




The Senate
NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
P.O. BOX 500129
SAIPAN, MP 96950

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-16
Date: June 20, 2025
RE: Senate Bill No. 24-19

S - Adopted 7/4/25


Honorable Dennis James C. Mendiola
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. President:

Your Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law to which Senate Bill No. 24-19 was referred, entitled:

“To amend 9 CMC § 2208(d) to authorize motor vehicle licensure to all residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”

begs leave to report as follows:

I. RECOMMENDATION:

After considerable discussion and deliberation, your Committee recommends the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-19 in its current form.

II. ANALYSIS:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of Senate Bill No. 24-19 is to authorize motor vehicle licensure to all residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands by amending 9 CMC § 2208(d).

B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that acquiring a valid driver's license in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) requires the presentation of relevant documents to confirm the applicant's lawful residency in the CNMI. Given our remote location and local restrictions in managing our immigration system, residents without proof of lawful presence in the CNMI have taken the risk of driving a motor vehicle without a valid driver's license. This not only leads to a lack of auto insurance coverage for the safety of all motorists and pedestrians on CNMI roads, but also results in a loss of revenue from unregistered vehicle fees and driver's license fees.

Your Committee further finds that approximately nineteen states, along with the District of Columbia have enacted legislation to allow unauthorized immigrants to obtain a driver's license, provided that the applicant can provide some form of documentation, such as a foreign passport, a foreign birth certificate, or a consular card, as well as proof of current residency in the state.

Your Committee met on June 20, 2025, to formally discuss the proposed legislation and review the comments officially received by the Committee. Your Committee agrees with the progressive approach of the proposed legislation's intent to enhance road safety by ensuring that motorists in the Commonwealth are properly licensed and insured, thereby reducing the number of uninsured drivers on the roads, potentially increasing revenue from licensing fees, and improving public safety in the community.

It is for these reasons that your Committee supports the intent of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-19 in its current form.

C. Legislative History:

Senate Bill No. 24-19 was formally introduced by Senator Donald M. Manglona on February 11, 2025, and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law for disposition.

During the Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, a similar legislation, Senate Bill No. 23-55, was formally introduced by Senator Donald M. Manglona on January 26, 2024, and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law for disposition. On January 3, 2025, the Senate convened its 8th Day, Fourth Regular Session, and a motion was made and seconded to file all remaining bills, resolutions, reports, and other assignments given to committees that require Senate action. Accordingly, Senate Bill No. 23-55 was filed, and the Senate of the Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned *sine die*.

D. Public Hearing and Comment:

1. Public Hearing. No public hearing was scheduled for Senate Bill No. 24-19. However, committee meetings, which are open to the public, were held on May 6, 2025, and June 20, 2025. See below for further details.
2. Committee Meeting. The proposed legislation made its first appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. The committee meeting notices and agenda were officially posted on May 1, 2025, on various legislative forums and social media sites to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under *Item No. IV. Public Comment* on the Committee Agenda. However, no oral testimonies in support or in opposition of the proposed legislation were presented before the Committee.

The proposed legislation made its second appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Friday, June 20, 2025. The committee meeting notice was posted on June 12, 2025 and the agenda was officially posted on June 17, 2025, on various legislative forums and social media sites to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under *Item No. IV. Public Comment* on the Committee Agenda. However, no oral testimonies in support or in opposition of the proposed legislation were presented before the Committee.

3. Written Comment. Your Committee sent out several requests for comments on the proposed legislation. To date, the status of comments received from the following government and private entities is as follows:
 - a. Office of the Attorney General, *no comment received*
 - b. Mayor of the Municipality of Rota, *no comment received*
 - c. Mayor of the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan, *no comment received*
 - d. Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan, *no comment received*
 - e. Mayor of the Northern Islands, *no comment received*
 - f. Rota Municipal Council, *no comment received*
 - g. Tinian Municipal Council, *no comment received*
 - h. Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council, *no comment received*
 - i. *Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, received March 18, 2025*

E. Estimated Fiscal Cost:

The enactment of Senate Bill No. 24-19 will not result in additional costs to the Commonwealth government. In fact, the proposed legislation indirectly aims to realize potential revenue by ensuring that every resident of the Commonwealth is properly licensed. This allows them to obtain essential auto insurance, regardless of one's immigration status, which further enhances the safety and well-being of all motorists and pedestrians.

F. Summary of Committee Amendments:

Your Committee made no amendments to the proposed legislation.

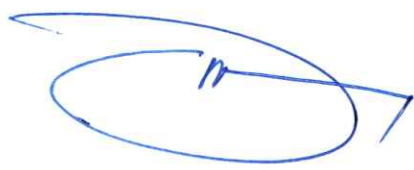
III. CONCLUSION:

Your Committee agrees with the intent and purpose of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-19 in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,



Senator Karl R. King-Nabors
Chairperson



Senator Francisco Q. Cruz
Vice Chairperson



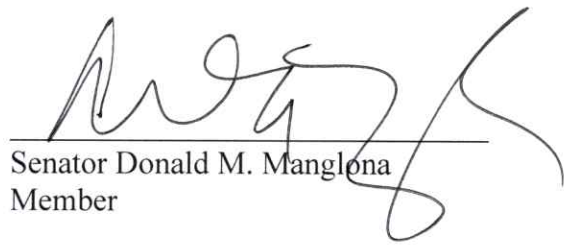
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo
Member



Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro
Member

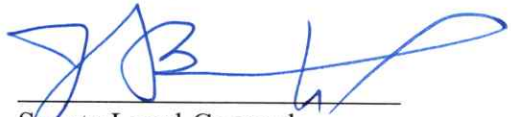


Senator Corina M. Magofna
Member



Senator Donald M. Manglona
Member

Reviewed by:



Senate Legal Counsel

Attachment(s): Written Comment(s)

1. *Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, received March 18, 2025*



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Arnold I. Palacios
Governor

David M. Apatang
Lieutenant Governor

Anthony I. Macaranas
Commissioner

March 17, 2025

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors
Vice President of the Senate
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Building, Capitol Hill
P.O. Box 500129 Saipan, MP 96950



Ref: **S.B. No. 24-19**. To amend 9CMC Sub-Section 2208 (d) to authorize motor vehicle licensure to all resident of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

I write in response to your request for insight and comments on Senate Bill No. 24-19. Base on my review of this bill, I submit the following comments for review and consideration by the requestee and to its committee.

The Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Motor Vehicle supports Senate Bill No. 24-19. The Bureau would like to recommend increasing the scheduling fee, additional \$25.00 to the current fee of \$50.00 in total of \$75.00 for all licensure under this provision.

Submitted for your review, please don't hesitate to contact me at 670-285-1371 or email at eric.david@dps.gov.mp.

Best regards,

Eric F. David
Director, CNMI-Bureau of Motor Vehicle

Cc: *DPS, Commissioner Office*
BMV-File

Maid
3/18/25
3:30p-M

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend 9 CMC § 2208(d) to authorize motor vehicle licensure to all residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature acknowledges that the issuance
2 of a driver's license under 9 CMC § 2208(d)(5) requires the applicant to submit proof of
3 U.S. citizenship or U.S. national, alien lawfully admitted for permanent or temporary
4 residence in the United States; conditional permanent resident status; an approved asylum
5 application or has entered into the United States in refugee status; has a valid, unexpired
6 nonimmigrant visa or nonimmigrant visa status; has a pending application for asylum in
7 the United States; has a pending or approved application for temporary protected status in
8 the United States; has approved deferred action status; or has a pending application for
9 adjustment of status to that of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the
10 United States or conditional permanent resident status in the United States.

11 The Legislature finds that a person without legal status in the CNMI cannot obtain
12 a driver's license to operate a motor vehicle. The Legislature also finds that individuals not
13 licensed to operate motor vehicles have limited transportation means to get to and from
14 their jobs, dental and medical appointments, school, and other necessary destinations.
15 Therefore, these individuals take chances and operate a motor vehicle without a driver's
16 license, have no vehicle insurance, and don't pay the driver's license fee.

17 The purpose of this Act is to allow all CNMI residents to obtain proper motor
18 vehicle licensure.

19 **Section 2. Amendment.** 9 CMC § 2208 is hereby amended to read:

20 "§2208. Issuance of Licenses and Identification Cards.

1 (a)-(c) [Unchanged.]

2 (d) Minimum issuance standards. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles shall require, at a
3 minimum, presentation and verification of the following information before issuing a card
4 to a person:

5 (1) A photo identity document, except that a non-photo identity document
6 is acceptable if it includes both the person's full legal name and date of birth.

7 (2) Documentation showing the person's date of birth.

8 (3) Proof of the person's social security account number or verification that
9 the person is not eligible for a social security account number.

10 (4) Documentation showing the person's name and address of ~~principle~~
11 principal residence.

12 (5) Except as provided in paragraph (8) of this subsection, Documentation
13 documentation showing that the person:

14 (i) is a citizen or national of the United States;

15 (ii) is an alien lawfully admitted for permanent or temporary
16 residence in the United States;

17 (iii) has conditional permanent resident status in the United States;

18 (iv) has an approved application for asylum in the United States or
19 has entered into the United States in refugee status;

20 (v) has a valid, unexpired nonimmigrant visa or nonimmigrant visa
21 status for entry into the United States;

22 (vi) has a pending application for asylum in the United States;

23 (vii) has a pending or approved application for temporary protected
24 status in the United States;

25 (viii) has approved deferred action status; or

26 (ix) has a pending application for adjustment of status to that of an
27 alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States or
28 conditional permanent resident status in the United States.

1 (6) Declaration required. Each applicant must sign a declaration under
2 penalty of perjury that the information presented on the application is true and
3 correct, and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles must retain the declaration. An applicant
4 must sign a new declaration when presenting new source documents to the Bureau
5 of Motor Vehicles on subsequent visits.

6 (7) Regulations. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles shall promulgate
7 regulations describing the documents that it will accept for verification of the data
8 required by this subsection.

9 (8) Exception process. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles may issue ~~regulations~~
10 ~~that provide an exception process for persons who, for reasons beyond their own~~
11 ~~control, are unable to present the necessary documents and must rely on alternate~~
12 ~~documents to establish identity or date of birth.~~ the following:

13 (A) A learner's permit under 9 CMC § 2206 to a person who is not
14 able to provide any of the required documentation under subparagraph (5)
15 of this subsection. Provided that the applicant shall provide any other form
16 of identification.

17 (B) A driver's license, not a Real ID driver's license, to a person
18 who is not able to provide the documentation required under subparagraph
19 (5) of this subsection. Provided that the applicant shall provide any other
20 form of identification. And provided further that the driver's license under
21 this provision shall be for one year and a fee of \$50.00, renewable each year
22 upon the payment of the annual fee of \$50.00.

23 (9) Successfully pass the required written and driving tests.

24 (10) The driver's license provided under this subsection shall not be used
25 for travel or access to any federal building.

26 (e)-(h) [Unchanged.]”

27 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
28 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent

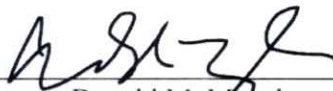
1 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
2 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

3 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
4 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under
5 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.
6 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant
7 to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any
8 way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the
9 date this Act becomes effective.

10 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
11 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

Date: 02/11/25

Introduced By: _____


Senator Donald M. Manglona

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:


Senate Legal Counsel