

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

_____ Session, 2025

H. B. 24- 54

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To increase the number of military leave hours available to CNMI government employees and to broaden eligibility for its use.

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Military and
2 Emergency Service Leave Act of 2025.”

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that the Uniformed
4 Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), 38 U.S.C. §§
5 4301 et seq., is a federal law that protects employees who serve in the nation’s
6 uniformed services from job discrimination. In September 2022, the Civilian
7 Reservist Emergency Workforce (CREW) Act amended USERRA to explicitly
8 include Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Reservists as part of the
9 protected uniformed services.

10 In light of the CREW Act, the Legislature finds it necessary to update the
11 CNMI Government’s military leave benefit to reflect the expanded categories of
12 federal uniformed service now recognized under USERRA. This Act modernizes
13 eligibility for the CNMI Government’s paid military leave benefit by expressly

1 including permanent CNMI Government employees who serve in the National
2 Guard, reserve components of the United States Armed Forces, the FEMA
3 Reservist Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
4 Commissioned Officer Corps, or any other uniformed service covered under
5 USERRA. By doing so, this Act ensures that all eligible CNMI Government
6 uniformed service employees ordered to perform active duty, training, emergency
7 response, or other authorized service under competent authority are extended this
8 employee benefit.

9 The Legislature also finds that multiple jurisdictions are expanding their
10 military leave benefits to better support citizen-soldiers as they balance increasingly
11 demanding service obligations with civilian employment. For example, in 2024,
12 Maryland enacted the Time to Serve Act, which authorized an increase in the
13 amount of leave state employees may take for military reserve duties from 15 to 30
14 days. Similarly, Section 1109 of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense
15 Authorization Act, Pub. L. No. 118-159, increased federal military leave benefits
16 from 15 to 20 days.

17 Like Maryland and the United States, the Legislature finds that increasing
18 the CNMI Government's military leave benefit from 15 to 30 days per calendar
19 year promotes the well-being and financial stability of government employees who
20 also fulfill military and federal emergency service duties. The Legislature also
21 acknowledges that this Act's expanded benefit strengthens the CNMI

1 Government's ability to recruit and retain uniformed service personnel by
2 enhancing the appeal and competitiveness of public sector employment for those
3 who serve.

4 Thus, by enacting this legislation, the CNMI affirms its commitment to
5 supporting citizen-soldiers and emergency responders who bear dual
6 responsibilities to their nation and their communities. The expanded eligibility and
7 increased duration of the paid leave benefit authorized by this Act ensures that the
8 CNMI Government remains a fair, supportive, and mission-ready employer in line
9 with the evolving expectations of federal law and national service.

10 **Section 3. Enactment.** Article 5 of Chapter 5, Part 2, Division 8, Title 1 of
11 the Commonwealth Code is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 **“Article 5. Military and Emergency Service Leave.**

13 **§ 101. Military and Emergency Service Leave.**

14 (a) All permanent employees of the Commonwealth government, including
15 those in the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches, and any
16 autonomous agency, office, board, authority, commission, or
17 instrumentality, shall be entitled to paid military and emergency service
18 leave not to exceed 30 working days per calendar year. This leave shall
19 be available to all permanent Commonwealth government employees
20 that:

21 (1) are a member of any of the following:

-
-
- 1 (i) the United States National Guard;
- 2 (ii) a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces;
- 3 (iii) the Federal Emergency Management Agency Reservist
- 4 Program;
- 5 (iv) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- 6 Commissioned Officer Corps; or
- 7 (v) any other uniformed service covered by the Uniformed Services
- 8 Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, 38 U.S.C. §§ 4301
- 9 et seq.; and
- 10 (2) are ordered to perform active duty, training, emergency response, or
- 11 other authorized service under competent military, federal, or state
- 12 authority, including service in response to a national emergency,
- 13 disaster, or other major incident.
- 14 (b) Military and emergency service leave shall be granted upon the
- 15 presentation of valid military orders or other appropriate
- 16 documentation.
- 17 (c) The maximum amount of paid leave authorized under this Section is 30
- 18 working days per calendar year. The 30-day cap shall not prevent an
- 19 employee from electing to use other accrued leave benefits for absences
- 20 in excess of the cap.

1 **§ 102. Rules and Regulations.**

2 Within 120 days of the effective date of this Article, the Civil Service
 3 Commission and all other departments, offices, branches, autonomous
 4 agencies, boards, authorities, commissions, and instrumentalities of the
 5 Commonwealth government shall adopt or amend their respective rules,
 6 regulations, policies, or internal procedures as necessary to implement this
 7 Article. Such rules and regulations may include, but are not limited to,
 8 procedures for requesting military leave, required documentation, eligibility
 9 determinations, coordination with other leave entitlements, and
 10 recordkeeping or tracking requirements.”

11 **Section 4. General Provisions.**

12 (a) Any existing regulation, policy, or procedure that is inconsistent with
 13 this Act is hereby superseded to the extent of the inconsistency.

14 (b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit the authority of the Civil
 15 Service Commission or any other CNMI government entity, including
 16 autonomous agencies, offices, boards, authorities, commissions, and
 17 instrumentalities, to promulgate regulations, policies, or procedures
 18 consistent with this Act.

19 **Section 5. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of

20 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court
 21 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 6. 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 7. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by
11 the Governor, or it becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 8/20/2025

Date: _____

Introduced by: _____

Rep. Daniel I. Aquino Jr.

Reviewed for legal sufficiency by:



House Legal Counsel

Date: 8/20/25




