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## Guam realtors mark 50 years of fair housing

Jamie Ward | The Guam Daily Post Jun 1, 2018 Updated Jun 1, 2018



RESOLUTION: A Fair Housing Congressional Resolution is presented by Del. Madeleine Bordallo during the Guam Association of Realtors Brokers Forum on Thursday at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort. From left, GAR past President Maria Miller, Bordallo, GAR President Christopher Felix and Chief Executive Officer and Government Affairs Director Peggy Llagas. Dontana Keraskes/The Guam Daily Post

The Guam Association of Realtors celebrated a historical anniversary at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort on Thursday by bringing in Guam's congressional delegate, who happened to be celebrating an anniversary of her own.

The event was the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, with which Del. Madeleine Bordallo shares her birthday.

With 465 licensed realtors on Guam, Bordallo spoke initially of her recent resolution in partnership

with GAR as read to Congress to commemorate the Fair Housing Act's anniversary. The act "enunciates a national policy of fair housing for all who live in the United States," Bordallo said.

Bordallo, who's running for re-election, dove into legislative updates that she thought would be of concern to GAR members. She discussed last week's approval by the U.S. House of Representatives of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019, which approves \$377 million in military construction spending on Guam in fiscal 2019, and which now goes to the Senate.

"Guam got everything it asked for," Bordallo said. "There were 500 amendments to that bill," she added, but Guam worked hard to keep its provisions intact.

She then discussed Guam's labor shortages and the contentious H-2B visa program, aimed to bring in temporary foreign workers, which she said affects everyone on Guam. She also said the House version of the bill that passed would support efforts to bring in more foreign workers.

"Like our construction industry, our health care industry has been impacted by the denials of H-2B visa applications and it's critical to the health of our entire island – both civilian and military communities – that we have a robust and thriving health industry that is able to meet the needs of all our people," she said. "I support supplementing our medical personnel when our domestic workforce is unable to meet our needs."

She received applause when she announced she was also offering standalone legislation on this issue should her amendment get axed in the Senate.

"You always worry about the Senate," she said. "Everybody does."

She said the single-piece legislation "would provide full exemption from the temporary workforce requirement under the H-2B program for all of Guam."

Bordallo then spoke of her discussions with Guam businesses and how it's too expensive and difficult for them to recruit solely from the mainland.

"(Stateside workers) ask all kinds of questions about housing and other benefits and will their children have good schools, and then they (businesses) pay the price," she said. "It's not fair."

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