

STATEMENT ISSUED BY SAHARA J. DEFENSOR

I want to state for the record that my role in the events that culminated in the recording that was released on a blog site, without my consent, was not, in any way, an effort on my or Michael's part to publicly accuse the Lt. Governor of academic fraud or impugn his character. Our goal in questioning the possibility was to obtain reassurance that no outside authority could construe our work as fulfilling the Lt. Governor's degree requirements.

My concerns arose in a meeting with my co-worker and the Lt. Governor, in which toward the end of the meeting my immediate supervisor joined. In this meeting, we discussed our draft of the public safety master plan. During that meeting the Lt. Governor made repeated references to his class project and the deadlines for his class project. After the meeting, my co-worker and supervisor sat around wondering what the Lt. Governor's intentions were with our master plan draft and his course work. (In a later meeting, our supervisor had admitted prior to this revelation, he, too, was concerned that the master plan was to be used for the Lt. Governor's graduation requirements.) The following morning, the Lt. Governor stated that he received an extension for his project but he needed a 3,000 word executive summary written by the end of the day.

This is the point in time where our intentions and the statements made to the media differ. We had never accused the Lt. Governor of fraud. We had a concern, sought guidance through the proper channels and when no redress was done, appealed to a higher authority.

There is no question that we followed all office rules and policies to address our concerns. Everyone in the Lt. Governor's office is acutely aware of the rules and well aware of the channels of supervision and the requirements to keep information confidential and discreet. Those rules were reinforced through continuous reminders from our supervisors who are tasked with monitoring and enforcing office policy.

All we were seeking were assurances that the Lt. Governor was not going to use our work product for his degree requirements. Michael and I are products of the University of Guam, both former Student Government Presidents, have earned our Masters Degrees, and have a combined total of 10 years of government service in policy analysis, research, and technical support. We fully understand the severity of the risk of being tied to any form of academic fraud. We fully are aware of how academic institutions ensure the authenticity of their students' research papers. Those who commit and get caught as well as those who abet in the fraud face civil and criminal penalties.

Pursuant to the rules, we addressed our request through our immediate supervisor Eric Palacios. When we did not get an immediate response from our immediate supervisor who had assured us

he would take it to the Lt. Governor's Chief of Staff and to the Lt. Governor immediately, we became even more anxious. It was at this time we felt the need to take it to the next level. We asked the Governor's Chief of Staff for advice on how to proceed with this situation. He later informed us that he was to speak to the Lt. Governor and get his assurances that he would not be using our work product for his course requirements. We told him that the master plan preparation did not only include our personal efforts but the work of several officials of public safety agencies as well. We know that the Chief of Staff did speak to the Lt. Governor and after that meeting we met with the Lt. Governor and he assured us that he would not use our work for his class.

This brings me to the issue of the recording of the conversation that has since gone viral on the internet. Michael and I were called into Chambers a couple of hours after our meeting with the Lt. Governor. I felt very uneasy as it became apparent to us when we entered the office that we were not meeting with the Lt. Governor, but rather with his wife, Attorney Naoko Shimizu. She appeared extremely agitated. I instinctively knew that something was wrong and I needed a recording to protect myself and my co-worker from slander, defamation and blacklisting. The recorded meeting occurred on Tuesday, April 5, 2011 after 5:30PM. As requested by Attorney Shimizu in the meeting, we submitted our resignations via text messages to Chief of Staff Dong Choe. Attorney Shimizu apologized to Michael on Thursday, April 7 and to me on Friday, April 8. She explained the reason behind her anger, and I had accepted her apology, but was still not comfortable enough to stay onboard in what had become a hostile work environment.

After the meeting concluded I feared for my personal and professional reputation. I kept the recording and shared my experience with a few of my trusted friends, just in case something happened. I believed up until recently that none of those friends would betray my trust and confidence. I was wrong.

I did not authorize the release of this recording and was extremely upset that it happened. If there are lessons to be learned from this situation, it's that you should not be afraid to question potential indiscretions for fear of reprisal and to protect yourself and your reputation even if it means you must leave your job.

This is unfortunately a high-profile and very political situation. I refuse to be a political pawn for the gain of one or detriment of another.

I feel compelled to clarify the rumors, innuendo, and lies being said about me and my co-worker. All I've tried to do since leaving Adelup is move on with my life. I'm sad to say that the media leak was a distraction not just for me or the administration, but for the island. I can only hope this statement will be the end of any confusion about my role in this unfortunate situation. All of us can move on and get back to the real issues affecting our government.

On Monday, Governor Eddie Calvo made great progress in protecting the rights of all our people by signing a bill into law ensuring that citizens have the right to document the actions of our Government officials through audio and video recordings. This act re-affirms Governor Calvo's commitment to openness and transparency in his administration so that our "government, of our people, by the people, for the people shall not perish."