

Report to Constituents

Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan | Proudly Representing the People of the Northern Mariana Islands

What's Inside:

- ▶ U.S. Workforce Act: At a Glance, p. 2
- ▶ Trump signs NMI Economic Expansion Act, p. 2
- ▶ \$73M for infrastructure brings 96% of Saipan to 24-hour water, p. 2
- ▶ Title I school funding jumps to \$11.5M, p. 3
- ▶ Obamacare dollars keep CHCC open, Medicare funding 'cliff' ahead, p. 3
- ▶ Tinian divert field okayed, p. 3
- ▶ CODEL visits Rota as NPS takes input on proposed park, p. 3
- ▶ Inclusion in STEP grant program nets \$142k for Marianas, p. 3
- ▶ U.S. public laws with Sablan language important to the Marianas, p. 4
- ▶ Vets health clinic study signed into law, p. 4
- ▶ Troop store opens, p. 4
- ▶ Saipan post office honors first Chamorro postmaster, fallen heroes, p. 4
- ▶ Boots-to-Business Reboot, p. 4
- ▶ Veterans resource list now online, p. 4

More time, more workers U.S. Workforce Act signed into law

The Marianas economy will have access to foreign labor for 10 more years and new protections for U.S. workers and local businesses under terms of the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act.

President Trump signed the law on July 24, 2018.

The Act provides unlimited H visas for construction and other temporary workers and resets the number of Marianas-only CW visas to 13,000 beginning in fiscal year 2019—an increase of 8,001 over the number set by the administration.

It also continues the bar on claims of asylum in the Marianas, without which there would be no parole for Chinese tourists, who make up almost half of all arrivals.

Congressman Sablan wrote the Act, together with Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Maria Cantwell (D-Washington) and a working group of congressional offices over 18 months of negotiation.

Sablan incorporated ideas from many hours of listening sessions with his constituents and policies from his previous immigration legislation (*See story on the NMI Economic Expansion Act, page 2*).

His bill also benefited from his decade of experience helping individuals solve problems created by U.S. Public Law 110-229, which put the Marianas under federal immigration control.

"Without a special foreign labor program, the present-day economy of the Marianas is not viable," Sablan said.

"In the future, however, we want a labor-force that is primarily U.S. workers. The U.S. Workforce Act gives us the time and tools we need to complete that economic transition.

"I thank all who helped work out the structure of the bill, particularly how to provide new protections for U.S. workers from competition from cheap foreign labor and how to protect our local businesses and the legacy foreign workers they employ.

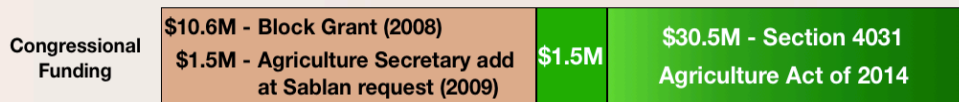
"And on behalf of the people of the Marianas I thank the President for signing the Act and everyone who made passage possible in the Senate and the House."

For details of the U.S. Workforce Act see page 2.

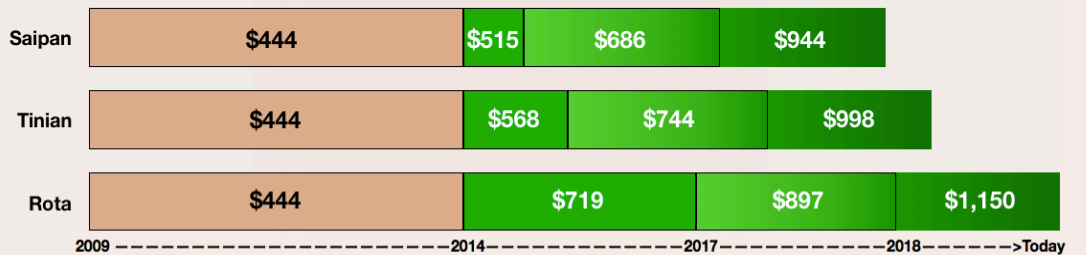


A partnership. Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Congressman Sablan have worked together over many years to address the labor needs of the Marianas economy. In 2014, they agreed on a five-year extension of the transition period to 2019. Public Law 113-235. In 2017, they increased CW permits and training fees. Public Law 115-53. Here, they shake hands after the Senate committee hearing on their bill, the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act, and discuss next steps for the legislation. The bill is now Public Law 115-218.

Congressman Sablan worked for more food stamp funding...



More families got help...



... and benefits grew: \$500... \$600... \$700...



New federal funding means new technology for students. Congressman Sablan discusses with Kagman High School students how their new iPads and robots can help them learn about coding, math, and problem-solving. These tech tools were purchased with the new Title I-A money the Congressman included for the Marianas school system in the Every Student Succeeds Act, U.S. Public Law 114-95 (*see story, page 3*).

Lilili Sablan
PRSR STD

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
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U.S. Workforce Act - At a Glance -

Extension: Adds 10 years — through 2029 — to all four elements of the transition period:

- Bar on claims of asylum in the Marianas (necessary for Chinese tourism)
- Exemption from national cap on H visas (allows unlimited workers for construction projects)
- E-2C visas — originally granted by CNMI immigration
- CW visas — Commonwealth Only Transitional Workers

Protects U.S. workers from unfair competition:

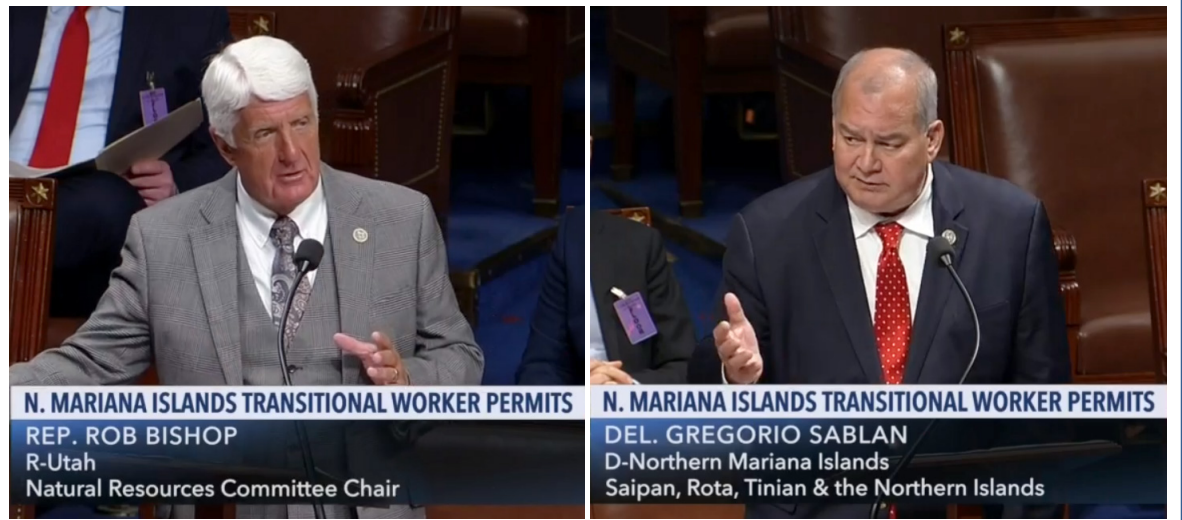
- U.S. Department of Labor must certify no U.S. worker is willing, able, and available for job
- CW wages may not drag down U.S. worker wages
- CW workers must be paid the higher of: Marianas minimum wage, federal minimum wage, prevailing wage
- From FY19 cap of 13,000, CW permits reduced statutorily by 500/year for five years, then 1,000/year for five years
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security can revoke CW permit, if employer violates any terms of employment
- Anti-fraud fee: Increases resources to protect against “bad actors” and ensures program integrity
- Increases fee paid by CW employers for training of U.S. workers
- Increases Marianas government accountability for effective use of funds to train U.S. workers

Helps local business:

- U.S. Department of Labor holds CNMI accountable for effective use of employer-paid training funds
- Protection from competition for permits from surge of temporary workers and from “ghost permits”
- Provides three-year permits for employers’ legacy workers, reducing fees and filing headaches

Increases Congressional oversight:

- CNMI Governor must report to Congress annually on number of U.S. workers employed
- Government Accountability Office audits CNMI Governor
- U.S. Department of Interior reports on statutory responsibility to help identify economic growth and diversification opportunities, assist with recruitment/training of U.S. workers



The U.S. House passed the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act on June 5. Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop of Utah and Congressman Sablan introduced the bill, H.R. 5956, just 12 days earlier, then spoke on the House floor together on the merits of the bill. Chairman Bishop laid out the economic rationale for the Workforce Act. Sablan emphasized the new protections making sure no U.S. worker is passed over for a job because of cheap, foreign labor. The bill also ensures that the Commonwealth government make good use of the training fees that employers must pay.

President signs Sablan’s NMI Economic Expansion Act

More CW permits, more money to train U.S. workers, set-asides for key job categories, and protections for local businesses that employ legacy foreign workers—these are all policies first agreed in the Northern Mariana Islands Economic Expansion that became the basis for the U.S. Workforce Act.

Congressman Sablan introduced the Economic Expansion Act on Jan. 5, 2017. President Trump signed it into law on August 22.

Sablan wrote the Act in response to the disaster caused by Chinese companies using up 4,000 CW permits

for construction, forcing nurses and other high-value foreign workers to leave the Marianas and hurting local businesses.

The Act, U.S. Public Law 115-53, bars the use of CW permits for new construction workers. To fill construction jobs there are unlimited H-2B visas available. That is because Sablan exempted the Marianas from the national cap on H visas, when in 2014 he used U.S. Public Law 113-235 to extend the immigration transition period to 2019.

To bring more U.S. workers into the labor force, the Economic Expansion

Act puts more money into training local residents who want jobs. Employers who hire a CW worker must pay \$200 to the fund to train U.S. workers, an increase of \$50.

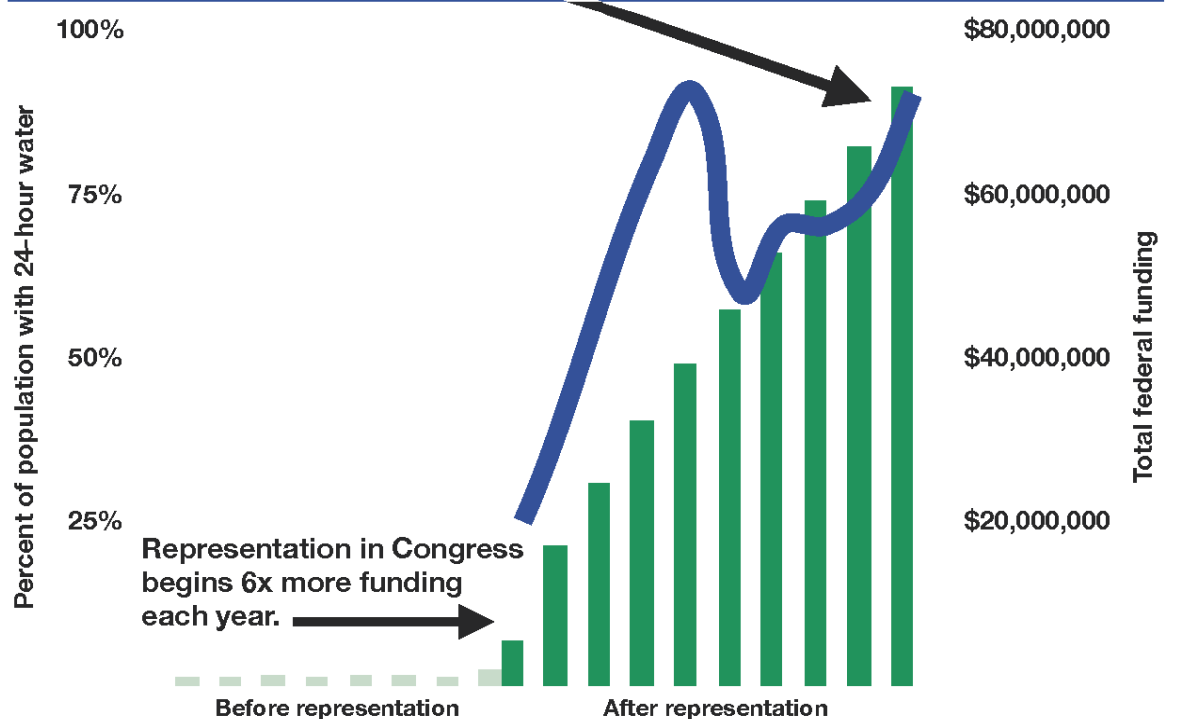
And Sablan’s new law—for the first time ever—increased the total number of CW permits. This increase laid the groundwork for the U.S. Workforce Act, which ups CW permits from 4,999 to 13,000.

In a display of legislative know-how Sablan got the House to pass his Economic Expansion Act in a *pro forma* session, while the House was in its August recess, a highly unusual move.

\$73 million for infrastructure CUC: 96% of Saipan now has 24-hour water

Before representation in Congress, the Marianas only received \$1 million annually for water infrastructure. After representation that changed. Congressman Sablan got funding formulas for the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act improved significantly. The result: more and more households on Saipan have water around the clock and CUC ratepayers were saved \$73 million.

CUC is now providing 24-hour water service in almost all areas of Saipan.
— Marianas Variety, 6/27/18



“I must sincerely commend you for your superior work in Washington to provide CUC the additional funding to continue toward the goal of 24-hour water access.”
- Governor Ralph DLG Torres

Title I school funding jumps to \$11.5M

The Public School System received \$11.5 million last school year, an increase of \$4.1 million because of a formula change for insular schools that Congressman Sablan included in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The change in Title I-A funding, Section 1121 of the Act, continues annually.

PSS used the new money to place 3,000 iPads in elementary and junior high schools. PSS plans to buy another 6,000 iPads next school year and the year after, as the formula change continues to pay off.

"I congratulate PSS for using this new money effectively. Our children need to be completely familiar with the computing tools they will use in the workplace."

Sablan's was the only change allowed in the

The better educated our kids are, the better off we all will be 10, 20, 30 years from now."

Congressman Sablan

Marianas, that have a high percentage of low-income families.

"It took six years of work to make that change," Sablan explains. "It could only happen when the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized.

"I used those six years to lay the groundwork with other members of the committee. So, when the Act moved, I was ready.

That is the long game required for changes in federal law—especially when millions of dollars are at stake."

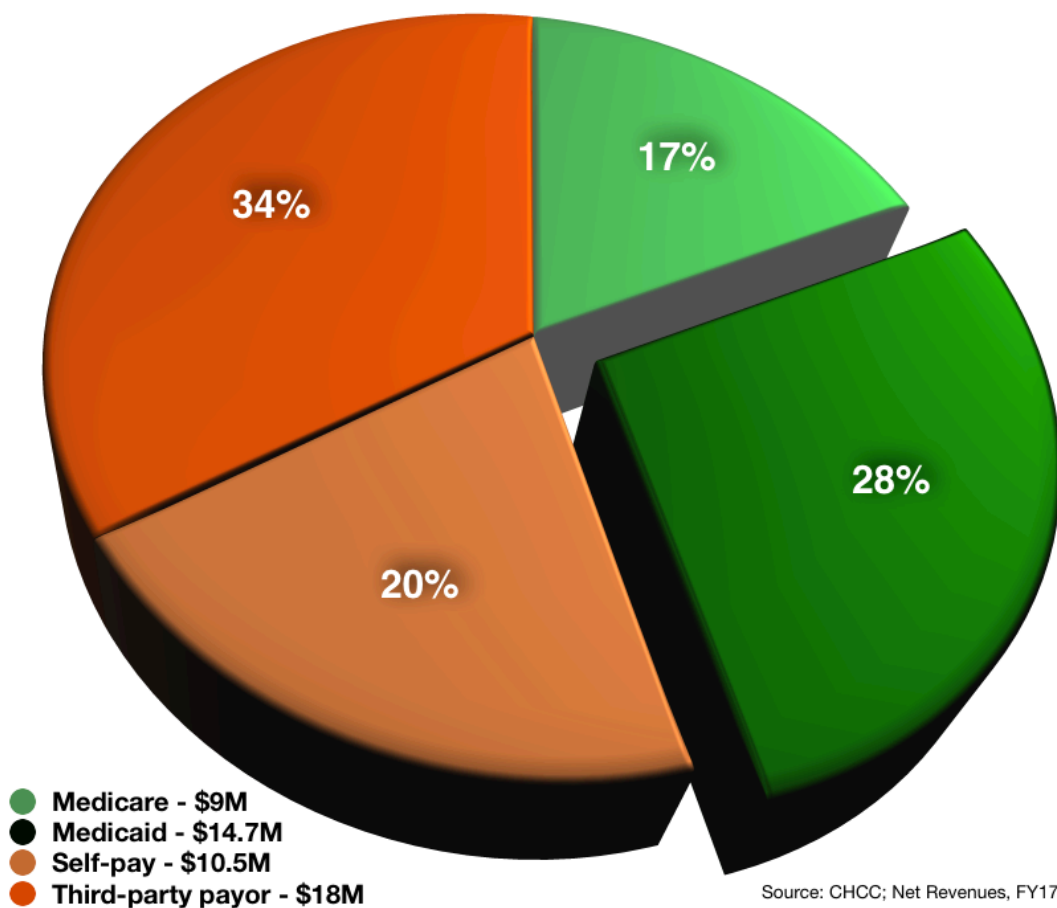
Sablan is a senior member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

"Our people are our future," the Congressman added. "The better educated our kids are, the better off we all will be 10, 20, 30 years from now."

formula for Title I-A funding, though other senators and representatives asked for amendments.

Title I-A is the largest federal education grant nationwide. The money helps school districts, like the

Without Medicaid CHCC is \$14.7M short



Obamacare dollars keep CHCC open

Medicaid funding 'cliff' ahead

The extra \$109 million for Marianas Medicaid, included in the 2010 Obamacare law, is keeping the Commonwealth Healthcare Center running.

The money provides medical services to 14,481 Marianas residents, says the CNMI Medicaid office.

But there is a Medicaid "cliff" ahead: Obamacare funding expires at the end of fiscal 2019. That means the Commonwealth government will have to pay the difference, or CHCC will have to cut back on services

to those with low incomes.

There is a third way: Congressman Sablan has legislation that would lift the cap on federal Medicaid dollars. The Marianas would get the same amount of funding as under Obamacare—or more if the Commonwealth government increased its local match.

"We were successful getting the extra \$109 million—and getting the local match cut by 10 percent—in Obamacare," Sablan said. "Having succeeded before, I think we

can again. We have to avoid the Medicaid cliff."

Sablan was also able to include a better Medicaid deal for the Marianas in the Health Equity and Accountability Act, H.R. 5942. The bill is cosponsored by the 61 members of the Asian Pacific Americans, Hispanic, and Black congressional caucuses.

He is also an original cosponsor of H.R. 676, Medicare for All, which would provide health insurance for all Americans.

IN BRIEF

Tinian divert field okayed, funding starts

The U.S. Air Force plans to spend \$375.6 million on the Tinian divert airfield. And, now that Governor Ralph Torres and Tinian leadership have agreed to the project, Congress has begun the funding.

The proposed National Defense Authorization Act for 2019 includes \$46 million for construction of a cargo pad with taxiway extension at Tinian airport and \$4.7 million for a maintenance facility, a total of \$50.7 million to get work started. Congress has also cleared \$21.9 million to lease 142 hectares on the airport's north side.

Congressman Sablan says the bill could help him bring money for civilian infrastructure to Tinian. "Section 2842 requires the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress what capital improvement projects are needed—'outside the fence'—to support proposed military activity," Sablan explained. "Once we have that report, we can decide what to fund." The report on Tinian public infrastructure needs is due in late 2019.



CODEL views ancient sites on Rota

Congressman Sablan invited Chairman Rob Bishop to lead a congressional delegation to the Marianas in February 2017—and be the first CODEL ever to visit Rota. The reason: Bishop's Natural Resources Committee has jurisdiction over the National Park Service, which is studying a possible Rota National Park. Sablan included the study authorization in U.S. Public Law 113-291.

While in Rota, Congressman Sablan and the rest of CODEL Bishop visited the Taga latte stone quarry and the Mochong village site (pictured above). That same week, 70 people on Rota and Saipan shared their ideas with the Service at listening sessions. The study team is now preparing preliminary findings for review in Washington. In about two years, recommendations will be finalized and transmitted to Congress for action.

Inclusion in STEP grant nets \$142,000

Congressman Sablan amended the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act to make the Commonwealth eligible for State Trade and Export Promotion grants. "Even though there was no STEP funding in 2013, we had been left out of the program and I wanted to make it right," Sablan explained.

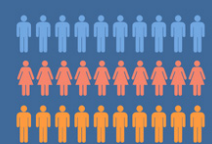
Good thing: Congress is funding STEP again, and CNMI Secretary of Commerce Mark Rabauliman was awarded \$142,000 in FY17. Commerce used the funds to hold workshops and provide one-on-one counseling to would-be exporters. The goal: increase the number of businesses in the Marianas that are selling overseas and add to the value of their products. For more information contact cnmi.step@commerce.gov.mp.

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U.S. Public Laws with Sablan Language Important for the Marianas

1. **P.L. 111-13 – Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act.** Marianas included in Domestic Volunteers Service Act and National Volunteer Antipoverty programs.
2. **P.L. 111-84 – National Defense Authorization Act of 2010.** Section 527: Marianas positions at each military service academy increased from one to two.
3. **P.L. 111-148 – Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.** Section 2005: 30% increase in Medicaid base funding for Marianas, local matching rate lowered from 50:50 to 55:45.
4. **P.L. 111-152 – Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010.** Section 1323: Provides additional \$109 million to the Marianas for Medicaid.
5. **P.L. 111-244 – Guam political status education.** Section 2: Marianas minimum wage increase rescheduled.
6. **P.L. 111-320 – Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act reauthorization.** Section 311: Marianas gets state share of Domestic Violence Coalition grant.
7. **P.L. 111-364 – Diesel Emissions Reduction reauthorization.** Section 2: State share of Diesel Emissions Reduction grant provided to Marianas.
8. **P.L. 111-383 – National Defense Authorization Act of 2011.** Section 642: Authorizes exchange store expansion feasibility study. Section 3503: Merchant Marine Academy congressional nomination allowed for residents of the Marianas.
9. **P.L. 112-239 – National Defense Authorization Act of 2013.** Section 588: Requires display of Marianas flag on military installations along with all state flags. Section 1699a: Marianas included in State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Grant program.
10. **P.L. 113-4 – Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013.** Section 201: Doubles grant for Sexual Assault Services Program in the Marianas.
11. **P.L. 113-34.** Section 1: Ownership of submerged lands conveyed to Mariana Islands. Section 2: Minimum wage increases rescheduled.
12. **P.L. 113-66 – National Defense Authorization Act for 2014.** Section 515: Authorization of feasibility study for National Guard unit in Marianas.
13. **P.L. 113-79 – Agricultural Act of 2014.** Section 4031: Creates Marianas SNAP pilot program, \$32.5 million provided.
14. **P.L. 113-121 – Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014.** Section 10321: Increases waiver of Marianas match for Army Corps projects.
15. **P.L. 113-235 – Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015.** Section 10: Immigration transition period extended from 2014 to 2019.
16. **P.L. 113-291 – National Defense Authorization Act of 2015.** Section 3051: Authorizes Rota National Park Resource Study.
17. **P.L. 114-92 – National Defense Authorization Act of 2016.** Section 556: Marianas positions at each military service academy increased from two to three.
18. **P.L. 114-95 – Every Student Succeeds Act.** Section 1121: Increases Title IA school funding for the Marianas.
19. **P.L. 114-305:** Authorizes naming of Saipan Post Office.
20. **P.L. 115-53 – Northern Marianas Economic Expansion Act.** Increases CW permits, bars use for new construction workers, increases training fee for U.S. workers.
21. **P.L. 115-182 – VA MISSION Act.** Section 213: Authorizes feasibility study for a VA community based outpatient clinic in the Marianas.
22. **P.L. 115-218 – Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act.** Continues the immigration transition period through 2029 with new protections for U.S. workers, local businesses, and legacy employees.

President signs vets health clinic study into law

President Trump has signed the VA MISSION Act. It requires a feasibility study for a veterans' health clinic in the Marianas to be done by December 3. Congressman Sablan added the study in Section 213 of the new law.

"Because we are the only state or territory without a VA-run clinic," he said.

"Health services to veterans have improved

over the last ten years. The VA contracted with a local doctor for an outreach clinic. We tripled the number of local providers in the Choice program. And with their own Marianas congressional office, veterans now have someone to turn to, when they are not getting the help they deserve.

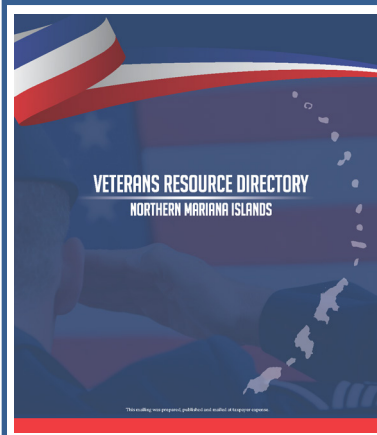
"But our next goal has to be a Community-Based

Outpatient Clinic, staffed by the U.S. Veterans Administration, here in our islands. And the feasibility study can get us there."

The Saipan troop store feasibility study the Congressman included in Public Law 111-383 resulted in this year's new store. Now, the clinic study in the VA MISSION Act, Public Law 115-182, could do the same.



Veteran resource fairs. Improving access to services for veterans and military families is one of Congressman Sablan's top priorities, and for two years in a row, the congressional office hosted Veterans Resource Fairs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Hundreds of veterans, service members, and military family members turned out to connect with more than 40 federal and local providers and learn more about the resources available to support them.



Vets resource list now online. The congressional office has created an online Veterans Resource Directory, to provide a quick guide to the federal and local government services that are available to assist and support veterans, military personnel, and their families in the Marianas. View the directory at <https://sablan.house.gov>.

Post office honors Segundo Sablan, fallen heroes

The U.S. Post Office in Chalan Kanoa was renamed in honor of the first Chamorro Postmaster, Tun Segundo T. Sablan, and all the Marianas servicemembers who lost their lives in the war on terrorism. President Obama signed Congressman Sablan's post office renaming bill, H.R. 5889 in December 2016. A dedication ceremony was held in April 2017.

Boots to Business comes to NMI

At Congressman Sablan's request, a Boots to Business Reboot workshop was held in the Marianas in March, giving veterans, reservists and military spouses the opportunity to learn about the process of starting up a business. The CNMI Small Business Development Corp., CNMI Military and Veterans Affairs, Veterans Business Outreach Center-Hawaii, and the U.S. Small Business Administration helped to organize the event.



Troop store opens. After eight years of work, the expanded Army and Air Force Exchange Service Troop Store—serving over 4,000 Marianas veterans, active duty and Reserve service members, and their families—is officially open. Congressman Sablan attended the soft opening in August 2017 and talked to veterans and military families about services available through the congressional office. The \$2.8 million, 5,000 square-foot facility now features more shelf space, more merchandise, and other amenities. Improving the troop store has been a goal of the Congressman since his first term in Congress, when a study he included in the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act found the project to be feasible.

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