

Hunger Initiative Testimony

I, Thomas A. Tebuteb, hereby submit this testimony as the Secretary/Officer-in-Charge of the Empty Vessel Ministry Foundation (EVM). Our organization is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization founded in the state of Washington in 2004 and incorporated in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in 2006. Our mission is to spread the word of Christianity, empower youth and women and help find sustainable local solutions to poverty.

EVM has been active in assisting the needy and impoverished families since its inception in the CNMI with clothing, educational supplies and food donations. EVM was most especially active after the two super typhoons--Soudelor in 2016 and Yutu in 2018—devastated our islands. And when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, EVM has remained active with its food distribution program in assisting our needy throughout the Saipan villages. Since the aftermath of the natural disasters, including the ongoing pandemic, EVM has assisted approximately five-thousand (5000) needy individuals with food donations.

Manned by non-salaried officials and volunteers, our organization relies mainly on monetary and in-kind donations from the federal and local government as well as from individuals and the private business establishments. As an example, EVM received fifty-thousand (\$50,000) dollars, in three phases, with 98% for food, from the Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP) for the past three years which will be expended by September 2021.

While we periodically schedule food distribution on a monthly basis, we provide lesser food amount than other organizations who received more funds. To illustrate, for the past two months we provided food (frozen chicken, canned goods, drinks, noodles and vegetables) to four hundred people at a cost of six-thousand (\$6000).

EVM has periodically assisted Marianas Health Center Care Services via its Social Worker Gail Labatete (670) 284-1977) who oversees the visiting nurses work with those in need of health care and food in the patients' homes.

Our clients also include a lady named Feng who is a widow with no siblings. Her struggle for food, like others, is being curtailed with the twice a week bread and pastries donation to EVM from one of the bakeries on island, the Great Harvest Bread Company. A couple of other clients include Himaya (670) 785-3631 and Linda (670) 788-2228 who depict the struggles that many of those we help have to endure. The many we help were employed in the hotels but were terminated due to the pandemic, so their reliance on finding odd jobs and seeking to put food on the table is a constant struggle.

In that light, our organization fully supports this Hunger Initiative and praise the proponents of this worthy undertaking.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas A. Tebuteb', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.