

HAWAII

# FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ DECEMBER 21, 2019 ◆

## SPREADING CHRISTMAS JOY THROUGH MONEY REMITTANCES

COVER STORY PAGE 4



HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

**25** Years of News



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*Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!*

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## EDITORIAL

# Sending Remittances is an Act of Kindness, Unselfish Love

**S**ome gifts will bring a smile and gratitude. Other gifts will go a long way in meeting urgent needs and also come with a smile and immense gratitude. For some Filipinos living in the Philippines, the latter is what receiving a remittance (wired money) from their family in Hawaii during the holidays means to them. Their remittance gifts go toward life essentials like tuition and supplies for school, clothes, even groceries.

Sending remittances is a long-standing tradition for millions of immigrant Filipinos and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). The Philippines exports labor of OFWs (Philippine nationals who work overseas) in the millions, over 10 million to be exact. So it's no surprise that the Philippines ranks third worldwide in remittances (behind China and India); and heavily relies on that income to support the overall economy. About 10 percent of the country's GDP comes from remittances, from OFWs in the U.S., Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and other Asian countries.

During the holiday season, the rate of remittances is spiked due to immigrant families who have left the Philippines permanently (in addition to OFWs contributions) sending money back home. These Filipinos have left their motherland, but have not forgotten the family they've left. Sending remittances, especially during the holidays, reaffirms tight family bonds and fulfills obligations culturally known as utang na loob, roughly translated as debt of gratitude (you've helped me, now I can help you). A kind of quid pro quo, but in an honorable way unlike the example playing out in news cycles at the moment.

Ultimately, the sending of remittance gifts is sharing love and joy, two rapturous emotions that epitomize the holiday season. If love had grades of quality from higher to lower, gift-giving to those who really need help perhaps could be placed in the higher tiers of love because it is unselfish love. It means you will not be getting anything tangible or of material in return, but something of greater value (but underrated in today's western society) -- sincere appreciation.

The Filipino tradition of remittance takes on an almost "good Samaritan" quality to second and third generation Filipino families living in Hawaii who continue to send monetary gifts to relatives they practically don't know except their names and that they are somehow distant relatives.

In the bible there is the parable of the good Samaritan who helps a stranger stripped of clothing and in great need of help. Modern interpretation of the parable is that we can all be like good Samaritans and help our fellow brothers and sisters, even if we don't know who they are.

Sending remittances is also about sending hope -- a hope that the gift we send will make a difference in the lives to those who receive it. To those who send year-round remittances regularly, this is truly behind their motivation, no question. We hear of Hawaii Filipinos putting their nephew or niece in the Philippines through school and college; or of families collecting donations to help a relative with a medical procedure that must be performed, life or death situations.

The image we have of Christmas is the nativity scene where there is the baby Jesus, his father Joseph, mother Mary, and the three kings in the backdrop of a manger. It is a meek setting. As we know a manger is a make-shift structure used to hold food for animals. Joseph and Mary were strangers in a strange land in desperate need of assistance. And the baby Jesus was vulnerable. This image speaks to the heart of gift-giving to those who really need our assistance. We help our loved ones who are vulnerable.

In the west, many of us are sheltered from seeing true struc-

(continue on page 3)

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**S**ending money transfers (commonly known as remittances) to family in the Philippines during Christmas time is a long-standing tradition. In our large immigrant community in Hawaii, many Filipino locals still have immediate family and close relatives back in the Philippines. Instead of shipping gifts, many of us instead choose to send remittances. It is more convenient for us and to family members back home it's preferred because they are able to spend the money received however they want -- on things they really need or something they've been "eyeing" to get for a while.

In our cover story this issue, associate editor Edwin Quinabo says sending remittances is big business and a boost to the country's economy. Millions of dollars (Christmas time is peak) are sent back home to the Philippines from Filipinos living abroad, not just from Filipinos who've moved away permanently, but from the millions of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). In the cover story, some Hawaii residents share why they keep this distinctly Filipino Christmas tradition alive. It's something their parents did and as adults themselves now continue to do. Some people in the Philippines also comment how money remittances can be very helpful during the holidays.

Also in this issue, HFC columnist Atty. Reuben Seguritan contributes "Democrats' Relief Act Would Eliminate Green Card Backlogs." A highlight of the "Relief Act" is that it increases the total number of green cards available. This would help ease the backlog and also address the problems of not having enough green cards for applicants and their families. The Act also has other important features such as removal of the "aging out" rule and a "hold harmless clause." Find out what they are in the article. Atty. Seguritan encourages immigrant advocates to support this Act pushed by Democrat lawmakers. Contact your respective D.C. representatives and senators and offer your support.

HFC contributing writer Atty. Sheryll Bonilla submits "Collaborative Approach to Worker Training Necessary in Today's Automation Environment." In the article, she discusses some of the technological and automation advances she's encountered in her work as an attorney and as a staff member in the Hawaii State Legislature. Implementing new tech can be difficult and confusing at first, but it ultimately makes work run more efficiently. The drawback at times is job skills need to be updated or sometimes positions are eliminated because of the increased efficiency. The reality is that job retraining is constant in today's fast-paced work environment.

HFC columnist Seneca Moraleda-Puguan writes about the 30th South East Asian Games being held in the Philippines; HFC columnist Melissa Martin, Ph.D. writes about the ongoing impeachment hearings and soon-to-be trial in the U.S. Senate. Be sure to also read our news sections.

Lastly, the new year is approaching so be sure to send us your organization's events to be placed in our calendar. For companies preparing your annual budget, please consider advertising in our newspaper. It is one of the best ways to reach Hawaii's Filipino community. In addition to our outlets, we are online and have a large, steady following of readers.

On behalf of the publishers and staff of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle, I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Until next issue, warmest *Aloha* and *Mabuhay!*

*Chona A. Montesines-Sonido*



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## EDITORIALS

# Fight Trump's Proposal to Cut Food Security for the Poor

**F**ood Banks around the nation are bracing for a rise in food insecurity nationwide. Why?

Under President Donald Trump's proposal to change the way food stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are calculated, some 3.6 million people could be stripped of receiving food assistance.

An analysis from policy firm Mathematica says that 9 percent of households nationwide currently on the SNAP program will lose their benefits -- that is a whopping figure that nearly one in 10 SNAP households could be affected.

The new rule change would also affect 982,000 impoverished students from getting access to free or reduced lunch.

Critics of the proposals are livid in light of the Trump administration's recent corporate tax cuts of \$1.7 trillion a year in taxes for billionaires and their companies.

Trump's proposed food cuts would save \$2.5 billion a year.

Do the math and see why cutting food assistance to the most vulnerable sectors of society -- the poor, the elderly, the handicap -- while corporations get a handout, is looking cruel and inhumane.

Data shows that in most

households currently receiving food benefits, there is at least one person living with a disability and all households receiving benefits are living in poverty.

Craig Gundersen, an agricultural and consumer economics professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who has studied the program for more than two decades, said that 50 percent of those 3.7 million SNAP beneficiaries were already food insecure despite the assistance they received.

Inflation and low wages have contributed to many families falling through the cracks and in need of food assistance.

Social services point out that food is not a luxury and the proposed cut is antithetical to the program's goals to address food insecurity in the U.S.

Cutting food assistance to the most vulnerable would have other consequences besides food insecurity for millions. Experts say it will raise healthcare costs and put the poor in a situation of having to choose between buying food or paying for housing. This could also lead to a rise in homelessness, as if it already isn't a crisis in most major cities.

## Strain on Food Banks

To give an example how this would affect food security in the country, Jocelyn Lantrip of the Food Bank of Northern

Nevada gives an example, "at the height of the recession, our food bank helped 103,000 people per month. Now, during the period of 'perceived' economic stability, we are helping 91,000 people per month.

Lantrip said experts anticipate an additional tens of thousands of people would need food assistance from her food bank should Trump's proposal be implemented.

"That's really hard for food banks to keep up with if you have that kind of decline in benefits," she said. "We support people if they fall outside of the safety net, but we can't replace the safety net as a food bank. We're spinning our wheels already, because when unemployment is low people assume hunger is low, but we're just helping more working poor than before."

## How Hawaii could be affected

The Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice estimates roughly 14,000 Hawai'i residents would lose their food stamps and access to other benefit programs, such as free school lunch.

"The proposed rule would take food assistance away from the poorest households in Hawai'i and would put pressure on all hunger-relief organizations, including Hawai'i Foodbank," said Ron Mizuta-

ni, President and CEO of Hawai'i Foodbank. "SNAP plays such a critical role in addressing hunger in our communities, including schools, and it is unlikely we could keep pace with the increase in needs."

## New Rule Change

Under this proposed rule, people whose gross income is 130 percent above the federal poverty line (slightly more than \$16,000 for one person) or have more than \$2,250 in assets, will no longer qualify to receive federal food benefits.

The change would also affect the broad-based categorical eligibility which allows states to streamline the food stamps application process for folks who qualify for certain benefits under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

The proposal also puts new employment requirements.

## Find other ways to cut spending

The stereotype of welfare mothers taking advantage of the system has long been determined as more myth than reality, especially in today's low wage, high inflation environment. Over the years, work requirements have been implemented to discourage abuse in the system. Many SNAP beneficiaries are low-wage working families.

While finding remaining

loopholes to ensure there is no abuse in the system as decades ago is justified, this current Trump proposal is too drastic, sweeping, and rigid that more than likely people who really are in need of food assistance will be harmed.

Implementing the scale of this reform would be detrimental to everyone as it could lead to increased homelessness and put a strain on the healthcare system, not to mention that it's inhumane, particularly where students from poor households could possibly be denied free or reduced school lunches. The U.S. is one of the richest countries in the world and there is no excuse for starving children. The absurdity is tenfold when considering the trillions a year in tax cuts corporations and billionaires are receiving. Or the billions in military aid Trump added to the budget that the Armed Forces did not even ask for.

The proposed cutback is estimated to save \$2.5 billion a year. How much is that equivalent to in the number of weapons the U.S. spends, maybe five bombs and a fighter jet or two? Weigh the value and it's a no-brainer where our priorities should be, if only Americans would pay attention to what their government does.

Stop this drastic policy change. Find cuts elsewhere, starting from the top, not from our poor, elderly, and handicap.

(EDITORIAL: SENDING...from page 2)

tural poverty with slim chances for prosperity. We see the homeless. But in many ways, we look at their situation as a choice they've made, which in most cases are not. For those who travel to developing countries like the Philippines, poverty in many parts is widespread and at a completely different level.

"If only you've seen what I've seen could you understand," a father struggling financially to make ends meet in Hawaii tells his children why it's still important to continue giving remittances to the Philippines. His name was Leopoldo and knew poverty as a youth and young adult before moving to Hawaii.

We don't always need to experience or see desperate vulnerability ourselves to know how important charity is. This was a good lesson that Leopoldo taught his children. And his children took that lesson to heart and continue their tradition of gift-giving by remittances to the Philippines.

There is a last story of the power of remittances. When a Filipina immigrant Remy who regularly helped her family in the Philippines

throughout her life passed on she was remembered for her kindness. When her Hawaii family gathered to video chat with their relatives in the Philippines shortly after her death, they've heard how Remy's help put her nephew through school, how she's helped with family burials there, and example after example how her monetary donations made life better for relatives in the Philippines.

Remy's Hawaii family really did not know the impact that their mother's charitable gifts over the years had until that day they video chatted with their relatives after Remy's passing.

Kindness really mattered, had profound consequences, and Remy was remembered for it -- and so was Leopoldo.

Let kindness, unselfish love shine this Christmas. Include gift-giving to those in need, the vulnerable among us, as the vulnerable baby Jesus in his birth at a manger received gifts from the three stranger-kings from foreign lands.

Merry Christmas to all. Peace and love to all.



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# Sending Remittances Is a Cherished Filipino Christmas Tradition

By Edwin Quinabo

**F**ilipinos celebrate a myriad of Christmas traditions, but one cherished custom almost unique to Filipinos around the holidays is sending money transfers (called remittances) back to family in the Philippines. Sending a remittance is common all year-round but it peaks in the month of December as it is the preferred method of gift-giving for millions of Filipinos around the world.

To get an idea of how prevalent money transfer regalos (gifts) to the Philippines is, data from the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)* shows cash remittances for the month of December last year reached \$2.849 billion, up from the \$2.741 billion inflows recorded in December 2017.

“December is the season for sending back money for loved ones in the Philippines,” said *Union Bank of the Philippines, Inc.* chief economist Ruben Carlo O. Asuncion.

And cash remittances sent to the Philippines is global, coming from Hawaii, the U.S. mainland, Canada, Europe, Australia, the Middle East (primarily Saudi Arabia and Qatar), Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and other parts of Asia.

Looking at year-round remittances, the *World Bank* estimates the Philippines receives close to \$30 billion a year mostly from *Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)*, which is a big boost to the national economy and makes up about 10 percent of the Philippines’ GDP. The Philippines is third in remittances worldwide, behind India and China (Mexico tied with Philippines for third), respectively.

Cora Guillermo of Pearl City is a second generation Filipino-American. Her parents emigrated to Hawaii in the 1970s from Ilocos Sur, Philippines. “My parents, uncles, and aunties would always send money to our family in the Philippines for Christmas. Back then, they’d send a money order. This is before the convenience of today’s online money transfers.

“I recall my parents sending money to both my mother and father’s side of the family. They’d send remittances, but I knew even as a child that it was difficult financially on my parents because money was tight growing up. But they never complained about giving.

“They were happy to hear how grateful our family in the Philippines were when they’d call usually on Christmas Eve, how the monetary gift went to important things like for school, clothes, or farming equipment. My family in the Philippines are farmers,” said Guillermo.

Even though Cora’s parents have passed on decades ago and she doesn’t really

know very well her family in the Philippines, she says she and her siblings continue this tradition of giving remittances during the holidays.

“I’m the one responsible for calling my brothers and sisters for our family’s Christmas donation to the Philippines. I’m the eldest among us. My eldest uncle used to take on this responsibility, so I took it upon myself to do this. I feel good about carrying on this tradition. It’s a way of honoring my parents.”

For many Hawaii immigrants whose parents are still in the Philippines, sending remittances goes beyond the Christmas season.

Waipahu resident Shalimar Pagulayan left the Philippines decades ago in her early adult life to get married to her husband Jonathan. She has been sending remittances regularly for years to her family in the Philippines.

“I send money to the Philippines monthly for my mom about \$500; and for my siblings and nephews for special occasions like their birthdays and holidays. I also send

sometimes to my cousins to help them pay for their college tuition fees.

“My mom is always very thankful and she tells me all the time that I don’t have to give her every month. Instead she wants me to enjoy my hard earned money and buy something nice for myself.”

Shalimar’s father passed away about two years ago and she says she wants her mom to enjoy her life -- the life she deserves. “She has always been a very hardworking mom for us her three children and two cousins whom my mom and dad adopted. I would like her to finally relax and enjoy her old age without worrying about anything. I also wish my mother not to feel the sadness of my father’s death.”

Pagulayan believes the remittances she sends helps to ease her mother’s mind at least by not having to worry about money. The remittances during the holiday season helps her family with the extra costs for the festivities.

Wilma Santiago of Waipahu also sends money to her mom, \$300 every month. She



says it is her honor to care for her in this way (sending remittances). “She cared for me before. And it is my turn.”

With the advent of messenger and skype or other visual phone-to-phone or computer-to-computer communications, Santiago said seeing a big smile from her mom makes her happy. “I’m sure she (mom) is grateful (of receiving the remittance), just seeing it in her face on messenger.”

Cultural experts say high up on Filipinos’ value system is caring for their elderly parents. For Hawaii Filipinos who are not in the Philippines to care for their parents, sending remittances is the next best thing which helps their other siblings who are there to provide for their parents.

It’s also a cultural value for Filipino immigrants to help their siblings (or their children) who’ve helped them while growing up in the Philippines. This practice is called *utang na loob* or debt of gratitude.

## Role of Remittances Play in the Philippines

Besides caring for elder-

ly parents, remittances helps the entire country in improving the quality of education, healthcare, and general standard of living. Millions of OFWs’ remittances contribute to the Philippines overall socio-economic development.

