



TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

P.O. BOX 500586 SAIPAN, MP 96950

JOEL C. CAMACHO
CHAIRMAN

Adopted - 7/28/2026 ✓✓

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. **24-58**

DATE: June 24, 2026

RE: House Bill No. 24-94

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. 24-94: "To amend the punishment for the crime of vandalism to include the option of confinement."

begs leave to report as follows:

I. RECOMMENDATION:

After considerable discussion, your Committee recommends that House Bill No. 24-94 be passed by the House in its current form.

TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE
RECEIVED BY *PS*
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II. ANALYSIS:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of House Bill No. 24-94 is to restore confinement as an optional punishment for vandalism by establishing graduated imprisonment terms based on the pecuniary loss resulting from the damage while preserving fines and community service penalties.

B. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that vandalism remains a recurring problem across the Commonwealth, causing damage to public and private property; between February 2024 and January 2026, law enforcement documented at least nine incidents, including severed residential surveillance wiring, destruction of solar lighting at beach pavilions, damage to new playgrounds, vandalism of ATMs and residential murals, and intentional cutting of electrical lines at public parks.

Through Public Law 21-18, the offense of vandalism was codified to address the growing incidence of property-destruction offenses; before that law, such conduct was prosecuted as criminal mischief, which provided for confinement as a sentencing option, whereas the current statute omits confinement ranges.

The absence of confinement as an available sentence constrains the courts' ability to impose penalties proportionate to the offense, particularly where the severity of the conduct, extent of damage, or violations of probation justify custody.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to reinstate confinement as an optional form of punishment for vandalism by establishing graduated custodial ranges tied to the pecuniary loss, while preserving judicial discretion to fashion sentences that are proportionate and consistent with the interests of justice. Therefore, your Committee supports the intent of the proposed legislation and also recommends the passage of House Bill No. 24-94 in its current form.

C. Public Comments/Public Hearing:

Prior to your Committee's meeting on April 10, 2026, the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations received comments from the following individual, which will be attached to this report:

1. Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, received on April 7, 2026.

Public comments were solicited during your Committee's meeting on April 2nd and April 10th, 2026. However, no members of the public provided oral testimony or additional comments regarding this bill, either at the meeting or through other means.

D. Legislative History:

House Bill No. 24-94 was formally introduced in the House by Representative Marissa R. Flores on February 9, 2026, and subsequently referred to the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations for disposition.

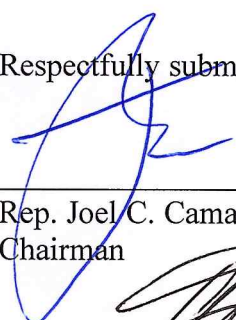
E. Cost Benefit:

The enactment of House Bill No. 24-94 will not include any direct appropriations but may result in additional expenses to the CNMI if courts impose custodial sentences more frequently, as restoring confinement as a sentencing option could increase costs for incarceration, transportation, and related corrections services depending on case volume and sentence length; if judges continue to favor fines, probation, or community service, the fiscal impact would be minimal.

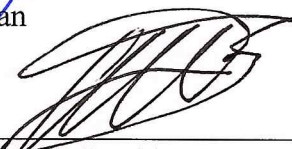
III. CONCLUSION:

Your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of House Bill No. 24-94 and recommends its passage in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,



Rep. Joel C. Camacho
Chairman



Rep. Vincent S. Aldan, Member

Rep. Angelo A. Camacho, Member

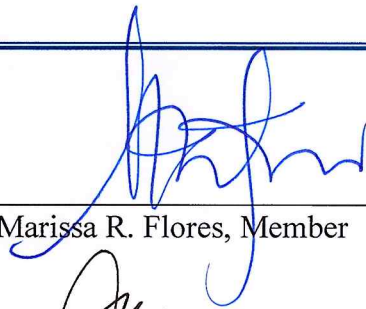


Rep. Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao
Vice Chairman

Rep. Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Member



Rep. Diego V.F. Camacho, Member



Rep. Marissa R. Flores, Member



Rep. Joseph A. Flores, Member



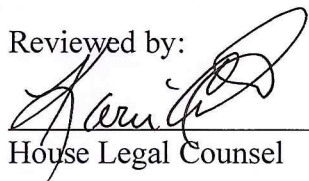
Rep. Julie A. Ogo, Member



Rep. John Paul P. Sablan, Member

Rep. Ralph N. Yumul, Member

Reviewed by:



House Legal Counsel

Date: 6-24-26

Attachments:

- Anthony I. Macaranas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, letter dated April 7, 2026
- House Bill No. 24-94



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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David M. Apatang
Governor

Dennis C. Mendiola
Lieutenant Governor

Anthony I. Macaranas
Commissioner

April 07, 2026

Joel C. Camacho
Chairman

*House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building
Capitol Hill, Saipan MP, 96950*

Ref: H.B. 24-94.

Chairman Camacho,

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), I write to express our strong support for House Bill 24-94, which amends 6 CMC § 1805 to restore confinement as a sentencing option for the offense of vandalism. DPS fully endorses the Legislature's findings and purpose as outlined in Section 1 of the bill. The documented increase in vandalism incidents between February 2024 and January 2026 including damage to public infrastructure, residential property, and community facilities demonstrates the need to provide courts with meaningful tools to address these crimes effectively.

Prior to Public Law 21-18, vandalism was prosecuted as criminal mischief, which included imprisonment as a potential penalty. The current statute's omission of confinement options has limited the courts' ability to impose proportionate sanctions, particularly in cases involving significant damage, repeat offenders, or violations of probation. By reintroducing graduated imprisonment ranges tied to the pecuniary loss caused by the vandalism (up to 10 years for losses of \$20,000 or more, up to 5 years for losses between \$2,500 and \$20,000, and up to 1 year for losses under \$2,500), HB 24-94 represents a critical step toward restoring judicial tools that better protect public and private property and deter future offenses.

While DPS supports the bill in its current form, we respectfully recommend one important enhancement: the inclusion of mandatory minimum sentences for the term of imprisonment in subsection (b). As drafted, the bill provides maximum terms of imprisonment ("not more than" 10 years / 5 years / 1 year) but leaves the actual imposition of any jail time to the complete discretion of the court. In our experience enforcing these laws, this flexibility has sometimes

*Chairman JGD
Rep. Joel Camacho
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resulted in sentences that impose no confinement at all—even in cases where the nature and extent of the damage, the defendant’s criminal history, or repeated violations would warrant incarceration.

To ensure consistent application of the law, enhance deterrence, and better reflect the seriousness of vandalism as a property crime, DPS recommends revising subsection (b) to establish mandatory minimum periods of confinement. For example, the statute could be amended to require imprisonment for “not less than [X] but not more than [Y] years,” where the minimum term is calibrated to the value of the pecuniary loss and the offender’s prior record. Such mandatory minimums would preserve judicial discretion in setting the exact term within the statutory range while guaranteeing that offenders receive at least some period of confinement when the facts of the case justify it.

We believe this targeted change would strengthen the bill without altering its overall structure or intent. DPS stands ready to work with the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations, the bill’s sponsor (Representative Marissa R. Flores), and your office to refine the language and provide any additional data or enforcement perspectives that may assist the Legislature.

Thank you for your leadership on this important public-safety issue. The Department of Public Safety appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Legislature to enact effective measures that protect our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony I. Macaranas', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Anthony I. Macaranas
Commissioner
Department of Public Safety

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 9, 2026

Third Regular Session, 2026

H. B. 24- 94

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend the punishment for the crime of vandalism to include the option of confinement.

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

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that incidents of
2 vandalism continue to occur throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern
3 Mariana Islands, resulting in damage to both public and private property. Between
4 February 2024 and January 2026, there were at least nine reported incidents of
5 vandalism documented by law enforcement, including but not limited to the cutting
6 of residential surveillance camera lines, damage to solar-powered lighting at beach
7 pavilions, vandalism of newly constructed playgrounds, automated teller machines,
8 residential murals, and the deliberate cutting of electrical power lines at public park
9 facilities.

10 The Legislature further finds that, through Public Law 21-18, the offense of
11 vandalism was established to address the proliferation of crimes involving the
12 destruction of public and private property. Prior to the enactment of Public Law 21-

1 18, such conduct was prosecuted as criminal mischief, an offense that included
2 confinement as potential form of punishment. However, the new law left out
3 punishment ranges for confinement.

4 The Legislature finds that the absence of confinement as a sentencing option
5 limits the courts' ability to impose appropriate penalties in cases where the nature
6 of the offense, the extent of the damage, or a defendant's noncompliance with
7 probation conditions would otherwise warrant confinement.

8 The purpose of the Act is to restore confinement as an optional form of
9 punishment for the offense of vandalism. This Act establishes graduated
10 confinement options based on the value of the pecuniary loss resulting from the
11 vandalism, while preserving judicial discretion to impose a sentence that is
12 proportional, appropriate, and consistent with the interests of justice.

13 **Section 2. Amendment.** 6 CMC §1805 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby
14 amended to read as follows:

15 "§ 1805. Vandalism

16 (a) It shall be unlawful for any person and/or persons to knowingly or
17 intentionally vandalize any public or private property.

18 (b) Any person and/or persons in violation of subsection (a) shall be
19 punished as follows:

20 (1) If the pecuniary loss from the property vandalized is valued at
21 \$20,000 or more, by imprisonment for not more than 10 years.

1 (2) If the pecuniary loss from the property vandalized is valued at
2 at least \$2500 but less than \$20,000, by imprisonment for not more than
3 five years.

4 (3) If the pecuniary loss from the property vandalized is valued at
5 less than \$2500, or where the pecuniary loss cannot reasonably be
6 determined, by imprisonment for not more than one year. For purposes
7 of this section, pecuniary loss means the reasonable cost of repair or
8 replacement of the items or property damaged.

9 (c) The court shall, in addition to any term of imprisonment, impose the
10 following fines and community service penalties as follows:

11 (1) First Offense: A fine of ~~not less than \$250 but~~ not more than
12 \$1,000 and not more than 40 hours of community service.

13 (2) Second Offense: A fine of ~~not less than \$1,000 but~~ not more
14 than \$5,000 and not more than 80 hours of community service.

15 (3) Third and any subsequent offense: A fine of ~~not less than~~
16 \$5,000 ~~but~~ not more than \$10,000 and not more than 120 hours of
17 community service ~~after time served."~~

18 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of
19 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
20 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its

1 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid
2 shall not be affected thereby.

3 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall
4 not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired
5 under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the
6 statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted
7 under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect
8 of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall
9 already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

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

Prefiled: 2/5/2026

Date: _____ Introduced by: /s/ Rep. Marissa R. Flores

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Karie Comstock
House Legal Counsel

Date: 2/5/2026