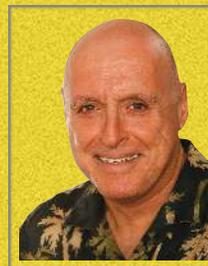


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 175 Different Looks at Nepotism – Pt. 1

The topic today is nepotism. Listener Elvin Quitano sent a message in on the Facebook feed here at The Point, asking us to talk about that. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's get to it, today, on The Extra Point.

Before we do anything else, let's define the term nepotism. It comes from the Italian word nepotismo, which is based on the Latin word nepos meaning 'nephew'. Since the Middle Ages and until the late 17th century, some Catholic popes and bishops, who had taken vows of chastity, and therefore usually had no legitimate offspring of their own, gave their nephews such positions of preference as were often accorded by fathers to son.

I know Elvin wants me to discuss nepotism in GovGuam and how it impacts performance. First, I'm not an expert on Govguam issues, nor do I know which families may have used nepotism to advance their own interests.

Generally, the heat generated by this topic comes from people who feel they or a family member lost on out a job, promotion, or other benefit that went to a relative of somebody else.

Others may be concerned in a general sense, when they feel the government isn't operating at a high level, needs to reduce expenses, or is losing good employees who feel that the quote-unquote "system" prevents them from getting ahead.

I went online and found an article from the East-West Center Pacific Islands Report, April 2013, where then Public Auditor Doris Brooks said there is no specific law that prohibits relatives from working in the same agency. "It's only where it becomes an issue of supervision." Brooks said, "It's not illegal, not improper. But is it good to have, in terms of good governance?"

A job application from the department of administration read this way: "...spouses and persons within the first degree of "blood relationship" may not be employed in the same department or agency in a supervisor-subordinate relationship and where two or more family members under the same household are prohibited; exception to this rule may be made for the good of the government service."

I don't know if laws have been updated that change any of this, but that last line provides an "escape clause" if someone wanted to get around the basic rule. "I hired additional family members for the good of the people of Guam." We can snicker at that, but could we disprove it?

So, some questions...

1. How much of this goes on, really? How many government positions have been given out because of family ties?
2. Has government performance suffered as a result? What proof is there that a specific downturn or failing on the part of GovGuam can be attached to nepotism? Would such proof stand up in court, or only in the court of public opinion?

We'll have more on this subject tomorrow. More questions, thoughts, opinions and counter-opinions. It's a tough topic and I appreciate Elvin for suggesting it.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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