



COPY

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

August 17, 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 with amendments House Bill No. 24-05, HD1, SS1 entitled, "To establish provisions for jaywalking; and for other purposes." The Senate passed on Final Reading H.B. No. 24-05, HD1, SS1, by the unanimous vote, in its 1st Day, Eighth Special Session on August 14, 2026.

Sincerely,

Dolores S. Bermudes
Senate Clerk

Attachment

Transmitted to HOUSE:

Received by: Date: 08.18.2026 Time: 10:50 AM

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2025

First Regular Session, 2025

H. B. 24-5, HD1, SS1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish provisions for jaywalking; and for other purposes.

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

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature recognizes the
2 importance of traffic regulations in protecting both motorists and pedestrians.
3 However, residents and tourists frequently disregard these rules, especially in high-
4 traffic areas, creating safety hazards. Currently, the Commonwealth lacks penalties
5 for jaywalking, reducing compliance and increasing risk. While the Legislature
6 remains committed to supporting tourism, it also prioritizes public safety and the
7 need for stronger traffic enforcement.

8 To address this issue, this Act establishes clear penalties for jaywalking,
9 ensuring accountability and promoting compliance with traffic laws to enhance
10 community safety.

1 **Section 2. Amendment.** Title 9, Division 5, Chapter 4, of the
2 Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to add a new § 5409 to read as follows:

3 **“§ 5409. Jaywalking.**

4 (a) It shall be unlawful for any pedestrian to cross any road at any point
5 between adjacent intersections that are controlled by any traffic control signal
6 device or police officer except in an officially designated crosswalk. Provided that
7 all officially designated crosswalks shall have identifiable signs that are properly
8 erected and visible.

9 (1) Exception: In the absence of an officially designated or visible
10 crosswalk, pedestrians may cross the street in a safe and reasonable manner.

11 (b) Penalty. A pedestrian who crosses a street outside a marked crosswalk
12 is in violation of this § 5404(a) and shall be guilty of a traffic infraction pursuant to
13 9 CMC §7112 and fined a payable offense of \$25 for the first offense and \$100 for
14 the second and subsequent offenses.

15 (c) Special Accounts. Consistent with this Act, there are hereby established
16 within the Commonwealth Treasury separate jaywalking special accounts for the
17 Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Department of Public Safety (DPS),
18 respectively, and all fines collected pursuant to this § 5409 shall be deposited and
19 used as follows:

20 (1) Thirty percent (30%) of the fines collected shall be deposited in
21 the DPW jaywalking special account and shall be available for use, without

1 further appropriation, by the DPW for the sole purpose of the repair and
2 maintenance of crosswalks to include signage and markings. The
3 expenditure authority shall be the Secretary of the Department of Public
4 Works; and

5 (2) Thirty percent (30%) of the fines collected shall be deposited
6 into the DPS jaywalking special account and shall be available for use,
7 without further appropriation, by the DPS for the sole purpose of enforcing
8 the provisions of this § 5409. The expenditure authority shall be the
9 Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.

10 (3) The remaining forty percent (40%) of all fines collected pursuant
11 to this § 5409 shall be deposited into the General Fund.”

12 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of
13 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
14 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its
15 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid
16 shall not be affected thereby.

17 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein
18 shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or
19 acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted
20 under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding
21 instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have

HOUSE BILL 24-5, HD1, SS1

1 the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal,
2 which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

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

Prefiled: 2/7/2025

Date: _____ Introduced by: /s/ Rep. Joseph A. Flores

Reviewed for legal sufficiency by:

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

Date: 2/4/2025

HB 24-5, HD1 as reviewed for legal sufficiency by:

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

Date: 7/25/2025



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

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-

95

Date: June 12, 2026

RE: House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1

S-Adopted 8/14/25 

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

Dear Mister President:

Your Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, to which was referred House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1, entitled:

“To establish provisions for jaywalking and for other purposes.”

begs leave to report as follows:

I. RECOMMENDATION:

After considerable discussion and deliberation, your Committee recommends passage of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1 in the form of Senate Substitute 1.

II. ANALYSIS:

A) Purpose:

The purpose of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1 is to improve public safety by establishing penalties for jaywalking in the Commonwealth. By promoting compliance with traffic laws among both residents and visitors, House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1 seeks to reduce pedestrian-related accidents, encourage responsible use of roadways, and strengthen traffic enforcement in high-traffic areas while supporting a safer environment for the community.

B) Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that the absence of penalties for jaywalking has contributed to unsafe pedestrian practices, particularly in high-traffic areas frequented by both residents and visitors. By establishing clear penalties for jaywalking, the bill encourages responsible behavior, supports more effective traffic law enforcement, and reduces the risk of pedestrian-related accidents. Accordingly, the Committee finds that the measure serves the public interest and is necessary to enhance public safety by promoting greater compliance with pedestrian traffic laws throughout the Commonwealth.

