



GUAM'S ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE ASSOCIATION
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REPRESENTATIVES FROM GUAM'S ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE ASSOCIATION FORWARD PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BILL 185 TO SENATOR B.J. CRUZ

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(November 6, 2009 – Hagåtña, Guam) Guam's Alternative Lifestyle Association (GALA), Derick Hills of the Guam Youth Congress, Attorney Bill Pesch, and straight allies released an amended version of Bill No. 185 and a letter recently sent to Senator B.J.Cruz. Through the amendments they offer significant compromises that, while addressing the rights of same-gender couples, take the community's comments into consideration, and will help heal the wounds caused by the divisive debate regarding Bill No. 185.

Tim Dela Cruz, President of GALA stated, "We realize the proposed amendments may not satisfy everyone, but we believe the amendments will make Bill 185 acceptable to the majority of Guam's residents and our Senators. We see these amendments as a positive step toward healing the wounds from the debate over legally recognizing same-gender relationships."

"The gay community took into consideration the concerns derived from public hearings on Bill Nos. 158, 185, and 212, the Catholic Church's opinions, news articles, and editorials to create a compromise that carefully considers the diverse views of our community. The amendments follow a recent meeting at the office of Senator Cruz in which we discussed compromises on controversial sections of Bill 185. Many of the changes are based on Nevada's Domestic Partnership Act," said Dela Cruz.



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Key changes in the amended version of Bill No. 185 include changing the term 'Domestic Partnership' to 'Civil Partnership', defining 'marriage' as a relationship between a man and a woman, and stressing that no religious entity is required to solemnize a civil partnership. To stress the seriousness of the relationship, those eligible to register for a civil partnership must share a common residence and sign a written statement that they have a committed relationship of mutual caring.

“The proposed amendments, while defining the benefits of a civil partnership, emphasize responsibilities that go with the recognition of the relationship, including the accrual of community property and community debts. The amended version of Bill No. 185 clarifies that a Civil Partnership is a serious lifetime commitment,” stated Dela Cruz.

“Considering the recent community divisiveness regarding Bill No. 185, we believe incorporating these amendments will make Bill No. 185 acceptable to the majority of our residents and will restore our island community’s reputation for tolerance and acceptance. Today’s full-page ad in the *Marianas Variety* by “Catholics in Support of Bill 185”, highlights the fact that many people of faith believe that faith and recognition of same-gender relationships are not mutually exclusive. “I therefore encourage the 30th Guam Legislature to amend Bill No. 185 to include these proposed changes and report it out to the Legislative Body for consideration,” said Dela Cruz.