



GOV. COMM. 24-127
(HOUSE)

David M. Apatang
Governor

Dennis James C. Mendiola
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 18, 2026

GOV2026-180

The Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez
Speaker
House of Representatives
Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950



The Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors
President
The Senate; Twenty-Fourth Northern
Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

3/18/26

Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **House Bill No. 24-26**, entitled, "To amend the crime of child abuse.", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 24-26**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

DAVID M. APATANG
Governor

cc: Lieutenant Governor; Attorney General; Commonwealth Law Revision Commission;
Public Auditor; DCCA, Division of Youth Services;
Special Assistant for Administration; Programs and Legislative Review

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**TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANA COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

APRIL 24, 2025

REPRESENTATIVE MALCOLM J. OMAR, OF SAIPAN, PRECINCT 4 (*for himself*; Representative Julie M. A. Ogo) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

H. B. No. 24-26

AN ACT

TO AMEND THE CRIME OF CHILD ABUSE.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Bill was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations, which submitted Standing Committee Report 24-25; adopted 8/29/2025.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
FIRST AND FINAL READING, AUGUST 29, 2025;**
without amendments and transmitted to **THE SENATE.**

IN THE SENATE

The Bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government, and Law, which submitted Standing Committee Report 24-51; adopted 2/4/2026.

THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, FEBRUARY 4, 2026;
without amendments and returned to **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

**H. B. NO. 24- 26 IS DULY PASSED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE.**



Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SECOND DAY, SECOND REGULAR SESSION

AUGUST 29, 2025

H. B. No. 24-26

AN ACT

TO AMEND THE CRIME OF CHILD ABUSE.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN
MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

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

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

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

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

3 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.**

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

6 “(a) A person commits the offense of child abuse if the person:

7 [1-3 unchanged]

8 (4) knowingly or recklessly, by act or omission, engages in conduct
9 that endangers a child younger than 18 years by:

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

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

18 **SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY.**

19 If any provisions of this Act or the application of any such provision to any
20 person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent
21 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to
22 persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be
23 affected thereby.

24 **SECTION 4. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**


25 This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be construed as
26 affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes
27 repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.
28 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under
29 or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of

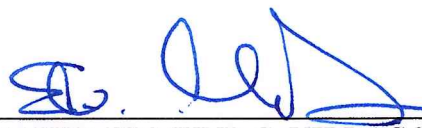
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1 terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall
2 already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.


3 **SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

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

Attested to by: 
Linda B. Muña, House Clerk

Certified by: 
SPEAKER EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ
House of Representatives
24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

Approved this 18th day of March, 2026


DAVID M. APATANG
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands