

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 16-128

RE: C.R. NO. 16-141/EDUCATION

SUBJECT: CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF MR. GRACEFUL
ENLET TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE COLLEGE
OF MICRONESIA-FSM

JANUARY 19, 2011

The Honorable Isaac V. Figir
Speaker, Sixteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Sixth Regular Session, 2011

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred C.R. No. 16-141
entitled:

"A RESOLUTION TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MR. GRACEFUL ENLET TO
SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF
MICRONESIA-FSM, REPRESENTING CHUUK STATE.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of the resolution is expressed in its title.

Mr. Graceful Enlet has been nominated by the President in accordance
with section 706(1) of title 40 of the Code of the Federated States of
Micronesia; his nomination is subject to the advice and consent of
Congress. C.R. No. 16-141 was transmitted to Congress on October 7,
2010 through P.C. No. 16-299.

NOMINEE BACKGROUND

Mr. Enlet received his Diploma from Truk High School in Weno, Chuuk;
he then went on to attend the U.S. International University in San
Diego, California, earning both a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science
and a Masters in Education.

Mr. Enlet has over thirty-five years of experience working in
Education, including as a Teacher at Southern Namoneas Junior High
School; Assistant District Extension Coordinator at the Community
College of Micronesia; Continuing Education Coordinator at the College
of Micronesia-FSM; Director of College of Micronesia-FSM Chuuk Campus;

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Education Specialist at the University of Hawaii-Manoa; and Special Assistant to the President at Pacific Islands Bible College. Mr. Enlet has also been a Part-Time Instructor at numerous institutions over the years, including at the Micronesian Institute of Bible Studies, the University of Guam, and the University of Hawaii.

Mr. Enlet has been very active in Community Services and Boards associated with Education, including as a Member of the Board of Berea Christian School; President of Youth for Christ at Berea Evangelical Church; Member of the American Association of School Administrators; Member and Chairman of the Chuuk State Public School Board of Education; and Member of the National Association of Bilingual Education.

PUBLIC HEARING

Your Committee held public hearings on C.R. No. 16-141 on November 22, 2010 and January 12, 2011. In attendance at the hearings were: Chairman Joseph J. Urusemal; Floor Leader Joe N. Suka; Senator Paliknoa K. Welly; Senator Dohsis Halbert; Senator Tony Otto; Spensin James, President of COM-FSM; Lieutenant Governor Churchill Edward, Member of the Board of Regents COM-FSM representing Pohnpei State; Jim Currie, Vice President for Cooperative Research and Extension/COM-FSM; Ringlen P. Ringlen, Vice President for Student Services/COM-FSM; Joe Habuchmai, Vice President of Administrative Services/COM-FSM; and Jean Thoulag, Vice President of Instructional Affairs/COM-FSM.

Current Board Member Lieutenant Governor Edward expressed his full support for the nominee. Mr. Churchill was confirmed by Congress to serve on the Board of Regents of the College of Micronesia-FSM in December 2009; based on his experience working with the nominee, who is the current Chair of the Board of Regents of COM-FSM, Mr. Edward supports the nominee. Current Board Member Mary Berngun Figir was also in attendance at the hearing, and described the nominee as a very valuable Member of the Board that other Members depend on for his leadership.

Spensin James, President of the College of Micronesia-FSM introduced the four Vice Presidents in attendance with him at the hearing, and expressed the Administration's full support for the nominee. Mr. James stated that the current Board has shown good leadership and the College enjoys a collaborative relationship with the Board; therefore, Mr. James supports maintaining the current composition of the Board.

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The four Vice Presidents of the College also offered comments in support of Mr. Enlet's re-nomination to the Board. Ms. Thoulag spoke of the strong working relationship the College currently enjoys with the Board, and indicated the preference to retain the current Board Members for another term. Mr. Currie reiterated those comments, stating that the current Board is a great Board to report to, and challenges the College Administration, leading to positive outcomes. Mr. Habuchmai expressed his support to keep the current Board composition as it is; a lot of the positive changes and progress occurring today is due to the work of these Board Members. Mr. Ringlen echoed those comments; stating that the current Board is in the best position to continue to work on the financial stability of the College as the Compact funding decreases in the coming years.

Mr. Enlet was unable to attend the first hearing, held on November 22, 2010, but the Committee was able to meet with Mr. Enlet in person on January 12, 2011. Mr. Enlet expressed that he was honored to be before the Committee. He has served on the Board for four years, one year when he finished the term of another, and one full term of three years of his own. Mr. Enlet stated it is a privilege to contribute in this way, and if given the opportunity, would gladly continue to serve.

