

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 22-02

RE: C.R. NO. 22-16/EDUCATION

SUBJECT: NOMINATION OF MS. GARDENIA AISEK TO SERVE
AS THE SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

June 02, 2021

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Twenty-Second Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
First Regular Session, 2021

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred C.R. No.
22-16, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MS.
GARDENIA AISEK TO SERVE AS SECRETARY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF
MICRONESIA.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of this resolution are expressed in its
title.

On May 25, 2021, your Committee on Education held a public
hearing on the nomination of Ms. Gardenia Aisek for Secretary of
the National Department of Education. Present at this hearing

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were the nominee, representatives from the National Department of Education (NDOE), and the Department of Justice.

Your Committee has long understood the importance of strong leadership and planning by the head of NDOE. The Committee believes that it is particularly critical to have a strong Secretary for NDOE as the Nation transitions post Amended Compact. Ms. Aisek has decades of experience in education, political leadership and budget analysis. She is well known to the Committee and has proven her ability to meet difficult challenges.

The Committee began the hearing by asking the nominee what her vision for NDOE was. The nominee stated that since the four states were quite different she would like to see more coordination between the states and NDOE. Also, the nominee stated that the Nation still suffers from a lack of core course standardization. She further opined that more is needed to be done to ensure all teachers meet their minimum number of classroom hours. Only strong leadership at the national level can make this happen.

The nominee spoke at length about her vision for teaching the history of the Federated States of Micronesia and ensuring that this course was standard for all the schools in the Nation. She strongly believes that incorporation of culture and local history is important to the continued strengthening of our shared national identity.

When asked to discuss what she thought the largest challenges for educating our children were, the nominee stated poor implementation and teaching was a real source of concern. Your Committee was advised that due to low salaries and more teachers retiring than coming into the profession this is likely to

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become increasingly challenging. It is lamentable that this issue continues to plague our Nation. The Committee wholeheartedly agrees that work must be done to change the trajectory in this area.

When questioned about the three core mandates of NDOE: teacher certification, school accreditation and student testing, the nominee agreed that these initiatives were vital to holding all teachers and schools to high standards. When asked if she would change how these initiatives are implemented she said this was not something she could speak to without being in the home office to do a detailed evaluation.

The Committee and the nominee discussed the need to promote vocational and technical training in the high schools, as well as, introduce students to a variety of skills like computer technology so they may find careers that suit them. The nominee agreed that not all students are interested in careers that require a college bachelor's degree and the Nation would be well served if more young people had building, technical and technology skills.

Representatives from NDOE voiced concern that the nominee did not have a detailed understanding of the administration at the national level. The NDOE representatives also strongly recommended that nominees for the Secretary position come from the long serving career staff at the Department. The Department of Justice strongly endorsed the nomination.

Regarding the concern raised by NDOE your Committee noted at the hearing that lack of coordination and communication between NDOE and the state department's of education is a long standing problem. When questioned, the Yap State administration often voices it's frustration regarding lack of communication with

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NDOE, so it is not surprising teachers and administration in Chuuk also have issues. This is a weak area that the nominee previously addressed in the hearing. As to who is nominated for the Secretary position, it is an Executive function and for the President to decide. The Committee is satisfied with the nominee's qualifications and her ability. Your Committee believes this nominee should be confirmed, and so recommends that Ms. Aisek be confirmed as the Secretary of Education for the National Department of Education.

Your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R.No. 22-16, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Joseph J. Urusemal
Joseph J. Urusemal, chairman

/s/ Aren B. Palik
Aren B. Palik, vice chairman

/s/ Wesley W. Simina
Wesley W. Simina, member

Edmond B. Moses,

Florencio S. Harper, member

/s/ Derensio S. Konman
Derensio S. Konman, member

Ferny S. Perman, member