

TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

_____ Regular Session, 2025

H. B. 24- 82

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the Legislative Branch by adding a transition period of up to 270 days for the implementation of the Legislature's Finance Department; and for other purposes.

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

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that Public Law 24-
2 20, Revised Appropriations and Budget Authority Act of 2026, establishes the
3 Legislature Operations Fund and vests expenditure authority in the Director of the
4 Legislative Bureau, thereby fundamentally restructuring how legislative funds are
5 administered and disbursed. The Legislature further finds that implementation of
6 this structure requires independent banking, accounting, payroll, procurement, and
7 reporting systems that do not presently exist within the Legislative Bureau.

8 The Legislature finds that immediate execution of these requirements,
9 without a transition period or implementation funding, would result in the
10 suspension or delay of legislative payments, including payroll, member allowances,
11 vendor payments, and other lawful obligations of the Legislature. Preventing

1 disruption of these payments is essential to maintaining continuity of legislative
2 operations and avoiding harm to employees, members, vendors, and governmental
3 functions.

4 The Legislature finds that the Department of Finance has acknowledged that
5 a transition of this scale typically requires between ninety and one hundred eighty
6 days and that continued use of existing financial systems during a transition period
7 is necessary to ensure uninterrupted payment processing and audit compliance.

8 The purpose of this Act is to amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to
9 prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the
10 Legislative Branch by adding a transition period up to 270 days for the
11 implementation of the Legislature's Finance Department solely to prevent the
12 stoppage or delay of legislative payments, to allow sufficient time for the
13 Legislature to enact corrective legislation, authorize necessary funding, hire
14 personnel, and establish compliant financial systems, while preserving fiscal
15 accountability and continuity of government operations.

16 **Section 2. Amendment.** The following amendment to Section 704(k) of
17 Public Law 24-20 is hereby enacted into law:

18 **Subsection 106. Implementation/Gradual 270-day Transition**
19 **Period.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the
20 Department of Finance, working collaboratively with the CNMI
21 Legislative Bureau and members of the Legislature, shall work to

1 implement the provisions of Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20,
2 Revised Appropriations and Budget Authority Act of 2026,
3 including but not limited to subsections 101 to 105, and any other
4 provisions directly related to the immediate operational separation
5 or exclusive execution of legislative expenditures under the
6 Legislature Operations Fund over a period not to exceed 270
7 calendar days. During this 270 day period, there shall be no
8 disruptions on the financial obligations and payments of the
9 Legislative Branch. The Department of Finance shall continue to
10 process and make payments with respect to all obligations, debts,
11 allocations, expenditures, and operations of the Legislative
12 Branch.”

13 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any
14 such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of
15 competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions
16 to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be
17 affected thereby.

18 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall
19 not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired
20 under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the
21 statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted


1 under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect
2 of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall
3 already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

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

Prefiled: 12/30/2025

Date: 12/30/25

Introduced by:


Rep. John Paul P. Sablan

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

Joseph S. Jay 12/30/25
House Legal Counsel



Date: 12/30/2025