



THE OFFICE OF SENATOR TELENA CRUZ NELSON

I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN | 36th GUAM LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURAL
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BORDER
PROTECTION AND
MARITIME
TRANSPORTATION

GUÅHAN
PRESERVATION AND
SELF-DETERMINATION

FEDERAL AND
FOREIGN RELATIONS

Transmitted Via Email:
frank.pallone@mail.house.gov

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

SUBJECT: Letter of Support– H.R. 955

Dear Chairman Pallone,

Buenas yan Håfa Adai! On behalf of the 36th Guam Legislature, I wish to express my support of H.R. 955, the “Medicaid Reentry Act of 2021,” relative to making Medicaid available to inmates during the 30-day period preceding their release.

Our primary adult correctional facility, the Guam Department of Corrections (DOC) faces unique challenges due to our geographic location. Approximately 80%-90% of inmates suffer from chronic care issues and mental health issues that require continuity of care after their release. Early enrollment to public health insurances like Medicaid is a highly efficient measure would ensure that inmates are informed and provided the support all members of our community should have. The facility lacks a full-time psychiatrist and adequate dental care. As is often the case, many rehabilitated prisoners are lost in navigating the health care system and have difficulty accessing the resources available to them. The inability to pay for or access necessary medical care and health needs to treat illnesses such as End-Stage Renal Disease, Dialysis, and addiction, can lead to adverse consequences including relapse. DOC’s recidivism rate is alarmingly high, with data from 2019 reporting that nearly 64% of inmates were previously convicted of misdemeanors or felonies. H.R. 955 is a bold and imperative step we must take to make meaningful change. To work in service of an individual, including those who have previously erred or committed a crime, is to also work in service of our community at-large, and our nation as a whole.

We thank you for your time and consideration. Should you wish to contact our office, please reach us via email at senatortcnelson@guamlegislature.org or through phone at +1(671) 989-7696.

Sincerely,

Senator Telena Cruz Nelson

Chairwoman, Committee on Federal and Foreign Relations
36th Guam Legislature

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