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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **AG Rapadas on COFA Roundtable**

*October 15, 2013- Tamuning, Guam-* Attorney General Leonardo M. Rapadas, at the roundtable discussion that took place yesterday regarding the deportation of Compact of Freely Associated States (COFA) citizens, told senators that the issue was much more complex than just amending Guam statutes. He reported that the Office of the Attorney General, even prior to the enactment of the law, had already been reporting all criminally convicted foreign nationals to the Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Detention and Removal Operations Office (DRO) for potential deportation. AG Rapadas also reported that in his experience, the other Guam law enforcement departments like the Guam Police Department and Department of Corrections has also worked well with DRO. A conversation AG Rapadas had with DRO confirmed that fact.

AG Rapadas explained to the senators that the problem could be a resource problem, but in his experience as U.S. Attorney, he knew that DRO and all other federal agencies were doing their jobs while dealing with the scarce resources that come from being the furthest federal district from Washington, DC. AG Rapadas explained that there are good reasons why Guam criminal statutes are written the way they are and that a better way to accomplish the goal of more deportations would be to get the Department of Homeland Security to enforce the immigration law on Guam as they would in the United States and other U.S. territories as alluded to in part by Vice-Speaker B.J. Cruz's comments regarding the U.S. Government's commitment to deport.

Chief Deputy Attorney General Phillip J. Tydingco reported to the senators that since the law's enactment, there were 19 COFA citizens convicted of several crimes, the majority of which were DWI cases which would not necessarily get them deported. Both AG Rapadas and CDAG Tydingco cautioned the senator from losing sight of the fact that there may be local victims that may not have rights such as restitution fulfilled for them should defendants be deported.

While Attorney General Leonardo M. Rapadas appreciates the request for assistance by Senator Respicio, the roundtable should have taken place before the COFA deportation provisions were placed in the "Three Strikes" bill without discussion.

Finally, AG Rapadas told senators he will continue to report not only on COFA citizens, but on all deportable non-citizens to DRO and I Mina'Trentai Dos na Liheslaturan Guåhan because of potential constitutional and organicity problems he discussed at the roundtable.

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