

Amended
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HOUSE JOURNAL SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2025

3rd Day, Second Regular Session

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Third Day, Second Regular Session on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 1:07 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll for attendance with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Present
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Present
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Present
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Present
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Present
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Present
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Present (via Microsoft Teams)
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Present
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Present
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Present
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Present
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Present
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Present (via Microsoft Teams)
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Present
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Present
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Present

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, 16 members are present and 4 members are absent.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 16 members present, both physically and online, a quorum is duly established. Let the record reflect that Representatives Marissa Flores, Julie Ogo, Malcolm Omar, and Raymond Palacios are excused from today's session. Before we move forward, I recognize Representative Ralph Yumul as the acting floor

leader for today's session. And with that, I recognize the Acting Floor Leader for the proper motion.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the suspension of Rule III, Section 6.

RULE III. SESSIONS AND MEETINGS

Section 6. Notice of Sessions.

Not less than 72 hours prior to convening a Regular or Special Session, the Speaker or a majority of the members of the House, shall file a written public notice of the date, time, and place of a session with the Clerk and post the same at the executive branch administration building and the Legislature's website. When possible, notices under this section shall be given to at least one newspaper of general circulation. Notices shall contain an agenda of items to be considered at the session. Final disposition shall not be taken on any other matter at such session. Once filed as part of this notice, the agenda may only be changed by adding items thereto by the recorded vote of the majority of the members of the House.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to suspend Rule III, Section 6 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted "yes."

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting "yes," the motion carries. We will now proceed to Item No. 2, Public Comments. The podium is open to receive any comments. Please state your name and the entity you represent, you

have five minutes. If you have prepared statements, please submit them to the Sergeant-At-Arms for forwarding to the Clerk's office.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments was presented by seven individuals on the following:

H. B. No. 24-49: To establish the CNMI Next/Gen 911 Telephone Communications System within the CNMI; and for other purposes.

JUD. BR. COMM. 24-3: Proposed NMI Code of Judicial Conduct.

JUD. BR. COMM. 24-4: Proposed NMI Rules of Judicial Disciplinary Procedure.

H. B. NO. 24-59: To enact the "CNMI Fair Billing Practices Act" to establish clear and fair standards for back billing practices in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to protect consumers while allowing service providers to recover unpaid amounts lawfully due; and for other purposes.

There being no further public comments presented, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 4, Introduction of Bills, and recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan under House Bills.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

House Bills:

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committee on Commerce:

H. B. NO. 24-59: To enact the "CNMI Fair Billing Practices Act" to establish clear and fair standards for back billing practices in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to protect consumers while allowing service providers to recover unpaid amounts lawfully due; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)

At this time, the Chair opened the floor for the introduction of unnumbered bills and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan formally introduced the following bill:

H. B. NO. 24-60: To safeguard the Commonwealth's landfill capacity, public health, and environment by restricting the acceptance and disposal of waste generated off-island unless certain health, safety, and environment conditions are met. **Introduced by: REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Roman C.

Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Elias J.M. Rangamar, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

There being no further introduction of House Bills, the Chair proceeded to House Local Bills, and recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho on behalf of Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo.

House Local Bills:

Representative Joel Castro Camacho formally introduced the following bill on behalf of Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo:

H. L. B. NO. 24-27: To appropriate Three Hundred and Five Thousand Dollars (\$305,000.00) for the continued operation and regulatory oversight of the Rota Casino Gaming Commission; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. JULIE M. A. OGO** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*)

At this time, the Chair opened the floor for the introduction of unnumbered House Local Bills and recognized Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho.

Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho formally introduced the following bill:

H. L. B. NO. 24-28: To re-appropriate the remaining fund balance of \$221,649.00 under Saipan Local Law 22-16 (Project Code 2001E); and for other purposes. **Introduced by: REPRESENTATIVES ANGELO A. CAMACHO AND THOMAS J.DLC. MANGLONA** of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for themselves*)

There being no further introduction of unnumbered House Local Bills and no items under House Legislative Initiatives, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 5, Introductions of Resolutions, and recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan under House Resolutions.

House Legislative Initiatives:

None

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

House Resolutions:

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following resolution, and, with no objection from the author, the Chair requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.

There being no objection on the floor, the resolution was introduced by the Committee of the whole House. The Chair then ordered that the resolution be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.

H. RES. NO. 24-12: To establish bi-annual legislative oversight hearings and reporting requirements for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), and the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regarding the implementation and impacts of Public Law No. 24-11; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

House Joint Resolutions:

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr. formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection, requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.

There being no objection, the resolution was introduced by the Committee of the whole House. The Chair then ordered that the resolution be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.

H. J. R. NO. 24-8: To urge the United States to take immediate and comprehensive action to identify, remove, and safely dispose of World War II-era unexploded ordnance throughout the Northern Mariana Islands. **Prefiled by: REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO JR.** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection, requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.

There being no objection, the resolution was introduced by the Committee of the whole House. The Chair then ordered that the resolution be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.

