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Governor

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Op-Ed: Ensuring Accountability and Transparency in Our Government

As Governor, my foremost duty is to serve the people of Pohnpei with integrity, fairness, and transparency. I have always believed that government, in all its functions, should be accountable to the people we are elected to represent. However, recent actions taken by the Legislature—particularly in their handling of matters involving our Director of Treasury—raise serious concerns about adherence to the principles of transparency, fairness, and due process.

While I fully respect the Legislature's role as a co-equal branch of government, any investigation or inquiry into the actions of public officials must be conducted through proper channels and with the transparency our people deserve. The recent decision by members of the Legislature to initiate an investigation into the Director of Treasury, without formally informing the Office of the Governor, violates these fundamental principles.

The Importance of Due Process

In any democracy, there are procedures in place to ensure that investigations are conducted fairly and transparently. These procedures exist not only to protect the rights of individuals under scrutiny but also to maintain the integrity of the institutions tasked with overseeing them. Unfortunately, the current situation reflects a failure to uphold these basic standards.

As Governor, I have not been formally informed by the Legislature of any ongoing investigation into the Director of Treasury. Even more concerning is that the Director herself was contacted without my office being copied or notified—a departure from standard practices of intergovernmental communication. This lack of formal procedure raises questions about the legitimacy of the inquiry and the motives behind it.

Personal Political Agendas Should Not Undermine Transparency

I want to make it clear: I am not opposed to any legitimate investigation, especially if it serves the public interest. However, any investigation must be grounded in fairness and follow the appropriate legal protocols. Such matters must be handled in a way that preserves public trust in our institutions, rather than eroding it through actions that appear personally politically motivated or conducted behind closed doors.

To ensure transparency, I have formally requested clarification from the Legislature regarding their intentions and the nature of their communications with the Director of Treasury. This is not only a matter of professional courtesy but a requirement of good governance. I have taken this step to ensure that we are upholding the principles of transparency and cooperation that our people expect from us. Unfortunately, my office has not received any reply as of today.

Public Confidence in Our Officials

I stand by the Director of Treasury, whose record of service speaks for itself. She has worked tirelessly to ensure the sound management of our state's finances, and she deserves the respect of an inquiry that is fair and impartial—one that follows the laws and procedures we have all agreed to uphold. We cannot allow any individual or institution to be subject to investigations that are shrouded in secrecy or driven by political and/or personal interests.

I hope that, by shedding light on this issue, we can remind everyone in government of the importance of unity and mutual respect. Investigations, when necessary, must always be conducted in a spirit of collaboration, not division. This is not just about protecting one individual; it is about protecting the integrity of our entire system of governance.

A Call for Accountability and Fairness

I call on the Legislature to work with my administration, not against it, to ensure that any inquiries are handled appropriately. The people of Pohnpei deserve nothing less. We are all here to serve you, and you have a right to expect that we do so with honesty, integrity, and transparency.

By respecting due process and fostering open communication, we strengthen the foundation of trust between the government and the people. As your Governor, I remain committed to these principles, and I will continue to stand up for what is right and just for all of us.

Let us move forward in a manner that serves the public interest, upholds the rule of law, and strengthens the bonds of trust that unite us as a people. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,



Stevenson A. Joseph
Governor
State of Pohnpei