

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Regular Session, 2025

H. B. 24- 26

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend the crime of child abuse.

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

1           **Section 1. Findings and Purpose:** The purpose of the Act is to amend the  
2 crime of child abuse to include conduct that places a child in imminent danger  
3 through the presence of methamphetamine. The Act specifies that ingesting  
4 methamphetamine in the presence of a child or resulting in the presence of  
5 methamphetamine in a child is included in the definition of child abuse.

6           The illegal drug methamphetamine is commonly abused in the CNMI.  
7 Unfortunately, if ingested in the presence of children, that exposure is dangerous  
8 because children can absorb the drug and the person using the drug may harm the  
9 child. In addition, pregnant women who use methamphetamine pass the drug on to  
10 their child, endangering the health of that child.

11           Many jurisdictions have made endangering a child an offense if the person  
12 uses methamphetamine in the presence of a child or if a newly born child tests

1 positive for methamphetamine. This Act adds that protection to the children of the  
2 CNMI as well.

3 **Section 2. Amendment.** Title 6, Division 5, Chapter 3, Article 1 § 5312.  
4 Child Abuse: Defined, of the Commonwealth Code is amended by amending  
5 subsection (a) to read as follows:

6 “(a) A person commits the offense of child abuse if the person:  
7 [1-3 unchanged]  
8 (4) knowingly or recklessly, by act or omission, engages in conduct  
9 that endangers a child younger than 18 years by:

10 (i) manufacturing, possessing, or in any way introducing into  
11 the body of any person the controlled substance methamphetamine  
12 in the presence of the child; or

13 (ii) any conduct establishing the proximity or accessibility of  
14 the controlled substance methamphetamine to the child and an  
15 analysis of a specimen of the child's blood, urine, or other bodily  
16 substance indicates the presence of methamphetamine in the child's  
17 body.”


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  
4 shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or  
5 acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted  
6 under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding  
7 instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have  
8 the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal,  
9 which shall 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  
11 the Governor, or it becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 4/16/2025

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Introduced by:   
Rep. Malcolm J. Omar

Reviewed for legal sufficiency by:

  
House Legal Counsel

Date: 4-16-25