H. J. R. NO. 24-9: To respectfully urge the United States Department of the Treasury, United States Customs and Border Protection, the United States Postal Service and any other responsible federal agencies to immediately cease and desist the implementation of Executive Order 14324 and remit to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands all revenues collected under Executive Order 14324, or in the alternative, to recognize the CNMI’s authority to collect such revenues itself consistent with the Covenant and applicable law in the event that said charges must be imposed. **Prefiled by: REPRESENTATIVES BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO, EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ, JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN, JOEL C. CAMACHO, RALPH N. YUMUL, VINCENT R. ALDAN, AND DANIEL I. AQUINO JR.**

House Commemorative Resolutions:

None

House Concurrent Resolutions:

None

The Chair opened the floor for introductions of unnumbered resolutions. There being no introductions of unnumbered resolutions and no items under House Commemorative Resolutions and House Concurrent Resolutions, the Chair moved down to Item No. 6, Messages from the Governor, and recognized the Clerk.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:

GOV. COMM. 24-54: (8/29/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24-20, D1, (To appropriate Forty Two Thousand Dollars (\$42,000.00) from revenues collected from poker fees in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes.). Became Tinian Local Law No. 24-06. [For info]

GOV. COMM. 24-55: (9/4/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24-25, D1, (To appropriate Forty Two Thousand Dollars (\$42,000.00) from revenues collected from poker fees in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes.). Became Tinian Local Law No. 24-07. [For info]

The Chair opened the floor for discussion; there being none, and no item under Item No. 7, Senate Communications, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 8, House Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor and no item under Item No. 7, Senate Communications, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 8, House Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

None

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following House Communications:

HSE. COMM. 24-60: (9/3/2025) From Representative Raymond U. Palacios, informing the Speaker that he is extending his personal leave previously noticed for August 26, 2025, through September 6, 2025, to September 13, 2025, and requesting to be excused from any official meetings or sessions during this period. [For info]

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 9, Communications from the Judicial Branch, and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Clerk announced the following Communication from the Judicial Branch:

JUD. BR. 24-6: (8/8/2025) From Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro to the Senate President and Speaker of the House *re: Submission of the NMI Rules of Judicial Disciplinary Procedure.*

The Chair opened the floor for discussion; there being none, and no items under Item No. 10, Communications from Departments & Agencies, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 11, Miscellaneous Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communication:

MISC. COMM. 24-53: (8/27/2025) From Charity Hodson, President, Northern Marianas Bar Association, expressing support for the Judiciary's proposed Judicial Code of Conduct and urging its adoption. [For info]

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair moved down to Item No. 12, Reports of Standing Committees, and recognized the Clerk.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The Clerk announced the following Reports of Standing Committees:

S. C. R. NO. 24-22: Reporting on JUD. BR. COMM. 24-3: Proposed NMI Code of Judicial Conduct. Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House disapprove the "Proposed NMI Code of Judicial Conduct."

S. C. R. NO. 24-28: Reporting on S. B. No. 24-28, SD1, entitled: "To amend 6 CMC § 3113; to establish disorderly conduct and public intoxication crimes; and for other purposes." Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass S. B. No. 24-28, SD1 in its current form.

S. C. R. NO. 24-29: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-23, entitled: “To amend 9 CMC § 2116 to update the definitions of “veteran” and “disabled veteran” and to allow a valid Veteran ID Card to be used as proof of veteran status when applying for a veteran’s license plate.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-23 in its current form.

S. C. R. NO. 24-30: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-36, entitled: “To establish a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 24-36, HD1.

S. C. R. NO. 24-31: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-37, entitled: “To suspend the operations of the Commonwealth Casino Commission; to transfer casino regulatory functions to the Commonwealth Lottery Commission on an interim basis; to establish a Division of Gaming within the Department of Finance; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House file H. B. No. 24-37.

S. C. R. NO. 24-32: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-44, entitled: “To amend 9 CMC §8209 by removing the seven-day grace period for motorists who violate 9 CMC §§8203 and 8204 with the citation effective immediately; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-44 in its current form.

S. C. R. NO. 24-33: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-47, entitled: “To realign the authority and duties of the CNMI Department of Labor; and for the other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-47 in its current form.

S. C. R. NO. 24-34: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-49, entitled: “To establish the CNMI Next/Gen 911 Telephone Communications System within the CNMI; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-49 in its current form.

S. C. R. NO. 24-35: Reporting on JUD. BR. COMM. 24-4: Proposed NMI Rules of Judicial Disciplinary Procedure. Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House disapprove the “Proposed NMI Rules of Judicial Disciplinary Procedure.”.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved to recommit the following to committee:

S. C. R. NO. 24-22: Reporting on JUD. BR. COMM. 24-3: Proposed NMI Code of Judicial Conduct. Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House disapprove the “Proposed NMI Code of Judicial Conduct.”

S. C. R. NO. 24-35: Reporting on JUD. BR. COMM. 24-4: Proposed NMI Rules of Judicial Disciplinary Procedure. Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House disapprove the “Proposed NMI Rules of Judicial Disciplinary Procedure.”

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to recommit S. C. R. No. 24-22 and S. C. R. No. 24-35 to committee was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the following:

S. C. R. NO. 24-28: Reporting on S. B. No. 24-28, SD1, entitled: “To amend 6 CMC § 3113; to establish disorderly conduct and public intoxication crimes; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass S. B. No. 24-28, SD1 in its current form.

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-28 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the following:

S. C. R. NO. 24-29: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-23, entitled: “To amend 9 CMC § 2116 to update the definitions of “veteran” and “disabled veteran” and to allow a valid Veteran ID Card to be used as proof of veteran status when applying for a veteran’s license plate.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-23 in its current form.

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-29 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the following:

S. C. R. NO. 24-30: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-36, entitled: “To establish a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 24-36, HD1.

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-30 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the following:

S. C. R. NO. 24-31: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-37, entitled: “To suspend the operations of the Commonwealth Casino Commission; to transfer casino regulatory functions to the Commonwealth Lottery Commission on an interim basis; to establish a Division of Gaming within the Department of Finance; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House file H. B. No. 24-37.

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-31 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the following:

S. C. R. NO. 24-32: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-44, entitled: “To amend 9 CMC §8209 by removing the seven-day grace period for motorists who violate 9 CMC §§8203 and 8204 with the citation effective immediately; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-44 in its current form.

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-32 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the following:

S. C. R. NO. 24-33: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-47, entitled: “To realign the authority and duties of the CNMI Department of Labor; and for the other purposes.”

Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-47 in its current form.

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-33 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the following:

S. C. R. NO. 24-34: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-49, entitled: “To establish the CNMI Next/Gen 911 Telephone Communications System within the CNMI; and for other purposes.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-49 in its current form.

The motion was seconded, and the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-34 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

There being no items listed under Item No. 13, Reports of Special and Conference Committees, and Item No. 14, Unfinished Business, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 15, Resolution Calendar, and recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the adoption of H. Res. No. 24-12:

H. RES. NO. 24-12: To establish bi-annual legislative oversight hearings and reporting requirements for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), and the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regarding the implementation and impacts of Public Law No. 24-11; and for other purposes.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt H. Res. No. 24-12 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the adoption of H. J. R. No. 24-8:

H. J. R. NO. 24-8: To urge the United States to take immediate and comprehensive action to identify, remove, and safely dispose of World War II-era unexploded ordnance throughout the Northern Mariana Islands.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to adopt H. J. R. No. 24-8 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Joint Resolution No. 24-8 is hereby adopted. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the adoption of H. J. R. No. 24-9:

H. J. R. NO. 24-9: To respectfully urge the United States Department of the Treasury, United States Customs and Border Protection, the United States Postal Service and any other responsible federal agencies to immediately cease and desist the implementation of Executive Order 14324 and remit to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands all revenues collected under Executive Order 14324,

or in the alternative, to recognize the CNMI's authority to collect such revenues itself consistent with the Covenant and applicable law in the event that said charges must be imposed.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to adopt H. J. R. No. 24-9 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted "yes."

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting "yes," House Joint Resolution No. 24-9 is hereby adopted. With nothing further, we now move down to Item No. 16, Bill Calendar, and I recognize the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the passage of H. B. No. 24-50:

H. B. No. 24-50: To authorize a loan between the Commonwealth Government and the Marianas Public Land Trust in the amount of \$29,000,000 and authorize the Marianas Public Land Trust to withhold and retain net annual distributable income starting Fiscal Year 2026 for repayment and security of the loan.

The motion was seconded. The Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe every member has been given a copy of the House substitute version. And at this time, I would like to offer a substitute version to include Subsection 104, which starts on page 3, ends on page 4, and is on line 8. So moved, Mr. Speaker.

The motion was seconded. The Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These provisions are actually recommended by the Marianas Public Land Trust Board of Trustees, and they are very self-explanatory. It is just the protection clause that in the event they are sued personally, the government will defend them in any lawsuit. So, it is pretty much a straightforward amendment that has been also inserted in the previous authorization legislations in the past that allowed our central government and the public trust to enter into a loan agreement. And if there is any question, I stand ready to answer. Thank you.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

Acting Floor Leader Ralph Neraja Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just so that we are clear, because during the other meetings with the Marianas Pacific Land Trust, none of this authorization was requested to this body. So, my question is, why do they want it now, and in the past, when we borrowed from the Marianas Pacific Land Trust, it was not required.

The Chair recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, in response to our good and strong congressman from precinct 3. In the past, authorizations, as I mentioned, were included. These provisions were included to protect the board of trustees. This is not something new. It is just that when I introduced the bill, we did not insert this provision. I hope that answers your question.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

Acting Floor Leader Ralph Naraja Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do understand. I am just... Is there any other reason why they wanted to include this this time? I am in full support. I just want to get some clarity as to why we are including the Department of Finance, the Attorney General's office, and all the others.

The Chair recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to that question from our Floor Leader, as I mentioned when I introduced this bill in our previous session, I mentioned that the board of trustees of Marianas Pacific Land Trust is different from other boards

of trustees. They are pretty much unique. They are the only board of trustees that can be sued personally for whatever decisions are made during their session. As opposed to other boards, they are protected by the central government. To protect them in any lawsuits.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I fully support the amendment. I just wanted some clarification. Mr. Chairman, I was wondering about page 4 from lines 4 to 8. So, pretty much we are giving Marianas Pacific Land Trust the protection for this loan and for all future loans?

The Chair recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: No. This is just for this loan.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: I bring it to our attention because is there a way we can add language here where it says that? Because it does not specify that it is just for this loan if you read lines 4 to 8.

The Chair recognized Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that concern that was brought up by Representative Joel Camacho. But this specific language is only speaking to this specific situation, which is only the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). They cannot go and negotiate other types of loans beyond this. This is only limiting the administration and the Marianas Pacific Land Trust to negotiate a loan agreement based on what is in this legislation. Right now, this legislation is not going to carry over to any other types of agreement between the Marianas Pacific Land Trust. Those will be specifically addressed. If you remember, the \$15,000,000.00 line of credit had this specific language in there, and it is only restricted to the line of credit. With this \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00), it is only restricted to the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). I hope that answers your question. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you. That does clarify my question. Yes, I just wanted to clarify that it only applies to the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). Thank you.

There being no further discussion on the floor, the motion to accept H. B. No. 24-50, HS1 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair proceeded to the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-50, HS1, and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, colleagues, for voting on the House substitute. At this time, many of us members here present are members of the Ways and Means Committee. And we have discussed thoroughly the budget submission from the administration that was given to the legislature back on April 1st. And part of that package of budget submission proposals from the administration included this in their communication for a \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) loan with Marianas Pacific Land Trust. This is where we are at now. And this \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) loan agreement, if they are going to strike an agreement between the Marianas Pacific Land Trust and the administration, this would dedicate the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) to the 75% retirement fund settlement obligation. When that happens, apparently, it is going to free up in the tune of \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). When the time comes, we are expecting a substitute supplemental budget from the administration to appropriate that \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). I just wanted to make that crystal clear. Thank you.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

Acting Floor Leader Ralph Naraja Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Chairman Sablan, for the long-awaited promise. This put, I guess, an ease to a lot of the students out there. So, this would allow us to address the Public School System's issue. Thank you, Representative Sablan. And I am ready for the vote.

There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-50, HSI with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-50, House Substitute 1 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the passage of S. B. No. 24-28, SD1:

S. B. No. 24-28, SD1: To amend 6 CMC § 3113; to establish disorderly conduct and public intoxication crimes; and for other purposes.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of S. B. No. 24-28, SD1 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” Senate Bill No. 24-28, Senate Draft 1 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the passage of H. B. No. 24-23:

H. B. No. 24-23: To amend 9 CMC § 2116 to update the definitions of “veteran” and “disabled veteran” and to allow a valid Veteran ID Card to be used as proof of veteran status when applying for a veteran’s license plate.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-23 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-23 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the passage of H. B. No. 24-36, HD1:

H. B. No. 24-36, HD1: To establish a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and for other purposes.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll for the motion for passage of H. B. No. 24-36, HD1 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-36, House Draft 1 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the passage of H. B. No. 24-44:

H. B. No. 24-44: To amend 9 CMC §8209 by removing the seven-day grace period for motorists who violate 9 CMC §§8203 and 8204 with the citation effective immediately; and for other purposes.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll for the motion for passage of H. B. No. 24-44 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-44 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the passage of H. B. No. 24-47:

H. B. No. 24-47: To realign the authority and duties of the CNMI Department of Labor; and for the other purposes.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll for the motion for passage of H. B. No. 24-47 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)

Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-47 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Acting Floor Leader moved for the passage of H. B. No. 24-49:

H. B. No. 24-49: To establish the CNMI Next/Gen 911 Telephone Communications System within the CNMI; and for other purposes.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll for the motion for passage of H. B. No. 24-49 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Absent (Excused)
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-49 hereby passes the House. Thank you, colleagues. That takes care of our Bill Calendar. We now move down to Item No. 17, Miscellaneous Business, and I recognize Representative Attao.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to extend our appreciation, or my appreciation, to my colleagues here in the House for their support in passing House Bill No. 24-50, House Substitute 1. We were visited, obviously yesterday, by our students from the Public School System with concerns regarding the budget that was appropriated to the Public School System. And we did explain to the students that the initial submission of the budget on April 1st was never revised to reflect the payment of \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) to the settlement fund. With this legislation, it would obligate the loan of \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) from Marianas Pacific Land Trust directly to the settlement fund, which would free up \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) in our general fund to address the shortages. A lot of these shortages that were—well, we had to make the cuts. Unfortunately, the administration did not submit a revised budget before July 1st to reflect the payment to the settlement fund in their anticipation of getting a pension obligation bond. But unfortunately, with our audit reports being delayed and with our financial rating, they were not able to get the pension obligation fund. Therefore, we went through Marianas Pacific Land Trust to try to negotiate different types of options to be able to address the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) shortage. And Marianas Pacific Land Trust, through their board of trustees, had opted for option 2. There were 3 options that were presented to the legislature and to the administration as to how we can get this \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) loan. Option 1, a direct loan from the Department of Finance through Marianas Pacific Land Trust. Unfortunately, the Department of Finance cannot go into a direct loan unless it is a pension obligation bond because of the constitutional amendment that allows only pension obligation bonds. Option 3 was the pension obligation bond, which was not qualified because of the credit rating in the audit reports from the central government. Therefore, option 2 was what was voted on by the settlement fund to assist the central government in this \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) loan. And they gave us, I believe, 90 or 60 days that would be expiring at the end of this month. Therefore, the reason why our good Chairman of Ways and Means had introduced this legislation is so we can press forward and get this address out of the House and also into the Senate’s hands. As for the students that came up here and for the Public School System that are doing the town hall meetings, thank you guys for doing those meetings. It is important to know for a fact that the action of the House of Representatives did not take away any of the instructional hours. The legislation that the House passed made sure that there are instructional hours. That was the first priority so the students would not have to be faced with difficulties in their application process for their futures. Whether it is a university or a college, whatever they choose. And this legislation right here that we had just passed will be an assistant to the budget. And we are hopeful that the Senate will act on the budget and will act on this specific legislation. So, we can address the shortages of the general appropriations and free up \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) so we can address some of those cuts that were made by the House. Because we need to make sure that the settlement fund gets their \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) payment. Failure to do that, we are putting the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands government

at risk that we might go into receivership into the settlement fund. Which would have total control of our general or of our collections before we even get to appropriating those funds. So, with that, colleagues, thank you all very much for supporting House Bill No. 24-50, House Substitute 1. And we look forward, and we are hopeful that the Senate will do the same so we can get this to the governor's desk, sign it into law, and allow the administration and Marianas Pacific Land Trust to negotiate a \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) loan to free up the general fund. So, we can address those cuts that this body had to make to make sure that the settlement fund is satisfied through the court judgement. Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to our viewing public who are watching on our social media platform and on our live feed television. Colleagues, we have heard the message from Public School System. We have read the articles. We even met with student protesters yesterday. And let me start with common ground: education is not optional, and we must fund it accordingly. Article XV of our Constitution requires no less than 25% of our general revenues to go to education. That is the law, and this legislation will fulfill it. But the Constitution says general revenues, not gross revenues. They are not the same. Just last month, under House Concurrent Resolution No. 24-2, SS1, both the House and Senate approved total gross revenues of about 180 million for FY 2026. But over \$53,000,000.00 of that is special revenue already earmarked for obligations, including \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) for retirees' pensions. That leaves \$127,000,000.00 in general revenues. One-fourth of that is \$31,000,000.00. That is why the House appropriated \$31,000,000.00 for the Public School System. It is constitutional, it is fair, and it is balanced with the rest of our obligations. Now let us test the alternative. The Public School System says it should get \$49,000,000.00 of the \$180,000,000.00 in gross revenues, and if we gave the Public School System that \$49,000,000.00 amount, that would leave only \$130,000,000.00 for all government operations, earmarks, and debts. The reality, based on the House and Senate Concurrent Resolution, is that we need \$53,000,000.00 for our obligations, leaving us only 78,000,000 dollars for the entire Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands government—the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judiciary Branch—when we need around 96,000,000 just to maintain the status quo. The math does not add up. If I can get your attention up to the screen for the Public School System's communication to the governor on April 1st, paragraph 4, the 1st sentence. The amount of 49 represents 25% of the overall gross revenue. This is not actually true because our top gross revenue for this budget proposal is at \$180,000,000.00. So, if you take 49 and you times it by 4, it is going to bring you up to 197. And that is not our gross revenue in this budget package. Think about it this way: when you get your paycheck, the gross is at the top. But you never take the number home. Taxes and deductions come out first. You live on your net pay. The constitution works the same way. The Public School System gets one-fourth of the government's net pay, not the gross. Yesterday, students came to protest at the governor's office, but when they came to the House, we sat with them. We sat with them and had a respectful dialogue. The students were thoughtful and impressive. So, let me be clear, the Public School System leadership, its teachers, staff, and especially its students are always welcome here in the House, where their voices will be heard with respect. But we also must be honest. While students rally, the Public School System leadership has been playing politics. Perhaps they have not been upfront that 25% comes from general revenues, not growth. That misleads the public. And the fact of the matter is, our student population has dropped from around

10,000 students in 2020 to about 8,500 students today. When enrollment was higher, the Public School System received \$37,000,000.00. Today with fewer students, they are demanding \$49,000,000.00. Fewer students and a higher budget make no sense. Under the House budget, 86% of the Public School System funds must go to instruction. That is how we put students first. Yet of the Public School System's 1,200 full-time employees, about 307 are in central office administration, more than a quarter of the workforce outside the classroom. That is enough to accomplish the mission if managed properly. And still, we hear reports that members of the Legislature recently delivered 35 cases of toilet hygiene to 7 schools. Why? Where is the money going? If basic supplies are missing, why is the Public School System spending on professional development trips and allowing travel all summer? That is not a legislature problem. That is a management problem. Our students deserve better. They deserve better than a top-heavy administration. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth must also pay \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) in retirees' pensions under the federal court order. We must keep our hospital running, fund medical referrals, maintain public safety, pay utilities, and support our tourism so our economy can recover. These are not luxuries. They are the foundations of daily life. Education is one of them but is not the only one. And we must be honest with ourselves. Our economy is not stronger in 2025 than it was in 2024. Looking ahead, 2026 may be even more difficult. We cannot allocate funds we do not have. We can only provide what the constitution requires and what fairness demands across all obligations. That is what we have done. So, let me close with this, education will be fully funded. The Public School System will get exactly the 25% that the constitution requires, no less and responsibly no more. Because we must also meet the rest of our obligation. Retirees will be honored, healthcare and public safety will be maintained, and the foundation of our economy will be strengthened. That is the balance the constitution requires, that is the balance the people deserve, and that is the balance we will uphold in this chamber and, if necessary, in court. And to the Public School System administrators and staff, I offer this challenge, in times of tight budgets, the true measure of leadership is resourcefulness. Our students deserve your best ideas, your creativity, and your commitment to stretch every dollar to the classroom. Meet this challenge, and together we can ensure that even with this budget, our students will receive the education they deserve and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will move forward strongly. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente.

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to what was mentioned just a while ago and what happened yesterday here when the students came in. I saw the students come in. But I was not able to join and attend because I was having another meeting with a constituent in my office. I know the Public School System has been doing town hall meetings. They have done it in Kagman, Marianas High School, and in Kobler. What was funny was that when I went to Kobler, my grandson was the one that invited me to go over to listen. Because they were so worried about their education. They have been told that they are going to probably shut down the school certain amounts of times. They are going to cut them down. Right now, basically what is happening is that they are off on Mondays, half-day on Mondays. It is taking away instructional hours the kids should be learning. And they are more or less mentioning that they will go ahead and cut it if the budget is not sufficient for what they are requesting. So that is something that really hurts me. Because for me, I worry more for the students in the classroom than all the other support staff. The teachers in the classroom are at the forefront, teaching and making the students learn. They are indoctrinating the students to the level where they can

assimilate themselves to challenge forward. And that is why I am so concerned. Students first. That is their motto. So, it is just a basic example of what we have. If we are living in our house and our economy is bad, our economy is not sufficient enough for us to spend money for what we want; our economy is so bad to the point that you only have kangkong and sardine to eat, then so be it. It is kangkong and sardine. Because you are not going to go out, unless you are going to jail, and go out to steal in order for you to survive. No. That is how critical I feel about this. I was a board member. I was in education for the longest time. From the Parent-Teacher Assembly to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands scholarship to the Board of Education. And I watch these people operate. I know they cannot cover or put a blind face on me. Because you know why? I know what they do. But my goal was to make sure that we support the kids. To move forward with our students. Some people are saying that by making a loan with Marianas Pacific Land Trust, we are compromising the future generation. These students we have right now, they are our future generation and beyond. And we are still moving ahead with that. Why? Because we do not want to compromise their education. Education is the economic engine for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. I will tell you that. What is making everybody sit over here is that most of you are educated. Most of the people are educated. But still there are limits in education and how they practice it. So, that is why, when situations like this happen, you know it is personal. You know it becomes personal. And I am sorry to say, but I have seen them travel so much. What Representative Sablan mentioned earlier is right. I had a chance to attend the town hall meeting. There were a lot of people. Students, teachers, and even central office employees. Basically the whole entire public school system was there. The whole place was packed in Kobler Elementary School. I will tell you something, I was the only representative there. There were other representatives that were supposed to come up. Unfortunately, they got some other commitments with their family or something. And I am not going to question that. But I was the only one. But none of those parents questioned me. They were questioning the Public School System. But they never came up to try and question me. Why? I do not know why. They do not ask me the question. Because if they asked me the question, I would just tell them right there. The commissioner was very adamant in saying everything, saying all the scenarios that Representative John Paul Sablan had mentioned with regard to the loan. How we are going to try to help out and everything. And it states that. But all of a sudden students popped up in front of our faces here yesterday and were throwing out all different kinds of questions and the insecurity of education in the future. That is really something. So, with that said, I just like to say to all the teachers and all the Public School System, please concentrate on what you do and be more assertive in how you handle the public school system, how you work with the public school system, how you work with the students, and how you pass knowledge to the students. Not how you pass bucks to yourself. Mr. Speaker, thank you. I just have to say this. It is hunting me down, and I just have to let it go.

The Chair recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to thank all the members for your support for House Joint Resolution No. 24-8. And to the viewing public, I would like to say, especially to those in the southern area, please be careful when you do barbecue. Because during the Typhoon Yutu, super typhoon. I personally witnessed a lot of bombs that were uprooted from trees. They were physically there, and they were unexploded. So, do not put your bricks and your grill, and your barbecue right there by a tree. Because I am pretty sure there will be a bomb or several bombs there. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Roy Chistopher Aldan Ada.

