



COPY

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

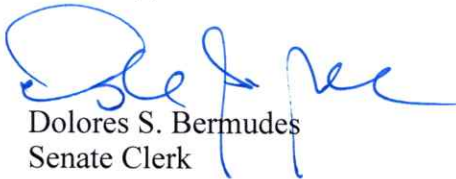
February 05, 2026

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 transmitting for your House action **Senate Bill No. 24-41, SD1**, entitled, "To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands." The Senate passed on Final Reading S.B. No. 24-41, SD1 by the unanimous vote, a quorum being present, 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 L

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION, 2025

S.B. No. 24-41, SD1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Child Abuse and Neglect
2 Central Registry Act of 2025”.

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that although the CNMI
4 has seen a decrease in child abuse and neglect cases, with 78 cases in 2023 and 36 cases in
5 2024, there is still a necessity to implement proper methods that enhance the reporting of
6 cases, as well as the management of cases through databases. The Legislature finds that
7 child abuse and neglect central registries are state-level databases that are designed to
8 prevent repeat maltreatment and facilitate background checks on roles involving children.
9 With around 45 states maintaining child abuse central registries, it can be presumed that
10 this is an effective measure that can assist in maintaining public safety if implemented in
11 the CNMI.

12 The Legislature finds it is necessary to implement a child abuse and neglect central
13 registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Legislature finds that
14 this central registry would be best placed under the Department of Community and Cultural
15 Affairs, Division of Youth Services-Child Protective Services (DYS-CPS) for the agency
16 to implement goals such as protecting the safety and welfare of children; centralizing all
17 records about relevant cases; supporting other government agencies, law enforcement, and
18 child serving institutions through regulated background checks; ensuring confidentiality,
19 transparency, and due process; as well as establishing a formal background clearance
20 system through which individuals seeking to work or volunteer with children may request
21 a sealed letter verifying their inclusion or non-inclusion on the registry. Therefore, the

1 purpose of this act is to formally establish a centralized child abuse and neglect central
2 registry within the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, under the authority of
3 the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Division of Youth Services-Child
4 Protective Services (DYS-CPS).

5 **Section 3. Enactment.** Subject to the codification of the Law Revision
6 Commission, the following is hereby enacted to read:

7 “Section 101. **Definitions.**

8 (a) “Child abuse and neglect” shall mean any act or failure to act by a parent,
9 caregiver, or other individual that results in actual or potential harm to a child’s physical
10 or emotional health, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse,
11 abandonment, or neglect, as defined in CNMI law.

12 (b) “Substantiated” shall mean a determination that child abuse or neglect occurred,
13 based on one of the following:

14 (1) “Court-substantiated” means when a court has ruled that abuse or
15 neglect occurred.

16 (2) “Agency-substantiated” meaning when DYS-CPS confirms abuse or
17 neglect through internal investigation and multidisciplinary review, often with
18 consultation from the Attorney General’s Office or a family court judge.

19 (c) “Under investigation” shall mean a temporary designation indicating an open
20 CPS case pending determination. If substantiated, no record is retained.

21 (d) “Registry” shall mean the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained
22 by DYS-CPS.

23 (e) “Authorized entry” includes DYS-CPS Registry personnel.

24 (f) “Clearance letter” shall mean an official sealed letter issued by DYS-CPS,
25 signed and certified only by the CPS Supervisor, that confirms whether an individual is or
26 is not listed on the registry.

27 (g) “DYS-CPS” shall mean the Division of Youth Services – Child Protective
28 Services under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

29 Section 102. **Establishment of the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.**

1 (a) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry shall be created and maintained
2 by the DYS–CPS under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

3 (b) As determined by DYS–CPS, individuals are identified on the Child Abuse and
4 Neglect Central Registry if their case is as follows:

5 (1) Court-substantiated

6 (2) Agency-substantiated

7 (3) Under investigation (temporary status)

8 (c) An individual is listed on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry only
9 after a formal decision is made. For agency-substantiated cases, it would include
10 consultation with the Office of the Attorney General or a judge (e.g., TPR or wardship).

11 (d) Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry entries shall include the following:

12 (1) Full legal name

13 (2) Date of birth

14 (3) Gender

15 (4) Last known CNMI address

16 (5) Case number (DYS-CPS, DPS, or court)

17 (6) Date and type of substantiation

18 (7) Classification: court-substantiated, agency-substantiated, or under
19 investigation (pending only)

20 (e) Only the DYS Administrator may certify a name for inclusion or non-inclusion.

21 (f) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry shall be maintained securely and
22 accessible only by trained and authorized DYS-CPS personnel.

23 **Section 103. Promulgation of Rules and Regulations.**

24 The Division of Youth Services under the Department of Community and Cultural
25 Affairs shall promulgate rules and regulations governing the procedures of the Child Abuse
26 and Neglect Central Registry.

27 **Section 104. Confidentiality and Privacy.**

28 (a) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry shall remain strictly confidential
29 and not accessible to the general public or employers.

1 (b) Clearance letters shall only be issued to the individual requesting the check.

2 (c) All information stored in the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry must be
3 stored securely. Unauthorized access, sharing, or misuse of information shall result in:

4 (1) A fine of up to \$10,000; or

5 (2) ~~Potential Criminal penalties, including imprisonment.~~ Imprisonment of
6 up to 5 years; or

7 (3) Permanent access revocation for violators.

8 Section 105. Authorization and Consent.

9 (a) Only individuals themselves may request a background check from the Child
10 Abuse and Neglect Central Registry. Employers and agencies ~~may~~ shall not request on
11 someone's behalf.

12 (b) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry background check request form
13 must be submitted with:

14 (1) A valid government-issued identification card

15 (2) Payment

16 (3) Signed consent and release

17 (c) If the requester is off-island, the form must be notarized and mailed with the
18 payment through certified mail.

19 Section 106. Background Check Process and Fees.

20 (a) Individuals requesting a background check must submit a completed
21 background check form. If the individual is residing off-island, the request must be
22 notarized and sent through certified mail, inclusive of the payment of fees.

23 (b) All requests are subject to ~~a fee as follows:~~ a non-refundable fee of up to \$25.00,
24 or an amount set by DYS through regulation.

25 ~~(1) A \$25.00 non-refundable fee is required per background check.~~

26 (~~2~~ 1) Accepted methods of payment include:

27 (A) Cash (in person)

28 (B) Certified check or money order payable to: DYS-Child Abuse
29 Registry Fund.

1 (c) Receipts will be issued for each payment.

2 (d) The funds collected shall be deposited into a dedicated account under the
3 Division of Youth Services (DYS), to be used solely for operations, training, and
4 maintenance of the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.

5 (e) Results:

6 (1) If not listed: a sealed clearance letter will be issued.

7 (2) If listed: a sealed letter will indicate "record found" with instructions
8 detailed for appeal.

9 (f) All results must be:

10 (1) Signed and stamped by the DYS Administrator

11 (2) Sealed and marked confidential

12 Section 107. **Appeal Process.**

13 (a) All individuals identified on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry hold
14 a right to appeal.

15 (b) Processes for appeal are as follows:

16 (1) Written notification: An individual is notified of substantiation and
17 given 30 days upon receipt of the notice to file an appeal.

18 (2) Internal Review Panel (within DYS-CPS): appeals filed by individuals
19 identified in the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry will go through an
20 internal review panel, inclusive of:

21 (A) A Caseworker II or III ~~that are~~ who is not assigned to the case

22 (B) Legal representative from the Office of the Attorney General

23 (C) CPS Supervisor or his/her designee

24 (3) Independent Administrative Hearing: Appeals shall go through an
25 Independent Administrative Hearing only after the Internal Review Panel
26 completes its ~~their~~ review.

27 (A) The Request must be submitted within 15 days of receiving the
28 denial of the removal request.

29 (B) Independent hearings must be heard by a panel inclusive of:

1 (i) Independent Neutral hearing officer designated in
2 accordance with the CNMI Administrative Procedure Act

3 (ii) Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division

4 (iii) Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division

5 (C) A decision on the Independent Administrative Hearing must be
6 rendered within 60 days after the request has been submitted.

7 (4) A final appeal may be made to the CNMI Superior Court within 60 days.

8 (c) If the appeal is successful, the individual identified on the Child Abuse and
9 Neglect Central Registry shall be removed from the registry.

10 **Section 108. Documentation and Record Keeping.**

11 (a) The DYS-CPS shall retain the following:

12 (1) Full personnel details of listed individuals.

13 (2) Substantiation summaries and investigation outcomes.

14 (3) Legal case files and appeal decisions.

15 (b) Registry data shall be reviewed annually for accuracy and compliance.

16 **Section 109. Record Maintenance and Removal.**

17 (a) Timeline of Inclusion on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry:

18 (1) A listing shall remain permanent if it is court-substantiated.

19 (2) A lifetime listing shall be issued for severe cases (e.g., child death and or
20 torture).

21 (3) Cases that are agency-substantiated shall be reviewed every month, and a
22 request for removal from the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry may be
23 submitted if there are no new incidents.

24 (b) ~~Minors shall be eligible for early removal at the age of 21, which shall be subject~~
25 ~~to review and if there are no new offenses~~ Individuals who were minors at the time of the
26 substantiated offense may request early removal upon turning 21.

27 (c) Cases that are under investigation shall be removed immediately if a case is
28 unsubstantiated.

1 (d) The CPS Supervisor shall be the sole authority for certifying removal from the
2 Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.

3 Section 110. Penalties for Unauthorised Use Access and Use of the Child Abuse
4 and Neglect Central Registry.

5 (a) Violations of unauthorized use are as follows:

- 6 (1) Accessing records without approval.
- 7 (2) Unlawful distribution of results.
- 8 (3) Committing forgery of clearance letters.

9 (b) Violators of subsection (a) of this section shall be subjected to: penalties
10 including a \$10,000 fine per violation, and/or criminal prosecution.

- 11 (1) A fine of up to \$10,000; or
- 12 (2) Imprisonment of up to 5 years; or
- 13 (3) Permanent access revocation for violators.

14 Section 111. Oversight and Implementation.

15 (a) DYS-CPS shall hold sole responsibility for the following:

- 16 (1) Developing clear regulations for Child Abuse and Neglect Central
17 Registry operations.
- 18 (2) Assigning trained personnel to handle submissions, approvals, and
19 maintenance.
- 20 (3) Providing training to Caseworkers II/III on Child Abuse and Neglect
21 Central Registry procedures.
- 22 (4) Conducting annual audits for quality control and data integrity.

23 Section 112. Public Awareness and Training.

24 (a) DYS-CPS shall lead public education campaigns through the following:

- 25 (1) Government meetings.
- 26 (2) Flyers, social media, and agency outreach.
- 27 (3) Training for agencies that work with youths.

28 (b) All CNMI Government employers and child/youth service agencies must:

- 29 (1) Require background clearance through DYS-CPS.

1 (2) Ensure existing employees complete checks within 6 months of the law's
2 signing into law.

3 (3) Maintain records for auditing.

4 (4) Implement clearance checks within 6 months upon signing into law.”

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

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

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

Date: 07/14/25

Introduced By: /s/ _____
Senator Donald M. Manglona

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Antonette R. Villagomez
Senate Legal Counsel



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

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-54
Date: December 2, 2025
RE: Senate Bill No. 24-41

So Adopted 2/4/26 [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 Senate Bill No. 24-41 was referred, entitled:

“To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in 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. 24-41 in its current form.

II. ANALYSIS:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of Senate Bill No. 24-41 is to formally establish a centralized child abuse and neglect central registry within the Commonwealth under the authority of the Division of Youth Services-Child Protective Services of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee recognizes that data on child abuse and neglect cases in the CNMI are consistently changing, due to several factors such as domestic conditions, economic challenges, habitual practices, and daily hardships. The presence of these cases in the community highlights the need to improve reporting and management through the implementation of a confidential database system, such as a centralized child abuse and neglect central registry. This approach has proven effective in preventing repeat maltreatment and facilitating background checks for positions involving children.

Your Committee further finds that Senate Bill No. 24-41 intends to establish a centralized child abuse and neglect central registry in the Commonwealth, to be managed by the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Division of Youth Services-Child Protective Services. If enacted, the registry would centralize relevant case records, enable background checks for child-serving government agencies and organizations, and ensure confidentiality and due process.

Your Committee met on December 2, 2025, to formally discuss the proposed legislation. During deliberation, it was shared that the proposed legislation was developed in collaboration with the Division of Youth Services to support certification and clearance requirements by federal welfare programs. Your Committee strongly supports the intent of the proposed legislation and recommends the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-41 in its current form.

