



TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH  
LEGISLATURE  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL  
OPERATIONS**

P.O. BOX 500586 SAIPAN, MP 96950

**JOEL C. CAMACHO**  
CHAIRMAN

*Adopted - 5/15/2025*  
STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-3  
DATE: April 29, 2025  
RE: House Bill No. 24-15

The Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Capitol Hill  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations to which was referred:

**House Bill No. 24-15:** To establish public sector employee and public sector employer relations through organized labor within the Commonwealth; and for other purposes.

begs leave to report as follows:

**I. RECOMMENDATION:**

After considerable discussion, your Committee recommends that House Bill No. 24-15 be passed by the House in its current form.

TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE  
RECEIVED BY *[Signature]*  
DATE *5/15/2025* TIME *1:28 PM*

## II. ANALYSIS:

### A. Purpose:

The purpose of House Bill No. 24-15 is to improve communication between public employers and employees, establish fair methods for resolving employment disputes, and promote better personnel management. It seeks to provide a uniform framework for recognizing employee rights to join organizations, engage in collective bargaining, and participate in concerted activities for mutual aid and protection.

### B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that this House Bill No. 24-15 aims to establish and protect the rights of public sector employees in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to organize and engage in collective bargaining. The proposed Labor-Management Relations Act outlines the procedures for forming employee organizations, defines the scope of representation, and sets guidelines for negotiations between public employers and recognized employee organizations. This framework is designed to promote effective communication and resolution of disputes regarding salaries, wages, hours, and other employment conditions.

Your Committee finds that House Bill No. 24-15 provides detailed processes for employee organization certification, good faith negotiations, and dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation and binding interest arbitration. It also protects public employees from adverse actions related to their participation in union activities. The Act aims to establish a consistent framework for recognizing employee rights while strengthening personnel management and fostering more effective employer-employee relations across all public agencies in the CNMI government.

Additionally, your Committee finds that House Bill No. 24-15 includes specific provisions for firefighters, aligning their definition with federal standards, ensuring compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, and designating them as emergency essential personnel. It also recognizes the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Northern Marianas Professional Firefighters Union (NMPFU) IAFF-Local 5335 as the exclusive bargaining representatives for CNMI firefighters. These measures aim to standardize and improve working conditions for CNMI firefighters while acknowledging their critical role in emergency response.

### C. Public Comments/Public Hearing:

Written & oral comments were solicited from the following agencies/entities:

1. CNMI Office of the Public Defender
2. CNMI Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review

3. CNMI Department of Public Safety
4. CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services
5. NMI Judiciary
6. CNMI Veterans Affairs Office
7. Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
8. CNMI Office of the Attorney General

Written comments were received from the following agencies/entities:

1. Edward A. Kelly, General President, International Association of Fire Fighters. Comments dated October 10, 2024.

“On behalf of the 350,000 member of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), I write to support the efforts of IAFF Local 5335 in their advocacy for the passage of the Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Management Relations Act, which would guarantee public employees in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) the right to form and join a public sector union and to engage in collective bargaining.”

2. Peter J. Leff, General Counsel, International Association of Fire Fighters. Comments dated April 10, 2025.

“The passage of the Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Manager Relations Act would establish comprehensive statutory guidelines governing public sector union formation, collective bargaining processes, and mechanisms for resolving bargaining impasses. This legislation would create a balanced legal infrastructure that properly protects employee rights while safeguarding public interests in ways that unilateral policy implementation simply cannot achieve.”

Oral comments were received during the Committee meeting from the following:

1. Mr. Hiram Aldan, Representative, International Association of Fire Fighters. Comment made April 29, 2025.

“...On behalf of the International Association of Fire Fighters, I submit to this Committee the letter of support from IAFF General President Edward F. Kelly. In addition to this letter, is a letter of support from our General Counsel of IAFF, Peter J. Leff. On behalf of President Sasamoto, Paul, Vice President Edward Dela Cruz Jr., and the entire Northern Marianas Professional Fire Fighters Union Local 5335, I urge you all to support the introduction of this bill to the Committee, which protects our rights to organize labor, as well as our right to collectively bargain. This bill does not just help the fire fighters but all public sector employees, this bill should not discriminate based on government agency you work for, nor public

sector employees should be excluded from this historic bill. So, please protect our rights, and thank you guys for your time.”

Written comments received have been attached as part of this Committee Report. Oral comments may be available upon request.

D. Legislative History:

House Bill No. 24-15 was introduced by Representative Blas Jonathan T. Attao on March 21, 2025, to the full body of the House and was referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations for disposition.

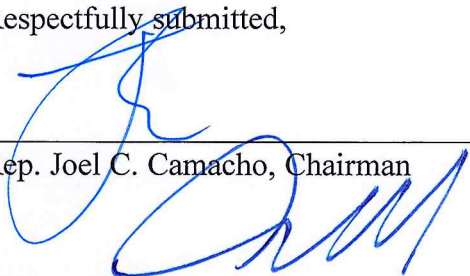
E. Cost Benefit:

The enactment of House Bill No. 24-15 is projected to yield substantial long-term benefits for the CNMI Government’s personnel management, labor relations, and overall operational efficiency. Establishing organized labor frameworks and protecting public sector employees’ collective bargaining rights is expected to enhance communication and resolve employer-employee disputes more efficiently. While initial costs for mediation, arbitration, and compliance may arise, these initial expenditures are offset by anticipated medium- to long-term benefits, such as improved employee morale and work conditions, faster and less costly dispute resolution, and reduced turnover. Risks include implementation delays, budget constraints, or resistance from either management or labor, which could limit early gains. Overall, the long-term gains in efficiency, workforce stability, and institutional professionalism are expected to outweigh the administrative costs.


**III. CONCLUSION:**

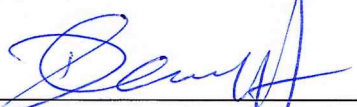
The Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of House Bill No. 24-15 and recommends its passage in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,

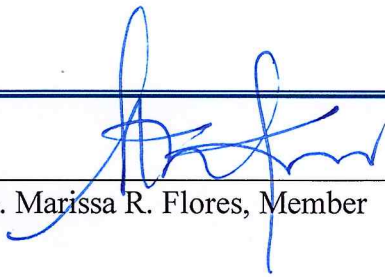
  
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Rep. Joel C. Camacho, Chairman

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Rep. Angelo A. Camacho, Member

  
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Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao, Vice Chair

  
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Rep. Diego V.F. Camacho, Member

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Rep. Marissa R. Flores, Member

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Rep. Joseph A. Flores, Member


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Rep. Julie A. Ogo, Member

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Rep. John Paul P. Sablan, Member

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Rep. Ralph N. Yumul, Member

Reviewed by:



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House Legal Counsel

Attachments:

- Letter dated October 10, 2024, from the General President of IAFF.
- Letter dated April 10, 2025, from the General Counsel of IAFF.



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

**Edward A. Kelly**  
General President

**Frank V. Lima**  
General Secretary-Treasurer

October 10, 2024

Dear Commonwealth Legislators,

On behalf of the 350,000 members of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), I write to support the efforts of IAFF Local 5335 in their advocacy for the passage of the Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Management Relations Act, which would guarantee public employees in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) the right to form and join a public sector union and to engage in collective bargaining.

The importance of granting public sector employees the right to form, join, and prosper in a union is deeply rooted in American history and essential to building the public trust.

The benefits of the unionization of a government workforce are innumerable. Unionization empowers public employees by giving them a collective voice in their workplace and the ability to advocate effectively for fair wages, comprehensive benefits, and safe working conditions. Job satisfaction among unionized public sector workers tends to increase significantly. This improved morale translates directly into increased productivity, as public employees are more likely to be deeply engaged in their work and committed to serving the public interest when they feel valued and respected. This improved morale also often results in lower turnover rates because when employees have mechanisms to address workplace issues and negotiate for better conditions, they are more likely to remain in their positions long-term. This stability is crucial for maintaining institutional knowledge and ensuring consistent, high-quality public services.

Unionization puts a mechanism into place that allows for the resolution of issues at the lowest of levels, efficiently and economically, before they spiral into larger, more expensive problems for the government to address.

Unionization also significantly enhances training opportunities for all public sector employees by advocating for comprehensive programs, securing dedicated funding, and standardizing training across departments and agencies. Unions facilitate peer-to-peer learning, negotiate for clear career development pathways, and push for training on new technologies and best practices, ensuring public employees are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills relevant to succeed and advance in their roles. Furthermore, unions advocate for leadership development, fostering a culture of continuous learning that keeps public sector workers engaged and prepared for the evolving demands of public service. This investment in training ultimately leads to improved public services, increased efficiency, and better use of public resources, benefiting both public sector employees and the communities they serve.

In addition, the process of collective bargaining itself fosters a sense of ownership and investment in the workplace. When employees have a seat at the table in discussions about workplace policies, resource allocation, and organizational goals, they develop a deeper

understanding of the challenges within their workplace and can contribute innovative solutions to help solve them. This participatory approach often leads to more efficient operations and better allocation of public resources.

More specifically, the IAFF and its affiliated Locals have been instrumental in advancing numerous critical policies that protect both fire fighters and civilians across the United States and Canada. Our efforts have led to significant improvements in fire fighter safety standards, the development of advanced firefighting techniques, enhanced professional development and specialized training programs, and increased mental health support for fire fighters. The IAFF and its Locals have also been able to secure hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal government through grants to staff fire departments and obtain new firefighting apparatus and equipment. Supporting IAFF Local 5335 will foster an environment where workers feel empowered to collectively engage with the local government in the equitable and productive exchange of ideas and the improvement of the fire department. As the first public sector union in CNMI, IAFF Local 5335 is poised to set a powerful precedent.

By supporting IAFF Local 5335's efforts to enshrine the right of public employees to organize and collectively bargain into law, the CNMI government has a historic chance to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to the welfare of its public servants and the safety of its citizens. This landmark legislation would not only protect workers' rights but also catalyze a more efficient use of CNMI's valuable resources, paving the way for innovative solutions to longstanding challenges. The benefits of supporting this bill extend far beyond the public sector – they touch every aspect of life in CNMI, from improved public services to a more robust local economy.

Please seize this pivotal moment and throw your full support behind the Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Management Relations Act. By doing so, you're not just supporting a policy; you're investing in a more prosperous, equitable, and efficient Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



Edward A. Kelly  
General President

cc: Frank V. Lima, IAFF General Secretary-Treasurer  
Stephen Gilman, IAFF 10<sup>th</sup> District Vice President ([sgilman@iaff.org](mailto:sgilman@iaff.org))  
Paul Sasamoto, President, IAFF Local 5335 ([paulfirerescue@gmail.com](mailto:paulfirerescue@gmail.com))  
Wayne Murphy, IAFF Chief Administrative Officer  
Jim Brinkley, IAFF Chief of Operations  
Peter J. Leff, IAFF General Counsel  
Jamie Eisner, IAFF Legal Counsel  
Corrine Griffin, Executive Assistant to the IAFF General President  
Teresa Alva, Executive Assistant of the IAFF General-Secretary-Treasurer  
Stephanie Griffiths, IAFF Legal Department

# MOONEY, GREEN, SAINDON, MURPHY & WELCH, P.C.

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April 10, 2025

Northern Mariana Islands Senate  
P.O. Box 500129  
Saipan, MP 96950

Northern Mariana Islands House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 500586  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Senators and Representatives:

On behalf of the law firm that serves as the General Counsel for the International Association of Fire Fighters (“IAFF”)—an organization of more than 350,000 professional fire fighters and paramedics across North America—I strongly urge you to support the Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Management Relations Act. This critical legislation would guarantee public employees in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) their fundamental right to form and join public sector unions and engage in collective bargaining—rights already afforded to public servants throughout the United States and Canada.

The benefits of public sector collective bargaining are substantial. Morale of employees operating under collective bargaining agreements dramatically improves, reducing costly and time-consuming turnover. Collective bargaining agreements establish clear, enforceable frameworks that govern employment relations, eliminating ambiguity about employer/employee rights and responsibilities. This creates a more stable and predictable legal environment that demonstrably benefits both public employers and employees. The negotiation process itself proactively addresses potential conflicts before they arise, preventing costly disputes and disruptions to public services.

The mutual investment in the collective bargaining process increases voluntary compliance with and reduces resistance to workplace rules. The negotiation table provides a structured forum where underlying tensions can be resolved diplomatically rather than in a manner that disrupts workplace operations. Furthermore, the periodic renegotiation of these agreements allows for necessary adaptations to evolving circumstances without the accumulation of resentment over outdated or ineffective policies. From a legal standpoint, these agreements serve as authoritative reference points that both parties can rely upon, minimizing interpretive disagreements that frequently lead to formal disputes.

Furthermore, collective bargaining agreements provide legally binding alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that provide alternatives to expensive and time-consuming litigation, while providing expert adjudication through arbitrators familiar with public sector labor law. These processes alleviate the burden on already overloaded court systems while delivering faster, more effective resolutions. In addition, the formalized grievance procedures created through these

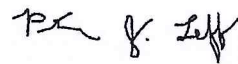
agreements also offer structured pathways for addressing workplace conflicts with clarity and certainty for all parties.

The passage of the Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Management Relations Act would establish comprehensive statutory guidelines governing public sector union formation, collective bargaining processes, and mechanisms for resolving bargaining impasses. This legislation would create a balanced legal infrastructure that properly protects employee rights while safeguarding public interests in ways that unilateral policy implementation simply cannot achieve.

As IAFF General President Edward Kelly previously emphasized in his letter to you dated October 10, 2024, the CNMI government now faces a historic opportunity to demonstrate genuine commitment to both the welfare of its public servants and the safety of its citizens. This landmark legislation would not only secure essential worker protections but would catalyze more efficient allocation of CNMI's resources, creating pathways for innovative solutions to persistent challenges. The benefits of this legislation extend far beyond the public sector—they would strengthen every aspect of life in CNMI, from enhanced public services to a more resilient local economy.

The time to support your public servants is now. We strongly urge you to stand with public employees, support the Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Management Relations Act, and help build a more equitable, efficient, and prosperous Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



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Peter J. Leff  
IAFF General Counsel

cc: Edward Kelly, IAFF General President  
Frank V. Lima, IAFF General Secretary-Treasurer  
Stephen Gilman, IAFF 10<sup>th</sup> District Vice President ([sgilman@iaff.org](mailto:sgilman@iaff.org))  
Paul Sasamoto, President, IAFF Local 5335 ([paulfirerescue@gmail.com](mailto:paulfirerescue@gmail.com))  
Jim Brinkley, IAFF Chief of Operations  
Teresa Alva, Executive Assistant of the IAFF General-Secretary  
Corrine Griffin, Executive Assistant to the IAFF General President  
Jamie Eisner, IAFF Legal Counsel  
Stephanie Griffiths, IAFF Legal Department

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 21, 2025

FIRST

Regular Session, 2025

H. B. 24-15

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish public sector employee and public sector employer relations through organized labor within the Commonwealth; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE 24<sup>TH</sup> NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1           **Section 1. Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Commonwealth of the  
2 Northern Mariana Islands Labor-Management Relations Act.”

3           **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that public sector  
4 employees within the CNMI Government has the right to organize and collectively  
5 bargain with an organization of their own choosing is protected. It is the purpose of  
6 this legislation to promote full communication between public employers and  
7 public employees by providing a reasonable method of resolving disputes regarding  
8 salaries, wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment between  
9 public employee organizations and public employers. It is also the purpose of this  
10 legislation to promote the improvement of personnel management and employer-  
11 employee relations with the various public agencies in the Commonwealth  
12 Government by providing a uniform basis for recognizing the right of employees

1 to join organizations of their own choice and be represented by those organizations  
2 in their employment relationships with public or private agencies through  
3 collective bargaining. This legislation is intended to strengthen public employer-  
4 employee relations through the establishment of uniform and orderly methods of  
5 communication between public employees and public employers by which they are  
6 employed and provide public employees with the right to self-organization; to form,  
7 join, or assist employee organizations; to bargain collectively through  
8 representatives of their own choosing; and to engage in other concerted activities  
9 for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.

10 **Section 3. Enactment.** Title 4, Economic Resources, Division 9, Labor is  
11 hereby amended to add a new Chapter 10, titled “Labor-Management Relations  
12 Act,” that shall read as follows:

13 **“Chapter 10. Labor-Management Relations Act.**

14 **101. Definitions.** As used in this section the term:

15 (a) “Public Employee” shall mean any person holding a position by  
16 appointment or employment in classified civil service of a public employer to  
17 include probationary or limited-term employees; including employees of  
18 municipalities, autonomous agencies, senatorial districts, and other political  
19 subdivisions of the Commonwealth.

20 (b) “Public Employer” shall mean (1) the Commonwealth of the  
21 Northern Mariana Islands, herein referred to as the “CNMI or Commonwealth,” (2)

1 a municipality, an autonomous agency, a senatorial district, or other political  
2 subdivision of the Commonwealth, (3) a school system or any government entity  
3 operating a public school, college or university, (4) a public authority, commission,  
4 or corporation, public agency, or instrumentality or unit of government which  
5 exercises governmental powers under the laws of the Commonwealth.

6 (c) "Employee Organization" shall mean any lawful association,  
7 organization, federation, council, or labor union, the membership of which includes  
8 public employees, and assists its members to improve their salaries, wages, hours,  
9 and terms and conditions of employment.

10 (d) "Mediation" shall mean effort by an impartial third party to assist in  
11 the reconciling a dispute regarding salaries, wages, hours, and other terms and  
12 conditions of employment between representatives of the public employer and the  
13 recognized employee organization or recognized employee organizations through  
14 interpretation, suggestion, and advise.

15 (e) "Terms and Conditions of Employment" shall mean salaries, wages,  
16 hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, including but limited to  
17 health/life/dental/vision insurance, retirement plans or savings account, and other  
18 fringe benefits. The terms and conditions of employment shall include discipline  
19 and disciplinary procedures.

20 (f) "Recognized Employee Organization" shall mean an employee  
21 organization which has been certified as the exclusive representative of an

1 appropriate bargaining unit.

2 **102. Right to Join an Organization.**

3 (a) Public employees shall have the right to form, join, and participate in  
4 the activities of employee organizations of their own choosing for the purpose of  
5 representation on all matters of employer-employee relations, including salaries,  
6 wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

7 (b) The procedures for an employee organization being certified as the  
8 exclusive representative of an appropriate bargaining unit include: (1) through  
9 documented majority process (card-check) whereby a majority of employees in an  
10 appropriate bargaining unit designate an employee organization as their exclusive  
11 representative by signing authorization cards, petitions, or other suitable physical  
12 evidence to be verified by the CNMI Department of Labor, or (2) through an  
13 election by secret ballot to determine the exclusive representative conducted by the  
14 CNMI Department of Labor; whenever (1) two or more employee organizations  
15 claim to represent at least 30% of employees in an appropriate unit, (2) an employee  
16 organization petitions the CNMI Department of Labor for an election showing at  
17 least 30% of employees in an appropriate unit wish to be represented by the  
18 petitioner, or (3) at least 30% of employees in a bargaining unit allege that the  
19 exclusive representative no longer represents a majority of the employees. If the  
20 employee organization receives a majority vote cast in an election, that employee  
21 organization will be deemed the exclusive representative of the appropriate

1 bargaining unit. In an election in which two or more employee organizations are on  
2 the ballot, if no choice receives a majority of the votes, there will be a run-off  
3 election between the two choices that receive the most votes.

4           **103. Exercise of Lawful Action as Elected, Appointed, or Recognized**  
5 **Representative of any Employee Bargaining Unit.** No public employee shall be  
6 subject to punitive or adverse action, such as termination, suspension, discipline,  
7 demotion, retaliation, subject to a hostile working environment, loss of wages or  
8 benefits, or denial of promotion, or threatened with any such action, for engaging  
9 in self-organization; forming, joining, or assisting employee organization(s);  
10 bargaining collectively through representatives of their own choosing; or engaging  
11 in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual  
12 aid or protection.

13           **104. Representation of Members; Membership Admission and**  
14 **Dismissal Regulations; Right to Personal Appearance.** Recognized employee  
15 organizations shall have the right to represent their members in their employment  
16 relations with public agencies through collective bargaining. Employee  
17 organizations may establish reasonable restrictions regarding who may join and  
18 may make reasonable provisions for the dismissal of individuals from membership.

19           **105. Scope of Representation.** The scope of representation shall include  
20 all matters relating to employment conditions and employer-employee relations,  
21 including, but not limited to, salaries, wages, hours, and other terms and conditions

1 of employment.

2 **106. Notice of Proposed Act relating to matters within Scope of**  
3 **Representation; Meeting; Emergencies.**

4 (a) Except in cases of emergency as provided in this section, the governing  
5 body of a public employer, and boards and commissions designated by law or by  
6 the governing body of a public employer, shall be give reasonable written notice to  
7 each recognized employee organization affected by any ordinance, rule, resolution,  
8 or regulation directly relating to matters with the scope of representation proposed  
9 to be adopted by the governing body or the designated boards and commissions and  
10 shall give the recognized employee organization the opportunity to meet with the  
11 governing body or the boads or commissions prior to the implementation of any  
12 such ordinance, rule, resolution, or regulation. No ordinance, rule, resolution, or  
13 regulation shall conflict with this section or any collective bargaining agreement.

14 (b) In cases of emergency when the governing body or the designated  
15 boards or commissions determine that an ordinance, rule, resolution, or regulation  
16 must be adopted immediately without prior notice or meeting with a recongnized  
17 employee organization, and provided that the ordinance, rule, resolution, or  
18 regulation does not conflict with this section or any collective bargaining  
19 agreement, the governing body or the boards or commissions shall provide notice  
20 and opportunity to meet at the earliest practical time following the adoption of the  
21 ordinance, rule, resolution, or regulation.

1           **107. Conferences; Meet and Negotiate in Good Faith.** The governing  
2 body of a public employer, or such boards, commissions, administrative officers or  
3 other representatives as may be properly designated by law or by such governing  
4 body, shall meet and negotiate in good faith regarding salaries, wages, hours, and  
5 other terms and conditions of employment with representatives of such organized  
6 employee organizations. “Meet and Negotiate in Good Faith” shall mean that a  
7 public employer or such representatives as it may designate, and representatives of  
8 recognized employee organizations or such representatives as it may designate,  
9 shall have the mutual obligation personally to meet and confer promptly upon  
10 request by either party and continue for such reasonable period of time in order to  
11 exchange freely information, opinions, and proposals, and to endeavor to reach an  
12 agreement on matters with the scope of representation prior to the adoption by the  
13 public employer of its final budget for the ensuing year. The process should include  
14 adequate time for the resolution of impasses as set forth in this section.

15           **108. Memorandum of Agreement.** If an agreement is reached by the  
16 representatives of the public employer and a recognized employee organization(s),  
17 they shall jointly prepare a written memorandum of such understanding or tentative  
18 agreement, which shall not be binding, and present it to the members of the employee  
19 organization for ratification. The memorandum of understanding or tentative  
20 agreement shall become binding after ratification by a majority of the employee  
21 organization’s members and thereafter shall be signed by at least one representative

1 from the employee organization and one representative from the public employer.

2           **109. Time Off Allowances to Employee Representatives.** Public  
3 employers shall allow a reasonable number of public employee representatives of  
4 recognized employee organizations reasonable time off without loss of  
5 compensation or other benefits when formally meeting and conferring with  
6 representatives of the public employer on matters with the scope of representation.

7           **110. Mediation; Appointment of Mediator; Costs.** If, after a reasonable  
8 period, representatives of the public employer and the recognized employee  
9 organization fail to reach an agreement, the public employer and the recognized  
10 employee organization shall appoint a mediator mutually agreeable to the parties.  
11 Mediation shall be scheduled promptly after selection of the mediator.

12           **111. Impasse.** If, after the mediation procedures in Section 12 have been  
13 exhausted, and an impasse remains between the parties, the public employer and  
14 the employee organization shall submit the outstanding issues to compulsory, final  
15 and binding interest arbitration.

16           **112. Interest Arbitration.**

17           (a) Within ten (10) days after the mediation procedures in Section 12 have  
18 been exhausted, each party shall select one arbitrator of their choosing, and these  
19 two arbitrators shall select a third neutral arbitrator within five (5) days of their  
20 selection. The arbitrators shall invoke fact-finding with recommendation for  
21 settlement of all issues in dispute unless the parties reach a voluntary settlement

1 prior to the issuance of the fact-finders' report and recommended terms of  
2 settlement. Fact-finding shall be limited to those issues that are within the required  
3 scope of negotiations unless the parties to the fact-finding agree to fact-finding on  
4 permissive subjects of negotiation. Throughout formal arbitration proceedings, the  
5 chosen arbitrators may mediate or assist the parties in reaching a mutually  
6 agreeable settlement on some or all of the issues.

7 (b) At the conclusion of the arbitration hearings, the arbitration panel shall  
8 direct each of the parties to submit, with such time limit as the panel may establish,  
9 a last offer of settlement on each of the issues in dispute. The arbitration panel shall  
10 decide each issue by majority vote by selecting whichever last offer of settlement  
11 on that issue it finds most nearly conforms with those factors listed below in Section  
12 14(c).

13 (c) The arbitrators shall decide the dispute based on a reasonable  
14 determination of the issues, giving due weight to those factors listed below that are  
15 judged relevant for the resolution of the specific dispute. In the award, the panel of  
16 arbitrators shall indicate which of the factors are deemed relevant, satisfactorily  
17 explain why the others are not relevant, and provide an analysis of the evidence on  
18 each relevant factor:

19 (1) the interests and welfare of the public and the financial ability of  
20 the Commonwealth to finance the cost items proposed by each party to the impasse;

21 (2) the overall compensation presently received by the public

1 employees, including direct wage compensation, vacation, holidays and excused  
2 time, insurance and pensions, medical and hospitalization benefits, the continuity  
3 and stability of employment, and all other benefits received;

4 (3) comparison of salaries, wages, hours, and conditions of  
5 employment of the employees involved in the arbitration proceedings with the  
6 salaries, wages, hours, conditions of employment of other employees performing  
7 the same or similar services and with other employees generally in public  
8 employment;

9 (4) stipulations of the parties;

10 (5) the lawful authority of the public employer;

11 (6) statutory restrictions on the public employer;

12 (7) the cost of living;

13 (8) the continuity and stability of employment including seniority  
14 rights and such other factors not confined to the foregoing which are ordinarily or  
15 traditionally considered in the determination of salaries, wages, hours, and  
16 conditions of employment through collective negotiations and collective bargaining  
17 between the parties; and

18 (9) such other factors not confined to the foregoing, which are  
19 normally and traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of salaries,  
20 wages, hours, terms and conditions of employment through collective bargaining,  
21 mediation, fact-finding, arbitration or otherwise between the parties.

1 (d) The decision of the panel of arbitrators shall be final and binding on the  
2 parties and shall include an opinion and an award. The arbitrators shall have a  
3 period of sixty (60) days from the termination of the hearing in which to submit  
4 their decision to the parties.

5 (e) Costs of interest arbitration shall be divided one-half to the public  
6 employer and one-half to the recognized employee organization.

7 **113. Global Amendments (Firefighters).**

8 (a) Definition Alignment:

9 Any government agency, instrumentality, or independent program in the  
10 Commonwealth employing firefighters shall define a "firefighter" as an employee  
11 engaged in fire protection activities as defined in 29 U.S.C. §§ 203 (c), (x), and (y)  
12 (1) and (2) and 29 C.F.R. § 553.230.

13 (b) FLSA Compliance:

14 To ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), all  
15 firefighters employed by the CNMI Government, including those under the  
16 Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and  
17 Commonwealth Ports Authority Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (CPA ARFF),  
18 shall be subject to the provisions of 29 U.S.C. § 207(k) and 29 C.F.R. § 553.230.  
19 Firefighter personnel shall work a minimum 53-hour workweek and 106-hours per  
20 pay period, with a work period of no fewer than 7 consecutive days and no more

1 than 28 consecutive days, in accordance with federal labor standards for fire  
2 protection and emergency medical services personnel.

3 (c) Emergency Essential Designation:

4 Firefighters shall be designated as key and emergency essential personnel  
5 and shall perform essential emergency functions in response to natural disasters,  
6 man-made emergencies, or other catastrophic events. Their designation as  
7 emergency essential employees shall ensure their availability for deployment  
8 during emergencies at the Local, State, and Federal levels and shall enable the  
9 Commonwealth to seek full federal reimbursement for all firefighter operational  
10 expenditures incurred during such events.

11 (d) Recognition of Collective Bargaining Representative:

12 Firefighters who are active, dues-paying members of the International  
13 Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and are in good standing under Northern  
14 Marianas Professional Firefighters Union (NMPFU) IAFF-Local 5335 shall be  
15 recognized as members of the sole and exclusive bargaining representative for  
16 firefighters employed by the Commonwealth. The CNMI Government shall  
17 acknowledge this representation in all matters related to collective bargaining,  
18 wages, benefits, and employment conditions.”


19 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of  
20 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court  
21 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its

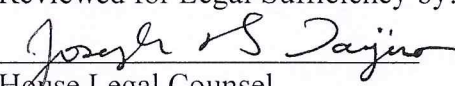

1 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid  
2 shall not be affected thereby.

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

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

Prefiled: 3/18/2025

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Introduced by:   
Rep. Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:  
 3/18/2025   
House Legal Counsel