Your Committee met on February 11, 2026 to discuss the provisions of the proposed legislation. The Committee raised concerns with respect to enforcement. It was noted that although the legislation provides for penalties and the distribution of fines, it does not appear to expressly identify the agency or officials responsible for enforcing the jaywalking violation. The Committee discussed whether existing statutory citations already confer such enforcement authority; however, if the current law does not clearly do so, the Committee finds that the bill may benefit from an amendment explicitly designating the appropriate enforcement authority to ensure clarity and effective implementation.

It was noted that House Draft 1 replaced the original tiered penalty structure with a flat \$100 fine and it was suggested to consider a graduated schedule or authorizing the Department of Public Safety to set fines by regulation, subject to a statutory maximum, to better align with other traffic violations. Concern was also raised that the bill's exceptions are unclear.

Further concern was raised with respect to the exception clause in the proposed legislation and it was expressed that there is a need to explicitly detail what roads are exceptions to the violation to avoid pedestrians from confusion and possible unintentional violations of the act. It was also asked whether comments had been received from the Department of Public Safety or the Department of Public Works regarding the bill's implementation and enforcement, particularly in congested areas where pedestrians continue to cross outside designated crosswalks. Support was expressed for the measure but emphasized that unresolved enforcement and implementation issues should be addressed to ensure the bill effectively achieves its intended purpose.

Senate Legal Counsel Villagomez was asked to provide guidance on the same matter regarding the exception clause of the proposed legislation. In her response, it was explained that the bill does not conflict with existing law but instead establishes a penalty for jaywalking while preserving an exception for areas without visible or officially designated crosswalks. Further noting that the exception recognizes that not all roads have crosswalks and allows pedestrians to cross safely and reasonably in those circumstances, concluding that the provision is justified and consistent with the bill's purpose. Furthermore, it would be for the court to decide whether or not it was reasonable for a person to have not seen an available crosswalk. It was recommended to maintain the existing section 5404 and create a new section 5409 for jaywalking.

It was emphasized that there is a need for public education, clear signage, and safety measures on secondary roads without designated crosswalks. It was noted that the bill's intent should include informing pedestrians and motorists to promote safe crossing practices and prevent accidents. It was suggested that DPW should be implementing clear signage in accordance with the act.

Concern was raised regarding the distribution of funds as detailed in the proposed legislation. It was expressed that instead of dividing a special jaywalking account, that 30% be distributed to DPW, 30% be distributed to DPS and the remaining 40% be placed into the General Fund. On the same accord, concern was raised regarding the allocation of jaywalking penalty revenues, suggesting that collected fines remain in the special account for distribution between the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Public Works rather than allocating a portion to the General Fund. Recommendation was offered to clarify the frequency of fund transfers and establish a process for tracking collections and distributions.

After careful deliberation, no member objected to inviting the Department of Public Safety and relevant stakeholders to discuss the proposed legislation, therefore, House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1 was tabled for further discussion in a future meeting.

Your Committee met on June 12, 2026 to discuss the provisions of the proposed legislation. During deliberation, a substituted version of the proposed legislation was introduced and the Committee agreed to the passage of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1, in the form of Senate Substitute 1.

C) Legislative History:

House Bill No. 24-05 was formally introduced by Representative Joseph A. Flores on February 04, 2025, and was referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations (JGO) for disposition. On July 25, 2025, the House JGO Committee adopted the proposed legislation in the form of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1, which was reported to the full body of the House of Representatives under House Standing Committee Report (SCR) No. 24-23. On August 25, 2025, during the Second Day, Second Regular Session of the House of Representatives, House SCR 24-23 was adopted, and the House of Representatives passed the proposed legislation in the form of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1. On September 02, 2025, House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1, was transmitted to the Senate and was subsequently referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications for disposition.

During the Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, a similar legislation, House Bill No. 23-38, was formally introduced by Representative Joseph A. Flores on March 31, 2023, and was referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations (JGO) for disposition. No further action was taken on the proposed legislation, and on January 07, 2025, the House convened its Seventh Day, Fourth Regular Session, and a motion was made and seconded to file all remaining bills,

resolutions, reports, and other assignments given to committees that require Senate action. Accordingly, House Bill No. 23-38 was filed, and the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned *sine die*.

During the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, a similar legislation, House Bill No. 22-40, was formally introduced by Representative Joseph A. Flores on March 12, 2021, and was referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations (JGO) for disposition. On July 27, 2022, the House JGO Committee adopted the proposed legislation in its current form, which was reported to the full body of the House of Representatives under House Standing Committee Report (SCR) No. 22-54. On October 18, 2022, during the Fourth Day, Fourth Regular Session of the House of Representatives, House SCR 22-54 was adopted, and the House of Representatives passed the proposed legislation in its current form. On October 20, 2022, House Bill No. 22-40, was transmitted to the Senate. No further action was taken on the proposed legislation, and on January 05, 2023, the Senate convened its Fifth Day, Fourth Regular Session, and a motion was made and seconded to file all remaining bills, resolutions, reports, and other assignments given to committees that require Senate action. Accordingly, House Bill No. 22-40 was filed, and the Senate of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned *sine die*.

During the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, a similar legislation, House Bill No. 19-191, was formally introduced by Representative Francis S. Taimanao on August 11, 2016, and was referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations (JGO) for disposition. On September 14, 2016, the House JGO Committee adopted the proposed legislation in the form of House Draft 1, which was reported to the full body of the House of Representatives under House Standing Committee Report (SCR) No. 19-142. On October 21, 2016, during the Seventh Day, Fourth Regular Session of the House of Representatives, House SCR 19-142 was adopted, and the House of Representatives passed the proposed legislation in the form of House Draft 1. On October 21, 2016, House Bill No. 19-191, was transmitted to the Senate. No further action was taken on the proposed legislation, and on January 04, 2017, the Senate convened its *Sine Die*, Fourth Regular Session, and a motion was made and seconded to file all remaining bills, resolutions, reports, and other assignments given to committees that require Senate action. Accordingly, House Bill No. 19-191 was filed, and the Senate of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned *sine die*.

D) Public Hearing and Comment:

1. Public Hearing. No public hearing was scheduled for House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1. However, a committee meeting, which is open to the public, was 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 made its first appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on February 11, 2026 in which your Committee

deliberated on the provisions stated in the proposed legislation and the comments provided to the Committee for review.

The proposed legislation made its second appearance during the scheduled committee meeting on June 12, 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 of the Committee Agenda. During the committee meeting, no public comments were provided on the proposed legislation.

3. Written Comment. Your Committee did not solicit comments on the proposed legislation. Therefore, no written comment in support or opposition of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1 was received by the Committee.

E) Estimated Fiscal Cost:

The enactment of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1, Senate Substitute 1 will result in additional costs to the CNMI Government as it may result in modest administrative and enforcement costs for the Department of Public Safety and maintenance costs for the Department of Public Works. However, these costs are expected to be partially offset by revenues generated from jaywalking fines, which the bill allocates to the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Public Works, and the General Fund.

F) Summary of Committee Amendments:

Your Committee agreed to the following amendments:

1. **Section 2. Amendment.** *Beginning on page 2, lines 1-3:* Title 9, Division 5, Chapter 4, of the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to add a new § 5409 to read as follows: “§ 5409. Jaywalking.
2. **Section 2. Amendment.** *On page 2 lines 11-14:* Language was inserted to establish a tiered penalty fee which impose a first time offense of \$25.00 and \$100.00 for second and subsequent offenses.
3. **Section 2. Amendment.** *On page 2 lines 15-21 through page 3, lines 1-11:* Language was amended to establish within the Commonwealth Treasury, separate jaywalking accounts for the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Safety. The amended language highlights that of all the fines collected pursuant to the new § 5409 , 30% be distributed to DPW and 30% be distributed to the DPS. The remaining 40% of all fines collected, shall be deposited into the General Fund.

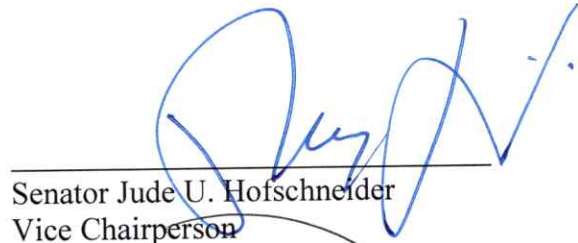
III. CONCLUSION:

Your Committee agrees with the intent and purpose of the proposed legislation and recommends passage in the form of House Bill No. 24-05, House Draft 1, in the form of Senate Substitute 1.

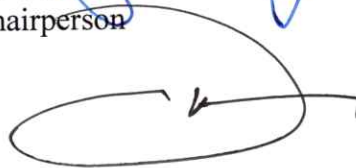
Respectfully submitted,



Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro
Chairperson



Senator Jude U. Hofschneider
Vice Chairperson



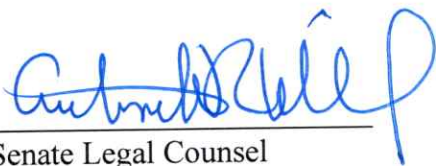
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz
Member

Senator Ronnie M. Calvo
Member

Senator Corina L. Magofna
Member

Senator Donald M. Manglona
Member

Reviewed by:



Senate Legal Counsel