retired from active duty after 26 years of honorable military service and is a graduate of the Military Police Officer Basic and Captains Career Courses, Combined Arms and Services Staff School, Command and General Staff College, and the National War College. TAG-Select Watson holds a Master of Arts degree in Management and Leadership from Webster University and a Master of Science degree in National Security Strategy with a concentration in Cyber Security Leadership from the National War College.

TAG-Select Watson's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal,

Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge, Army Staff Identification Badge, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Citation, Army Superior Unit Award, Parachutist Badge, Chilean Paratrooper Badge, and German Armed Forces Efficiency Badge (Silver).

The Committee finds that through the required Public Hearing for the Governor's Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), the TAG-Select received overwhelming support from her family, friends, and active and retired members of the U.S. Military. The individuals described witnessing the TAG-Select's character, hard work, and determination as an immigrant to the United States, member of the University of Guam's Reserve Officer Training Corps, and record of leadership across key management and command assignments in the U.S. Military.

The Committee recognizes and appreciates TAG-Select Watson's responses and the commitment she made during her Confirmation Hearing, to strengthening recruitment, retention, and leadership growth opportunities for current and future GUNG members. The TAG-Select desires to explore additional State Partnership Programs with U.S. jurisdictions and allied countries, building on existing relationships with the Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of the Philippines. TAG-Select Watson committed to improving GUNG's current capacity to facilitate internal and joint training requirements after thorough assessments are completed, and to establishing working groups for the careful review and potential use of Artificial Intelligence and similar technologies in support of GUNG's mission and mandates.

Based on the foregoing findings, the Committee hereby reports out the Governor's Appointment of Ms. Karin L. Watson, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.), to serve as The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard and Director of the Department of Military Affairs, with the recommendation **TO DO CONFIRM**.