



TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

P.O. BOX 500586 SAIPAN, MP 96950

**JOEL CAMACHO**  
CHAIRMAN

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 24-21  
DATE: July 25, 2025  
RE: House Bill 24-39

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

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations to which was referred:

**House Bill No. 24-39:** “To establish Treatment Program Enforcement Officers within the Judiciary to carry our enforcement, supervision, and monitoring functions essential to the success of court-supervised treatment programs, and to ensure that these officers are fully recognized as law enforcement personnel under Commonwealth law.”

begs leave to report as follows:

**I. RECOMMENDATION:**

After considerable discussion, your Committee recommends that House Bill No. 24-39 be passed by the House in its current form.

RECEIVED BY *[Signature]*  
DATE 8/18/2025 TIME 2:45P

## **II. ANALYSIS:**

### **A. Purpose:**

The purpose of the bill is to establish Treatment Program Enforcement Officers to enforce, supervise, and monitor all court-supervised treatment programs and to ensure these officers are fully recognized as law enforcement personnel under Commonwealth law.

### **B. Committee Findings:**

Under current law, the Judiciary's ability to assign enforcement and supervision personnel to court-supervised treatment programs is limited by statute to Drug Court. As a result, Community Supervision Officers and Compliance Officers (CSOs) cannot be deployed to other treatment programs, such as the Mental Health Court Docket.

This bill addresses that limitation by reclassifying current CSOs as Treatment Program Enforcement Officers (TPEOs). TPEOs retain the same statutory powers as existing CSOs, such as the authority to create records, conduct investigations, serve warrants, and carry firearms; however, TPEOs enjoy an expanded scope of authority that allows them to serve across all court-supervised treatment programs. This ensures legal and operational continuity while allowing the Judiciary to respond more effectively to the needs of different treatment programs and dockets.

### **C. Public Comments/Public Hearing:**

The following entities were invited to present written and/or oral testimony on the day of the committee meeting:

- NMI Judiciary
- CNMI Department of Public Safety
- Office of the Attorney General

The Committee received written comments from the following:

- Honorable Alexandro C. Castro, Chief Justice, and Honorable Roberto C. Naraja, Presiding Judge, NMI Judiciary. Comments dated July 23, 2025.

“We fully support the passage of House Bill 24-39 to establish Treatment Program Enforcement Officers within the Judiciary.”

Comments received have been attached as part of the committee report.

D. Legislative History:

On July 14, 2025, Representative John Paul P. Sablan introduced House Bill No. 24-39, which was subsequently referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations on that same date.

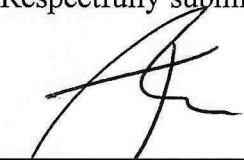
E. Cost Benefit:


This proposed bill will not result in additional costs to the CNMI government. The legislation involves reclassifying Community Supervision Officers and Compliance Officers and expanding their roles across all court-supervised treatment programs. This process will be managed using existing resources, requiring no new hires, infrastructure, or major administrative expenses. Overall, this bill is expected to be cost-neutral while enhancing the Judiciary's ability to provide effective enforcement, supervision, and monitoring across a broader range of treatment programs.

**III. CONCLUSION:**

The committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of House Bill No. 24-39 and recommends its passage.

Respectfully submitted,

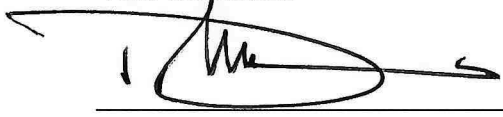
  
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Rep. Joel C. Camacho,  
Chairman

  
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Rep. Vincent S. Aldan, Member

  
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Rep. Angelo A. Camacho, Member

  
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Rep. Marissa R. Flores, Member


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Rep. Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao,  
Vice Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Member

  
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Rep. Diego F. Camacho, Member

  
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Rep. Joseph A. Flores, Member

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Rep. Julie A. Ogo, Member


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Rep. John Paul P. Sablan, Member

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Rep. Ralph N. Yumul, Member

Reviewed by:



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House Legal Counsel

Date: 3/13/25



*The*  
**JUDICIARY**  
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**SUPREME COURT**

P.O. Box 502165 · Saipan, MP 96950  
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ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO  
Chief Justice  
ACCastro@NMIJudiciary.gov

July 23, 2025

Chairman Joel C. Camacho  
Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations  
24<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Legislature  
P.O. Box 500586  
Saipan, MP 96950

**Re: Judiciary Comments on House Bill Nos. 24-10, 24-26, 24-28, and 24-39**

Dear Chairman Camacho:

We write in response to your letter requesting for comments on House Bill Nos. 24-10, 24-26, 24-28, and 24-39. Keeping with past practice, the Judiciary will submit comments or recommendations on proposed legislation that directly affects the functions and operations of the third branch of government. Please see our comments below:

**House Bill 24-10 [Change of Name]:**

We fully support the passage of House Bill 24-10 to establish a change of name legal procedure in the CNMI. Currently, there is no statute specifying the standards for a name change. The proposed legislation will establish a uniform and organized process for the court to address petitions for name change.

**House Bill 24-26 [Child Abuse Amendment]:**

We will refrain from commenting on House Bill 23-26, as it involves legally substantive amendments to the definition of the crime of child abuse. The Judiciary commenting on substantive changes to the law undermines judicial neutrality and affects our ability to fairly adjudicate related issues. Additionally, courts are prohibited from advocating for or against any particular issue.

**House Bill 24-28 [Grand Jury System]:**

While we support the Legislature's efforts to strengthen the justice system, the Judiciary has some concerns regarding the practicality of implementing the grand jury system.

The CNMI struggles with persistent and recurring fiscal challenges. Year after year, including the current fiscal period, the Judiciary remains significantly under-funded and is now facing additional efforts to further reduce its funding. The court will be burdened with added expenditure such as

juror fees, administrative and personnel costs, and courtroom security should the bill move forward. In other words, it is crucial for the Legislature to establish an appropriate funding source to ensure the viability of the grand jury system, or else, it will not work.

Also, given the CNMI's limited population, the court may encounter significant challenges collecting an adequate and impartial pool of grand jurors. Further, there is an existing mechanism in place—preliminary examination under Rule 5.1 of the NMI Rules of Criminal Procedure, which provides for checks against unfair prosecution. Establishing a grand jury system may lead to overlapping use of judicial resources and efforts.

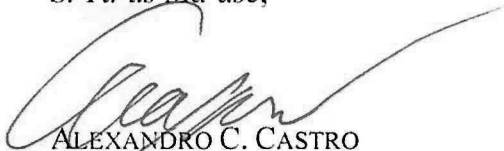
To adequately address these concerns and explore the feasibility of a grand jury system in the CNMI, we propose the establishment of an ad hoc committee composed of representatives from the Judiciary, the Office of the Attorney General, the Public Defender's Office, and the Legislature.

**House Bill 24-39 [Treatment Program Enforcement Officers]:**

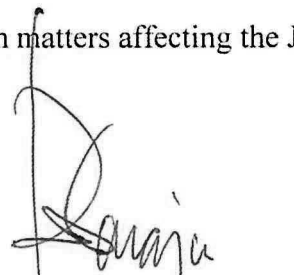
We fully support the passage of House Bill 24-39 to establish Treatment Program Enforcement Officers within the Judiciary. Enforcement and supervision of participants are essential components of a successful treatment court program. These officers supervise participants, conduct home and work visits, perform drug testing, monitor compliance, and make arrests, as necessary, delivering rehabilitative justice, preserving public safety, and maintaining officer accountability.

We look forward to continuing to work with your office on matters affecting the Judiciary and the law in this 24th Commonwealth Legislature.

*Si Yu'us Ma'ase,*



ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO  
Chief Justice



ROBERTO C. NARAÑA  
Presiding Judge

cc: Associate Justice John A. Manglona  
Associate Justice Perry B. Inos  
Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo  
Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho  
Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio  
Associate Judge Lillian A. Tenorio

JEO-7182025

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH  
LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 14, 2025

4th Spc

Regular Session, 2025

H. B. 24-39

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish Treatment Program Enforcement Officers within the Judiciary to carry out enforcement, supervision, and monitoring functions essential to the success of court-supervised treatment programs, and to ensure that these officers are fully recognized as law enforcement personnel under Commonwealth law.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE 24<sup>TH</sup> NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1           **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that the Judiciary  
2 of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands employs various law  
3 enforcement personnel, including Community Supervision Officers and  
4 Compliance Officers under 1 CMC § 3207. These officers exclusively serve the  
5 Drug Court and are authorized to supervise participants, conduct home and work  
6 visits, perform drug testing, monitor compliance, and make arrests.

7           The Legislature further finds that similar enforcement and supervision  
8 functions are necessary for other court-supervised treatment programs administered  
9 by the Judiciary, such as the Mental Health Court Docket. These programs provide  
10 rehabilitative services as an alternative to traditional criminal prosecution,  
11 sentencing, or incarceration. Like Drug Court, these programs require robust

1 enforcement and participant monitoring to ensure accountability, public safety, and  
2 successful rehabilitation.

3           However, current law limits Community Supervision Officers and  
4 Compliance Officers to the Drug Court, creating a statutory gap that restricts the  
5 Judiciary’s ability to assign such officers to other court-supervised treatment  
6 programs.

7           To address this gap, this Act reclassifies the Community Supervision  
8 Officers and Compliance Officers as Treatment Program Enforcement Officers.  
9 This reclassification preserves the core enforcement and supervision  
10 responsibilities of the former positions while enabling the Judiciary to deploy these  
11 officers not only within Drug Court but also across all court-supervised programs—  
12 whether structured as a treatment docket or treatment court, and whether  
13 established by statute, court rule, or judicial administrative order. Because  
14 Community Supervision Officers and Compliance Officers are currently  
15 recognized as law enforcement officers under various provisions of  
16 Commonwealth law, this Act also updates those statutory references accordingly,  
17 thereby maintaining officer benefits and responsibilities under the revised statutory  
18 framework.

19           By creating this statutory framework and aligning key definitions, the  
20 Commonwealth strengthens its capacity to deliver rehabilitative justice while  
21 preserving public safety and maintaining officer accountability.

1           **Section 2. Enactment.** Section 3208 of Article 1, Chapter 2, Division 3,  
2 Title 1 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby enacted to read as follows:

3           **“§ 3208. Treatment Program Enforcement Officers.**

4           (a) The Presiding Judge of the Superior Court may employ Treatment  
5           Program Enforcement Officers to supervise, monitor, and enforce  
6           compliance of participants in any court-supervised treatment program  
7           administered by the Judiciary, whether structured as a treatment docket  
8           or treatment court, and whether established by statute, court rule, or  
9           judicial administrative order. Treatment Program Enforcement Officers  
10          may be assigned to one or more such programs as determined by the  
11          Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

12          (b) Treatment Program Enforcement Officers may include a Chief and one  
13          or more Deputies.

14          (c) Treatment Program Enforcement Officers shall have the authority and  
15          responsibility to:

16               (1) Create, maintain, and secure a complete record of each participant  
17               placed in a court-supervised treatment program.

18               (2) Instruct a participant as to the terms, conditions, and restrictions  
19               specified by the court-supervised treatment program.

20               (3) Keep informed of all terms, conditions, and restrictions specified by  
21               the court-supervised treatment program.

1           (4) Investigate, exercise general supervision over, and monitor  
2           compliance of participants, which shall include, among other things,  
3           the authority to visit a participant at home, employment site, or  
4           anywhere else specified by the court-supervised treatment program,  
5           to conduct drug tests of participants, and to take any items prohibited  
6           by the conditions of supervision that are observed in plain view.

7           (5) Keep records of work performed and report on information  
8           concerning a participant's conduct and compliance with a court-  
9           supervised treatment program.

10          (6) Use all suitable methods not inconsistent with the court-supervised  
11          treatment program, to aid and encourage a participant to effect  
12          improvements in conduct.

13          (7) Serve warrants of arrest, make arrests, and bring participants before  
14          the court-supervised treatment program authority when he or she  
15          believes that cause for formal sanctions or termination exists.