C. Legislative History:

Senate Bill No. 24-41 was formally introduced by Senator Donald M. Manglona on July 14, 2025, 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 Senate Bill No. 24-41. 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.

3. Written Comment. Your Committee did not solicit comments on the proposed legislation. However, written testimonies in support of Senate Bill No. 24-41 were received by the following:
- a. Honorable Ramon “RB” Jose Blas Camacho, Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan, *letter dated August 5, 2025*
 - b. Gordon B. Salas, Supervisor, Child Care Licensing Program, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, *letter dated November 21, 2025*
 - c. Andrew S. Taimanao, Police Lieutenant, Criminal Investigations Bureau – Special Victims Investigation Unit, Department of Public Safety, *letter dated November 25, 2025*
 - d. Maribel S.D. Loste, Director, Child Care and Development Fund Program, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, *letter dated November 20, 2025*
 - e. Aniceto T. Ogumoro, Acting Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, *letter dated November 25, 2025*

E. Estimated Fiscal Cost:

No fiscal analysis was prepared for the proposed legislation.

The enactment of Senate Bill No. 24-41 will result in substantial start-up costs to the Commonwealth government for the purpose of acquiring technological systems required to implement and maintain the registry, personnel training for the management and access of information in the system, and conducting public awareness and outreach to all stakeholders.

However, the establishment of a centralized, confidential registry will greatly assist with identifying repeat offenders or individuals at risk of abuse or neglect that may reduce the number of children negatively affected by being in contact with certain individuals. Although startup costs may seem substantial, funding may be identified through external sources or in collaborative partnerships that may help to offset some of the associated costs with the long-term benefits in improving child protection within the Commonwealth.

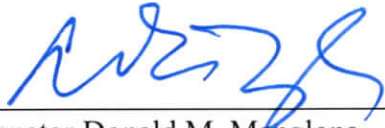
F. Summary of Committee Amendments:

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 Senate Bill No. 24-41 in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,

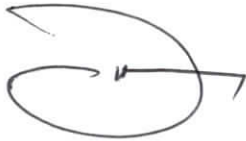


Senator Donald M. Manglona
Chairperson



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

Attachment(s):

1. Written Testimonies:

- a. Honorable Ramon “RB” Jose Blas Camacho, Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan, *letter dated August 5, 2025*
- b. Gordon B. Salas, Supervisor, Child Care Licensing Program, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, *letter dated November 21, 2025*
- c. Andrew S. Taimanao, Police Lieutenant, Criminal Investigations Bureau – Special Victims Investigation Unit, Department of Public Safety, *letter dated November 25, 2025*
- d. Maribel S.D. Loste, Director, Child Care and Development Fund Program, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, *letter dated November 20, 2025*
- e. Aniceto T. Ogumoro, Acting Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, *letter dated November 25, 2025*



Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho
Mayor of Saipan

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

MUNICIPALITY OF SAIPAN
CTC Building, 2799 Teer Drive Suite A, Oleai
P.O. Box 501457 Saipan, MP 96950

(670) 234-6208 • Fax: (670) 234-1190 • Email: saipanmayor@mos.gov.mp



August 5, 2025

The Honorable Karl King- Nabors
Chairman, Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
P.O. Box 500129
Saipan, MP 96950



Subject: Senate Bill No. 24- 41: "To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands."

Hafa Adai yan Tirow Chairman King- Nabors,

Thank you for providing the Office of the Mayor, Municipality of Saipan the opportunity to provide comments on the above subject. I am writing to express my full support for Senate Bill 24-41, "To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands."

This legislation is a vital step toward strengthening the protection of our children and promoting the safety of families across our islands. A central registry will help identify and track individuals involved in confirmed cases of abuse and neglect, allowing appropriate authorities to take necessary preventive measures. It also serves as a valuable resource to raise awareness within our community, keep the public informed, and ensure that agencies are alert and coordinated in their efforts to protect our youth.

By supporting this bill, we are reinforcing our collective responsibility to keep our children safe, to provide them with a secure environment, and to hold accountable those who endanger their well-being. I thank the authors of this bill for prioritizing the safety and future of our youngest citizens.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (670)234-6208 or via email at saipanmayor@mos.gov.mp.

