

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5201

February 6, 2025

Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

It was a true honor to stand alongside my fellow Republican colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to witness your inauguration in the U.S. Capitol and hear your vision for ushering in a Golden Age of American prosperity. I celebrate your commitment to strengthening our nation and look forward to working with you to expand prosperity across the United States, including for the Americans I proudly represent in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

While the CNMI is a proud part of the American family, it is extraordinarily small compared to other states and communities, meaning that federal policies often have an outsized impact on our people. Given this reality, I write to highlight the unintended consequences of federal assistance reviews in the territories and to request your support in streamlining the national review process for federal financial assistance programs affecting the CNMI.

The CNMI has a population of approximately 47,000 people, with a tourism-based economy that continues to struggle under the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Federal assistance plays a critical role in ensuring that American citizens in the CNMI have access to essential services such as healthcare, nutrition programs, and education.

In reviewing compliance with your Executive Actions regarding federal assistance, it is important to recognize the relative scale of federal obligations in the CNMI. In Fiscal Year 2024, the CNMI received \$624.5 million in federal financial obligations, primarily supporting Medicaid and the CNMI's Nutrition Assistance Program. This represents just 0.01% of the total \$4.9 trillion obligated nationwide. While this funding is a minute fraction of total federal expenditures, its impact on the CNMI is immediate and profound.

To illustrate this, I bring to your attention the NextGen Scholarship Program, hosted by Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services (NMC-CREES) and funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) NextGen Workforce Initiative. This program removes financial barriers for students pursuing degrees in food science, agriculture, natural resource management, and related fields, ensuring they have

access to higher education and career opportunities in industries vital to both the CNMI and the nation.

However, I have been informed that critical funding for this program has been delayed, impacting students currently enrolled in institutions across the United States. For many, this scholarship has been a lifeline, and disruptions in funding threaten their ability to continue their education. These students applied for and received assurances from NIFA that their expenses would be covered, and the sudden delay has immediate and severe consequences for their academic future and financial stability. It also places Northern Marianas College in a difficult position, as it administers the program and ensures its success.

Your clarification on the federal review process clearly stated that federal scholarship programs, such as NextGen, should not be affected by administrative actions under your Executive Orders. The challenges faced by the CNMI in accessing these funds highlight an opportunity to simplify the implementation of federal reviews and prevent unintended disruptions to essential programs.

Your administration has already identified areas where federal programs do not align with your policy objectives—many of which involve billions of dollars in assistance. By contrast, programs serving U.S. territories like the CNMI are relatively small in scale, but often governed by unique legal provisions that can complicate broader federal policy reviews.

I know we share the belief that one-size-fits-all federal solutions often overlook the distinct needs of rural and isolated communities. Given this reality, I urge you to consider segmenting the review of federal assistance programs in the U.S. territories, allowing their continued operation while broader national policy adjustments take place. As you work to implement reforms on a larger scale, I stand ready to work with your administration to navigate the complexities of federal programs affecting the territories.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your leadership in ensuring that Americans in every part of our nation, including the CNMI, have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Sincerely,



KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS
Member of Congress

Cc: Honorable Scott Bessent, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury
Honorable Gary Washington, Acting Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
Honorable Russell Vought, Acting Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget