peace and order. This strain is reflected in several high-profile incidents, including violent crimes, missing persons cases, and natural disasters, such as the 2009 Saipan shooting, multiple homicide investigations between 2012 and 2019, and the devastating Category 5 typhoon in 2018. These events highlight the growing need for enhanced public safety capacity. Your Committee finds that during emergencies and disasters, first responders are often required to work extended hours with limited relief, impacting their well-being and effectiveness.

Your Committee finds that the creation of the police reserve unit is intended to expand first responder capacity, improve overall response capabilities, and provide additional trained assistance at emergency scenes, including accidents, fires, and natural disasters. The measure aims to enhance both the effectiveness and well-being of first responders while strengthening public safety services for the community.

Your Committee met on May 06, 2025, to discuss the provisions of the proposed legislation. During the discussion, no member objected to inviting DPS Commission Anthony I. Macaranas into the chamber to deliberate further on the proposed legislation. Your Committee raised concern that the bill does not address funding for activating personnel during emergencies. It was mentioned that there are severe staffing shortages within the Department of Public Safety, particularly on Tinian, where only about seven patrol officers remain. Due to overtime demands and scheduling pressures, many officers are leaving for other employment. It was questioned how the government would fund the activation of additional personnel during events such as typhoon responses and asked for further discussion on the operational challenges facing DPS and the importance of the bill.

Commissioner Macaranas expressed that DPS officers handle heavy daily workloads, overtime demands, and community service duties, contributing to staffing shortages. Since last year, 23 officers have left for military service or better opportunities in the mainland. The department is seeking a COPS grant to hire additional officers and is also facing high repair costs for aging DPS assets. He further expressed that it may be necessary to include the usage of the reserve for other public events where the frontline officers may not be needed. Your Committee feels that this suggestion would still raise the question of who will fund this usage. In response, Commissioner Macaranas suggested that the fees and fines collected by the court could be remitted to DPS to address the concern.

Your Committee stated that under Section 2, subsection 101(g) of the proposed legislation, it entails the requirement of the employer (DPS) to provide medical insurance coverage and life insurance coverage for death on the line of duty. Your Committee asked if this is the case with current police officers. Commissioner Macaranas shared that DPS encourages officers to obtain life insurance due to the risks associated with law enforcement duties noting that newly hired officers typically receive insurance briefings and are given coverage options, but expressed concern that the bill's language may mandate insurance coverage rather than provide it as an option suggesting that the language be changed to mirror how it health and life insurance is offered to the current officers. Your Committee asked Commissioner Macaranas to review Senate Bill No. 24-05, which establishes the fire

COPY

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

September 09, 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. 24-07,** entitled, "To establish a Police Reserve Unit within the Department of Public Safety." The Senate passed on Final Reading S.B. No. 24-07 by the unanimous voice vote, a quorum being present, in its 1st Day, Fourth Regular Session on September 04, 2026.

Sincerely,

Dolores S. Bermudes
Senate Clerk

attachment

Transmitted to HOUSE:

Received by: _____ Date: 9/9/2026 Time: 2:40

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

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-87
Date: March 18, 2026
RE: Senate Bill No. 24-07

A. Senate 9/4/26

Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mister President:

Your Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law, to which was referred Senate Bill No. 24-07, entitled:

"*To establish a Police Reserve Unit within the Department of Public Safety.*"

begs leave to report as follows:

I. RECOMMENDATION:

After considerable discussion and deliberation, your Committee recommends passage of Senate Bill No. 24-07 in its current form.

II. ANALYSIS:

A) Purpose:

The purpose of Senate Bill No. 24-07 is to establish a Department of Public Safety Police Reserve Unit to strengthen first-responder capacity, improve emergency response during crises and disasters, reduce strain on existing personnel, and enhance public safety by providing additional trained support.

B) Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that over the past decade, changing community dynamics and increasing demand for public services have strained available resources, creating ongoing challenges for first responders tasked with protecting life and property and maintaining

reserve corps and addresses similar concerns outlined in the proposed legislation, such as expectations for volunteers and compensation when funding is available.

Your Committee further expressed that low salaries and job risks have made police and fire positions less attractive, leading many employees to leave for safer or better-paying jobs. Furthermore, it is important to establish a reserve unit to assist understaffed DPS personnel and reduce liability arising from excessive overtime and fatigue. Your Committee urged consideration of salary adjustments for law enforcement and fire personnel, recognizing their critical role in protecting public safety.

Your Committee expressed that the proposed legislation details an increased first responder capacity for emergencies such as accidents, fires, or natural disasters, and questioned whether this scope of work will include other events. Commissioner Macaranas shared that reserve officers would receive police academy training to prepare them to perform duties similar to those of frontline officers and to respond effectively during emergency events.

Your Committee raised the question of whether the volunteers in the reserve unit would be compensated. Commissioner Macaranas stated that although the reserve program is intended to be voluntary, participants should receive some form of compensation or stipend due to the nature of the work, noting that reserve officers could be given hiring priority for future vacant positions within the department. Your Committee expressed that if there is a suggestion to include a stipend for volunteers in the reserve unit, it should be included in the proposed legislation. Commissioner Macaranas shared that all of this would also need to come with funding. Your Committee expressed that, as budget season approaches, there is a need to capture these additional expenses in the budget to ensure DPS is equipped with the necessary resources. When asked whether the court fines and fees would fund the reserve, Commission Macaranas shared that DPS does not receive the court fines and fees and that remitting them to the Department would greatly help with the costs DPS incurs.

Your Committee asked Commissioner Macaranas whether the department would consider hiring retired officers into the reserve, since they would fall under the same insurance the CNMI government uses. Commissioner Macaranas shared that retired officers interested in serving as reserve officers would likely receive updated training rather than complete the full police academy, adding that retirees could continue receiving their pensions while volunteering as reserve officers, and noted that several former officers have already expressed interest in participating in the program. He further shared that there is a need to consult with the settlement fund administrator on how to structure participation for retired public safety officers in the volunteer reserve program. The intent is for retirees to serve while continuing to receive pensions, while non-retired volunteers may require compensation to encourage participation.

Your Committee asked Senate Legal Counsel Jose A. Bermudes whether or not an influx of federal funds into the intent of the proposed legislation would constitute a violation of the settlement agreement. Counsel Bermudes stated that allowing retirees to serve in the reserve unit would not constitute "double-dipping" if compensation comes from federal

funds rather than the general fund. He explained that double-dipping rules generally apply when retirees return to government employment paid from the same funding source as their pension, and noted that federal funding may be treated as an exception.

Your Committee asked whether the legislation should set a standardized compensation rate for reserve officers, such as a baseline equivalent to a PO1 rank, regardless of prior rank or service time. The concern raised was that higher pay for reserves could affect morale and retention of current DPS officers. A suggestion was made to use a consistent, lower baseline rate as supplemental income for reserve duties. Commissioner Macaranas suggested compensating reserve officers through a monthly stipend instead of hourly pay, proposing amounts such as $500 for weekend duty or $250 for shorter events, emphasizing that reserves should be volunteers rather than part-time employees, but still require compensation due to the demands, training, and challenges of police work. Commissioner Macaranas also noted that reserve officers must complete academy training to develop the mindset and skills needed to interact with the public and handle difficult situations.

Your Committee raised concerns about physical and training requirements for retired or former law enforcement officers seeking to join the volunteer reserve force, noting that they may not meet the standard academy fitness benchmarks. Your Committee asked whether such requirements should be explicitly defined in the proposed legislation or left to DPS to establish through internal regulations after passage. Commissioner Macaranas stated that eligibility standards for reserve officers would be set through regulations, including assessment criteria to determine fitness for duty, with applicants disqualified if they do not meet the required standards. Your Committee asked whether fitness and qualification standards for reserve officers should be defined in the legislation or left to DPS, as the subject-matter expert, to develop through regulations. The speaker emphasized the need for flexibility while upholding appropriate standards for program participation. Commissioner Macaranas expressed support for including flexible standards for reserve officers while being sensitive to older individuals and those with disabilities. He suggested allowing applicants to demonstrate capability rather than imposing strict barriers, and noted that those with prior law enforcement experience could still serve in less physically demanding roles if needed.

After deliberation on the proposed legislation, no member of the Committee objected to tabling Senate Bill No. 24-07 for further discussion in a future Committee Meeting.

Your Committee met on June 20, 2025, to discuss the provisions of the proposed legislation. With the Committee's consensus, Senate Bill No. 24-07 was tabled for further discussion at a future Committee Meeting.

Your Committee met on July 02, 2025, to discuss the provisions of the proposed legislation. With the Committee's consensus, Senate Bill No. 24-07 was tabled for further discussion at a future Committee Meeting.

Your Committee met on March 18, 2026, to discuss the provisions of the proposed legislation. During the Committee Meeting, the author of the proposed legislation expressed the need to establish a police reserve unit within DPS, emphasizing its benefits in the current economic climate. It was noted that a reserve unit would help reduce overtime costs and expand the pool of qualified applicants. Additionally, reserve officers would already be academy-trained, making it easier to transition them into full-time roles when positions become available. After deliberation, no member objected to the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-07 in its current form.

C) Legislative History:

Senate Bill No. 24-07 was formally introduced by Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro on January 27, 2025. On February 26, 2025, Senate Bill No. 24-07 was 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. 24-07. However, committee meetings, which are open to the public, were held to receive written and oral testimonies on any proposed legislation appearing on the agenda. See below for further details.

2. Committee Meeting. The proposed legislation first appeared during the scheduled committee meeting on May 06, 2025, at which your Committee deliberated on the provisions of the proposed legislation and the comments provided to the Committee for review.

   The proposed legislation made its second appearance at the scheduled committee meeting on June 20, 2025, at which your Committee deliberated on the provisions of the proposed legislation and the comments provided to the Committee for review.

   The proposed legislation made its third appearance at the scheduled committee meeting on July 02, 2025, at which your Committee deliberated on the provisions of the proposed legislation and the comments provided to the Committee for review.

   The proposed legislation made its fourth appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on March 18, 2026, in which your Committee deliberated on the provisions stated in the proposed legislation and the comments provided to the Committee for review

   The respective Committee Meeting notices and agendas were officially posted on various legislative forums and social media sites in accordance with the Open Government Act to invite members of the general public to provide comments as indicated under Item No. III. Public Comment on the Committee Agenda. Public comments offered during the Committee Meetings are as follows:

1. Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety

3. Written Comment. Your Committee requested comments on the proposed legislation. To date, the status of comments received from the following government agencies is as follows:

    1. Garren Manglona Quitugua - *letter received May 07, 2025*
    2. NMI Settlement Fund - *letter received March 14, 2025*
    3. Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety - *letter received March 14, 2025*
    4. Honorable Aubry M. Hocog, Mayor, Municipality of Rota - *letter received on March 28, 2025*

E) Estimated Fiscal Cost:

The enactment of Senate Bill No. 24-07 will result in additional costs to the CNMI government related to training, equipment issuance (including uniforms and firearms), insurance coverage during activation periods, and administrative oversight.

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. 24-07 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 Jude U. Hofschneider
Member

Reviewed by:

Senate Legal Counsel
Attachments:

- Garren Manglona Quitugua - *letter received May 07, 2025*
- NMI Settlement Fund - *letter received March 14, 2025*
- Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety - *letter received March 14, 2025*
- Honorable Aubry M. Hocog, Mayor, Municipality of Rota - *letter received on March 28, 2025*

Gmail Office of Senator Karl R. King-Nabors <sen.kking.nabors@gmail.com>

Written Testimony for S.B NO 24-07

1 message

PACIFIC ISLANDER <garren97@gmail.com> Wed, May 7, 2025 at 3:01 AM
To: sen.kking.nabors@gmail.com

Good morning Mr. Chairman and honorable members of this committee. I am writing to you all to express my support for S.B NO 24-07.

The establishment of a Police Reserve Unit within the Department of Public Safety is a forward-thinking and fiscally responsible initiative that directly addresses our growing public safety needs while preserving limited government resources.

This bill creates an organized and trained reserve force that can assist during high-demand situations, such as community events, traffic control, natural disasters, and public outreach activities. By deploying reserve officers for these duties, we can significantly reduce the reliance on full-time officers for overtime assignments thereby reducing overall OT costs that have placed a growing burden on the government's budget.

Furthermore, the presence of trained reserve officers during large public gatherings and special events will allow our full-time police officers to remain focused on pressing law enforcement priorities such as criminal investigations, patrol coverage, and emergency response. This augmentation strategy ensures better coverage, increases public safety visibility, and improves community-police relations.

In short, this bill strikes a practical balance between financial sustainability and public safety enhancement. It is a win-win for the government and the people of the Commonwealth.

Garren Manglona Quitugua

P.S. I would greatly appreciate it if you could kindly read this during your session.

Thank you yan Si yu'us Ma'se, Ghilisow!



NMI SETTLEMENT FUND

POST OFFICE BOX 501247, SAIPAN, MP 96950

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL:
sen.kking.nabors@gmail.com



March 14, 2025

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

RE: S.B. 24-07, To Establish a Police Reserve Unit within the Department of Public Safety

Dear Vice-President King-Nabors,

I am writing in response to your letter dated March 12, 2025, requesting a response to proposed Senate Bill 24-07.

We have reviewed the proposed bill and it does not appear to contain provisions related to the NMI Settlement Fund. We note, however, that if this bill is passed any retirees who are members of the Settlement Fund who are returning to service as a member of the Police Reserve Unit will need to comply with 1 CMC § 8392.

Sincerely,

Joyce C.H. Tang

Tel: 670.322.3863 • Fax: 670.664.8080

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

Arnold I. Palacios
Governor

David M. Apatang
Lieutenant Governor

Anthony I. Macaranas
Commissioner

JUDICIARY, GOVERNMENT, LAW
CNMI SENATE
03/14/25
DATE
2:51 pm

March 11, 2025

Karl R. King-Nabors
Chairman
Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building
Capitol Hill, Saipan MP, 96950

Ref: S.B. 24-07.

Chairman King-Nabors,

Thank you and to the members of the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary and Government, and Law, for giving us the opportunity on the inclusion of our comments, recommendations and concerns. The Department of Public Safety is in full support of Senate Bill 24-07. This proposed bill marks a significant step forward in recognizing the value of police reserve officers that will provide supplement support to our police full time officers, augmenting capabilities and resources in time of need.

For services rendered by Police Reserve Officers, the Department of Public Safety recommends providing a monthly stipend of $200, regardless of activation status, and the guarantee of full compensation during natural or man-made disasters, as well as during civil unrest. This would ensure that our reserve officers are fairly compensated for their services during critical times. This legislation demonstrates our commitment to supporting those who serve and protect our communities, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on our police reserve programs.

Sincerely,

Anthony I. Macaranas
Commissioner
Department of Public Safety

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE HONORABLE AUBRY MANGLONA HOCOG
Mayor of the Municipality of Rota
Mailing Address: Post Office Box 537 Rota, MP 96951
Phone: 670.532.9451/9452 * Email: mayor.ahocog@gmail.com

MOR-2025-132

March 27, 2025

JUDICIARY, GOVERNMENT, LAW
CNMI SENATE
03/28/25
DATE
11:28a.m.

The Honorable Senators Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law
24th CNMI Legislature
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

Subject: Endorsement for Senate Bill No. 24-07

Dear Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I am writing to convey my endorsement for Senate Bill No. 24-07, legislation that seeks "To establish a Police Reserve Unit within the Department of Public Safety." This bill addresses a growing need in our community and offers a practical solution to augment our existing law enforcement resources.

As the bill aptly points out, the demands on public services have increased significantly, placing considerable strain on our first responders. The establishment of a Police Reserve Unit will provide crucial support to the Department of Public Safety, enhancing their capacity to protect our citizens, safeguard property, and maintain peace and order. The use of citizen volunteers, trained to assist in these vital functions, is a commendable and efficient approach.

The provisions within Senate Bill No. 24-07, which carefully outline the chain of command, arrest authority, on-duty regulations, and equipment issuance, demonstrate a well-structured framework designed to ensure accountability and effective operation of the reserve unit. The inclusion of medical and life insurance coverage for reserve officers during activation is a significant recognition of their service and potential risks.

I believe that Senate Bill No. 24-07 will substantially benefit our community by strengthening our law enforcement capabilities and fostering greater community involvement in public safety. I urge the Committee to consider this bill favorably and move it forward in the legislative process.

Thank you for your commitment to the welfare of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Aubry Hocog

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2025 **S. B. NO. 24-07**

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish a Police Reserve Unit within the Department of Public Safety.

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

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that in the past decade, there has been a change in community dynamics, as the demand for public services becomes greater than available support and resources; this becomes a challenge for many first responders, as their mission is the protection of life, property and the preservation of peace and order. Over the years, there have been several high-profile cases and incidents. The following headlines provide a summary of some of those events:

"5 dead in Saipan shooting (2009)"

"Relatives believe two girls abducted (2011)"

"CNMI report: Female tourist dragged by car in a brazen robbery on Saipan (2011)"

"Missing person case now a homicide (2012),"

"Crisostomo sentenced to life in prison (2014)"

"Saipan farmer found dead; case classified as a homicide (2016)"

"Extreme Category 5 typhoon, the worst U.S. storm since 1935, leaves Northern Mariana Islands devastated (2018)"

"Police still investigating Saipan restaurant murders (2019)"

"Man swept out to sea in Saipan, HSC-25, and Department of Public Safety conducting a search (2020)"

In times of natural disasters or state of emergency, first responders are often left working around the clock, away from their families, and with limited relief. In support of first responder growth and well-being the Legislature finds the need to establish the

Depatment of Public Safety Police Reserve Unit.

This Act will help increase first responder capacity and well-being by expanding programs and services and widening available assistance at the scene of an emergency, such as an accident, fire or natural disaster.

Section 2. Amendment. Subject to codification by the CNMI Law Revision Commission, Title 1, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 10, Article 1 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to add a new subsection to read as follows:

"§ 101. Police Reserve Unit Authorized.

(a) Police Reserve Unit Authorized. The Commonwealth authorizes the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to create and maintain a police reserve unit. This unit will be authorized to have as many reserve officers as patrolmen. It will be staffed by citizen volunteers who will assist DPS in the protection of life, and property and the preservation of peace and order.

(b) Chain of Command. The DPS Commissioner is in charge of and responsible to the Governor for the conduct of the reserve unit. Reserve officers will be appointed from the list of applicants who have completed the Police Academy and all other requirements consistent with applicable laws and regulations promulgated under Section 3. The reserve officer rank will be subordinate to reserve supervisory ranks that may be created and also to all paid (FTE) officers.

(c) Arrest Authority. Reserve officers will have full arrest authority while on duty and only while on duty during the duration of the activation period.

(d) On Duty. A reserve officer will be on duty when the unit as a whole has been activated, or when he or she has been specifically assigned to a task or duty by the DPS Commissioner, or Deputy Commissioner. Reserve officers cannot place themselves on duty.

(e) Dismissal. Reserve officers may be dismissed from their reserve status by the DPS Commissioner for violating any rule or regulation. The reserve captain or supervising officer may suspend a reserve officer from duty status pending review by the DPS Commissioner of allegations of misconduct.

(f) Equipment Issue. DPS shall provide necessary uniforms and the standard equipment, including a handgun, issued to DPS officers. The handgun shall be issued only during the activation of the reserve unit or any reserve officer called to duty. The handgun shall be returned and stored by the DPS when the activation period ends.

(g) Employee Benefits. During the activation period, the employer shall provide medical insurance coverage and life insurance coverage for death on the line of duty.

(h) Hiring Priority. Reserve officers shall be prioritized, based on seniority, for any DPS full-time officer positions.

Section 3. Regulations. The DPS Commissioner shall promulgate necessary regulations consistent with this Act."

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

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

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

Date: 01/27/25

Introduced By: /s/
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Jose A. Bermudes
Senate Legal Counsel