Sincerely,

RAMON "RB" JOSE BLAS CAMACHO
Mayor, Office of the Municipality of Saipan



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Office of the Secretary

CHILD CARE LICENSING PROGRAM

Caller Box 10007
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950
Tel: (670) 488-1343



November 21, 2025

Senator Donald Manglona
Floor Leader
Senate
24th CNMI Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Re: Support for SB24-41: The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025

Magofli'e', Hafa Adai, yan Tirow Senator Manglona:

On behalf of the **Child Care Licensing Program** under the **Department of Community and Cultural Affairs**, I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025, as introduced.

We believe that the creation of a centralized, confidential registry through the DCCA Division of Youth Services–Child Protective Services (DCCA-DYS-CPS) is a critical step toward protecting the safety and well-being of all children in the Commonwealth. This registry will help agencies like ours make informed decisions when hiring or working with individuals in positions of trust. It promotes accountability, strengthens prevention efforts, and ensures that information is accessible only to those who truly need it — while still respecting individual rights and due process.

For foundational purposes, the Child Care Licensing Program under the umbrella of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs was established through Public Law 4-67, as amended by Public Law 4-69 and codified under Title 3 of the Commonwealth Code, Division 1, Chapter 4, Subsections 1401 et al. Chapter 4 is also known as the Child Care Standards Act of 1985 which took effect on September 10, 1985.

Its function is to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children in Day Care Centers & Group Child Care Homes, Before and After School Programs, Family Child Care Homes, and Infant and Toddler Child Care Centers throughout the CNMI by establishing appropriate rules, regulations,

November 25, 2025

Senator Donald Manglona
Floor Leader
Senate
24th CNMI Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950



Re: *Support for SB24-41: The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025*

Dear Senator Manglona:

I am writing as a police lieutenant assigned to the Special Victims Investigation Unit (SVIU) who works closely with the Division of Youth Services-Child Protective Services (DCCA-DYS-CPS), where my role often brings me into contact with minors who need every bit of protection we can offer. For that reason, I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025, introduced.

A central registry managed by DYS-CPS would help all of us who work in child safety stay informed and make better decisions. Having accurate, confidential information available to the right agencies strengthens prevention and helps ensure that the people serving our children are fit to do so. It also puts clear protections in place so that the information is handled responsibly and with care.

This measure would reinforce the shared work of law enforcement, CPS, schools, health providers, and community partners. We rely on one another, and a system like this would help us respond more consistently and protect children more effectively across the C.N.M.I.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for supporting efforts that place children's safety at the forefront. Please feel free to reach out if I can assist as the bill moves forward.

Respectfully,

Andrew S. Taimanao
Police Lieutenant
Criminal Investigations Bureau-SVIU
Department of Public Safety



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program

Caller Box 10007 Bldg. No. 1347/1344 Ascension Drive
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

Website: www.childcare.gov.mp

Vision for Children and Families:

"All children in the CNMI will be safe, healthy, and thriving members of our culturally diverse community. Their families will have access to the high quality supports they need to achieve their potential."



November 20, 2025

Senator Donald Manglona
Floor Leader
Senate
24 th CNMI Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950



Re: Support for SB24-41: The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025

Dear Senator Manglona,

On behalf of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs-Child Care and Development Fund Program (DCCA-CCDF), I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025, introduced.

We believe that the creation of a centralized, confidential registry through the DCCA Division of Youth Services–Child Protective Services (DCCA-DYS-CPS) is a critical step toward protecting the safety and well-being of all children in the Commonwealth. This registry will help agencies like ours make informed decisions when hiring or working with individuals in positions of trust. It promotes accountability, strengthens prevention efforts, and ensures that information is accessible only to those who truly need it — while still respecting individual rights and due process.

The DCCA–CCDF Program provides subsidized child care to eligible families who are working, in school, or participating in job training. To ensure the safety of children served, CCDF providers must meet strict certification requirements. The 2014 CCDF reauthorization requires lead agencies to conduct child abuse and neglect registry checks as part of their health and safety protocols. The creation of the DYS Child Abuse and Neglect Registry will significantly assist our program by allowing us to verify that all CCDF child care providers and center staff are cleared of any substantiated abuse or neglect findings.

Furthermore, this registry will strengthen collaboration among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and the broader community. It will enhance our ongoing partnership with the DCCA Division of Youth Services – Child Protective Services as we work together to build a safer and more responsive child protection system for the CNMI.

Thank you for your leadership and for your continued commitment to protecting our CNMI children. Please do not hesitate to contact me by email at mloste.ccdf@childcare.gov.mp or



David M. Apatang
Governor

Dennis James C. Mendiola
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

2794 Tekken St. Susupe | Jose M. Sablan Building
P.O. Box 500791 Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 664-9000 / 9001, Front Desk



Anthony I. Macaranas
Commissioner

November 25, 2025

Senator Donald Manglona
Floor Leader
Senate
24th CNMI Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950



Re: Support for SB24-41 – The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025

Dear Senator Manglona:

On behalf of the CNMI Department of Public Safety (DPS), I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed *Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Act of 2025*. We commend the Legislature for introducing this critical measure and for prioritizing the protection and well-being of children throughout the Commonwealth.

The Department of Public Safety recognizes that the creation of a centralized, confidential Child Abuse and Neglect Registry under the DCCA Division of Youth Services–Child Protective Services (DCCA-DYS-CPS) is an essential advancement in strengthening child protection systems across the CNMI. A unified registry will greatly enhance DPS’s ability to conduct accurate, timely, and comprehensive background checks for individuals seeking employment or volunteer positions in roles of trust and authority.

As the agency responsible for law enforcement, criminal investigations, and community safety, DPS routinely interacts with vulnerable populations and coordinates closely with DYS-CPS in responding to and investigating cases of child abuse and neglect. The establishment of this registry will:

- Improve interagency collaboration and information sharing;
- Assist detectives and investigators in identifying individuals with documented histories of child abuse or neglect;
- Enhance hiring safeguards within DPS by ensuring that all personnel who work with youth meet the highest standards of safety and integrity; and
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention efforts by providing reliable, centralized data accessible only to authorized entities while maintaining due process protections.

The CNMI Department of Public Safety is committed to supporting this legislation and recognizes its value in reinforcing a comprehensive network of protection for our children. The registry will complement ongoing efforts among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, and the wider community to create a safer CNMI for all youth.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to this important initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact us at commissioner@dps.gov.mp or (670)664-9022 if DPS can be of further assistance in advancing SB24-41.

Respectfully,

ANICETO T. Ogasumoro
Acting Commissioner of Public Safety

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the "Child Abuse and Neglect
2 Central Registry Act of 2025".

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that although the CNMI
4 has seen a decrease in child abuse and neglect cases, with 78 cases in 2023 and 36 cases in
5 2024, there is still a necessity to implement proper methods that enhance the reporting of
6 cases, as well as the management of cases through databases. The Legislature finds that
7 child abuse and neglect central registries are state-level databases that are designed to
8 prevent repeat maltreatment and facilitate background checks on roles involving children.
9 With around 45 states maintaining child abuse central registries, it can be presumed as an
10 effective measure that can assist in maintaining public safety, if implemented in the CNMI.

11 The Legislature finds that it is necessary to implement a child abuse and neglect
12 central registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Legislature
13 finds that this central registry would be best placed under the Department of Community
14 and Cultural Affairs, Division of Youth Services-Child Protective Services (DYS-CPS) for
15 the agency to implement goals such as protecting the safety and welfare of children;
16 centralizing all records about relevant cases; supporting other government agencies, law
17 enforcement, and child serving institutions through regulated background checks; ensuring
18 confidentiality, transparency, and due process; as well as establishing a formal background
19 clearance system through which individuals seeking to work or volunteer with children
20 may request a sealed letter verifying their inclusion or non-inclusion on the registry.
21 Therefore, the purpose of this act is to formally establish a centralized child abuse and

1 neglect central registry within the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, under
2 the authority of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Division of Youth
3 Services-Child Protective Services (DYS-CPS).

4 **Section 3. Enactment.** Subject to the codification of the Law Revision
5 Commission, the following is hereby enacted to read:

6 **“Section 101. Definitions.**

7 (a) “Child abuse and neglect” shall mean any act or failure to act by a parent,
8 caregiver, or other individual that results in actual or potential harm to a child’s physical
9 or emotional health, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse,
10 abandonment, or neglect, as defined in CNMI law.

11 (b) “Substantiated” shall mean a determination that child abuse or neglect occurred,
12 based on one of the following:

13 (1) “Court-substantiated” means when a court has ruled that abuse or
14 neglect occurred.

15 (2) “Agency-substantiated” meaning when DYS-CPS confirms abuse or
16 neglect through internal investigation and multidisciplinary review, often with
17 consultation from the Attorney General’s Office or a family court judge.

18 (c) “Under investigation” shall mean a temporary designation indicating an open
19 CPS case pending determination. If substantiated, no record is retained.

20 (d) “Registry” shall mean the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained
21 by DYS-CPS.

22 (e) “Authorized entry” includes DYS-CPS Registry personnel.

23 (f) “Clearance letter” shall mean an official sealed letter issued by DYS-CPS,
24 signed and certified only by the CPS Supervisor, that confirms whether an individual is or
25 is not listed on the registry.

26 (g) “DYS-CPS” shall mean the Division of Youth Services – Child Protective
27 Services under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

28 **Section 102. Establishment of the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.**

1 (a) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry shall be created and maintained
2 by the DYS–CPS under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

3 (b) As determined by DYS–CPS, individuals are identified on the Child Abuse and
4 Neglect Central Registry if their case is as follows:

- 5 (1) Court-substantiated
- 6 (2) Agency-substantiated
- 7 (3) Under investigation (temporary status)

8 (c) An individual is listed on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry only
9 after a formal decision is made. For agency-substantiated cases, it would include
10 consultation with the Office of the Attorney General or a judge (e.g., TPR or wardship).

11 (d) Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry entries shall include the following:

- 12 (1) Full legal name
- 13 (2) Date of birth
- 14 (3) Gender
- 15 (4) Last known CNMI address
- 16 (5) Case number (DYS-CPS, DPS, or court)
- 17 (6) Date and type of substantiation
- 18 (7) Classification: court-substantiated, agency-substantiated, or under
19 investigation (pending only)

20 (e) Only the DYS Administrator may certify a name for inclusion or non-inclusion.

21 (f) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry shall be maintained securely and
22 accessible only by trained and authorized DYS-CPS personnel.

23 **Section 103. Promulgation of Rules and Regulations.**

24 The Division of Youth Services under the Department of Community and Cultural
25 Affairs shall promulgate rules and regulations governing the procedures entailed with the
26 Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.

27 **Section 104. Confidentiality and Privacy.**

28 (a) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry shall remain strictly confidential
29 and not accessible to the general public or employers.

1 (b) Clearance letters shall only be issued to the individual requesting the check.

2 (c) All information stored in the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry must be
3 stored securely. Unauthorized access, sharing, or misuse of information shall result in:

4 (1) A fine of up to \$10,000 per violation

5 (2) Potential criminal penalties, including imprisonment.

6 (3) Permanent access revocation for violators.

7 Section 105. **Authorization and Consent.**

8 (a) Only individuals themselves may request a background check from the Child
9 Abuse and Neglect Central Registry. Employers and agencies may not request on
10 someone's behalf.

11 (b) The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry background check request form
12 must be submitted with:

13 (1) A valid government-issued identification card

14 (2) Payment

15 (3) Signed consent and release

16 (c) If the requester is off-island, the form must be notarized and mailed with the
17 payment through certified mail.

18 Section 106. **Background Check Process and Fees.**

19 (a) Individuals requesting a background check must submit a completed
20 background check form. If the individual is residing off-island, the request must be
21 notarized and sent through certified mail, inclusive of the payment of fees.

22 (b) All requests are subject to a fee as follows:

23 (1) A \$25.00 non-refundable fee is required per background check.

24 (2) Accepted methods of payment include:

25 (A) Cash (in person)

26 (B) Certified check or money order payable to: DYS-Child Abuse
27 Registry Fund.

28 (c) Receipts will be issued for each payment.

1 (d) The funds collected shall be deposited into a dedicated account under the
2 Division of Youth Services (DYS), to be used solely for operations, training, and
3 maintenance of the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.

4 (e) Results:

5 (1) If not listed: a sealed clearance letter will be issued.

6 (2) If listed: a sealed letter will indicate "record found" with instructions
7 detailed for appeal.

8 (f) All results must be:

9 (1) Signed and stamped by the DYS Administrator

10 (2) Sealed and marked confidential

11 Section 107. **Appeal Process.**

12 (a) All individuals identified on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry hold
13 a right to appeal.

14 (b) Processes for appeal are as follows:

15 (1) Written notification: An individual is notified of substantiation and
16 given 30 days to file an appeal.

17 (2) Internal review panel (within DYS-CPS): appeals filed by individuals
18 identified in the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry will go through an
19 internal review panel, inclusive of:

20 (A) A Caseworker II or III that are not assigned to the case

21 (B) Legal representative from the Office of the Attorney General

22 (C) CPS Supervisor or his/her designee

23 (3) Independent Administrative Hearing:

24 (A) The Request must be submitted within 15 days of the denial

25 (B) Independent hearings must be heard by a panel inclusive of:

26 (i) Independent hearing officer

27 (ii) Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division

28 (iii) Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division

1 (C) A decision on the Independent Administrative Hearing must be
2 rendered within 60 days after the request has been submitted.

3 (4) A final appeal may be made to the CNMI Superior Court within 60 days.
4 (c) If the appeal is successful, the individual identified on the Child Abuse and
5 Neglect Central Registry shall be removed from the registry.

6 Section 108. **Documentation and Record Keeping.**

7 (a) The DYS-CPS shall retain the following:

- 8 (1) Full personnel details of listed individuals.
9 (2) Substantiation summaries and investigation outcomes.
10 (3) Legal case files and appeal decisions.

11 (b) Registry data shall be reviewed annually for accuracy and compliance.

12 Section 109. **Record Maintenance and Removal.**

13 (a) Timeline of Inclusion on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry:

- 14 (1) A listing shall remain permanent if it is court-substantiated.
15 (2) A lifetime listing shall be issued for severe cases (e.g. child death and or
16 torture).
17 (3) Cases that are agency-substantiated shall be reviewed every month, and a
18 request for removal from the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry may be
19 submitted if there are no new incidents.

20 (b) Minors shall be eligible for early removal at the age of 21, which shall be subject
21 to review and if there are no new offenses.

22 (c) Cases that are under investigation shall be removed immediately if a case is
23 unsubstantiated.

24 (d) The CPS Supervisor shall be the sole authority for certifying removal from the
25 Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry.

26 Section 110. **Penalties for Unauthorized Use.**

27 (a) Violations of unauthorized use are as follows:

- 28 (1) Accessing records without approval.
29 (2) Unlawful distribution of results.

- 1 (3) Committing forgery of clearance letters.
2 (b) Violators of subsection (a) of this section shall be subjected to penalties
3 including a \$10,000 fine per violation, and/or criminal prosecution.

4 Section 111. **Oversight and Implementation.**

5 (a) DYS-CPS shall hold to sole responsibility of the following:

- 6 (1) Developing clear regulations for Child Abuse and Neglect Central
7 Registry operations.
8 (2) Assigning trained personnel to handle submissions, approvals, and
9 maintenance.
10 (3) Providing training to Caseworkers II/III on Child Abuse and Neglect
11 Central Registry procedures.
12 (4) Conducting annual audits for quality control and data integrity.

13 Section 112. **Public Awareness and Training.**

14 (a) DYS-CPS shall lead public education campaigns through the following:

- 15 (1) Government meetings.
16 (2) Flyers, social media, and agency outreach.
17 (3) Trainings for agencies that work with youths.

18 (b) All CNMI Government employers and child/youth service agencies must:

- 19 (1) Require background clearance through DYS-CPS.
20 (2) Ensure existing employees complete checks within 6 months upon
21 signage into law.
22 (3) Maintain records for auditing.
23 (4) Implement clearance checks within 6 months upon signing into law.”

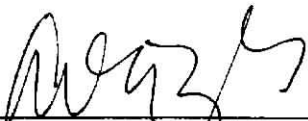
24 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
25 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent
26 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
27 circumstances other than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

28 **Section 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
29 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under

1 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.
2 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant
3 to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any
4 way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the
5 date this Act becomes effective.

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

Date: 7/14/25

Introduced By: 
Senator Donald M. Manglona

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:


Senate Legal Counsel