

**The Honorable Governor Lou Leon Guerrero
& The Honorable Lieutenant Governor Joshua Tenorio
Public Safety Address: Safer Guam Initiative
January 6, 2020**

GOVERNOR: Not so long ago, a father could leave his front door unlocked, and know that his family--and his home were safe. A mother could send her children to a bus stop knowing they were protected. And a teen that damaged a neighbor's property knew that he had to accept responsibility, and make it right. Criminals were caught. Justice was predictable. And everyone knew that the punishment would fit the crime.

Today, popular culture glorifies gangsters. Drugs and alcohol undermine our schools. And the justice system feels like it works harder for the lawbreakers than the law abiding. But, we did not get here overnight.

LT GOVERNOR: In the last decade alone, crimes like aggravated assault, rape, robbery, and theft increased by 41%. Drug related crime rose and yet the number of uniformed police officers dropped 25% when compared to 2015. While politicians bickered about what should be done and how we should pay for it, the system built to protect us drowned under a rising tide of crime. Instead of working together, pointing fingers became more important than solving problems. Grabbing headlines won, our people lost, and an era of excuses was born.

GOVERNOR: If Josh and I could sit with you at your kitchen tables, or speak to your families in your living rooms, we'd say that we heard you. We listened to you in village meetings held across the island, at holiday gatherings and after mass. You want to raise your children and grandchildren in safety and dignity. And you expect that the People you sent to Adelup and Hagåtña will make it happen. Today, our administration is announcing the Safer Guam Initiative, a 4-point plan to place 100 more police officers on our streets and enhance safety at a village level, fight drugs and treat addiction, end the revolving door of crime, and hold negligent parents accountable for the criminal acts of their children.

100 More Police Officers at a Village Level

We held six different community meetings on public safety. And at every single one, you said there weren't enough cops in our communities. You were right. On the first day we walked into office, GPD had just 289 uniformed police officers--the lowest number in at least a decade. The job requirements had increased, pay wasn't competitive, and morale was low. Once we stabilized our government's finances, we added new officers to GPD's ranks, secured funding for a new competitive wage study, and began the continuous recruitment of new officers. But, this is the beginning of our work, not the end.

Using my existing budgetary authority, I have directed that DOA, GPD, and our fiscal team accomplish the goal of recruiting, training, and deploying 100 new police officers by the end of the year. With 100 new officers added to GPD's ranks, we will have the resources to reinstitute Community Resource Units at our village precincts. This means officers will walk our neighborhood streets, support neighborhood watch organizations, and protect us where we live.

Construct a Yigo Police Precinct

LT GOVERNOR: As we think differently about law enforcement, we must also accept that Guam is growing, and we must evolve and expand. Currently, the Dededo Precinct covers both Yigo and Dededo. This means that, at any given shift, only 8 officers cover a population of 74-thousand people. That makes no sense. While the existing Dededo precinct can accommodate some growth, distance and the future construction of the GPD evidence lab in Yigo provides us with an opportunity to grow smartly and to also add a Yigo precinct to our list of law enforcement assets--and leverage federal funds to do it. That is why the Guam State Clearinghouse will work with GPD, GHURA, and USDA to meet the needs of our growing community. And, as community growth demands that we place new resources in the north of our island, we will not forget the south. This administration will seek the return of a second southern precinct.

School Safety Partnership

We also took quick steps to make our schools safer. Thanks to our School Safety Partnership, we have replaced old, broken intercoms and fire alarms. Patrols now include regular school visits, and Guam Homeland Security will be working with DOE to assess and strategically place cameras in our schools. With these tools we can capture vandals and prevent vandalism.

Automated Traffic Enforcement

Growth also demands that we adopt new tools--tools that allow technology to enforce traffic violations so that every police officer available can prevent crime or catch criminals. That is why we will seek the passage of an automated island-wide traffic enforcement system. On its own or with the help of a qualified private sector partner, GPD can keep our roads and intersections safer and allocate its manpower where it is most needed.

100% digital screening of all containers entering the Port Authority of Guam

GOVERNOR: And technology can do more than bust school vandals and catch traffic violators. Technology can help keep drugs, and other contraband, off our streets. A public-private partnership can provide the Customs and Quarantine Agency with the equipment, tools, personnel, and training to efficiently scan 100% of cargo entering our ports. Everyday we lose lives and dollars because we fail to change. The legislation we transmit will recognize that with improved screening capacity, we will see increased Use Tax collections and guarantee a safer border.

Recruit Specialists in Addiction Treatment

But as long as there is demand someone will work to provide the supply. We must acknowledge that addiction is a sickness--that no society can punish its way to sobriety or cure these crimes with prison cells alone. This is why the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center will open an in-patient detox unit at the end of March. Maximizing our treatment capacity means we need addiction treatment specialists during a time of national shortage. To secure the talent our people need, the Director of Behavioral Health and Wellness won designation as a Health Professional Shortage Area in July. Now, qualified specialists will receive federal debt forgiveness for practicing on Guam.

Enhanced Enforcement of Alcohol Regulations

LT GOVERNOR: We also recognize the profound social consequences of alcohol abuse and its role in recent crimes. You asked us to act and act we will. We will be proposing a change to the way alcohol is sold at the retail level. We believe that alcohol should not be sold at stores between midnight and 2 p.m. This won't apply to weekends, holidays, bars, or restaurants. Let me be clear: We make this proposal to curb alcohol abuse at a village level and limit alcohol access during the majority of school hours. Additionally, increased alcohol enforcement actions have been expanded through the combined efforts of the Department of Revenue and Taxation, the Guam Police Department, the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center and the Department of Youth Affairs. We are also working with our school communities to identify alcohol-related problems before they begin. We will focus on prevention, intervention, and treatment.

No Parole for Violent and Sex Offenders

GOVERNOR: Yet, even as we hire 100 new officers, stop drugs at our ports, treat drug addiction, and manage the abuse of alcohol in our villages, we must also admit that there is violence on our streets and in our homes. Some in our society violate others with profound cruelty--cruelty that must be punished. Without punishment, the scales of justice cannot be balanced, and those who are evil will have nothing to fear. No violent criminal, no person who commits a sex crime should be given a discount on the debt they owe to society. This is why, notwithstanding the minimums already required by law, our legislative package will include a measure that eliminates parole for violent criminals and those who have been convicted of sex crimes.

No Plea deal is Valid Without Proof of Victim Notification

We can accept that justice isn't perfect--that any system run by human beings will be prone to human error. But those errors should never include a failure to listen to the victims of crime. In recent years, the Judiciary and the Office of the Attorney General have made significant strides to ensure victims know their rights. But too often, well meaning people on all sides still allow

victims and their voices to fall through the cracks. That is why our legislative package will require that the AG demonstrate a clear and convincing effort to notify a victim before a plea deal is entered. Without that effort, the plea deal cannot occur. It is time that justice stands on the side of law abiding citizens. And we cannot do that unless we let them speak.

Hold Negligent Parents Criminally Accountable

But, fixing our problems also demands that we be honest with each other. Our children won't learn respect or responsibility unless we teach it to them. Guam law already holds parents and their children civilly liable for the damages caused by their children, but based on our village meetings you asked that we take an even stronger step forward. In California, for example, it's a misdemeanor for a parent to fail to fulfill his or her duty to exercise reasonable care, supervision, protection, and control over their minor child. We seek to adopt that standard here. You are your child's keeper, and one parent's failure to supervise their child should not place all of our children in danger.

Finally, we must recognize that many parents are trying their best but simply need the tools to do better. That is why I have asked PBS Guam to produce a multicultural education campaign that includes the advice of culturally competent individuals. It will communicate our laws, teach parents where they can find help, and make clear their basic responsibilities and the consequences of failure.

What's Next?

LT GOVERNOR: In the days, weeks, and months ahead we will act decisively to implement these initiatives. But legislation is also required and it will be transmitted shortly. Our work is just beginning. No policy will be effective if it isn't implemented correctly; if it isn't meaningfully supported by our lawmakers, community leaders, and private sector. Some of these ideas may not be popular, and may even make some people uncomfortable. But we must make these changes.

GOVERNOR: We know that our plan is not perfect. But we are not afraid to start somewhere. Let us roll up our sleeves and work to rollback the tidal wave of crime that has risen to meet us. In the final analysis, the Safer Guam Initiative is about freedom. The freedom to walk through a parking lot without fear, the freedom to spend a day at the beach even when you are by yourself, the freedom to know that you are safe--especially at home. It won't be easy. The road won't always be smooth. But we will not rest until you are safe. We will work until you feel truly free.