Often OFWs are able to return to their families in the Philippines during the Christmas holiday season. Otherwise if they are not able to go back home, the more than 10 million OFWs shower their families during the festivities by sending their Christmas work bonuses from their employers.

Nimfa Ilagan, owner of Ria Money Transfer in Waipahu, said many of her clients send remittances to help their families in the Philippines for various reasons like medical care, school tuition, pay mortgages, or to build a house where they plan to live eventually in retirement.

Some Philippine economists say the country is too dependent on exporting their labor to other countries and receiving remittances. The ideal

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## COVER STORY

(from page 4)

scenario is for the Philippines to have a robust economy so that OFWs do not have to seek employment abroad and be separated from their families. It's common for OFWs to be separated from their families anywhere from months to years, depending how long their employment contract is.

OFWs will often accept work contracts in a string of two years or more and go from one country to the next. Philippine sociologists say that means millions of Filipino children are growing up without their father or mother. Being away is a tremendous sacrifice that cannot be substituted with money in extreme cases where a parent is gone for many years.

**Being grateful**

Maricel Mangona, 45, of San Pedro Laguna, Philippines receives regular remittances from her husband. She says it helps to pay for her family's bills and to buy everyday things they need. "Without it, I would not be able to support my daughters."

Jeremiah Calayan, 20, of Paternos, Manila, Philippines says his ninong (uncle) sends him remittances from the U.S. "It means a lot. This is where we get some of our allowances.

"Receiving it (remittance) from the US has a higher conversion rate (U.S. dollar-to-peso) which we can use here for

groceries and paying bills."

Jeremiah says when he receives remittances he is mindful of the work that went into earning that money his uncle sends. "It is part of his (uncle's) salary and we should value every cent of it and be grateful."

Joel Farinas, 50, of Metro Manila, said he used to receive remittances from his aunty when he was younger that went to help pay for his college education. He said it was his aunt's way of paying back a debt of gratitude to his mom. His aunt was the youngest in the family and his mom the eldest. His mom helped raise his aunt so when his aunt went to live in Hawaii, it is something his aunt never forgot.

"That money my aunt sent was vital for me to be able to finish my studies," said Joel who is has been a civil engineer for years. "So money remittances have real life impact, even the Christmas remittance I received was spent wisely and carried me with my expenses through a few months into February and March the following year while I was in college."

**Sending Remittances**

Llagan said the average remittance of her clients at Ria Money Transfer is \$200. She said people can send as much money as they want as long as they can provide documents

where the money came from like a bank statement, loan papers, or pay stub.

Other remittance companies report higher averages anywhere from \$300 to as high as \$500 during the holiday months of November through January.

Llagan said senders must bring a valid picture ID and fill up an intake form that includes general information such as name, address and phone number and information on the person receiving the remittance. For larger remittances of more than \$3,000, that's when documents must be provided such as a bank withdrawal receipt.

There are several methods of delivery to choose from: bank or money transfer company remittances, door-to-door delivery, or online money transfer.

1) *Bank or money transfer company remittance.*

Sending a remittance from a bank is one of the safest ways but has some drawbacks. There tends to be longer lines during the holiday season and if you use a check to deposit money into a receiver's account, it could take a few days for the check to clear. If the money is urgently needed, talk to a bank representative about the fastest way to send the money without any delay time.

2) *Door-to-door delivery.*

As the name says, money

**"The money my aunt sent was vital for me to be able to finish my studies. Money remittances have real life impact, even the Christmas remittance I received was spent wisely and carried me with my expenses through a few months into February and March the following year while I was in college."**

— **JOEL FARINAS, Metro Manila**

is delivered to the door of the recipient. Many senders use this older method of delivery for its reliability. It's also the most convenient way for the receiver of remittance. This service is not always available in rural parts of the Philippines.

3) *Online money transfer.*

This is fast becoming the most popular method of sending remittances because of its and speediness. There are online companies that will send money and could be available to recipients within minutes. You need to set up an account the first time you use an online remittance company. You could put any amount of money into your account and simply click to send a money transfer whenever you want. Like other methods of delivery, there is a drawback. For online money transfer, one concern is hackers phishing your account. Like all internet transactions, companies have

stringent safeguards in place, but there is always a risk.

Senders should weigh the best method of delivery considering safety, reliability, and convenience. Another factor to keep in mind is the recipient's timing needs. How soon is the money needed?

New customers unfamiliar with remittances must first do their research especially when sending a large amount of money. Going through a bank or established money transfer company with money transfer experts can make the process easier. These professionals know the laws and requirements (that can vary depending on how much is sent) of sending money transfers.

Money transfer companies charge a fee for their services and senders are encouraged to shop around for rates.

For the casual Christmas sender, most say going through a bank or money transfer company is the easiest method.

"Helping family in the Philippines through remittances is a wonderful tradition to keep. I would encourage Hawaii Filipinos to include it in their gift-giving for the holidays," said Guillermo.

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

**SBA Hawaii Announced 2019 Lending Results**

The Hawaii District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration has announced the lending statistics for fiscal year 2019 at the 21st Annual SBA Lender's Breakfast at the Oahu Country Club on Wednesday, Nov. 20th, with an audience of over 80 lenders, business providers and consultants.

In the 12 months ending September 30, 2019, SBA provided loans to 178 small businesses in Hawaii for a total of \$51,639,700 million to be used for equipment purchase, expansion, inventory, working capital and other eligible business purposes. Thirty-three financial institutions, based both in Hawaii and on the U.S. mainland, participated in the federal agency's

financing programs to meet the diverse needs of small business owners and entrepreneurs in the islands this year.

Each fiscal year, Hawaii's SBA District Office recognizes the top lenders in three size categories based on the financial assets of the banks, savings and loans and credit unions. SBA honored the top performing lending institutions.

The SBA 7(a) Lender of the Year Award is based on the number of 7(a) loans approvals with bonus points for special support of agency initiatives such as financing for veterans and small business that export products or services.

Taking the award for smaller financial institutions in Cat-

egory 3, SBA presented Ohana Pacific Bank with the award for 7(a) loans.

The "Lender of the Year" Award for mid-size Category 2 lenders in 2019 recognized Central Pacific Bank with 55 loans for \$2.869 million.

First Hawaiian Bank was honored with the "Lender of the Year" title for Category 1, the large financial institutions with assets in excess of \$9 billion. The bank approved 23 loans for \$2.899 million throughout the district.

The 504 Loan program provides affordable, long term fixed rate financing to help expanding firms acquire land, buildings, machinery and equipment or for building, modernizing or reno-

vating facilities. HEDCO, a local certified development company, worked with lenders to provide 28 loans over \$19.05 million for small business ventures

First Hawaiian Bank was named top 504 Lender as the most active participant, producing 12 loans for almost \$9.555 million, edging out Bank of Hawaii in a competitive race over the course of the year.

Hawaii National Bank was presented with the 504 Lender Award in Category 3 for two loans, totaling \$1.63 in loan volume.

For more information about the SBA financing tools and eligibility, contact the U.S. SBA at 808 541-2990 or go to [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) for details.

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## OPINIONS



By Melissa Martin, Ph.D.

## Dump Trump or Dump Democrats

**O**mpeachment. Yay or nay. What do you say?

House Democrats are conducting an official inquiry into allegations that President Donald Trump pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden.

Impeachment and U.S. Presidents. “While only three previous presidents faced serious threat of removal, one out of four confronted formal accusations in the House,” according to a 2019 article in The New York Times.

President Bill Clinton was impeached by the House but

acquitted after Senate trials. Is the current chaos a form of liberal revenge for the past sex scandal in the Oval Office?

President Richard Nixon resigned before the full House could vote on impeachment. Does the Trump “Smear Gate” even compare to Watergate? Or is it a worse offense?

“The House has initiated impeachment proceedings more than 60 times but less than a third have led to full impeachments. Just eight—all federal judges—have been convicted and removed from office by the Senate. Outside of the 15 federal judges impeached by the House, two Presidents (Andrew Johnson in 1868 and William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton in 1998), a cabinet secretary (William Belknap in 1876), and a U.S. Senator (William Blount of Tennessee in 1797) have also been impeached.” [www.history.house.gov](http://www.history.house.gov).

“The President, Vice President and all Civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.”— U.S. Constitution, Article II, section 4. [www.history.house.gov](http://www.history.house.gov).

Do politicians cry wolf when they don’t get their way? “Indeed, I don’t like this or that, so I will cry impeachment!”

How many hands in Washington D.C. are clean? “But my hands are somewhat cleaner than your dirty hands!” Step forth politician without sin and throw the first stone.

We teach children that character matters. Yet, a leader with character defects and disturbing behaviors (i.e., lying, cheating, stealing, spying) is not necessarily mentally ill. A leader that lacks altruism, em-

pathy for humanity, and kindness is not necessarily mentally ill. America has elected a leader that does not fit the norm—that doesn’t mean he is mentally ill. Trump is narcissistic, disrespectful to females, discriminating against minorities, and a billionaire that misuses his power. His impulsive tongue and emotional reactions are what lands him in hot water, along with his twitter tantrums. He probably missed the lesson on how to agree to disagree with tact (i.e., diplomacy, sensitivity, thoughtfulness) in grade school.

The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump is a 2017 book. More than 27 psychiatrists, psychologists, and mental health experts offered their consensus view that Trump’s mental state presents a clear and present danger to our nation and individual well-being.

The 2017 rebuttal book

is called Twilight of American Sanity: A Psychiatrist Analyzes the Age of Trump. “Calling Trump crazy allows us to avoid confronting the craziness in our society—if we want to get sane, we must first gain insight about ourselves. Simply put: Trump isn’t crazy, but our society is,” declares the author.

Both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association have policies stating it’s unethical to diagnose public figures from afar.

I didn’t vote for Donald or Hillary. I am not in cahoots with Republicans or Democrats. I belong to the Disillusioned Party.

Impeachment. Yay or nay. What do you say?

**MELISSA MARTIN, Ph.D.**, is an author, columnist, educator, and therapist. She lives in Ohio. [www.melissamartinchildreauthor.com](http://www.melissamartinchildreauthor.com).

## Collaborative Approach to Worker Training Necessary in Today’s Automation Environment

By Sheryll Bonilla, Esq.

**L**ast month the Judiciary of Hawaii State went live on electronic filing. Federal courts had already done this

for more than a decade using the PACER system. That’s a mind-blowing reality when you consider the sheer numbers of cases handled in nearly all federal courts in the entire

nation that are in a single digital filing system that can be accessed from anywhere. All attorneys in Hawaii, except for family court, are now required to use this, even for Land Court petitions for routine conveyances.

I had my first encounter with electronic filing yesterday. I experienced enough glitches to have called the help desk three times to walk me through it. Finally another person at the help desk who could hear the call asked what kind of computer (Mac or PC) and what browser I was using. Google Chrome and Windows. They said make sure your computer is using Windows and then Internet Explorer; Chrome is ok but Internet Explorer is optimal. Problem almost solved. I could tell by the sequencing of my case’s party ID numbers that many other law offices were also entering data into the system at the same time – traffic on the internet.

I gave up for the afternoon and returned to it in the eve-

ning. I lost all the information I put in hours earlier because I didn’t complete it and had to re-enter everything. This go-round it took a whole hour for each of the two cases I filed, simply from all the data entry, not counting time spent scanning and uploading all those signed documents. What a hassle I thought, this is taking so much time just categorizing each person and document, typing in everyone’s name and address and the titles of all the documents plus all the scanning and uploading all signed papers. From 8:00 p.m. to 10 p.m., however, I appear to have been the only attorney filing cases because all the ID numbers for both cases I filed were in perfect, unbroken sequence.

In the back of my mind, though, even with the drudgery and time spent typing in all those boxes, I thought the new court filing system might turn out to be a good thing. After all, I was staff when former Senate President / Congresswoman Colleen Hanab-

usa ordered the initiation of the Hawaii State Senate to go electronic. We were the guinea pigs. I spent my first year in the Senate under the old, massive paper killing form of legislation and every year after that using President Hanabusa’s Senate website. It was a marvel. None of us in the Senate wanted to go back and we were all incredulous that it took Speakers Calvin Say and Joe Souki so long to warm up to the idea. Our House of Representatives staff counterparts wanted to have it easy like we did with all bills on our computers and the senators’ laptops, but as long as House leadership was reticent, paper was what they had to handle.

All senators had access to the most recent versions of all bills and the committee reports immediately after both were entered, and mark-ups and amendments were easy. Staff no longer had to wait long hours for the print shop or scramble to make sure our bosses were reading and con-

(continue on page 14)



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## MAINLAND NEWS

# Couple Critical of Duterte Granted Political Asylum in U.S.

By Ted Laguatan, Esq.

**S**AN FRANCISCO (Philippine Daily Inquirer) — An immigration judge granted reprieve from deportation to a Filipino couple in San Francisco Bay Area, in the first successful political asylum case seeking sanctuary from the administration of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte.

San Francisco Immigration Judge Ila Deiss issued separate but similar decisions on December 3 granting asylum to Philippine-born husband and wife Rene and Joy Flores for fear of political persecution if they are sent back to the Philippines.

The couple will no longer be subject to deportation

and may even apply for lawful permanent resident status in a year's time.

Immigration lawyer Ted Laguatan, the couple's counsel, called the decision "an affirmation that many American officials and Americans are now aware of the extensive human rights violations of Duterte and the thousands of extrajudicial killings he instigated."

Laguatan recalled that the Flores couple came to his office as an offshoot of President Donald Trump's tightening the screws on undocumented immigrants. Rene's sister Ruby has been Laguatan's client for 15 years.

The Flores couple came to the United States in 2000 initially to visit relatives, go sightseeing and do some shopping but was urged by

relatives to stay in the U.S. due to the political turmoil that eventually led to the ouster of then-President Joseph Estrada.

In the past few years they joined protests against President Duterte, particularly for extrajudicial killings or EJK of addicts and suspected dealers in a war on drugs that has earned the condemnation of the United Nations, the United States, Australia, European and other countries.

Laguatan presented news clippings from various publications of the Floreses joining various protest actions and quotations of their statements against Duterte's violations of human rights.

Documentation by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International of alleged atrocities committed by Duterte even during his time as mayor of Davao City were also offered as evidence by Laguatan.

"Being openly against Duterte's anti-human policies, supporting human rights organizations which speak out against Duterte's serial extrajudicial killings, constantly participating in protest and other actions to stop Duterte's mass murder policies and deeply committed to protecting and upholding the human rights of people in the Philippines, Rene and Joy Flores face se-

rious risks if they return to the Philippines at this time," Laguatan argued before the court. He presented arguments for political asylum also under the Convention Against Torture.

"Immigration Judge Ila Deiss granted the applications of Rene and Joy Flores for political asylum on the basis of her findings that the Duterte administration is involved in extensive human rights violations and thousands of extrajudicial killings. Critics are imprisoned or killed. Judge Deiss' decision will give a message to the global community of the kind of oppressive government and the atmosphere of fear that exists in the Philippines," Laguatan said.

He explained that the Flores couple did not have to apply for asylum during the time of Presidents Estrada, Gloria Arroyo and Benigno Aquino III because they did not have political opinions against any of these presidents that would endanger their security or lives.

Laguatan stressed "one does not have to actually experience harassment to file a credible application for asylum. But he or she has to show through the evidence he presents that those who have the same political opinions as his have been harmed or killed by his government."

"This is a very big thing. Many Filipinos in the U.S. similarly situated as the Floreses will have some hope that they might also be able to acquire legal status."

The Floreses were also fortunate that their case was scheduled to be re-heard in only six months after the initial hearing in June, when it normally could have taken five years for the whole asylum process to take place.

They also benefited from what is called "changed circumstances doctrine" when they were found to have timely filed the asylum application because the changed circumstances — the assumption to office of Duterte and his alleged human rights abuses — happened when they were already in the U.S.

"The most important impact of this case I believe is this: With her decision in granting this political asylum application of the Floreses, the Immigration Judge sent a loud message not only to Filipinos in the U.S., in the Philippines and other parts of the world that the extensive state-sponsored human rights violations instigated by President Rodrigo Duterte are a reality. Decent human beings and civilized nations should put a stop to this horrible oppression of the Filipino people," Laguatan said. ([www.mvariety.com](http://www.mvariety.com))

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### State Civil Rights Commission Settles Discrimination Case with City & County of Honolulu

The Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) today announced the settlement of a complaint alleging employment discrimination by the Honolulu Police Department ("HPD") on the basis of credit history and credit report. The no-fault settlement provides \$95,860 in monetary relief for the complainant in this case, changes to HPD's hiring policy, and training for supervisors, managers, and other employees involved in the hiring process at HPD's Career Center.

HCRC Executive Director William D. Hoshijo stated, "The state discrimination laws recognize that an individual who has less-than-perfect credit score or credit history does not mean he or she would be an unreliable employee. The law enacted in 2009 during the Great Recession was meant to eliminate discrimination against workers who, for reasons beyond their control, had fallen upon economic hard times and overextended their financial resources."

While state law allows employers to consider an employee's credit history or credit report for managerial or supervisory positions, and for certain other jobs as expressly permitted or required by federal or other state law, such as jobs in financial institutions, Hawai'i Revised Statutes §§ 378-2(a)(8) and 378-2.7 prohibit employers from inquiring into and considering an employee's credit history or credit report prior to a conditional offer of employment if there is no bona fide occupational qualification ("BFOQ") for the position.

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## AS I SEE IT



By Elpidio R. Estioko

# Happy New Year: Let's Welcome 2020!

options, wider chances, more opportunities, and a lot of positive challenges. It's these challenges that propel us to make resolutions to make sure we hurdle those challenges. But... most New Year's Resolutions fail! Despite this, we do it anyway!

Reflecting on what happened to our resolutions in the past, I would like to refer you to a study made in 2007, conducted by Richard Wiseman from the University of Bristol involving 3,000 people, which showed that 88% of those who set New Year's resolutions fail. Well, if that is the case, why is there still a need for a New Year's resolution? With almost everybody breaking their promises immediately after making them, and after jumping when the clock strikes 12 midnight of December 31, 2019 during the countdown, the issue now is: Do we still have to make a New Year's resolution for 2020 despite the rate of failure is so high?

Based on my observation, most people say yes because making a New Year's resolution is crucial to our life. If we make one, we set a goal which we aspire to attain. On the other hand, if we don't... there's no goal, at all, in our life as we navigate another year.

So, to make our life for 2020 more substantive and



meaningful, let us set up a goal – make a New Year's resolution!

With that, what then is the most important resolution you will make? While there are popular goals or resolutions people go for, to me, the most important, should be to keep the family together. If your family is one, united, and well-connected – maintain it by all means, in fact, improve it even more! If there's a lot of disconnections, dysfunctions, and misunderstandings – pick up the pieces and put them together because the family is the main concern of Christmas during the holiday season. So with that, let's make and nourish this year's resolution to greater heights. Make the family the center of our heart, the center of our life, the center of our existence. In fact, make it the center of everything we do in life without any mental reservation!

By the way, the same study showed that the most common reason for participants failing

their New Year's resolution was setting themselves unrealistic goals (35%), while 33% didn't keep track of their progress and a further 23% forgot about it. About one in 10 respondents, the study further showed, claimed they made too many resolutions. I think that makes sense!

Now, as to success rate, the study mentioned better chances of achieving one's resolutions when we engage in goal setting (a system where small measurable goals are being set; such as, a pound a week, instead of saying "lose weight"); when we make our goals public and get support from our friends; and when we talk with a counselor about setting goals and new year resolutions.

So, if only we can set up realistic goals, items that are attainable and easy to comply with... we may have a better success rate in accomplishing our resolutions.

But, the reality is, with or without a New Year's resolution, we can do a lot of good

things in our life. If we can make our New Year's goals and can commit to these resolutions, our life will even have more meaning... it will have a direction, there is a goal we can aim for and attain, as we live the New Year 2020, to the very end. We have a charted future, so to speak!

So, is there a need for a New Year's resolution? Definitely, yes! The issue is setting up and going for realistic goals. If only we can set up realistic goals, things that are attainable and easier to comply... we may have a better success rate in accomplishing our resolutions.

If we can make our New Year's goals and can commit to these realistic resolutions, our life will even be more meaningful... it will have a direction, there is a goal we can aim for and look forward to.

So, by next week, we can start saying goodbye to 2019 and ending the year with a bang... Then let's welcome 2020 and embrace the New Year with hope and added enthusiasm for a better year!

Can we do that? Yes, we can!

.....  
**ELPIDIO R. ESTIOKO** was a veteran journalist in the Philippines and an award-winning journalist here in the US. For feedbacks, comments... please email the author at [estiokoelpidio@gmail.com](mailto:estiokoelpidio@gmail.com).

**L**et's say goodbye to 2019 and welcome 2020! We however need to reflect on what happened in 2019 so we have a better idea and have more options in welcoming 2020. Our personal reflection will give us some ideas to ponder upon and make good choices to implement for the New Year.

By now you know that traditionally, as we leave the current year and approach a new year, we make our new year's resolution promising to do an act of self-improvement or something slightly nice, big or small! The tradition dates back to religious origins, but the concept, regardless of origins, is geared towards reflecting upon self-improvement every year. This, to me, is the reason why we resolve to do something at the start of the New Year.

We are hoping that we have more opportunities to come as the New Year is about to roll and usher another year for us. I am optimistic the New Year will give us better

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## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

# AARP Hawai'i Applauds the House for Passing A Bill to Lower Drug Costs

**A**ARP Hawai'i commends Rep. Case for helping pass the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act in the U.S. House of Representatives. AARP urges the Senate to pass an accompanying bill the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act.

AARP Hawai'i State Director Keali'i Lopez said in a statement: "This bipartisan legislation (Cummings Act, H.R. 3) is a bold step toward lowering prescription drug prices and high out-of-pocket costs for millions of old-

er Americans, including our nearly 150,000 Hawai'i members.

"H.R. 3 would allow Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices, set an annual out-of-pocket cap for seniors in Medicare Part D, and crack down on relentless drug price increases by pharmaceutical companies. In addition, the \$500 billion that the Congressional Budget Office estimates taxpayers will save over the next ten years would be reinvested back into the Medicare program to create important new dental, hear-

ing, and vision benefits. These benefits would improve older adults' health and well-being and reduce future health care costs."

High drug prices disproportionately hurt older Americans, particularly Medicare Part D enrollees, who take between four and five prescription medications each month and have an average annual income of just over \$26,000 a year. The average annual price of a specialty drug used on a chronic basis is now \$79,000. Medications cannot work if they are unaffordable.

## CANDID PERSPECTIVES



By Emil Guillermo

# Filipino Immigrants Have a Voice in Impeachment Process

But there's no difference. It all works to diminish your vote and take power away from the American people.

Jayapal consistently hammered home the idea that if we allow Trump to get away with what he's done, then it will put all presidents in the future above the law.

"We will no longer be a democracy," she said. "We will be a monarchy or a dictatorship."

Let that send a chill down your spine, all ye Filipino freedom lovers, in our history we have fought both.

## The Somber Vote

And so on Friday the 13th, you can understand the solemnity of the Judiciary Committee's vote to move two articles of impeachment—for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress—to the full House for a final debate and vote.

The 23-17 vote may have been along party lines, but it was a picture of diversity.

It looked like America speaking.

Nine votes came from a solid block of people of color, men and women, including Jayapal. And there would have been a tenth had Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) been there instead of recuperating from a heart procedure.

Lieu had tweeted after the Dec. 9 hearing the key findings of the case: that Trump abused the power of his office to pressure a foreign nation to interfere in U.S. elections; that Trump withheld \$391 million in aid and a White House meeting; that Trump's conduct undermined national security; and that Trump engaged in unprecedented obstruction of Congress to do so.

Apparently, it was all enough to make him sick.

The next day, he was in the hospital, according to his office staff. Lieu, 50, born in Taiwan, a retired U.S. Air Force colonel, and former prosecutor, was having a heart procedure done.

Let that be a reminder to all that you can reverse heart

disease and diabetes ailments simply by going vegan.

To reverse a bad presidency, you need impeachment.

Lieu's vote would have made the committee vote 24-17. He's expected to be back for the full vote in the coming week. But there's already a majority of votes in the House to impeach.

But not to remove Trump. That's for the Senate to decide in January.

Still, an impeached Trump will soon be a thing.

It will be like drawing a big red "I" on his cheek, fitting for the megalomaniac-in-chief.

Of course, the president will see it as a pronoun.

## Democratic history

Every step of this process is all at once both new and historic. It's a news person's fantasy.

Impeachment has only happened four times in 243 years, and only three if you consider that Nixon resigned before he could be officially impeached.

The question to everyone in America, but to the political class especially, is where were you when democracy was put to the test?

What did you do to save it?

Anything?

If you sent in a note of support to your Congress or told a friend to watch the hearings, that may be enough in our representative democracy.

The diverse block of "Aye" votes were somber and forthright.

And then came the "No" votes, primarily white males, all angry, defiant, and anything but forthright.

It could be the future of politics in America, where people of color, fast becoming the majority, are constantly butting heads with the white minority.

It would be more helpful if the Republicans did more than vote their political self-interests, facts be damned.

The facts are undisputed: The president made that call to

Ukraine. The president withheld money for an ally fighting Russia. The president said he wanted a "favor" of investigations into a tech company suspected of hacking and into his political rival, Joe Biden. Abuse of power.

And then the president did all he could to prevent Congress from investigating. Obstruction.

The Republican strategy was to bring up irrelevancies.

The most egregious might have been Rep. Matt Gaetz, infamously arrested for DUI in the past, though he saw no shame in going after Hunter Biden's past substance abuse as evidence to discredit the son of Joe Biden.

It all amounted to a massive delaying tactic.

For 14 hours on Thursday alone, after a marathoner on Wednesday, the talk went on. Was it the undoing of the 2016 election? A Democratic coup? What about the economy?

Republicans even asked if two articles of impeachment were enough or was it, as Trump put it, "impeachment lite"?

I don't know of any defense attorney who ever got away with saying, "Your honor, the defendant only killed one man."

## Not about TRUMP

I was hoping to hear the Republicans sound like the founders themselves, engaging in enlightened debate about the Constitution.

The Republicans needed to rise to the occasion. But they didn't.

The full House now debates the issue and votes, probably by the end of the week.

I'm sure we'll see the arguments made in committee come back before the full House in a sycophantic attempt by Republicans to show Trump love.

But the real love will come if Republicans remember Jayapal's words, and find the courage to acknowledge the truth, for the sake of the country and the Constitution.

Will we see it in the final role call for impeachment in the House this week?

We'll probably hear about a dozen more conspiracy theories before a Republican finds the courage to vote his or her conscience, knock Trump off his high horse, and go with the truth.

When the final vote comes, what will we do to save our democracy as we know it?

That's the real test of this holiday impeachment.

EMIL GUILLERMO is a veteran journalist and commentator. He was a member of the Honolulu Advertiser editorial board. Listen to him on Apple Podcasts. Twitter @emilamok.

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# #30thSEA GAMES

By Seneca Moraleda-Puguan

**S**ocial media has been abuzz recently. Posts and hash tags on the 30th Southeast Asian Games being held in the Philippines filled my Facebook wall. Excited as many Filipinos are for hosting the SEA Games, the event didn't have a good start. News of complaints from foreign delegates about transportation, accommodation and food circulated that caused many to react. My wall has been bombarded with rants, complaints, and messages of disappointment and embarrassment toward the government and organizers of the games.

Honestly, at first, reading all the news about the delay in transportation and improper billeting of the foreign delegates made me feel embarrassed for the Philippines. I was tempted to write on my wall and share my thought about it but decided not to. I

just silently read some posts and ignored the others. It was heartbreaking because I wanted to be proud for my country. And so instead of writing a rant, I prayed and asked God to redeem the situation. I knew that to conclude that the SEA Games was a failure because of the setbacks on the first few days would be a disservice to the many men and women who spent sleepless nights to prepare for this big event. While my children were sleeping, I declared a prayer of blessing upon the Philippine government, the organizers, all the volunteers, the athletes and everyone involved. I prayed that every lie will be silenced and at the end of the SEA Games, the Philippines will be proud and our neighboring countries will be blessed. True enough, my prayers have been answered.

After a while, it has been revealed that many of the news being shared around are not true. Pictures of the

preparations and the excellent locations for the games were posted. Explanations regarding the setbacks were shared. Some Filipino athletes started to ask for support instead of complaints. And amazingly, after the Opening Ceremony held in the Philippine Arena on the 30th of November, the atmosphere changed. Many were amazed to witness an excellent program to welcome all the participants, athletes and delegates from all over South East Asia. Posts turned from embarrassment to pride. Many were just proud to be a Filipino.

The SEA Games fiasco made me realize some things.

It has proven that many believe in fake news. We take things at face value. We share things without verifying if it's true. And this goes not just to ordinary people but also to those who call themselves journalists. Many members of the media have made a mistake in writing news articles

that are not based on facts but on hearsay.

When I was young, I learned in school that one of the bad attitudes that Filipinos have is 'crab mentality'. The SEA Games issue has become an evidence of it. We are divided as people. We have a tendency to pull each other down. This is saddening but I hope we overcome.

Social media is very powerful. It can build and it can tear down. Many lives have been destroyed by it. It has given us a platform to judge, to rant, and to complain about everything. There's nothing wrong to point out mistakes. We have to. We need to. But to simply rant without doing

anything is pointless. I told myself that I will only post encouraging messages on my wall and will fight the urge to rant and complain.

As I write this article, our Filipino athletes have been winning medals, making the Philippines proud. They deserve to be on the spotlight. They are ones deserving to be talked about. Besides, the Games are about them, all the athletes from the South East Asian region who worked hard to gain pride for their countries, and not the accommodation, the transportation and the food. These are important but not newsworthy.

Move aside, fake news. Hello, good news!



PHILIPPINES 2019  
30<sup>TH</sup> SEA GAMES

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## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### Schatz Legislation to Raise Smoking, Vaping Age to 21

**L**egislation first authored by U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) that will prohibit the sale of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to anyone under the age of 21 has been included in a bipartisan spending deal announced by congressional leaders.

The bill must now pass Congress and be signed by the President.

"This is a big win for public health. Raising the minimum smoking and vaping age to 21 will protect our kids and save lives," said Senator Schatz.

Every day, approximately 1,300 people die from smoking-related diseases, making tobacco the leading cause of

preventable death in the United States. Research from the National Academy of Medicine shows that raising the minimum legal age of sale of tobacco products to 21 nationwide would reduce the number of new tobacco users, decrease smoking frequency by 12 percent, and save more than 220,000 lives from deaths related to smoking. Approximately ninety-five percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21.

In 2015, Hawaii became the first state in the nation to raise the smoking age to 21. Since then, 18 states and the District of Columbia have followed Hawaii's lead. Schatz's provision will expand the minimum legal sale age nationwide.

## LEGAL NOTES



By Atty. Reuben S. Seguritan

## Democrats' Relief Act Would Eliminate Green Card Backlogs

**D**emocrat Senators Dick Durbin and Patrick Leahy introduced the "Relief Act" recently. This bill is their answer to the "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019" that was passed in the House of Representatives last July 10.

Last October 30, Durbin along with all Senate Judiciary Committee Democrats, called on Senator John Cornyn, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee, to hold a hearing on legislation to address green-card backlogs.

The "Relief Act" and "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019" both eliminate the employer-based per-country limits that prevent

any country from using more than 7% of the green cards in any given year. The bills also double the family-based per-country limit from 7 to 15%.

The "Relief Act" is different from the "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019" because it also increases the total number of green cards available. This is good because it would help ease the existing backlog and also address the problems of not having enough green cards for applicants and their families.

The "Relief Act" will gradually phase out over the course of 5 years the per-country limits for employment-based green cards and also increase the per-country limits for family-based immigrants from 7 to 15%. The bill will also make new green cards available to almost the entire existing backlog of employment and

family-based green card applicants.