16          (8) Carry a firearm in the performance of official duties.

17          (9) Perform any other duty, or have such powers as are necessary to  
18          implement the provisions of this Article, as deemed appropriate by  
19          the court-supervised treatment program.

20          (d) Treatment Program Enforcement Officers shall meet minimum  
21          standards of professional experience, education, physical and mental

1 fitness, and integrity as established by the Judicial Council. No person  
2 shall be employed as a Treatment Program Enforcement Officer who:

3 (1) Has been convicted of a felony or any crime involving moral  
4 turpitude;

5 (2) Fails to pass a criminal background check and clearance process as  
6 determined by the Judiciary;

7 (3) Fails to meet training and certification requirements, including  
8 firearms training if authorized to carry a weapon; or

9 (4) Does not meet any additional standards established by the Judiciary  
10 for law enforcement personnel responsible for supervising or  
11 monitoring court-supervised treatment program participants.

12 (e) As used in this Section, “court-supervised treatment program” means  
13 any judicially administered program that facilitates access to  
14 rehabilitative services for eligible individuals as an alternative to  
15 traditional criminal prosecution, sentencing, or incarceration. Court-  
16 supervised treatment programs include Drug Court, the Mental Health  
17 Court Docket, and any future Judiciary-administered program  
18 addressing behavioral health conditions, substance use disorders, or  
19 other underlying factors contributing to criminal conduct.”

1           **Section 3. Amendment.** Subsection (u) of Section 8282, Chapter 6, Part 2,  
2 Division 8, Title 1 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to read as  
3 follows:

4           “§ 8282. **Law Enforcement Officers.**

5           For purposes of this chapter, law enforcement officers shall include the  
6 following:

7           [ . . . ]

8           (u) ~~Community supervision officers and compliance officers~~ Treatment  
9           Program Enforcement Officers employed by the Commonwealth  
10           Judiciary.”

11           **Section 4. Amendment.** Section 1434 of Article 3, Chapter 4, Part 1,  
12 Division 1, Title 6 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to read as  
13 follows:

14           “§ 1434. **Resisting Arrest.**

15           (a) A person who willfully resists, delays, or obstructs any law enforcement  
16           officer, in the discharge, or attempt to discharge, any duty of his or her  
17           office commits the offense of resisting arrest.

18           (b) “Law enforcement officer” includes any police officer of the  
19           Department of Public Safety, corrections officer of the Department of  
20           Corrections, any fire prevention officer or fire inspector and arson  
21           investigator of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical

1 Services, or any probation officer of the Office of the Adult Probation  
2 Supervision, any officer of the Division of Youth Services Juvenile  
3 Probation Unit, the chief marshal and deputy marshals of the Marshal  
4 Service Division, any parole officer of the Board of Parole, any  
5 conservation officer of the Department of Natural Resources, any  
6 customs officer of the Department of Finance, the chief investigator  
7 and investigators of the Office of the Attorney General, the  
8 investigators of the Office of the Public Auditor, ~~any community~~  
9 ~~supervision officer and compliance officer~~ any Treatment Program  
10 Enforcement Officer of the Judicial branch, or any other law  
11 enforcement officer of the Commonwealth.

12 (c) A person convicted of resisting arrest may be punished by not more  
13 than one year imprisonment or not more than \$1,000 fine or both.”

14 **Section 5. Amendment.** Subsection (y)(21) of Section 10101, Chapter 1,  
15 Division 10, Title 6 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to read as  
16 follows:

17 **“§ 10101. Definitions.**

18 For purposes of this division:

19 [ . . . ]

20 (y) “Law Enforcement” means:

21 [ . . . ]

1                   (21) ~~any community supervision officer and compliance officer~~ any  
2                   Treatment Program Enforcement Officer employed by the  
3                   Judicial Branch;

4                   [ . . . ]”

5                   **Section 6. Amendment.** Subsection (b) of Section 3207, Article 1, Chapter  
6                   2, Division 3, Title 1 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby amended to read as  
7                   follows:

8                   **“§ 3207. Establishment of Drug Court.**

9                   (a) There is hereby established within the Commonwealth Superior Court a  
10                   drug court which, upon appropriation by the Legislature, shall operate a  
11                   collaborative non-adversarial system to effect the rehabilitation and  
12                   recovery of drug offenders through continuous court monitoring,  
13                   regular drug testing, and holistic drug dependency treatment. The  
14                   Commonwealth Superior Court shall study the requirements for  
15                   establishing this drug court and shall, as soon as possible, but no later  
16                   than thirty days after the enactment of 1 CMC § 3207, report to the  
17                   Legislature the amount of funds necessary for the drug court's  
18                   operations.

19                   ~~(b) Community supervision officers and compliance officers shall serve~~  
20                   ~~under the Drug Court and shall have the authority and responsibility to:~~

- 1                   ~~(1) Create, maintain and secure a complete record of each participant~~  
2                                   ~~placed in a treatment court program.~~
- 3                   ~~(2) Instruct a participant as to the terms, conditions and restrictions~~  
4                                   ~~specified by the treatment court program.~~
- 5                   ~~(3) Keep informed of all terms, conditions and restrictions specified by~~  
6                                   ~~treatment court.~~
- 7                   ~~(4) Investigate, exercise general supervision over, and monitor~~  
8                                   ~~compliance of participants which shall include, among other things,~~  
9                                   ~~the authority to visit a participant at home, employment site, or~~  
10                                  ~~anywhere else specified by the treatment court, to conduct drug~~  
11                                  ~~tests of participants, or take any items prohibited by the conditions~~  
12                                  ~~of supervision that are observed in plain view.~~
- 13                   ~~(5) Keep records of work performed and report on information~~  
14                                   ~~concerning a participant's conduct and compliance with a treatment~~  
15                                   ~~court program.~~
- 16                   ~~(6) Use all suitable methods, including the imposition of informal~~  
17                                   ~~sanctions, not inconsistent with treatment court program, to aid and~~  
18                                   ~~encourage a participant to effect improvements in conduct.~~
- 19                   ~~(7) Serve warrants of arrest, make arrests and bring participants before~~  
20                                   ~~the treatment court when he or she believes that cause for formal~~  
21                                   ~~sanctions or termination exists.~~

1           ~~(8) Carry a firearm in the performance of official duties.~~

2           ~~(9) Perform any other duty, or have such powers as are necessary to~~  
3           ~~implement the provisions of this Article, as deemed appropriate by~~  
4           ~~the treatment court.”~~

5           **Section 7. Transition of Currently Employed Community Supervision**  
6           **and Compliance Officers.**

7           (a) The positions of Community Supervision Officer and Compliance  
8           Officer under 1 CMC § 3207 shall cease to exist upon the completion of the  
9           transition process described in this Section.

10          (b) Any individual currently employed as a Community Supervision Officer  
11          and Compliance Officer under 1 CMC § 3207 shall be reclassified as a Treatment  
12          Program Enforcement Officer, subject to meeting the minimum qualifications and  
13          standards set forth in this Act and as further established by the Judicial Council.

14          (c) The Judiciary shall ensure a seamless transition of employment status,  
15          without loss of salary, rank, accrued leave, or other employment benefits, for those  
16          individuals who are reclassified pursuant to this Act.

17          (d) The Judicial Council shall adopt any policies or procedures necessary to  
18          implement this transition, including, but not limited to, title changes, job  
19          descriptions, re-training, and certification processes.

1 (e) During the transition period, Community Supervision Officers and  
2 Compliance Officers shall continue to perform their duties in accordance with  
3 existing law and judicial assignments, until their reclassification is completed.

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

8 **Section 9. Savings Clause.** Nothing in this Act, including any repealer,  
9 shall be construed to affect any existing right acquired under prior law, contract,  
10 rule, regulation, or order. Repealers in this Act shall not affect proceedings  
11 instituted under prior law civil or criminal liability that existed on the date this Act  
12 becomes effective.

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

Prefiled: 7/11/2025

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduced by: \_\_\_\_\_

Rep. John Paul P. Sablan

Reviewed for legal sufficiency by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
House Legal Counsel