



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

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

S-Adopted 7/16/25


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

Dear Mr. President:

Your Committee on Fiscal Affairs, to which House Bill No. 24-19 was referred, entitled:

“To rename the ‘CNMI Scholarship Office’ to the ‘CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office’”,

begs leave to report as follows:

I. RECOMMENDATION:

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

II. ANALYSIS:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of House Bill No. 24-19 is to rename the “CNMI Scholarship Office” to the “CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office”.

B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that the CNMI Scholarship Office was established as a proactive measure in response to the expected phase-out of nonresident workers in the Commonwealth. The office not only offers financial assistance to eligible residents in the Commonwealth seeking to further their education in any field, but also oversees various financial aid programs, including the Nursing School Scholarship, Post Secondary Teacher Education Program, Behavioral Health Professional Scholarship, and the Professional Student Exchange Program scholarship through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Your Committee further finds that as part of the scholarship agreement signed by recipients to receive financial aid, they commit to returning to the Commonwealth after graduation and working for a specified number of years, based on the terms of their scholarship awarded. Should a recipient fail to meet this obligation, the CNMI Scholarship Office addresses issues related to overdue or defaulted financial assistance agreements.

Additionally, your Committee finds that the CNMI Scholarship Office, as intended, contributes to the workforce development of the Commonwealth by recruiting graduates and facilitating job opportunities, thereby investing in the economic growth and stability of the Commonwealth.

Your Committee further finds that on July 11, 2024, the CNMI Scholarship Board of Directors approved changing the name of the CNMI Scholarship Office to the CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office to better reflect the comprehensive nature of its services.

Your Committee met on June 24, 2025, to discuss the proposed legislation. Your Committee unanimously supports the intention of House Bill No. 24-19 to endorse the decision of the CNMI Scholarship Board of Directors to rename the office, aligning it with its mission to serve eligible applicants who aspire to pursue their degrees and contribute to the Commonwealth's workforce development. It is for these reasons that your Committee supports the intent of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of House Bill No. 24-19 in its current form.

C. Legislative History:

House Bill No. 24-19 was introduced by two principal sponsors, Representative Marissa R. Flores and Representative Joel C. Camacho, on April 24, 2025, and was subsequently referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations for disposition. On April 29, 2025, the House JGO Committee adopted House Bill No. 24-19 in its current form, which was reported to the full body of the House of Representatives under House Standing Committee Report (SCR) No. 24-5. On May 15, 2025, during the First Day, Second Special Session of the House of Representatives, House SCR 24-5 was adopted, and the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 24-19 in its current form.

On May 19, 2025, House Bill No. 24-19 was transmitted to the Senate and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Fiscal Affairs for disposition.

D. Public Hearing and Comment:

1. Public Hearing. No public hearing was scheduled for House Bill No. 24-19. However, a committee meeting, which is open to the public, was held on June 24, 2025. See below for further details.
2. Committee Meeting. The proposed legislation made its first appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Tuesday, June 24, 2025. The committee meeting notices and agenda were officially posted on June 20, 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 testimony in support or in opposition of House Bill No. 24-19 was stated before your Committee.
3. Written Comment. Your Committee agreed not to solicit comments on the proposed legislation. Additionally, no written comment in support or opposition of House Bill No. 24-19 was received by your Committee.

E. Estimated Fiscal Cost:

The enactment of House Bill No. 24-19 will not result in additional expenses to the Commonwealth government, as the intent is to change the name of the CNMI Scholarship Office to the CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office in line with the existing responsibilities to support the workforce of the Commonwealth.

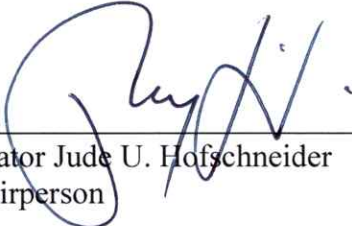
F. Summary of Committee Amendments:

Your Committee made no amendments to the proposed legislation.

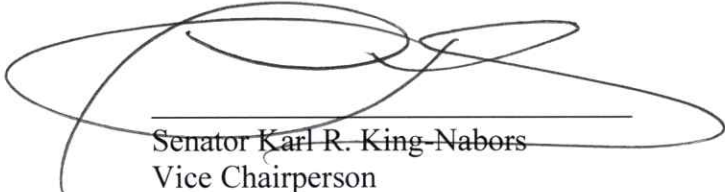
III. CONCLUSION:

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

Respectfully submitted,



Senator Jude U. Hofschneider
Chairperson



Senator Karl R. King-Nabors
Vice Chairperson

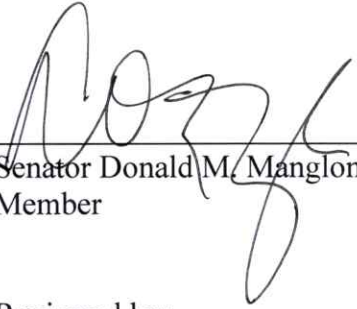
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo
Member



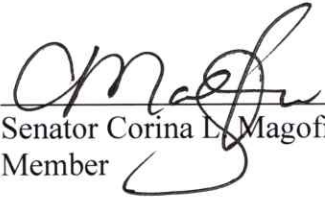
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro
Member



Senator Francisco Q. Cruz
Member



Senator Corina L. Magofna
Member



Senator Donald M. Manglona
Member

Reviewed by:



Senate Legal Counsel

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2025

First Special Session, 2025

H. B. 24-19

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To rename the “CNMI Scholarship Office” to the “CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office.”

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 24TH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that increasing
2 access to education and workforce training through financial aid opportunities
3 significantly improves the likelihood that local residents will become well-
4 educated, well-equipped contributors to the CNMI’s workforce. Currently, the
5 CNMI Scholarship Office provides such financial aid opportunities through
6 multiple scholarships, such as the Post Secondary Teacher Education Program
7 Scholarship and the Behavioral Health Professional Scholarship.

8 On July 11, 2024, the CNMI Scholarship Board of Directors approved
9 changing the name of the “CNMI Scholarship Office” to the “CNMI Scholarship
10 and Financial Assistance Office” to better reflect the scope of the office’s services.
11 These services include, but are not limited to, administering higher education
12 financial assistance programs, which necessarily includes the power to address

1 matters related to delinquent or defaulted financial assistance agreements, and other
2 responsibilities necessary to carry out the office's mission.

3 Based on the foregoing, the Legislature concurs with the CNMI Scholarship
4 Board of Directors' decision to rename the office as it more accurately represents
5 the office's purpose and function. Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to rename
6 the "CNMI Scholarship Office" to the "CNMI Scholarship and Financial
7 Assistance Office."

8 **Section 2. Amendment.** Section 10102 of Chapter 10, Division 1, Title 3 of
9 the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

10 **"§ 10102. CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office**

11 (a) The CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office is hereby
12 established within the Executive Branch headed by an administrator
13 appointed by the Scholarship Board of Directors.

14 (b) The CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office is
15 established as an autonomous agency under the general control and direction
16 of the Scholarship Board of Directors. The board shall adopt bylaws that
17 enumerate its purposes, duties, powers, and rules of organization and
18 operation, which bylaws shall not be inconsistent with this article."

19 **Section 3. Global Amendment.** Unless the context clearly indicates
20 otherwise, all references in the Commonwealth Code, regulations, executive orders,

1 or official documents to the "CNMI Scholarship Office" shall be construed to mean
2 the "CNMI Scholarship and Financial Assistance Office."

3 Pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806, the Law Revision Commission shall make all
4 necessary changes to the Commonwealth Code to reflect the renaming of the office,
5 including, but not limited to, correcting cross-references and clerical or
6 typographical errors to ensure conformity and consistency throughout the Code.

7 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of
8 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
9 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its
10 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid
11 shall not be affected thereby.

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

19 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
20 Governor, or it becoming law without such approval.

HOUSE BILL 24-19

Prefiled: 4/2/2025

Date: _____ Introduced by: /s/ Rep. Marissa R. Flores
(Principal Sponsor)
/s/ Rep. Joel C. Camacho
(Principal Sponsor)

/s/ Rep. Ralph N. Yumul
/s/ Rep. Julie M. A. Ogo

Reviewed for legal sufficiency by:

/s/ Joseph M. Hallahan
House Legal Counsel

Date: 4/1/2025