The existing caps will be removed for family-based second preference F2A category for new spouses and minor children of existing lawful permanent residents (LPRs) in the United States. This is because the bill will re-classify the spouses and children of LPRs as immediate relatives and hence, not included in the visa caps. Right now there is a cap of about 88,000 and there is a backlog of about 150,000. For family-based green cards in the first preference category, the available green cards will be increased from 23,400 to 111,334.

A revolutionary rule from the bill is the removal of "aging out" for workers and their children. "Aging out" is when a child is removed as a derivative beneficiary of the applicant worker because he/she has turned 21 years old. The

bill proposes to maintain the eligibility of a minor child of an applicant until the application was processed. The eligibility of the child would also be maintained for non-immigrant status as the child of a temporary worker. This is the answer to the problem of some children who turned 21 and who have been forced to leave the US before their parents received their green cards.

The bill also has the "hold harmless" clause which exempts immigrant visa petitions approved prior to enactment of the bill from the changes imposed to petitions approved for five years after enactment.

Family-sponsored immigrants would increase by at least 375,000 while employment-based categories would double from 140,000 to 235,000. The diversity lottery program would also be

doubled. For EB-5 investors, the available visas would be almost triple. These increases in the number of visas are all because of the removal of the children and spouses from the cap of green cards available in these categories.

The increase in the number of available green cards would also lessen the wait times for the different categories. It is estimated that with the "Relief Act", the wait time for employment-based green cards will be less than a year.

There are still problems with the "Relief Act". It does not provide green cards to children of H-1B workers who have already aged out.

The "Relief Act" should be supported because it provides an overall solution for legal immigrants and their families as compared to the "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019".

**REUBEN S. SEGURITAN** has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 5281 or log on to his website at [www.seguritan.com](http://www.seguritan.com)

### AFTER COURTS BLOCKED PUBLIC CHARGE RULE – WHAT IMMIGRANTS APPLYING FOR GREEN CARDS OR VISAS NEED TO KNOW

Last month, district courts blocked the Trump administration's rule that attempted to deny green cards to immigrants who fail to meet tough income tests or use public programs. This victory for immigrants means that the rule that was supposed to take effect on October 15 will be stopped while the court battles proceed.

It's still important to understand how the rule might have affected those applying for green cards. While the policy change expands the public programs the government considers in deciding some immigrant applications, it won't affect many immigrants living here. The public programs are limited to Medicaid, nutrition assistance (SNAP), and public housing (Section 8).

Here are three steps to take to see how this policy change might affect you and your family if the courts eventually allow it to be implemented.

- 1 – Find out if you or your family members would be affected by the rule change. It doesn't apply to those applying for citizenship, humanitarian migrants such as refugees and asylees, and those applying to renew their DACA.
- 2 – If your family is affected by the new rule, learn more about how participation in public programs might affect you before disenrolling. Using public benefits will not automatically make you a public charge – immigration officials must look at your overall circumstances to decide whether you pass the test. They weigh positive factors, like having a job or health insurance, against negative factors, like using certain programs, English proficiency, or having a health condition. Remember that we all have a right to use certain programs, and they exist to make us healthier and our communities stronger.
- 3 – Speak out against these changes and advocate for inclusive policies in your community. Visit [www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org](http://www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org) to learn more about how to fight back against this rule change, and find out whether your state or community is working on immigrant-inclusive policies. There is power in using your voice to make sure all our



communities are healthy and thriving.

Questions about your immigration status or use of public benefits? Consult a pro bono immigration attorney near you: [www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory](http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory).

This advisory was sponsored by Protecting Immigrant Families, a national campaign to combat the Trump administration's public charge rule. For more information: [www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org](http://www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org)



HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

# LEAD Program Launches in Kaua'i

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) has arrived on Kaua'i, the latest island to launch the nationally recognized arrest diversion program. There are LEAD projects already operating on O'ahu, Maui and Hawai'i island.

The pilot project, which

received \$650,000 in 'Ohana Zone funding from the State, launched recently in Lihue. The Kaua'i-based nonprofit Women in Need (WIN) will operate the pilot project alongside key partners, including the Kaua'i Police Department, the Kaua'i county Prosecutors, and Mental Health Kookua.

"The LEAD program shows what is possible when people collaborate and work together for the greater good," said Scott Morishige, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness. "We're proud that the State was able to provide 'Ohana Zone funds to launch Kaua'i's LEAD pilot, and we look forward to

seeing how the pilot program will reduce unsheltered homelessness on Kaua'i and positively change lives."

LEAD is an arrest diversion program implemented as an alternative to the normal criminal justice system cycle of booking, detention, prosecution, conviction and incarceration. Under the LEAD program model, law enforcement officers contact

low-level nonviolent offenders or individuals at high risk of arrest and refer them into a trauma-informed intensive case-management program. There, the individual receives a wide range of support services, often including transitional and permanent housing and/or drug treatment. The original LEAD program began in Seattle in 2011 and has been replicated in 34 states.

**(OPINIONS: COLLABORATIVE...from page 6)**

considering the most recent language of bills. Residents from any island could easily see the most recent version and submit testimony instantly, without running into difficulties of driving to the Capitol, fighting parking and bringing enough copies for each committee member in time for the hearing. The Senate saved an enormous amount (was it a million?) on toner, paper, copy machines leases, electricity and staff time, all by digitalizing all the bills the Senate considered. President Hanabusa's vision and then-Senator David Ige's technical leadership, and Jon Shimabukuro's technical staff all worked a miracle.

The Senate website was the first of its kind in the U.S. We had lawmakers from other states admiring it, and wishing they could introduce it in their

legislatures. Our Hawaii Senate website improved access and made citizen participation so easy that it received recognition from the National Conference of State Legislatures and Congress itself. So, having been through the internet transformation of the Senate, which was absolutely painless and hassle-free, I thought that even with the humbug of data entry and scanning and uploading signed documents, the courts going electronic would still be a good thing.

It was. I told myself during those two hours that I would have spent more time driving all the way to Punchbowl to file my cases and a second time coming back to pick up my documents. I saved even more time because I didn't have to make copies and put them in envelopes to mail to

opposing counsel or prepare and file a certificate of service that I sent the copies to them. After creating the case, I immediately had a case number, and I could print all the PDF documents with the file-stamp right from the convenience of my computer. I still have to mail it to parties who don't have lawyers, but the electronic transmission to the other attorneys in the case reduces the postage, paper and ink. All my cases are viewable, so I can see them all without having to go to each case screen under Hoo-hiki. Each attorney in the case can print each document and not have to request a file from a prior attorney if they misplace their copy or take over a case. It will take some adjustment but it looks like it will be helpful to lawyers and courts.

Electronic filing, though

means there are probably many messengers and couriers out there who in one fell swoop, lost a bulk of their livelihood. Anyone who has had to file documents at the court counters remembers there's often a line of messengers with bag or arm full of documents to file with the clerks. Those couriers just lost their jobs. There's still work for the messengers filing family law cases or recording conveyance documents at the Bureau of Conveyances, but even Land Court petitions are now electronic.

That quick turn of fate in the economics of daily life happened elsewhere, too. While President Trump sent subsidies to farmers to compensate for the trade wars, the transportation industry got hit also. Have you noticed how late shipments of food leaves some shelves partially empty in stores this year? Hawaii Public Radio interviewed Brad Dechter, the president of DHX, on the impact of the Trump tariffs on Hawaii's shipping industry. He said that in 39 years in the industry, he's never seen anything like it, and the uncertainty is kind of scary. If you know any locals who earned a good living working on ships, they may have commiserated

about the lack of assignments in 2019 as the trade wars made its impact felt. Ship workers will likely rebound when the next president removes the tariffs, but the messengers have to find new jobs.

This is where the values of socialism come into view. We're not talking communism, which deserves the fear and rejection it gets. Communism is evil, I agree. Socialism, however, has been given a bad name by people not understanding the differences and mixing them up. Let's define socialism as leadership across business and government realizing that the collective good of society depends on taking a positive, collaborative approach to improving conditions for as much of the citizenry as possible. This doesn't mean free handouts. This means understanding that businesses benefit when there is a greater pool of labor trained with skills that companies need, so investing in worker training actually is in their favor. Job security leads to less stress for people and less social unrest on small to larger scales, from family to schools to communities. Socialism, at its simplest, is to value the collective

(continue on page 15)

(Sagot sa Krosword Blg. 11 | December 7, 2019)

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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**(OPINIONS: COLLABORATIVE...from page 14)**

good by investing in people – through good roads, good schools, available emergency services, sufficient wastewater and solid waste management, adequate supplies of drinking water, and many more benefits that we don't think of as socialist.

U.S. News and World Report (Feb. 6, 2018, "The Worker Retraining Challenge") shows the benefit of businesses, unions and government who work together with a compassionate, caretaker view of the citizenry. Sweden uses a long-range approach and the higher social stability is a result of the trust people have in their economic condition. In Sweden, "job security councils" are run jointly by unions and industry to retrain laid off workers in skills that are in demand. While they are learning new skills, the social safety net keeps their financial condition stable until they are trained and find new work with their retraining.

The article says that up to 800 million jobs worldwide – a third of the global workforce -- are at risk of being automated by 2030, a mere decade away, just enough time for your middle schooler to graduate from college. A study on trends brought on by advances in technology points to a situation where "retraining and public assistance programs at an unprecedented level will be needed." About

375 million, including around 23% of the U.S. workforce, will see their jobs become no longer needed and be forced to learn new job skills and find other work. Technology, however, can create as many as 900 million new jobs.

Even with that outlook in industry, only Sweden and a few other countries are investing in worker training and safety net benefits. Industry can spend more on training, the study's author says. Sweden's industry-union councils are adept at tracking which jobs and skills are in demand and can adapt quickly to market changes. This enables the councils to retrain workers so that they can find jobs on par with those they lost. With the benefits in a well-trained labor pool from which to select employees, companies are happy to spend 0.3% of their total wage costs to support the councils.

Germany transformed its unemployment agency toward job matching and giving vouchers to cover retraining. The one-stop shop makes the transition smoother for laid off workers.

The report pointed to the scarcity in American funding for mid-career job skills retraining. Beyond that, though, programs fail to train people in skills that will

help them find jobs, because there isn't much data on which to project job trends. Two states making forward-looking efforts are Indiana and Colorado. Ascend was created by universities, businesses, and foundations to get information to find gaps in the state's workforce and train works in skills that industry needs then help match labor to job vacancies. Skillful is a collaboration between organizations, LinkedIn, and the state of Colorado that's also gathering information to more accurately produce training programs to the needs of industry.

With automation happening at such a fast pace, even employees in their mid-30s are finding their job skills out of date and themselves out of jobs. Social stability and order are becoming increasingly influenced by the economic insecurity brought by technological advances, economic globalization and immigration patterns. Companies are well advised to take a more collective approach to work with unions, higher education, and other organizations to crank out the data and find the skills gaps and trends in workforce readiness. With those projections, a collaborative approach to worker training can ameliorate the upheaval in fast moving business changes.

Have your organization's events listed in our community calendar. It's recommended to submit press releases a month in advance of your organization's event. Send information to [filipinochronicle@gmail.com](mailto:filipinochronicle@gmail.com).

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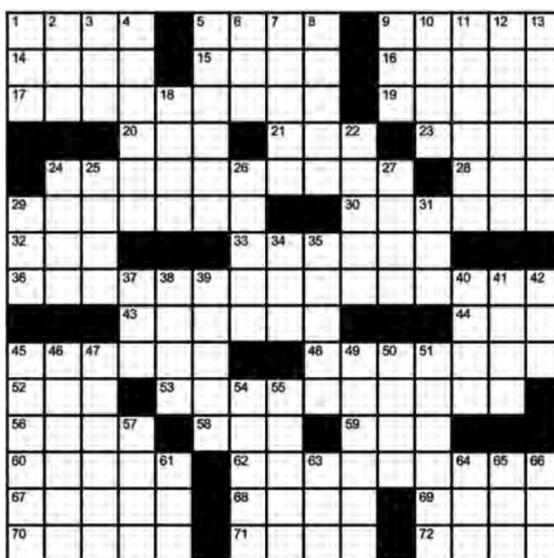
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**CROSSWORD** No. 12  
by Carlito Lalicon

**ACROSS**

- 1. Bonny one
- 5. Eastern royal
- 9. Accommodate
- 14. Asian nurse
- 15. Book of Mormon
- 16. Brown shade
- 17. Swindler
- 19. Common sense?
- 20. Asian language
- 21. Breed
- 23. Heraldic border
- 24. Mix
- 28. Jail, slangily
- 29. Catch sight of
- 30. Yoghurt

- 32. Bleed
- 33. Entered
- 36. Hospital employee
- 43. Water cannon target
- 44. Arctic bird
- 45. Least wild
- 48. One, for lithium
- 52. Carrier to Tokyo
- 53. Strike out
- 56. Corn syrup brand
- 58. British john
- 59. Musical notes
- 60. Ancient Roman magistrate
- 62. Pristine
- 67. Article of faith
- 68. A-line line



- 69. Unit of pressure
- 70. Alpha's opposite
- 71. Coastal raptor
- 72. Buffoon

**DOWN**

- 1. Resinous deposit
- 2. I love: Lat.
- 3. Honshu honorific
- 4. Hello and goodbye
- 5. Mix anew, as greens
- 6. Black cuckoo
- 7. Boot camp reply
- 8. Basket fiber
- 9. Beast of burden
- 10. Audition tape
- 11. Outline

- 12. Means of support
- 13. Ability
- 18. Coarse file
- 22. Attuned
- 24. Game name
- 25. Cabal
- 26. Engender
- 27. Bump off
- 29. Dog's warning
- 31. African antelope
- 34. Bonanza find
- 35. Brash

- 37. Anger
- 38. Puncture sound
- 39. Add up
- 40. Bluster
- 41. Quite
- 42. Barely get, with "out"
- 45. Start liking
- 46. Wreath for the head
- 47. Not terrestrial, perhaps
- 49. Burning

- 50. Farm soil
- 51. Artificial
- 54. Spoil, with "up"
- 55. Hermit
- 57. Cassini of fashion
- 61. In-flight info, for short
- 63. One of the 12 tribes of Israel
- 64. Former Portuguese colony in India
- 65. Coastal flier
- 66. Towel off

(Solution will be on the next issue of the Chronicle)

# PICTORIALS

## HFC's 25th Anniversary Celebration, Excellence Awards, and Gala Dinner

Alongside its staff members, friends, family and community leaders, the Chronicle celebrated its 25th year at the Ala Moana Hotel on Nov. 23, 2019 serving the Hawaii Filipino community.



HFC Excellence Awardees with presenters Lt. Gov. Josh Green, Councilmember Ron Menor and guest Philippine Consul General Joselito Jimeno.



Bernadette Baraquio and radio host Glenn Sagayadoro emceed the HFC's 25th Anniversary Celebration



HFC Publisher Dr. Charlie Sonido with guests from the First Hawaiian Bank



Lt. Gov. Josh Green and Excellence Awardee Dr. Carol Davide with fellow attendees



2019 HFC Scholarship Awardee Alyssa Acob with the scholarship's committee chair Dr. Edna Bautista



Councilmember Ron Menor with HFC columnist JP Orias



Lt. Gov. Josh Green with HFC Publishers Dr. Charlie Sonido and Chona Montesinos-Sonido



Carlota Ader and Joni Reddick with other guests having fun on the dance floor at the event's after party



HFC Publishers with Philippine Consul General Joselito Jimeno, Contributing Editor Dr. Belinda Aquino, Councilmember Kym Pine and keynote speakers Dr. Florangel Rosario-Braid and Emil Guillermo with his wife, Kathy



Doctors from Dr. Sonido's clinic volunteer as stage and event ushers during the anniversary celebration



The Chronicle awarded long-time staff members for their hard work and contributions that shaped the paper for the past 25 years



Dr. Charles Sonido with (from left to right) Ofelia Lagat, Jonathan Pagulayan, Lily Capalad and Elvie Gabriel