

continue to press for maximum public awareness of the real conditions in the Marianas public and private sectors and efforts of the federal and local governments.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has been constituted under federal law as a local constitutional government for the primary benefit of the people of the Marianas as well as the United States as an example of democratic self-governance. There is, therefore, a careful balance that must be maintained between the respect of the wishes of the local government and enforcement of the civil and human rights that Americans hold as sacrosanct. Those decisions should be based on sound information, not subjective political agendas of the government or some private entity. For that reason, one of the most difficult aspects of Congressional oversight over these very important and often sensitive civil and human rights-related matters, has been the lack of credible information by the very executive branch agencies tasked with the responsibility for enforcement of federal laws. Throughout those oversight efforts, the Administration has given the Committee voluminous testimony and information about the Marianas. Fortunately, the GAO has now completed this independent report as mandated by the 1999 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

The two main industries in the Northern Marianas are the tourist and garment industries. The Department of Interior has questioned the benefits of the Islands' garment industry. Interior has issued several studies concluding that the local garment industry—and foreign labor—has an adverse fiscal impact on the Northern Marianas, findings hotly contested by the Northern Marianas' government and business sectors. Both sides have testified before my Committee to present their points of view, but for the first time an independent and unbiased government agency has looked into the Northern Marianas economy. The GAO looked specifically at the economic impact of the two dominant industries—garment and tourist; tax contributions by the local garment industry; and local government revenues as compared to other territories.

GAO found “the garment and tourist industries are the driving forces of the CNMI economy.” The two sectors account for a about 85 percent of the Commonwealth's total economic activity and represent—directly and indirectly—four out of every five jobs in the Northern Marianas. Critically important to the debate is the GAO's finding that “the local resident population \* \* \* has benefited, economically, in the form of higher incomes and better employment opportunities, from the growth in the garment and tourist industries, and from the presence of foreign workers.” GAO concluded that without the garment and tourist industries “the CNMI economy could not have grown to its current size and complexity.”

Significant number of foreign workers are brought into the Northern Marianas to supplement the existing workforce. The Department of Interior and several Members have criticized the use of these foreign workers, stating that the foreign workers have taken employment opportunities from local residents. Yet GAO concluded that there was no support for Interior's claim. GAO determined that the “garment and tourist industries are dependent on

foreign workers for much of their workforce because the labor pool of local residents, even including those currently unemployed, is insufficient to support an economy the size and scope that exists in the CNMI.” Changes in the Northern Marianas ability to use foreign labor to supplement its current labor pool or legislation that would adversely impact either of these industries could have severe impacts on the Northern Marianas' economy, “causing job losses among local residents and revenue losses to the CNMI government,” the report stated. Several legislative proposals exist that would do just that, and I am opposed to them.

The GAO also criticizes a 1999 Interior Department study that found that the garment industry had a net negative impact. “[T]he Interior study is methodologically flawed because it understates the contributions made by the garment and tourist industries to the CNMI economy and overstates the impact of these industries and their workers on the need for government services and infrastructure.” The GAO determined, however, that the Northern Marianas is more self-sufficient fiscally than other territories. It also found that the Northern Marianas generates more of its government revenues locally—about 87 percent—than all other U.S. territories and all levels of government in the U.S., a remarkable fact.

Finally, the study showed that the garment industry contributes significantly to the local economy, directly contributing about \$52 million, or 22 percent, of the government's \$234 million budget in 1998. It determined that the Northern Marianas garment industry proportionally pays more in taxes and fees than the U.S. garment industry. That is, the garment industry in the Northern Marianas taxes and fees represented about 5 percent of their gross receipts between 1993 and 1998, whereas the U.S. garment industry overall paid only 3.3 percent of their gross receipts in taxes and fees.

During a hearing last September, my Committee heard reasoned warnings from business and government leaders about the potential impact of certain legislative initiatives to eliminate local control of immigration, to remove duty-free access, or to increase the minimum wage on the “vulnerable” economy of the Northern Marianas. GAO's study underscores those warnings and this body should consider carefully the potential adverse impact of any legislation on the frail economy of the Northern Marianas—or the economies of any of our territories.

I will continue to insist on full compliance with federal laws, advocate heightened federal-territorial mutual cooperation in multiple areas, and support local and private sector initiatives to manage the economy and advance self-sufficiency. I strongly encourage my colleagues to review the GAO report, “Northern Mariana Islands: Garment and Tourist Industries Play a Dominant Role in the Commonwealth's Economy” (GAO/RCED/GGD-00-79) which is available to the public through the Government Printing Office and also the world wide web: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/r200079.pdf>.

IN MEMORY OF LILLIAN BAKER WOODWARD

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2000

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a woman who for almost five decades captivated readers with her poignant and charismatic writing as a columnist in three local newspapers. Lillian Baker Woodward passed away on November 16, 1999 at the age of 95.

Born on January 17, 1904 in Seattle, Washington, Lillian majored in journalism at the University of Oregon where she met, fellow journalism student and future husband, Donald Woodward. Married in 1926, Donald and Lillian Woodward led a traditional life with Lillian as a homemaker and Donald in the real estate business. In 1948, the couple moved to Moss Landing where they established a fuel dock, marine supply store and boat brokerage business. As “one of the real true pioneers of Moss Landing” (Phil DiGirolamo, Phil's Fish Market), Lillian captured the lives of the local people as well as chronicled the ending of the Monterey Bay's sardine era through industry changes and impacts on the community. After Donald's death in 1962, Mrs. Woodward continued to write and publish prolifically throughout the remainder of her life.

Lillian Woodward was much more than a local journalist, described as “force that held the [Moss Landing] community together” (Monterey County Herald, 11/17/99), Mrs. Woodward touched everyone near and far who read her chronicle. She will be sorely missed by the many people who were privileged to know her both personally and through her writing. Lillian is survived by two sons, Donald and Richard; a daughter, Virginia W. Stone; and many loved grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

TRIBUTE TO MR. GREGORY KOMESHOK

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2000

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the deeds of a well-respected member of New Jersey's Polish-American community, Gregory Komeshok of Passaic, New Jersey. Greg has been elected the 1999 Grand Marshal for the 63rd Annual Pulaski Day Parade because of his years of community service. It is only fitting that the Central of Polish Organizations has chosen him, for he epitomizes the spirit of caring and generosity of spirit and embodies pride in his heritage.

Mr. Komeshok, a member of the Passaic High School class of 1965, went on to receive a Bachelors Degree in Industrial Technology and a Masters Degree in Administration and Supervision from Montclair State University.

Greg has always been a community leader. At 26, he was the youngest ever to hold the