



CONGRESS OF THE
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 23-12

RE: COMMITTEE TO WAIT ON THE PRESIDENT

JANUARY 13, 2025

The Honorable Esmond B. Moses
Speaker, Twenty-Third Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Sixth Regular Session, 2025

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee to Wait on the President was duly appointed on January 10, 2025, consisting of the following members: Vice Speaker Robson U. Romolow, Johnson A. Asher, Joseph J. Urusemal, and Merlynn Abello-Alfonso. Vice Speaker Romolow was designated as the Committee Chair.

The Committee met with President Wesley W. Simina on January 10, 2025, at approximately 11:30 p.m., in the President's Conference Room. The President was accompanied by Vice President Aren B. Palik, along with members of the President's cabinet and staff. The meeting was opened with a short prayer. President Simina welcomed your Committee members and thanked all attendees. Chair Romolow, in turn, also expressed thanks and reported that Congress was in session and ready to transact business.

The President initiated the substantive portion of the meeting by noting that the Executive has submitted multiple pieces of proposed legislation for Congress to consider during this session. He stated that the Executive transmitted an updated revenue projection, and he indicated that a proposed supplemental budget bill is forthcoming. This proposed budget bill will likely include funding requests for multiple items, including a settlement with Palau and citizen outreach visits to certain outer islands,

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among other requests. Additionally, the President shared several other priority items for Congress to consider during this session, including a marine spatial planning bill, multiple grants (including a grant for the Single Audit and a grant from Saudi Arabia for the establishment of a United Nations Multi-Country Office in the FSM), and certain other resolutions (including resolutions for SDP and IDP proposals that were characterized as "critical" to the availability of Compact Sector funds).

Following the President's remarks, Vice President Palik acknowledged certain comments made on the Congressional floor earlier in the day by Chair Romolow, related to the failure of a marine vessel to stop in Chuuk to allow certain passengers to disembark and receive medical care. The Executive reported that a panel has been established to investigate this incident and that the captain of the vessel has been asked to step down during the investigation.

After the President and Vice President shared their priorities and updates, members of your Committee shared a list of Congress's own priorities and concerns for this session.

First, Chair Romolow initiated a discussion on certain pilotage fees that were charged to a United States military vessel that arrived in Chuuk to deliver charitable medical assistance. President Simina and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs indicated that the Executive would work to address multiple concerns related to this matter.

Next, Senator Urusemal asked the Executive questions related to certain negotiations surrounding United States military activities in Yap. President Simina indicated that the Executive understands the concerns of Yap State.

Senator Urusemal also questioned the Executive about \$9 million in funds previously set aside for PII expenses. The Secretary of Finance and Administration attempted to offer an explanation on the accounting of these funds. President Simina suggested that the Department of Finance and

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Administration hold another meeting on this topic with your Committee on Ways & Means.

After the PII funds discussion, Senator Urusemal offered remarks related to the schedules for certain marine vessels traveling to Yap.

Next, members of your Committee discussed various nominations, including forthcoming nominations for the Postmaster General, Public Defender, Consul General of Guam, and certain other vacancies.

Senator Asher then raised concerns about the application of P.L. No. 22-159, related to the hiring of nonresident workers by private sector employers. Senator Asher indicated that he would likely call for a public hearing to further discuss this matter.

Next, Senator Abello-Alfonso expressed concerns about a recent incident involving a marine vessel transporting passengers through the outer islands of Pohnpei. The Executive indicated that it would look into the details of this incident.

President Simina ended the substantive portion of the meeting by thanking Congress for its recent passage of an independent prosecutor bill. President Simina also indicated that the Executive will likely transmit proposed legislation to make certain amendments to this bill.

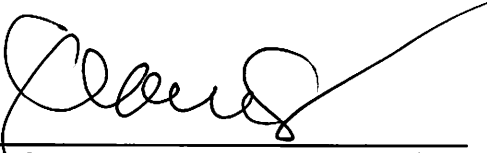
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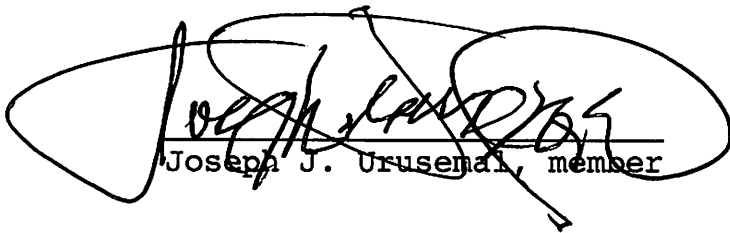
The meeting concluded with mutual agreement to move forward on the above issues in a timely and cooperative manner.

Respectfully submitted,

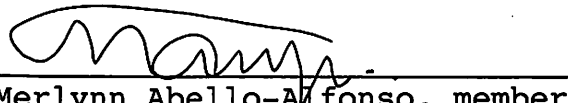


Robson U. Romolow, chair

Johnson A. Asher, member



Joseph J. Urusemal, member



Merlynn Abello-Afonso, member