



The People's Party

Democratic Party of the Northern Mariana Islands

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NMI Democrats Elect New Leaders

On Saturday, May 3, 2025, Democrats from across the CNMI gathered in person and virtually in a General Membership Meeting to elect a new Central Executive Committee and to elect new party officers.

Democrats were joined at the meeting by former Delegate Gregorio Kiliili Camacho Sablan who, in true Kiliili fashion, explained in plain terms the consequences of Trump's recent decisions for the CNMI. From our water bills to the plight of Medicaid, the Trump administration's goal to shutter the Department of Education and the cuts planned for the Nutrition Assistance Program, Kiliili painted a picture for those gathered of the challenges of the present challenges facing the CNMI. "Can you imagine," he asked, "in Tinian and Rota and us [in Saipan] going back to where it was before I got into office?"

Kiliili insisted that in sharing these realities, he wasn't pointing fingers. But he also emphasized the tragedy that it is a former member of Congress who is sharing what's actually happening in Washington, D.C. Despite his disappointment, he has not given up hope in our democracy and in our Commonwealth. He admonished those present to encourage people to vote, and to vote for candidates we can trust. Though things will likely get worse before they get better, we have the power to stand up and be heard.

Senator Celina Babauta, echoing Kiliili's comments, lamented the impact a cut in funding to Medicaid will have to low-income families in the CNMI. Like Kiliili, Senator Babauta understands the value of voting for candidates who will do the work. "Change nothing in November," she asserted, "and nothing changes". I'm asking everybody in Saipan, Tinian, and Rota to rise up and help us." Senator Babauta looks forward to recruiting candidates and working with elected officials who will advocate for our young and old, for all our people, especially for those less fortunate.

Once the Central Executive Committee was elected, the new leaders of the party voted for the party's officers. Annie Pickelsimer, a longtime Democrat, is the new party Chair. Serving alongside her are Vice Chair Luella I. Marciano, who will serve in an acting capacity as the party transitions to new leadership. Emelia Chargualaf is the party treasurer, and Shawna Indalecio is the party secretary.

For her part, Chair Pickelsimer is humbled by the vote of confidence the CEC placed in her. "I will work with you," she said to her fellow CEC members and to the elected officials in attendance, "to build on our successes and to offer solutions to our people. We have a strong party, and we can become even stronger. With democrats on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota working together, we can expect a Blue wave in November."

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