Mr. Enlet informed the Committee that he currently resides in Hawaii and has been living there due to family considerations; however, he has recently accepted a position in Chuuk that will result in splitting his time between Hawaii and Chuuk. Mr. Enlet expressed that he understood his being a legal resident of Hawaii might give the Committee pause. His current position in Chuuk is a contract job and does not require him to live in Chuuk full-time; however, Mr. Enlet hopes that this will lead to a decrease in the cost for him to attend Board meetings since he will be in Chuuk approximately six months out of the year.

In response to questions by the Committee, Mr. Enlet addressed the decision-making power of the Board. Specifically, Committee Members were interested in the authority and autonomy of the Board. Mr. Enlet informed the Committee that the Board makes all final decisions regarding the policies of the College and does not rubberstamp the requests of the College Administration. When the College has a new policy to implement, the College conducts a study and makes suggestions to the Board. The Board then can decide to act on a request (affirm or deny), or defer to require more information or a more in-depth study to be conducted. The Board may also suggest

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policies that the College should consider, study, and report back to the Board on. In the end, the Board makes all final policy decisions.

Mr. Enlet next addressed the concerns of the Committee regarding the discrepancy in faculty and administrative salaries. After receiving a breakdown of all COM-FSM salaries recently, your Committee was surprised by the large discrepancy in salaries between faculty and administrative personnel; your Committee noted that there are a considerable number of people in Administration at the College making substantially more than the President of the FSM. Your Committee further noted that it is difficult to support these large salaries when employees of the National Government have been in a salary freeze for quite some time.

Mr. Enlet informed the Committee that the faculty salary reflects only ten months of employment; if a faculty member teaches Summer Session, their yearly income is higher than what is shown on the budget breakdown. Mr. Enlet stated that both faculty and administrative salaries are on the low end of salaries in the region, and are not market competitive. Your Committee informed Mr. Enlet that salaries for elected officials in the FSM are not always in line with regional salaries either; for example, the Speaker of the Palau Legislature earns \$50,000 per year compared with the FSM Speaker earning \$30,000 per year. Your Committee recognized that it is imperative to retain qualified faculty, and emphasized that rather than focusing so much on regional comparison, the Committee would prefer to see greater focus on lowering the turnover of qualified instructors and reigning in administrative salaries. Your Committee noted that last time the Committee requested salary discrepancies to be looked into at COM-FSM, under an earlier Administration, the result had been a salary raise for everyone, with a greater increase for administration than faculty; your Committee hopes this is not the result again. Mr. Enlet indicated that a closing of the gap between faculty and administration salaries is in progress. Your Committee made clear the importance of this issue to the Committee, and expects the Board to continue to look into this matter.

When asked about rumors of a plan to close down State Campuses, Mr. Enlet informed the Committee that there is no plan at the moment to close State Campuses; Mr. Enlet did express a need to streamline areas to bring expenses in line, but that closing of campuses was not being considered.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

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Your Committee notes that current law permits a Member of the Board of Regents to serve "for a term of three years and shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms." 40 F.S.M.C. §708(2). Mr. Enlet disclosed that he originally served one year remaining when a vacancy occurred, and has also served one three-year term of his own. The process of filling a vacancy on the Board of Regents is addressed in 40 F.S.M.C. §710, and the law is silent on whether completing a partial term when a vacancy occurs should be counted towards the two-term limit. Based on research and advice of staff, your Committee believes the intent of the law is that a partial term served due to a vacancy should not apply to the two-term limit. Furthermore, your Committee presumes that the Department of Justice has vetted the resolution before transmittal, and would have prevented the transmittal of an ineligible nominee.

Your Committee notes that Mr. Enlet has many years of direct experience working in all levels of Education. Your Committee is confident that the nominee has the necessary education, experience and skills to continue to serve on the Board of Regents of the College of Micronesia-FSM.

Your Committee recommends the following amendment to C.R. No. 16-141:

1. Page 2, line 7, delete "Fifth Special Session, 2010" and insert "Sixth Regular Session, 2011" in lieu thereof.

CONCLUSION

Your Committee on Education is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 16-141, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto C.R. No. 16-141, C.D.1.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Joseph J. Urusemal
Joseph J. Urusemal, chairman

/s/ Claude H. Phillip
Claude H. Phillip, vice-chairman

Dohsis Halbert, member

/s/ Setiro Paul
Setiro Paul, member

/s/ Fredrico O. Primo

/s/ Joe N. Suka

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Fredrico O. Primo, member Joe N. Suka, member

Peter S. Sitan, member