



OFFICE OF SENATOR  
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

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## Legislation Responds to Judiciary's Concern for Judicial Officer and Peace Officer Safety

Public Safety Committee Chairman Shawn Gumataotao and Ranking Member Tina Rose Muña-Barnes introduced Bill 280 at the request of the Judiciary of Guam. The measure criminalizes the use of force, threats, or deception against or toward a Judicial Officer or Peace Officer, or members of their family, including the dissemination through any means, including by posting on the internet, the judicial officer's or peace officer's – or their family's - personal information.

“Bill 280 recognizes the serious threats that are made against the safety of Judicial Officers and our broader law enforcement community,” said Senator Gumataotao. “Our sister branch of government informed policymakers two years ago that threats to their safety reflect a national trend of hostility towards our courts, and this proposal is put forward in response to the Judiciary's renewed request for Senators to establish appropriate protections for Judicial Officers and Peace Officers.”

According to the Judiciary of Guam, in 2020, a former litigant before a federal judge in New Jersey carried out an attack that resulted in the death of the judge's twenty-year-old son and serious injuries to her husband. On October 19, 2023, a judge born in Guam was killed at his home in Washington County, Maryland, following a ruling in a child custody matter. Following that incident, the National Center for State Courts warned that sustained attacks on the rule of law, public institutions, and the courts are increasingly manifesting in real-world violence, and that normalizing such attacks threatens public safety and democratic governance.

“This proactive policy proposal comes at a time when citizens with opposing political and social viewpoints find it difficult if not impossible to engage in civil discourse,” said Senator Gumataotao. “Bill 280 is by no means the only deterrent that is needed to safeguard the safety of Judicial Officers and Peace Officers; however, it is a much-needed policy tool that highlights the real and unique dangers these public officials face daily because of the very nature of the services they provide to our people.”

During last year's discussion regarding legislation establishing a death benefit program for families of fallen public safety and law enforcement officers, the Attorney General of Guam testified that he and other public servants who make up our public safety and law enforcement community risk everything serving the People of Guam in a profession that can be dangerous and can also inherently create dangerous enemies seeking revenge and retribution for one's public service.

Bill 280 builds on the earlier efforts of Ranking Member Muña-Barnes who introduced a similar measure, Bill 291, during the previous term and Bill 22 in January 2025, which was later withdrawn.

For more information, please contact Senator Gumataotao's office at (671) 647-1409/1411 or via email at [office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov](mailto:office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov).