

# Jennings to Uiafa'atali Radewagen: Withdraw or Suspend HR 6062

SWAINS ISLAND, USA, May 2, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On May 1, 2024, Delegate Su'a Alexander Eli Jennings (Swains Island Delegate, American Samoa Legislature) requested that U.S. Congresswoman Uiafa'atali Amata A. Radewagen withdraw or suspend [H.R. 6062](#) currently before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs. H.R. 6062 seeks to remove Congress from the American Samoa Constitution's amendment procedure by repealing [48 U.S.C. § 1662a](#).

The November 2022 American Samoa constitutional referendum saw a majority of American Samoans vote to give the Swains Island Delegate the right to vote in the local legislature for the first time in 62 years, along with 4 other constitutional changes. On December 14, 2022, American Samoa Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga submitted the 5 proposed changes to the Secretary of the Interior, Deb. Haaland. To date, no amendments have been approved or disapproved by the Department of the Interior or by Congress.

In a May 1, 2024 email to Congresswoman Amata, Delegate Jennings said "Our Constitution specifies only 4 months for DOI to review our Amendments then refer them for a Congressional review, not 17 months to an indefinite time at your request, in order to introduce and hopefully pass HR 6062 by both Houses of Congress, without the approval of the 2022 Constitutional



WASHINGTON-Delegate Jennings testifying before the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs, January 18, 2024



WASHINGTON-Left to right: DOI Deputy Asst. Sec. Keone Nakoa, Lt. Gov. La'apui E.V. Ale, Swains Island Delegate Su'a Alexander Eli Jennings, January 18, 2024

Convention or the people of American Samoa and Swains Island.”

Jennings was referring to Art. V, Sec. 3 of the Revised Constitution of American Samoa, which requires the Secretary of the Interior to approve or disapprove any proposed constitutional amendments to the American Samoa Constitution within 4 months after receipt.

Delegate Jennings pushed further asking for “a Congressional Review of the entire American Samoa Constitution, together with our recent Amendments, to determine whether inconsistencies in our Constitution discriminates against any class or race of U.S. Citizens or American Samoan Natives – including lineal descendants of Swains Island, under the framework of the U.S. Constitution.”

“This is a desperate attempt to fulfill my obligations under a sworn oath to defend the Constitution of the United States and American Samoa, and the rights of every U.S. Citizen and American Samoan Native-including lineal descendant of Swains Island,” said Jennings.

The Swains Faipule mentioned his request was the start of an appeal to the Federal Government for assistance “in lieu of ASG’s persistent refusal to discuss and resolve local matters critical to American Samoa and Swains Island.”

Delegate Jennings testified in opposition to H.R. 6062 on January 18, 2024 before the House Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs. Since the hearing, Jennings has raised awareness of Swains' lack of recognition as part of American Samoa, both traditionally and politically. To date, there has been no official action on H.R. 6062 since the January 18 congressional hearing.

May 13, 2024 will mark the 99th anniversary of Congress placing Swains Island under the administration of the government established in American Samoa by the United States. American Samoa was administered by the Department of the Navy from 1900-1951; from 1951-present it has been administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

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