



# HOUSE JOURNAL

## SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2025

11<sup>th</sup> Day, Second Regular Session

Monday, December 22, 2025

*The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Eleventh Day, Second Regular Session on Monday, December 22, 2025, at 10:08 a.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	Absent (During Roll Call)
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Present
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Present
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Present
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Present
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Present
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Present
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Absent (Excused)
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Present
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Present
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Present
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Present
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Absent (Excused)
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Present
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Present
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Absent (Excused)

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, we have 15 members present and 5 members absent.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 15 members present, a quorum is duly established. Let the record reflect that Representatives Thomas Manglona, Raymond Palacios, Patrick San Nicolas and Ralph Yumul are excused for today's session.

Representative Attao may or may not make it. But we will wait on that. Colleagues, as discussed before the session, I now call for recess.

*The House recessed at 10:10 a.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 4:38 p.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, hours ago, we had just finished the roll call. And I recognize the Clerk to call the roll for Representative BJ Attao for the record.

## **ROLL CALL**

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao Present

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. Let the record reflect that Representative Attao is present. We now proceed to Item No. 4, Introduction of Bills, and I recognize Representative John Paul Sablan under House Bills.

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

### *House Bills:*

*Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan formally introduced the following bill; subsequently requested the Chair that it be placed on the Bill Calendar:*

**H. B. NO. 24-80:** To Repeal and Re-Enact Public Law 24-14 to further Define and Identify General Revenues and approve revenues and resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as identified pursuant to Article III, Section 9 (a) of the CNMI Constitution, as amended, and 1 CMC Division 7, for Fiscal Year 2026 and make appropriations for the operations and activities of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, its agencies, instrumentalities, and independent programs, and to provide budget authority for government corporations for Fiscal Year 2026; and for other purposes.  
**Prefiled by:** REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (for himself, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Joel C. Camacho, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule IX, Section 8.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair proceeded to Item No. 5, Introduction of Resolutions, and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan, under House Concurrent Resolutions.*

## **INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

### ***House Concurrent Resolutions:***

*Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan formally introduced the following resolution; subsequently requested the Chair that it be placed on the Resolution Calendar:*

**H. C. R. NO. 24-3** To further approve revenues and resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as identified under Article III, Section 9(a) of the Constitution, as amended, and Title 1, Division 7, of the Commonwealth Code, for Fiscal Year 2026, beginning October 1, 2025, and ending on September 30, 2026. **Prefiled by: REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*)

*The Chair proceeded to Item No. 15, Resolution Calendar, and recognized the Floor Leader.*

## **RESOLUTION CALENDAR**

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt H. C. R. No. 24-3:*

**H. C. R. NO. 24-3** To further approve revenues and resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as identified under Article III, Section 9(a) of the Constitution, as amended, and Title 1, Division 7, of the Commonwealth Code, for Fiscal Year 2026, beginning October 1, 2025, and ending on September 30, 2026.

*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. At this time, I would like to offer a House Substitute for House Concurrent Resolution No. 24-3. So that it may reflect on the changes that are to be made on the revised budget bill when we proceed to the Bill Calendar. So moved.

*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. The changes of House Concurrent Resolution No. 24-3, if I may start at the top ceiling, \$158,018, 387.00 and we have a bottom number of net resources available for appropriations at \$138, 935,827.00. And these are the changes made from the previously prefiled budget bill at the ceiling of \$179 million. What this House substitute does is make those proper amendments to address and identify the \$150 million top ceiling that was identified by the Governor’s communication back in October 14, 2025 to both the presiding officers of the House and the Senate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the motion to accept House Concurrent Resolution No. 24-3, House Substitute 1 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair proceeded to the motion to adopt H. C. R. No. 24-3, HS1 and 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 adoption of H. C. R. No. 24-3, HS1 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	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Absent (Excused)
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Absent (Excused)
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Absent (Excused)

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 16 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 16 members present voting “yes,” House Concurrent Resolution No. 24-3, House Substitute 1 is hereby adopted. Thank you, colleagues. We now proceed to Item No. 16, Bill Calendar, and I recognize the Floor Leader.

## **BILL CALENDAR**

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-80:*

**H. B. NO. 24-80:** To Repeal and Re-Enact Public Law 24-14 to further Define and Identify General Revenues and approve revenues and resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as identified pursuant to Article III, Section 9 (a) of the CNMI Constitution, as amended, and 1 CMC Division 7, for Fiscal Year 2026 and make appropriations for the operations and activities of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, its agencies, instrumentalities, and independent programs, and to provide budget authority for government corporations for Fiscal Year 2026; and for other purposes.

*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. At this time, I want to offer a House substitute to House Bill No. 24-80, so that it reflects the top identified resources in the bill. So moved.

*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. Mr. Speaker, for the past three weeks, your standing committee on Ways and Means have been working diligently with the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs. And based on this substitute, based on the Governor’s communication from October 14, 2025, as per Article III, Section 9(a) of the CNMI Constitution, it states:

The anticipated revenues may not be increased by the legislature without the consent of the governor.

That is the reason why this substitute identifies the top identified resources at \$158 million. As opposed to the \$179 million initially prefiled by myself last week. So, this substitute reflects the top ceiling at \$158 million and the bottom ceiling for appropriation at \$138 million. If there are any questions, I stand ready to answer with the best of my abilities. Thank you.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt H. B. No. 24-80, HSI was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair proceeded to the motion for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-80, HSI, and opened the floor for discussion.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And colleagues, if you could please give me some of your indulgence. I know we have been doing this since 10 o'clock this morning, but I think we must be open, honest, and transparent about this process that we had gone through the past several weeks. This budget decision is not a matter of preference or politics. It is a matter of constitutional duty, legal obligation, and fiscal responsibility. Under the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Constitution, the Legislature is responsible for appropriating public funds based on reasonable revenue estimates, full disclosure of expenditures, and transparent accounting liabilities. A budget can only be fair and balance when it is supported by verifiable financial information. While the Department of Finance and the Secretary herself has provided public updates, key financial documents and supporting schedules remain pending and have not been fully transmitted to the Legislature. Placing risk on this process and limiting full validation. That risk is compounded by the fact that the Commonwealth remains behind on its required audits, creating future harm through weakened transparency, federal compliance risks, and potential funding delays. Despite these challenges, the Commonwealth's legal obligations do not pause. We are bound by court judgment orders requiring funding of settlement obligations. We are bound by statute to make the 25% to the Public School System. We carry longstanding obligations for land compensation through the Marianas Pacific Land Trust and the Department of Public Lands. We have within-grade increases and employee-related liabilities that must be honored. We also carry out outstanding vendor obligations, including those arising from the CARES Act, BOOST, and other federally funded COVID-era programs. While these funds were federal in origin, the responsibility to properly disburse, reconcile, close out these programs, and resolve unpaid balances rests squarely with the Commonwealth. Some federal expenditures remain unresolved, including questioned costs and unreconciled payments. In cases where misuse or abuse of federal funds have been identified, amount have yet been fully recovered from those responsibilities, shifting the burden to the people of the Commonwealth and exposing the government to further compliance and enforcement risk. Taken together – pensions, education, insurance coverage, land compensation, employee obligations, vendor payments, unresolved federal fund reconciliations, audit backlogs, and incomplete financial disclosures – these realities require a consolidated budget. Failure to pass this budget would have immediate and damaging consequences; jeopardizing retirees' pensions; destabilizing the Public School System; threatening health and life insurance for active employees and retirees'; increasing land and vendor liabilities; and deepening audit and compliances risks. All public service servants and elected officials have taken an oath to uphold the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth. That oath requires us to act responsibly and in

good faith. Anything less – whether through inaction or refusal to meet clear legal obligations – constitutes an injustice to the people we serve. Let me be clear, voting “yes” does not mean all concerns are resolved. It means recognizing our fiduciary duty to prevent greater harm when the law leaves no alternative. Allowing this budget to fail would not fix past deficiencies – it would compound them and place the burden on retirees, educators, students, landowners, vendors, and families. Finally, I want to thank the legislative staff who worked tirelessly to support the House Committee on Ways and Means under difficult conditions and tight timelines. Their professionalism and commitment made this process possible. For these reasons – grounded in constitutional responsibility, statutory mandate, court orders, and our oath of office – it is my responsibility to vote “yes” on this consolidated budget to protect pensions, sustain education, preserve insurance coverage, honor legal obligations, and safeguard the fiscal integrity of the Commonwealth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield my time.

*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. 24-80, HS1, First and Final Reading, 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	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Absent (Excused)
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Absent (Excused)
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Absent (Excused)

Clerk Linda B. Muña: 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. 24-80, House Substitute 1 hereby passes the House. Thank you, colleagues. We will now go into recess.

*The House recessed at 4:57 p.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 5:05 p.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went into recess, we had just voted on House Bill No. 24-80, House Substitute 1. I now recognize the Floor Leader for the motion to amend today’s agenda.

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule III, Section 6.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened up the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule III, Section 6 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

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

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 12 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 12 members present voting “yes,” the motion carries. We now proceed to Item No. 2, Public Comments. The podium

is open to receive 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**

*There being no public comments presented on the floor and no item under Item No. 3, Adoption of Journals, the Chair proceeded Item No. 4, Introduction of Bills, and recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr., under House Bills.*

### **ADOPTION OF JOURNALS**

None

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

#### ***House Bills:***

*Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr. formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations:*

**H. B. NO. 24-78:** To amend Title 4. Economic Resources, Division 6. Banking and Financial Institutions of the Commonwealth Code, to give the Banking Director authority to regulate digital asset businesses; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO, JR.** (for himself, Representatives Malcolm J. Omar, John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez)

*The Chair called for recess.*

*The House recessed at 5:09 p.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 5:09 p.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we were under House Bills and it is Representative Ralph Yumul's bill next on the agenda. According to his off-island memorandum, Representative Ralph Yumul designated Representative John Paul Sablan to introduce bills and other legislations on his behalf. However, Representative John Paul Sablan is not in the chamber. We will proceed down in the House Bills and I recognize Representative Joseph Flores.

*Representative Joseph Arriola Flores formally introduced the following bill:*

**H. B. NO. 24-81:** To establish a Non-Profit Organization Tax Credit to incentivize individual and corporate contributions, promote philanthropic engagement, and ensure the long-term viability of organizations that provide essential services and enhance the quality of life for the people of the CNMI. **Filed by: REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)

*There being no further introduction of House Bills, the Chair proceeded to House Local Bills and opened the floor for introduction of unnumbered House Local Bills.*

#### ***House Local Bills:***

*There being no introduction of unnumbered House Local Bills on the floor, the Chair proceeded to House Legislative Initiatives and opened the floor for introductions.*

#### ***House Legislative Initiatives:***

*There being no introduction of unnumbered House Legislative Initiatives on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 5, Introduction of Resolutions, and Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan.*

### **INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

#### ***House Resolutions:***

*Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection, the Chair requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.*

*There being no objections on the floor, the resolution was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The Chair ordered that it be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.*

**H. RES. NO. 24-21:** To encourage the Honorable David M. Apatang, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to declare a Proactive resilience Emergency Declaration to protect the Commonwealth's renewable energy future in light of the approaching federal deadline under the 2025 "Big Beautiful Budget" Act (BBB); and urging all agencies to fast-track renewable energy projects before the opportunity expires. **Filed by: REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V.F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J. M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*)

*Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection, the Chair requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.*

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

**H. RES. NO. 24-22:** Supporting the establishment of mandatory financial literacy education in CNMI public schools; urging the CNMI Public School System (PSS) and the Board of Education to collaborate with private financial institutions, workforce development partners, and accredited financial education providers; and encouraging a unified, community-wide effort to equip students with essential financial skills needed for lifelong success. **Prefiled by: REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V.F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J. M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*)

*There being no further introductions of House Resolutions, the Chair proceeded to House Joint Resolutions and recognized Representative John Paul Sablan.*

***House Joint Resolutions:***

*The Chair called for recess.*

*The House recessed at 5:14 p.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 5:15 p.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we were under House Joint Resolution. I now recognize Representative John Paul Sablan.

*Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan 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 on the floor, the resolution was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The Chair then ordered that it be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.*

**[ADDED-12/22/2025] H. J. R. NO. 24-10:** To honor and congratulate CITADEL Pacific Ltd. (CPL) on the occasion of its 20th Anniversary. Introduced by **REP.**

**JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V.F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J. M. Rangamar, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*)

*There being no further introduction of Resolutions on the floor, the Chair returned back to Item No. 4, Introduction of Bills, and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan, under House Bills.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### *House Bills:*

*Representative John Paul Palacios formally introduced the following bill on behalf of Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul, which was then referred to the House Committee on Gaming:*

**H. B. NO. 24-79:** To amend Title 4, Division 2, Chapter 3 of the Commonwealth Code, to amend the Commonwealth Gaming provisions, remove exclusive license, and allow for more casino licenses; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. RALPH N. YUMUL** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, and John Paul P. Sablan*)

*The Chair proceeded 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. 24-86: (12/2/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24-27, S1 (*To appropriate Three Hundred and Five Thousand Dollars (\$305,000.00) for the continued RCGC operations, establish a reserve for future appropriation by the Rota Legislative Delegation; and for other purposes.*). Became **Rota Local Law 24-05** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 24-87: (12/9/2025) Informing the House of the execution of the \$29 million pension loan with the Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT) and urging immediate legislative action on the FY 2026 Revised Budget to prevent disruption to the Group Health & Life Insurance Program. [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 24-88: (12/10/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, 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.*)  
Became **Saipan Local Law 24-12** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 24-89: (12/10/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24-30 (*To re-appropriate the remaining fund balance of \$48,450.00 allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-26; and for other purposes.*). Became **Saipan Local Law 24-13** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 24-90: (12/10/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24-32 (*To re-appropriate \$78,980.00 allotted under Saipan Local Law 18-17; and for other purposes.*). Became **Saipan Local Law 24-14** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 24-91: (12/10/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 24-33 (*To amend Saipan Local Law 24-05 that appropriated the remaining fund balance of \$85,500 under Saipan Local Law 23-04 for the repair, maintenance and improvements of recreational facilities in Precinct IV; and for other purposes.*). Became **Saipan Local Law 24-15** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 24-92: (12/15/2025) Certification and request for legislative authorization to exceed the government salary ceiling pursuant to 1 CMC § 8248(a) for the Department of Corrections to hire a Physician Assistant at an annual salary of \$104,000.00. [**For action**]

*The Chair opened the floor discussion and recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.*

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of Representative Malcolm Omar and myself, I would like to thank the Governor and the administration for signing into law House Local Bill No. 24-30, which became Saipan Local Law 24-13, and House Local Bill No. 24-33, which became Saipan Local Law No. 24-15. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*The Chair recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.*

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to extend my appreciation to Governor Apatang for Governor's Communication No. 24-90, informing the House that he signed into law, House Local Law No. 24-32, which became Saipan Local Law No. 24-14.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 7, Senate Communications, and recognized the Clerk.*

## **SENATE COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Clerk announced the following Senate Communications:*

SEN. COMM. 24-63: (12/1/2025) Returning H. B. No. 24-74, entitled, "To appropriate funds derived from trust interest income from the Marianas Public Land

Trust towards payment of household allotments of Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) benefits for November 2025.”, which was passed by the Senate with amendments on December 1, 2025, in the form of *H. B. No. 24-74, SS2 to read: “To appropriate funds derived from trust interest income from the Marianas Public Land Trust.”* [For action on Senate amendments]

SEN. COMM. 24-64: (12/2/2025) Transmitting a certified copy of Senate Commemorative Resolution No. 24-06, entitled, *“To recognize and honor the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente for his exemplary lifetime of public service and profound contributions to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and its People, and to convey the Senate’s sincere condolences, prayers, and appreciation to his family”*. [For info]

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to accept Senate Communication No. 24-63 and 24-64.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to accept Senate Communication No. 24-63 and 24-64 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*Pursuant to the action, Senate Communication No. 24-63, referencing, “(12/1/2025) Returning H. B. No. 24-74, entitled, “To appropriate funds derived from trust interest income from the Marianas Public Land Trust towards payment of household allotments of Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) benefits for November 2025.”, which was passed by the Senate with amendments on December 1, 2025, in the form of H. B. No. 24-74, SS2 to read: “To appropriate funds derived from trust interest income from the Marianas Public Land Trust.” [For action on Senate amendments]”, was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.*

*The Chair called for recess.*

*The House recessed at 5:19 p.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 5:19 p.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we were under Senate Communications. And I did mention that we are going to refer Senate Communication No. 24-63, returning action on House Bill No. 24-74, in the form of Senate Substitute 2 to the House Committee on Ways and Means. However, I will go ahead and place this on the Bill Calendar for action. But not on today’s calendar as this bill is dependent on what the outcome of the budget bill will be. And after the budget is signed into law, and the final form is published, that is when both Houses can decide on the action moving forward after that, regarding House Bill No. 24-74, Senate Substitute 2. Clerk, kindly note that Senate Communication No. 24-63 will be placed on the Bill

Calendar for later action. Okay, with nothing further, we now proceed to Item No. 8, House Communications, and I recognize the Clerk.

### **HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Clerk announced the following House Communications:*

HSE. COMM. 24-73: (12/4/2025) From Representative Thomas John DIC. Manglona informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on official matters beginning December 8, 2025, until further notice, and respectfully requests to be excused from all legislative sessions, SNILD sessions, committee meetings, and official functions during this period. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 24-74: (12/9/2025) From Representative Roman C. Benavente informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal leave from December 9, 2025 to December 13, 2025, and respectfully requests to be excused from all official meetings and sessions during this period. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 24-75: (12/15/2025) From Representative Julie M. A. Ogo informing the Speaker that she will be out of the Commonwealth on personal leave from December 31, 2025 to January 5, 2026, and respectfully requests to be excused from all official meetings and sessions during this period. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 24-76: (12/16/2025) From Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal business from December 19 to January 7, 2026, and respectfully requests to be excused from all official meetings and sessions during this period. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 24-77: (12/18/2025) From Representative Ralph N. Yumul informing the Speaker that he will be on personal leave from December 22, 2025, through January 2, 2026, and respectfully requesting to be excused from all official meetings and sessions during this period. Further informing that Representative John Paul P. Sablan has been designated to officially introduce legislation on his behalf. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 24-78: (12/18/2025) From Representative Raymond U. Palacios informing the Speaker that he will be taking a leave of absence and respectfully requesting to be excused from the House Session scheduled for December 22, 2025. [*For info*]

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

### **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

*The Clerk announced the following Communications from the Judicial Branch:*

JUD. BR. COMM. 24-8: (12/12/2025) From Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro to the Senate President and Speaker of the House submitting: *Proposed Amendment to NMI Rules of Attorney Discipline and Procedure, specifically enacting a newly enacted Rule 5(d), which creates a Confidentiality Rule to supplement the establishment of a Lawyer Assistance Program in the CNMI* [Submitted 12/12/2025; **Deadline: 2/10/2026**]

*The Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.*

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been referred to the Judicial and Governmental Operations?

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Yes.

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Okay. I will be calling a committee meeting. I know the deadline in on February 10, 2026. So, I will be calling committee meeting after the holidays.

*Pursuant to the action taken, Judicial Branch Communication No. 24-8, referencing, “(12/12/2025) From Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro to the Senate President and Speaker of the House submitting: Proposed Amendment to NMI Rules of Attorney Discipline and Procedure, specifically enacting a newly enacted Rule 5(d), which creates a Confidentiality Rule to supplement the establishment of a Lawyer Assistance Program in the CNMI [Submitted 12/12/2025; **Deadline: 2/10/2026**]”, was referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations.*

*There being no further discussions on the floor and no item 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 Communications:*

MISC. COMM. 24-79: (12/9/2025) Transmitting a copy of the executed \$29 million Loan Agreement between the Marianas Public Land Trust and the CNMI Government, dated December 5, 2025. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-80: (Rec'd 12/17/2025) From the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) submitting: *NMHC's Financial Statements and Independent*

*Auditor's Report Years and Additional Information for Year Ended September 30, 2021. [For info]*

MISC. COMM. 24-81: (Rec'd 12/17/2025) From the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) submitting: *NMHC's Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control and on Compliance for Year Ended September 30, 2021. [For info]*

*Pursuant to the actions taken:*

- 1- *Miscellaneous Communications No. 24-80, referencing, "(Rec'd 12/17/2025) From the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) submitting: NMHC's Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report Years and Additional Information for Year Ended September 30, 2021. [For info]", was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means; and*
- 2- *Miscellaneous Communications No. 24-81, referencing, "(Rec'd 12/17/2025) From the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) submitting: NMHC's Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control and on Compliance for Year Ended September 30, 2021. [For info]", was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.*

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded 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. 24-42:** Reporting on H. B. NO. 24-59, entitled: "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." *Your House Committee on Commerce recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 24-59, HD1.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt the following:*

**S. C. R. NO. 24-42:** Reporting on H. B. NO. 24-59, entitled: "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." *Your House Committee on Commerce recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 24-59, HD1.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-42 was carried by voice vote, There was no "nay" vote.*

*There being no item under Item 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 Floor Leader.*

## **REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES**

None

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## **RESOLUTION CALENDAR**

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt H. Res. No. 24-19:*

**H. RES. NO. 24-19:** To Express the Sense of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature Regarding the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's Request for Information and Interest on Commercial Leasing for Outer Continental Shelf Minerals Offshore the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Published in the Federal Register on November 12, 2025 (FR Doc. No. 2025-19852), and to Urge Respect for CNMI Self-Government, Indigenous Rights, Environmental Protection, Equitable Benefit-Sharing, and the Lessons of Global and Pacific History.

*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. 24-19 was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt H. Res. No. 24-20:*

**H. RES. NO. 24-20:** To respectfully recognize the significant contributions of Victorino "Vic" Sablan Cepeda to the educational and vocational advancement of the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

*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. 24-20 was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt H. Res. No. 24-21:*

**H. RES. NO. 24-21:** To encourage the Honorable David M. Apatang, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to declare a Proactive Resilience Emergency Declaration to protect the Commonwealth’s renewable energy future in light of the approaching federal deadline under the 2025 “Big Beautiful Budget” Act (BBB); and urging all agencies to fast-track renewable energy projects before the opportunity expires.

*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. 24-21 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt H. Res. No. 24-22:*

**H. RES. NO. 24-22:** Supporting the establishment of mandatory financial literacy education in CNMI public schools; urging the CNMI Public School System (PSS) and the Board of Education to collaborate with private financial institutions, workforce development partners, and accredited financial education providers; and encouraging a unified, community-wide effort to equip students with essential financial skills needed for lifelong success.

*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. 24-22 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair proceeded to Item No. 16, Bill Calendar, and recognized the Floor Leader.*

## **BILL CALENDAR**

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and Rule LX, Sections 9 and 10.*

*The Chair called for recess.*

*The House recessed at 5:29 p.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 5:29 p.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we just entered the Bill Calendar and the Floor Leader was offering a motion. I now recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and Rule IX, Section 9 and 10 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of S. B. No. 24-04:*

**S. B. NO. 24-04:** To advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI.

*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. 24-04, First and Final Reading, 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	Absent (During Vote)
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Absent (Excused)
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (During Vote)
Representative <u>Malcolm Jason Omar</u>	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Absent (Excused)
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Absent (Excused)

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 14 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 14 members present voting “yes,” Senate Bill No. 24-04 hereby passes the House. I now recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading on H. B. No. 24- 59, HD1:*

**H. B. NO. 24-59, HD1:** 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.

*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 on the passage of H. B. NO. 24-59, HD1, First and Final Reading, 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	Absent (During Vote)
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Absent (Excused)
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (During Vote)
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Absent (Excused)
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Absent (Excused)
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Absent (Excused)

Clerk Brenalyn T. Santos: Mr. Speaker, all 14 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 14 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-59, House Draft 1 hereby passes the House. Colleagues, with nothing further under the Bill Calendar, we now proceed to Item No. 17, Miscellaneous Business, and the floor is open.

### **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

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

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues, for allowing me this time. I want to extend our appreciation to the Chairman of Ways and Means, Representative John Paul Sablan, for his commitment and dedication to getting this revised budget out of the way. And to the members of the Ways and Means Committee, the membership of the House, alongside the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, and the Senate working together with the administration trying to get this revised budget out and ready for our people to move forward. Most especially the Group Health and Life Insurance payment to the settlement fund so our retirees can enjoy the holiday season knowing the fact that they will not be losing the healthcare benefits. And our government employees, those that are in the Group Health and Life Insurance system, and those that are looking forward to participating in the Group Health and Life Insurance. We all know that the Aetna Insurance that has been provided to the CNMI Government is probably the best anywhere else in the world that can compare. We here in the CNMI have something good and beneficial for our retirees and our government employees, and those in the private sector that are under the Aetna Program. It is a little bit costly, but we have done our due diligence to get the payment out. I know the Senate will be acting on the \$3.7 million House Bill No. 24-75 that will address the full amount of payment in addition to what the budget package is appropriating into the Group Health and Life Insurance. Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your patience and for all the many recesses and the sessions you are calling to address the budget cycle. And to the administration and the Marianas Pacific Land Trust for actually sitting down and inking that contractual agreement to relieve the general fund of \$29 million so that we can make that payment to the settlement fund. I know that this is going to be a big challenge that we will face in the coming months, again. As soon as April 1st rolls around, we will be facing another budget cycle. I think we have proven, not just to ourselves but to the general public, that we can sit as members of the Legislature, both the House and the Senate, and address the needs of our people. Even the administration is opening its door to make sure that we get some accurate information so we can address the budget as we need with the challenges we face. Again, Chairman Sablan, thank you for taking the lead. To the members, thank you for your time and efforts. To the Legislative Bureau staff, our Counsels, our Legislative Assistants, our Fiscal Analyst, our Informational Technology team, and our Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you all for your patience. This is good news that is going to come out in the papers tomorrow and our other media outlets here in the CNMI. With that being said, I wish everyone a happy holiday. Hopefully the new year brings us less challenges and more exciting things to look forward to. With that, colleagues, to you and your families, happy holiday! Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*The Chair recognized Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada.*

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I share the same sentiments with Representative Ada. I would also like to thank our good Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee for getting us together and deliberating on the matter with the upper house and the executive branch. Thank you for including the minority group in all your discussions and keeping them posted. This is really a big issue and concern in with the retirees. There are a lot of them that are pending their referral because they are waiting for our action on the Group Health and Life Insurance. So, thank you to everyone who participated and worked hard in producing a product that we all supported today. With that, I would extend a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone who is listening and our people of the Commonwealth. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.*

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to echo the same sentiments that Chairman Attao and Leader Attao had said. I want to thank the Chairman of Ways and Means, Chairman John Paul Sablan, from the greatest village of Precinct 2. I just had to say that. I was kind of disappointed that neither of the two had mentioned that. But he is from the great village of Precinct 2. And Precinct 2 is where it is at, and I also want to thank you all, seriously, for all your hard work. I want to let you all know that this is harder than cutting grass, because this is a lot of back and forth. I commend you for all that you do. I want to thank the Legislative Bureau staff, the Legal Counsels and everyone. I hope you guys can push for my bills so I can start introducing more. And having said that, I just want to wish a merry Christmas to you and your families and a prosperous new year. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.*

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be remiss if I do not personally extend my appreciation and gratitude to the committee members of Ways and Means. I really thank you all for your patience, understanding, and cooperation. The past 3 weeks I had to give you all short notices so that we could push forward the deliberations on the revised budget that we had just passed. I do also want to thank our very great staff of the Legislative Bureau for all their hard work and their inputs on deliberation. Lastly, I want to thank Chairman Jude Hofschneider and the members of the Fiscal Affairs Committee for their patience and their cooperation as we were handling this revised budget on a joint effort. This is something we do not see often, but we did it. We did it jointly so that we can move forward and pass this important revised budget. Lastly, I want to wish you all a very joyous Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*The Chair recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.*

Representative Joel Castro Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to thank our very powerful, powerful Chairman from Precinct 2, and our Vice Chairman, Representative Attao, for all their hard work. Their continuous hard work. Chairman, you have done an excellent job with keep us in the loop in the group chat, and all the information you have been disseminating. I would like to thank the Legislative Bureau staff, too, for all their hard work. The hours and hours of hard work that you all have put in. I would like to thank the Senate members and Senate Jude Hofschneider for such an efficient process. I know it was a lot of work and undertaking, back and forth, like Representative Aquino and Representative Ada had mentioned. But we were able to get it all done today. So, I appreciate all the hard work, all the members. I would like to wish the public, to you, my colleagues, and to the Legislative Bureau staff a safe and joyous Merry Christmas and safe New Year to come.

*The Chair recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan.*

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ditto to everything that everyone said, but here is my concern—I am glad we passed the budget, I really am. But my

questions are about that, because I just received some information that for this Fiscal Year 2026, we allotted \$2 million for utilities. Correct? Yes? That is right. I just received these arrears that the government has lapsed in the past 30 days: \$1.2 million. So in 30 days, the arrears are already at \$1.2 million. How is that going to address that \$2 million? Or how is that going to address that? Mind you, the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation tags a 1% interest every month on late fees, compounded annually. So, I do not think that \$2 million is going to cut it. But then who is going to pay for that short? And who is going to pay for that penalty, the compounding interest? As I read it, because this just came out today, the balance for the CNMI Government—all of it, the central government, the hospital, the Public School System, the Commonwealth Ports Authority, and other government agencies—is \$36,408,265. You compound that with the 1% monthly with an annual, or you put a 1% penalty every month and compound it on the 12th month. That is already at \$2.9 million. I do not know. I hope we win the lottery or sell Pagan to address this issue. Because this thing keeps going on, and the ratepayers are going to keep paying for that. As long as there is no lockbox that mandates the Department of Finance to pay up front all arrears or what is owed today. You use your bill today; you pay today. All the arrears, you know, find out another way. This is not going to be a very Merry Christmas, I will tell you that much. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is just a coincidence that I am going right after Representative Aldan. I want to take the time; I am not going to take up so much, but I want to thank the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Committee of Ways and Means, the staff, the counsels of the Legislative Bureau—who have tirelessly placed their time and commitment to help us—and the fiscal analyst. I cannot underscore the importance of that office. Because while we do not see them roaming around often, they are in that office reading directives, watching the news, and looking at data. So, their contribution is just as equally important as the lawmakers who crafted and the counsels who have guided us through the constitutionality of language. I want to thank my colleagues and my families. And on behalf of my families, my children, and the residents of Precinct 3, Merry Christmas, *dāngkulun si yu 'us ma 'asi, felis pasgua*, and Happy New Year. Thank you, Commonwealth; I love you very much.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 18, Announcements, and recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is just to inform the public, and this is in regards to House Resolution No. 24-19, that tomorrow at the Multipurpose Center, we have the Federal Seabed Mineral Leasing RFI town hall meeting. It starts at 5 o'clock tomorrow. So, if people want to know what is going on with their resources, I highly recommend that they attend that townhall meeting. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.*

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also want to take this opportunity to wish the great and awesome people of Precinct 2, from the great Chairman

Sablan and myself, a very Merry Christmas. And we want to inform the people of Precinct 2 and the people of the CNMI that Chairman Sablan and I have been hard at work cleaning the Chalan Kanoa cemetery. And we are about 90% complete. And to come down to the Christmas village for the last days that it is in Precinct 2, the Multipurpose Center.

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

## **ADJOURNMENTI**

**Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores:** 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 discussion on the floor, the motion to adjournment was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The House adjourned at 5:48 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Brenalyn T. Santos  
House Journal Clerk

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## **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. 24-37: To rename Isa Drive to “Governor Carlos S. Camacho Drive” in honor of the First Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. REP. DENITA KAIPAT YANGETMAI of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez*) Introduced on December 5, 2025.

**THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:**

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### ***Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during House Session on December 5, 2025:***

H. B. NO. 24-75: To authorize the continued payment of employer premiums for the Group Health & Life Insurance (GHLI) Program by permitting expenditure of \$3,747,585.00 recently identified by the Governor that shall be appropriated by the Legislature for FY 2026. REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San*)

*Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*). Introduced on December 5, 2025; moved and placed on the Bill Calendar; and moved and passed on First and Final Reading without amendments.

[ADDED-12/5/2025] H. B. NO. 24-76: To adopt the village delimitation and name master map for Saipan as the sole village delimitation and name master map of Saipan and to provide for the Office of the Mayor of Saipan to be the primary custodian for maintaining and preserving the master map and for the Department of Commerce – Central Statistics Division to be the secondary custodian; and for other purposes. REP. DENITA KAIPAT YANGETMAI of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez*). Introduced on December 5, 2025. Referred to: House Committee on Natural Resources and to the House Committee on Commerce on 12/9/2025 (MEMO).

[ADDED-12/5/2025] H. B. NO. 24-77: To amend the operating budget and scope of operations of the Office of Grants Management and State Clearinghouse (CNMI OGM-SC); and for other purposes. REP. MARISSA R. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez*). Introduced on December 5, 2025. Referred to: House Committee on Ways and Means on 12/9/2025 (MEMO).

[ADDED-12/5/2025] H. L. B. NO. 24-36: To re-appropriate the remaining fund balance of \$89,217.00 under Saipan Local Law 22-15 (Project Code 3754H) for the maintenance and improvements of Commonwealth parks and recreational facilities in Precinct III and the maintenance and improvements of Garapan Core and the Froilan C. Tenorio Beach Road pathway in Precinct III; and for other purposes. REP. MARISSA R. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself*). Introduced on December 5, 2025, and transmitted to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation.

[ADDED-12/5/2025] H. L. B. NO. 24-37: To rename Isa Drive to “Governor Carlos S. Camacho Drive” in honor of the First Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. REP. DENITA KAIPAT YANGETMAI of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez*) Introduced on December 5, 2025; requires three legislative days appearance prior to transmittal to the respective Legislative Delegation.

[ADDED-12/5/2025] H. RES. NO. 24-19: To Express the Sense of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature Regarding the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s Request for Information and Interest on Commercial Leasing for Outer Continental Shelf Minerals Offshore the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Published in the Federal Register on November 12, 2025 (FR Doc. No. 2025-19852), and to Urge Respect for CNMI Self-Government, Indigenous Rights, Environmental Protection, Equitable Benefit-Sharing, and the Lessons of Global and Pacific History. REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) Introduced on December 5, 2025; moved and placed on the Resolution Calendar; no action taken.

[ADDED-12/5/2025] H. RES. NO. 24-20: To respectfully recognize the significant contributions of Victorino “Vic” Sablan Cepeda to the educational and vocational advancement of the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. REP. MARISSA R. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) Introduced on December 5, 2025; moved and placed on the Resolution Calendar; no action taken.