

https://www.postguam.com/business/bordallo-updates-members-of-commerce-chamber/article_c10df832-63b8-11e8-b932-87351e8effd3.html

Bordallo updates members of Commerce Chamber

Meghan Swartz | The Guam Daily Post May 31, 2018 Updated Jun 1, 2018



"I'M OPTIMISTIC": Del. Madeleine Bordallo provides legislative updates to members of the Guam Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort. David Castro/The Guam Daily Post

"My provision in the House bill ensures that when Guam's workforce cannot provide enough medical personnel, we can recruit from off island."

– Del. Madeleine Bordallo

Del. Madeleine Bordallo gave a legislative update to the Guam Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, following the recent passage of the defense bill in the House of Representatives, which

includes \$377 million in military construction spending on Guam for fiscal year 2019.

The National Defense Authorization Act now heads to the Senate. When asked whether she thinks the bill will pass there, Bordallo said, "I think so. Let's just say I'm optimistic."

If significant changes are made to the Senate version, however, Bordallo said she will be part of the conference committee working to reconcile any differences between the House and Senate bills.

The bill extends the federal H-2B visa caps exemption for Guam to 2020, and will include health care workers in that exemption.

"I support supplementing our medical personnel when our domestic workforce is unable to meet our needs," Bordallo said. "My provision in the House bill ensures that when Guam's workforce cannot provide enough medical personnel, we can recruit from off island."

Former Sen. Robert Klitzkie, however, said even if the exemption is extended, that doesn't mean more H-2B workers will get approved by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Klitzkie said USCIS is "just denying apparently everything that was routinely granted in the past."

He did say he believes the economic boost from the Marine Corps' move to Guam could solve many of the island's financial issues. Nearly 5,000 Marines and about 1,300 family members are being moved to a new base on Guam to reduce the presence of U.S. troops in Okinawa, a move estimated to cost \$8 billion, Post files show.

Chief of Staff Adam Carbullido said Bordallo's office has written to USCIS to request clear guidance in regard to a previous court ruling requiring USCIS to stop its blanket denial of H-2B petitions.

'Net-negative' promise

Bordallo also said certain provisions within the NDAA will hold the U.S. Navy accountable, requiring them to adhere to a "net-negative" promise to return military land on the island back to the local government if it is no longer necessary for national security.

The defense bill would require a date to be set, by which point the Navy would promise to return the land, though that date would be set by the Navy.

The bill also includes language that would "require that the Navy conduct its repairs in American

shipyards, including here on Guam," rather than going to foreign shipyards.

"We must have a strong ship-repair capability in Guam," Bordallo said, in order to support military efforts in the region as well as local workers.

Meghan Swartz