

B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that despite the ongoing efforts of collaborative law enforcement agencies to rid the community of illicit drugs, methamphetamine abuse remains rampant in the Commonwealth. More concerning is the direct and indirect exposure of methamphetamine to the youth of the Commonwealth, placing them at great risk at an alarming rate for our small island communities. Even more troubling is the increasing number of children born to mothers who abuse methamphetamine during pregnancy.

Your Committee further finds that House Bill No. 24-26 seeks to strengthen the definition of the offense of child abuse in the Commonwealth by including conduct, whether intentional, knowing, or reckless, that endangers a child under 18 years of age. This specifically encompasses methamphetamine-related conduct that places a child in imminent danger through its presence, whether by use, manufacture, or possession.

Your Committee met on December 2, 2025, to formally discuss the proposed legislation. Recognizing the critical importance of safeguarding the safety and well-being of our youth, your Committee strongly supports the intent of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of House Bill No. 24-26 in its current form.

C. Legislative History:

House Bill No. 24-26 was formally introduced by Representative Malcolm J. Omar on April 24, 2025, and was subsequently referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations (JGO) for disposition. On July 25, 2025, the House JGO Committee adopted House Standing Committee Report (SCR) No. 24-25, recommending passage of House Bill No. 24-26 in its current form. On August 29, 2025, during the Second Day, Second Regular Session of the House of Representatives, House SCR 24-25 was adopted, and the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 24-26 in its current form. On September 2, 2025, House Bill No. 24-26 was transmitted to the Senate and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law for disposition.

D. Public Hearing and Comment:

1. Public Hearing. No public hearing was scheduled for House Bill No. 24-26. However, a committee meeting, which is open to the public, was held on December 2, 2025. See below for further details.
2. Committee Meeting. The proposed legislation made its first appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on Tuesday, December 2, 2025. The committee meeting notices and agenda were officially posted on November 26, 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 to your Committee.



COPY

THE SENATE
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
P. O. Box 500129
Saipan, MP 96950

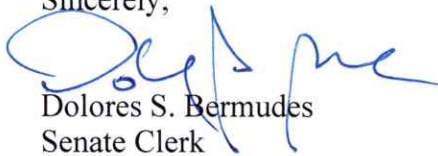
February 05, 2026

The Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez
Speaker
House of Representatives
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Speaker Villagomez:


I have the honor of returning without amendment House Bill No. 24-26, entitled, "To amend the crime of child abuse. The Senate passed on Final Reading H.B. No. 24-26, by the unanimous vote, in its 2nd Day, Third Regular Session on February 04, 2026.

Sincerely,


Dolores S. Bermudes
Senate Clerk

Attachment

Transmitted to HOUSE:

Received by: 

Date: 2/5/2026

Time: 2:13 p



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

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-51
Date: December 2, 2025
RE: House Bill No. 24-26

5- Adopted 2/2/25 + [Signature]

Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors
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 House Bill No. 24-26 was referred, entitled:

“To amend the crime of child abuse,”

begs leave to report as follows:

I. RECOMMENDATION:

After considerable discussion and deliberation, your Committee recommends the passage of House Bill No. 24-26 in its current form.

II. ANALYSIS:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of House Bill No. 24-26 is to amend the crime of child abuse that includes the conduct in which a child is placed in imminent danger through the direct or indirect exposure to methamphetamine.

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. Department of Public Safety, *no comment received*
- c. Division of Youth Services, *no comment received*
- d. Mayor of Rota, *no comment received*
- e. Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan, *no comment received*
- f. Mayor of Saipan, *no comment received*
- g. Substance Abuse, Addiction and Rehabilitation Program, *no comment received*

E. Estimated Fiscal Cost:

No fiscal analysis was prepared for the proposed legislation.

The enactment of House Bill 24-26 will not impact budgetary resources upon its enactment, as the proposed legislation intends to update the definition of child abuse and strengthen policies intended to protect the youth in the Commonwealth.

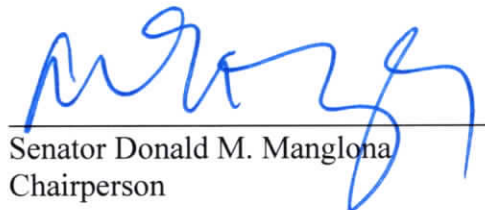
F. Summary of Committee Amendments:

Your Committee agreed that no further amendments were needed.

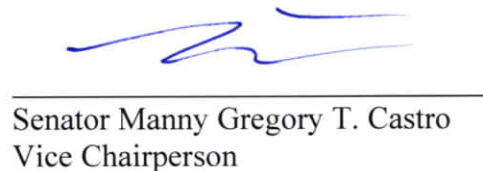
III. CONCLUSION:

Your Committee agrees with the intent and purpose of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of House Bill 24-26 in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,



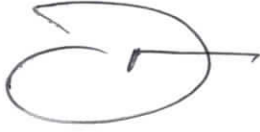
Senator Donald M. Manglona
Chairperson



Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro
Vice Chairperson

Senator Celina R. Babauta
Member

Senator Ronnie M. Calvo
Member



Senator Francisco Q. Cruz
Member

Senator Corina L. Magofna
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. 24-26

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend the crime of child abuse.

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

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose:** The purpose of the Act is to amend the
2 crime of child abuse to include conduct that places a child in imminent danger
3 through the presence of methamphetamine. The Act specifies that ingesting
4 methamphetamine in the presence of a child or resulting in the presence of
5 methamphetamine in a child is included in the definition of child abuse.

6 The illegal drug methamphetamine is commonly abused in the CNMI.
7 Unfortunately, if ingested in the presence of children, that exposure is dangerous
8 because children can absorb the drug and the person using the drug may harm the
9 child. In addition, pregnant women who use methamphetamine pass the drug on to
10 their child, endangering the health of that child.

11 Many jurisdictions have made endangering a child an offense if the person
12 uses methamphetamine in the presence of a child or if a newly born child tests

1 positive for methamphetamine. This Act adds that protection to the children of the
2 CNMI as well.

3 **Section 2. Amendment.** Title 6, Division 5, Chapter 3, Article 1 § 5312.
4 Child Abuse: Defined, of the Commonwealth Code is amended by amending
5 subsection (a) to read as follows:

6 “(a) A person commits the offense of child abuse if the person:

7 [1-3 unchanged]

8 (4) knowingly or recklessly, by act or omission, engages in
9 conduct that endangers a child younger than 18 years by:

10 (i) manufacturing, possessing, or in any way introducing
11 into the body of any person the controlled substance
12 methamphetamine in the presence of the child; or

13 (ii) any conduct establishing the proximity or accessibility
14 of the controlled substance methamphetamine to the child and an
15 analysis of a specimen of the child's blood, urine, or other bodily
16 substance indicates the presence of methamphetamine in the
17 child's body.”

18 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of
19 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
20 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its

HOUSE BILL 24-26

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

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

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

Prefiled: 4/16/2025

Date: _____ Introduced by: /s/ Rep. Malcolm J. Omar
/s/ Rep. Julie M. A. Ogo

Reviewed for legal sufficiency by:

/s/ Joseph L.G. Taijeron, Jr.
House Legal Counsel

Date: 4/16/2025