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to state it for the viewing public and the record. I want to thank our good chairman of Ways and Means and the members. We worked hard on putting together a budget that would help the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. And to all the members here today for supporting the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00) loan that would help free up some money so that we can, not only for money that is needed for the school, but also for other programs and agencies that the community is availing itself of. And I know there is a lot of sentiment about how the Public School System issue was brought to the public. But I just want to state for the record, also, I want to thank the classroom teachers. Because I do know that a lot of the classroom teachers were preparing for the opening of the school and throughout the school year also utilize their own money to buy supplies for their classroom for their students. And to all the staff that comprise the Public School System, also to the bus drivers that get these kids to and from school. They are unsung heroes. It is really tough to wake up at 5 in the morning, Monday through Friday, just to get these kids to school on time so that they can actually get the adequate instructional hours. And to all the staff in the classroom and in the schools, thank you for all that you do. And to the parents, thank you for being patient with the deliberation. Right now, we, here in the House, collectively agreed to support this initiative. I hope the Senate will also consider the sensitivity of this act and act on it expeditiously for the betterment of all the programs that need funding.

The Chair recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan.

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say this to the viewing public. When your leadership informs you about a situation and they give you a half bait truth, what does that say about your leadership? It makes one wonder, are you really there for the people you are supposed to serve, or are you self-serving? Because as a leader, when you are telling your followers something half bait, that means you are not being upfront. That right there is saying that you are lying. You are lying to the people that you are supposed to be serving. So, do not come around and try to paint a bad picture when you cannot keep yourself under control. There are times that we make decisions and it is not popular, but we have to make it. But instead of trying to work together, you spread out half-truths. That does not make you a leader at all. Not one bit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente.

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask my colleagues, that are here, if prior to the closing of the budget year, if you have some excess funds and everything, I think it is good to invest in your precinct. If you are able to donate. Anything would help. It may be a laughing matter, but it helps. Remember, we are here by the people and for the people. So, if you can help assist student that need assistance and schools that need assistance, please extend to all the precinct. I am asking all the representatives from Kagman, San Vicente, Tanapag, everywhere. We represent these students. So, I ask you, if you have some funds, talk to the schools and figure out what they need, if you can extend their help and everything. I just like to ask you for that. Only a recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

Acting Floor Leader Ralph Naraja Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to all the members that supported the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). But I would like to air out, with regard to the budget bill that the House passed. I think none of it was mentioned—the students came up, and I applaud the students for coming up and speaking and fighting for their rights, as well as to be educated—the House inserted a provision. I believe it is under Section 09. It says, “Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, no budget cuts or austerity measures shall be applied to teacher salaries, instructional positions, or essential programs.” For example, student meals, council, special education, Chamorro and Carolinian Language Heritage Studies, and all non-instructional administrative cost reduction have been exhausted. We put up provisions to ensure that instructional hours are not to be touched until the central department manages their operation so that we ensure that every student is at school and gets the required hours. Also, the percentage that goes to the 86% of the \$31 million (\$31,000,000.00) goes to all the expenditures that involve instruction. The teachers are protected. Now we should go to the Senate, because we are starting to hear the word “furlough,” and I think we forgot to put furlough in here. That is something that we should advocate to the Senate to include—that there should not be any furloughs with regard to education. So, that is something that we should go up to the Senate and respectfully ask that they insert such provisions so that we can ensure that the students remain in school and the teachers remain teaching. I just wanted to add that. I yield. Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add that yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we had a very productive meeting at the judicial. And with everything going on now with the Public School System, hopefully moving forward, we can also try to do the same. Mirror the same kind of working relationship with the Public School System leadership and the House. To just try to work it out rather than to just throw things out there—the scares and everything. When actually, I am pretty sure all these House members are concerned about the quality of education that our students receive on the island. And I know that I am only a rookie here. But hopefully one day I can be born ready like my colleague over there. Thank you.

There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 18, Announcements, and recognized Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues, for passing the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). This announcement has something to do with the \$29 million (\$29,000,000.00). If you all have not noticed, we are in September, and it is Cultural Heritage Month. And we should all be celebrating the *Refaluwasch* and Chamorro culture. It is happening in and out of schools. So, one that is coming up soon, on September 20th, is *Aghurubw* Day. And that is on our island here, *Mañagaha*, or *Ghalaghal*, in *Refaluwasch*. I bumped into one of the officers, and she is asking for water. If you can open up your hands there. Some of you have already contributed, thank you. But we still need some more because we will be out there where

there is no water. It is only ocean water, brackish water in *Mañagaha*. All are invited. Free ferry and free food.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: What time is the event?

Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai: I apologize. I do not know. You have to check for the newspaper. I think it will be out in the newspaper. September 20th, and that is a Saturday. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to notify the members of the Judicial and Governmental Operations committee that I will be calling another committee meeting next week, Thursday. The time is yet to be determined. As you know, the committees seem like there is never-ending work. Thank you all for your time and effort. Thank you.

There being no further announcements on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Adjournment, and recognized the Acting Floor Leader.

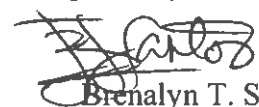
ADJOURNMENT

Acting Floor Leader Ralph Naraja Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hereby move to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair. So move.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussions on the floor, the motion for adjournment was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.

The House adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brenalyn T. Santos
House Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY: 1st Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:

H. L. B. NO. 24-22: To rename a portion of Lana Drive in the village of As Lito, Precinct I, to "Diego T. Benavente Drive" in honor of the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente, former Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and long-serving public servant of the Commonwealth. Introduced by REP(S). VINCENT R. ALDAN, ROMAN C. BENAVENTE, DIEGO V. F. CAMACHO, JOSEPH A. FLORES, RAYMOND U. PALACIOS of Saipan, Precinct 1 (for themselves, Representative Edmund S. Villagomez) on August 29, 2025.

H. L. B. NO. 24-23: To establish the Rota Cultural Heritage and Education Tour Act, for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO on behalf of REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) on August 29, 2025.

[ADDED-8/29/2025] H. L. B. NO. 24-24: To establish the Rota Department of Public Works equipment rental fee, and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO on behalf of REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) on August 29, 2025.

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:

Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session on August 29, 2025:

H. B. NO. 24-53: To amend 1 CMC § 7831 to exempt the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) from the mandatory one percent (1%) Public Auditor Fee, forgive all arrears related to such fee, and establish a cost-based audit recovery system with mandatory reporting and penalties for noncompliance; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (for himself) on August 29, 2025; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. [Public comments were received in an open and public meeting when the legislation appeared on the House Agenda of August 29, 2025]

H. B. NO. 24-54: To increase the number of military leave hours available to CNMI government employees and to broaden eligibility for its use. Introduced by REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO JR. of Saipan, Precinct 2 (for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Diego V. F. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Malcolm J. Omar, John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez) on August 29, 2025; and was moved and placed on the Bill Calendar.

H. B. NO. 24-55: To amend the penalties for illegally parking in spaces designated for persons with disabilities by strengthening and enforcing clear penalties for violation and repeat offenses and by ensuring accessible parking for persons with disabilities; and for other such purposes. Introduced by REP. DIEGO V. F. CAMACHO on behalf of REP. MARISSA R. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 3 (for herself) on August 29, 2025; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

H. B. NO. 24-56: To establish the CNMI Air Service Development Matching Fund to support federal air service development grants, such as the Small Community Air Service Development Program, and to provide procedures and responsibilities related to the use of the Fund. Introduced by REP. ANGELO A. CAMACHO of Saipan, Precinct 5 (for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Roman C. Benavente, Marissa R. Flores, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) on August 29, 2025; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

[ADDED-8/29/2025] H. B. NO. 24-57: To re-establish a Government Liability Cap. Introduced by REP. EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ of Saipan, Precinct 3, (for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Roman C. Benavente, Marissa R. Flores, and Ralph N. Yumul) on August 29, 2025; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

[ADDED-8/29/2025] H. B. NO. 24-58: To amend 4 CMC § 1305 to exempt services and the sale or exchange of securities and other similar assets from gross revenue tax; to amend 4 CMC § 1708 to allow rebates for exempted activities; to repeal 4 CMC § 1712; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. ANGELO A. CAMACHO of Saipan, Precinct 5 (for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Joel C. Camacho, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul) on August 29, 2025; referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means on September 2, 2025.

H. L. B. NO. 24-22: To rename a portion of Lana Drive in the village of As Lito, Precinct I, to “Diego T. Benavente Drive” in honor of the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente, former Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and long-serving public servant of the Commonwealth. Introduced by REP(S). VINCENT R. ALDAN, ROMAN C. BENAVENTE, DIEGO V. F. CAMACHO, JOSEPH A. FLORES, RAYMOND U. PALACIOS of Saipan, Precinct I (for themselves, Representative Edmund S. Villagomez) on August 29, 2025.

H. L. B. NO. 24-23: To establish the Rota Cultural Heritage and Education Tour Act, for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO on behalf of REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) on August 29, 2025.

[ADDED-8/29/2025] H. L. B. NO. 24-24: To establish the Rota Department of Public Works equipment rental fee, and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO on behalf of REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) on August 29, 2025.

[ADDED-8/29/2025] H. L. B. NO. 24-25: To appropriate Forty Two Thousand Dollars (\$42,000.00) from revenues collected from poker fees in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS of Tinian, Precinct 6 (for himself) on August 29, 2025.

[ADDED-8/29/2025] H. L. B. NO. 24-26: To appropriate \$380,000.00 from revenues collected pursuant to Saipan Local Law 22-06; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. RALPH N. YUMUL of Saipan, Precinct 3 (for himself, Representatives Angelo A. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, and John Paul P. Sablan) on August 29, 2025.