



GOV. COMM. 24-120
(HOUSE)

David M. Apatang
Governor

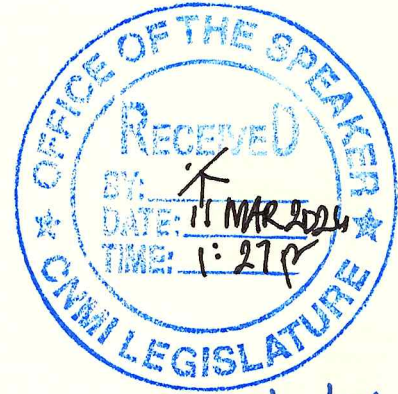
Dennis James C. Mendiola
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 11, 2026

GOV2026-140

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



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

3/11/26


Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **House Bill No. 24-23**, entitled, "To amend 9 CMC § 2116 to update the definitions of "veteran" and "disabled veteran" and to allow a valid Veteran ID Card to be used as proof of veteran status when applying for a veteran's license plate.", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 24-23**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,


DAVID M. APATANG
Governor

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
RECEIVED BY 
DATE 3/11/2026 TIME 2:48 PM

cc: Lieutenant Governor; Attorney General; Commonwealth Law Revision;
Public Auditor; Military and Veterans Affairs Office; Bureau of Motor Vehicle;
Special Assistant for Administration; Programs and Legislative Review



TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANA COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

APRIL 24, 2025

REPRESENTATIVE JULIE M.A. OGO OF ROTA, PRECINCT 7 (*herself*) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

H. B. No. 24-23

AN ACT

TO AMEND 9 CMC § 2116 TO UPDATE THE DEFINITIONS OF “VETERAN” AND “DISABLED VETERAN” AND TO ALLOW A VALID VETERAN ID CARD TO BE USED AS PROOF OF VETERAN STATUS WHEN APPLYING FOR A VETERAN’S LICENSE PLATE.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Bill was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations, which submitted Standing Committee Report 24-29; adopted 9/9/2025.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
FIRST AND FINAL READING, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025;
without amendments and transmitted to THE SENATE.**

IN THE SENATE

The Bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs, which submitted Standing Committee Report 24-69; adopted 2/26/2026.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, FEBRUARY 26, 2026;
without amendments and returned to THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

**H. B. NO. 24-23 IS DULY PASSED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE.**


Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THIRD DAY, SECOND REGULAR SESSION
SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

H. B. No. 24-23

AN ACT

TO AMEND 9 CMC § 2116 TO UPDATE THE DEFINITIONS OF
“VETERAN” AND “DISABLED VETERAN” AND TO ALLOW A
VALID VETERAN ID CARD TO BE USED AS PROOF OF
VETERAN STATUS WHEN APPLYING FOR A VETERAN’S
LICENSE PLATE.

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

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 The Legislature finds that the current requirements for obtaining a
3 Veterans License Plate should be amended to provide veterans with additional
4 options for proving their eligibility. While the DD214 (Certificate of Release or
5 Discharge from Active Duty) has been the primary document for verification,
6 many veterans now possess a Veteran ID Card (VIC) issued by the
7 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Since obtaining a VIC requires a DD214,
8 the VIC serves as official proof of veteran status and should be accepted as an

HOUSE BILL 24-23

1 alternative form of veteran status verification in certain contexts. In particular,
2 the Legislature finds that the VIC should be accepted as an alternative form of
3 verification in the context of applying for a Veterans License Plate in the CNMI.

4 This bill also updates the definitions of “veteran” and “disabled veteran” to
5 explicitly include individuals who served in a reserve component of any branch of
6 the United States Armed Forces. Additionally, it removes the specific listing of
7 each military branch in favor of a broader reference to the Armed Forces. This
8 change ensures the law remains adaptable by allowing for the seamless inclusion
9 of newly established branches, such as the United States Space Force, without
10 requiring future legislative amendments.

11 Thus, based on the foregoing, the purpose of this Act is to amend
12 9 CMC § 2116 to update the definitions of “veteran” and “disabled veteran” and
13 to allow valid VICs be used as proof of veteran status when applying for a
14 veteran’s license plate. This amendment ensures that eligible veterans can more
15 easily access the benefits and recognition they deserve.

16 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.**

17 Sections 2116 (a) and 2116 (b) (1) of Chapter 1, Division 2, Title 9 of the
18 Commonwealth Code are hereby amended, with all other provisions remaining
19 unchanged and in full force and effect, as follows:

20 **“§ 2116. Veteran or Disabled Veteran License Plates.**

21 (a) Definition.

22 (1) For purposes of this Act, the term “veteran” means a person

HOUSE BILL 24-23

1 who served on active duty or in a reserve component of any branch of
2 the United States Armed Forces and who was discharged or released
3 under conditions other than dishonorable.

4 (2) "Disabled Veteran" means a person who served on active duty
5 or in a reserve component of any branch of the United States Armed
6 Forces and who was discharged or released under conditions other than
7 dishonorable and certified as having at least 10% disability due to
8 service-related injury.

9 (b) Application.

10 (1) In lieu of the license plates contracted on behalf of the Bureau
11 of Motor Vehicles, in order to qualify for a veteran's license or disabled
12 veteran's license plate the applicant must submit the following along
13 with the application for vehicle registration:

14 (i) A copy of the Certificate of Release or Discharge from
15 Active Duty from the Department of Defense (DD214); or, if a
16 DD214 is not available, one of the following:

17 (A) For individuals otherwise qualified under
18 subsection (a)(l):

19 (1) A certification from the Military and Veterans
20 Affairs Office, based on documentation submitted by the
21 applicant to the Military and Veterans Affairs Office that
22 proves he/she served in the U.S. military services; or

HOUSE BILL 24-23

1 (2) A valid Veteran Identification Card issued by the
2 United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

3 (B) For individuals otherwise qualified under
4 subsection (a)(2):

5 (1) A certification from the Military and Veterans
6 Affairs Office based on documentation submitted by the
7 applicant to the Military and Veterans Affairs Office that
8 proves he/she has at least 10% disability due to service-
9 related injury.”

10 **SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY.**

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

16 **SECTION 4. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

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

HOUSE BILL 24-23

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

3 **SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

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

Attested to by:



Linda B. Muña, House Clerk

Certified by:



SPEAKER EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ
House of Representatives
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

Approved this 11th day of March, 2026



DAVID M. APATANG
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands