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THE SENATE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE



SENATE JOURNAL

SECOND SPECIAL SESSION – 2025

SJ 24-06

1st Day

Friday, May 9, 2025

In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President, Dennis C. Mendiola, issued a session call on May 2, 2025 that the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature will convene this open and public session. The notice, the official session call, and the session agenda was filed in the Office of the Senate Clerk; released to the media; and posted at the Entrance Halls of the Office of the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives, posted on the Commonwealth Legislature's website at www.cnmileg.net

The Honorable Dennis C. Mendiola, Senate President, presided

President Dennis C. Mendiola: [NO AUDIO] May I please ask everyone to please stand for a moment of silence.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Presente</i> (Present)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Present
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Estague' ha'</i> (Here)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Here
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Gaige</i> (Here)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors	Here
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Absent - excused
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Present
Senator Dennis C. Mendiola (President)	Here

CLERK: Mr. President, eight (8) members are present and one (1) member absent.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Clerk. With eight members present, we have the necessary numbers to conduct today's session. Clerk, please let the record reflect that Senator Magofna is out of the Commonwealth unofficial business. Before we move any further, allow me

to recognize today's support staff. We have our Senate Clerk, Ms. Dolores Bermudes. We got our Legal Counsel, Mr. Joe Bermudes. We got our Fiscal Analyst, Mr. David Demapan. We have our Legislative assistant, Ms. Jolyn Tagabuel. We have our Sergeant at Arms, our high-speed Sergeant at Arms, Mr. Benjamin Terlaje. Welcome members. Before we proceed, may I recognize the Floor Leader to make the proper motion to suspend rules? Thank you. Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to suspend rules to receive unnumbered communications and pertinent rules to act on Standing Committee Report 24-07.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you. Floor Leader. There's a motion made to suspend pertinent rules and it has been seconded. All in favor of that motion, say aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Pertinent rules are hereby suspended. Moving on to Item B, Public Comment. Before I open the public comment portion of our agenda. Some ground rules pursuant to our Senate rules. Anyone wishing to make a statement. Please limit your statement to five minutes. If you wish to submit a testimony in writing you, you may do so. For record purposes, please state your full name and the item and the agenda you would be discussing or making a comment on public comment is hereby open. Good afternoon, ma'am.

PUBLIC COMMENT

YC Senator Jireh Cruz: Good afternoon. My name is Senator Jireh Cruz. I'm the CNMI Youth Congress Representative for the island of Tinian. I just want to speak on behalf of my Vice Speaker of the 20th CNMI Youth Congress Senator Monique Luisa P. Mendiola. This is responding to the H.B. No. 24-20, requiring conspicuous warning labels on all betelnut products sold or imported into the CNMI. Mr. President, on behalf of Speaker Vinnie Juan Sablan and my colleagues in the 20th CNMI Youth Congress, we express our strong support for House Bill 24-20, which seeks to mandate clear and visible warning labels on all betelnut products and containers imported to the CNMI. This measure is critical in raising awareness about the significant health risks associated with betelnut and consumption. The Youth Congress recognizes betelnut as a known carcinogen and the leading cause of oral cancer in our islands. Currently, the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in the CNMI. As Representatives of the Youth, we are deeply concerned about the growing normalization of betelnut youth among young people, and the lack of public awareness and its health risks. While we acknowledge its deep culture of significance, we do believe it is essential to ensure that consumers, especially young people, are fully informed of the risks. This bill is an important step toward promoting healthier, potentially life-saving choices among our youth and the broader community. We commend the authors of this bill and the Legislature for addressing this urgent public health issue. The 20th CNMI Youth Congress remains committed to

supporting policies that prioritize the wellbeing of our youth and the future of our community. Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to the wellbeing of our people.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you. Senator Cruz. Senator, Youth Congress.

YC Senator Jireh Cruz: Correct. Yes, sir.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Cruz. Any other member of our community that's wishing to make a comment? Okay, moving forward, I now close down. Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

David Evangelista: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman yan Hafa Adai. Welcome to our beautiful island of Tinian. I strongly support the betelnut move to put a patent on it, and a sense of direction. Finally, at last. I think we keep kicking the can down the road for so many years, and the author of that bill is I would like to congratulate that person, whoever came up with that bill. Maybe it's the entire Senate with the entire House in regards to that bill. Mr. President with all respect, i kutura kasi i pupulu yan eyi mu haggan na pugua the lime in that they make mas, if you take lime and put it to a pot that's been cooking for so many hours and it turns black, that lime will turn that pot back to its normal. Like brand new anion fun. Now, it's not or the pupulu that's harming I think the human being. It is used of our ancestors. And with a little bit of rice, no lime, it's poison. They go, people go out there to make ways of making ends meet, medical referral. So, we're wasting tons of money going all the way over to San Diego and California. For a checkup and that money could be used elsewhere. The abandoned education, especially track and field. Now, I don't want to sideline that law. With all due respect funding. We can probably get a dentist instead of flying over there to Saipan and get attention with full respect. I strongly support that. Let's stick to our culture. *Dankolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase.*

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, sir. For the record, please state your name.

David Evangelista: David Evangelista.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, sir. You're welcome. Any other comments? There's none being that there's no other comments. Moving on our agenda.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

NONE

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Item C on the agenda, there's none.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

NONE

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Item D, there's none.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY

NONE

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Item E. There is none.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS
NONE**

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Item F, there's none. Item G, clerk?

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE

Senate Clerk: Mr. President, we have five on our agenda 24-13 to 24-17.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. Discussion from the members? I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you. Mr. President. At this time, I move to reject House Communication 24-13.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There is a motion offered by the Floor Leader to reject Senate Joint Resolution No. 24-02 pertaining to House Communication 24-13 and it was seconded. Clerk, please call the roll or discussion. Senator Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Thank you, Mr. President. I just wanted to know if there would be any, substitute to the bill because we're basically rejecting the House amendments made to a joint resolution introduced by yourself to call for the Executive Branch of the government to deliver their State of the Commonwealth Address.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: *Un dankolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase* Senator Babauta. Absolutely there is one that we are going to be introducing when we get to that portion. However, we do have to reject this. Based on date, just so that everybody understands the communication between the Legislature and the Executive Branch has come to an agreement in terms of the date. And I think it's important for us to ensure that the date is in this resolution. Any other discussion? Ready? Clerk call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors	Yes
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Excused

Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Dennis C. Mendiola (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting yes.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. With eight members voting yes, Senate Joint Resolution No. 24-02, House Communication No. 24-13 is hereby rejected. Next item on the agenda.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SENATE

Senate Clerk: Mr. President, we have three Senate Communications 24-60 to 24-62.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Clerk. Any comments from the members? Thank you. Okay, moving on. Next item on the agenda. Communications from the Delegate.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CNMI DELEGATE NONE

President Dennis C. Mendiola: There's none. Unfinished Business. Recognize the Floor Leader.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Gov. Msg. No. 24-27:** Apr. 11, 2025 – *Vetoed* S.L.B. No. 24-01, D1 – To amend TLL No. 21-09 to provide for regulatory complaint internet gaming; to authorize the establishment of the Tinian Stable Token; and for other purposes.
2. **Gov. Msg. No. 24-40:** Apr. 07, 2025 – Signed into law and disapproved parts of H.L.B. 24-03, D2 – To appropriate revenues collected for the Third Senatorial District pursuant to PL 20-59, becomes *Saipan Local Law No. 24-02*.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Mr. President, at this time, can we allow for discussions?

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Yes. Would you like to offer the motion? Then we get into discussion first. Okay. Opening the floor for discussion. Go ahead, Senator Hofschneider.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Under the question posted by the Floor Leader which particular item that we offer the discussion for, do we need to go through the motion of what is being asked and we go in discussion?

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Absolutely. Mr. Chairman Senator Hofschneider, and that's why Floor Leader has to offer the motion first. And then we get into the discussion.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: So, clarify. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Recognize Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Mr. President, at this time, I move to override the Governor's vetoed Senate Local Bill 24-01, D1; To amend Tinian Local Law 21-9 to provide for regulatory complaint. I'm sorry. Correction on this. To amend TLL No. 21-09 to provide for regulatory complaint internet gaming; to authorize the establishment of the Tinian Stable Token; and for other purposes.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There is a motion offered to override the Governor's vetoes on Senate Local Bill No. 24-01, D1 on the Governor's Communication No. 24-27 and it was seconded. Any discussion by the members? Recognize Senator Karl King-Nabors.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Mr. President. With regards to the veto message by the Governor. A little back history on this piece of legislation this is not the first time this bill was introduced. It was introduced prior in the previous Legislature and was vetoed. One of the things that was interesting about the first veto message that it did not have any language in the veto that contested Tinian's ability and authority to have this Stable Coin Component as a function of a payment method that already exists on our online gaming initiative here in the island of Tinian. The initial veto message actually cited the fact that there was an age restriction that needed to be implemented, which was interesting because that very language that was used to veto that bill is a part of the federal statute and guideline for such operations to occur. So, we went ahead, took all of the veto the previous messages. And tried to address them and actually took the language from the federal statute and inserted that language into the findings of the bill so we could satisfy a lot of the issues. Then in the second veto, there was an issue regarding the jurisdiction of Tinian and it not being a state I would argue, and that this is actually a far more stringent and efficient way to oversee the online gaming aspect. Stable coin, again is tracked through software and if anything, it allows for more transparency when it comes to The Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission. It allows for federal anti-money laundering statutes, banking tax laws will apply to casino, my banking and tax laws, and not to mention fencing regulations. This will be again, a one for one component. This statute is being introduced and implemented through multiple states. I also want to mention that of the market, us utilizing stable coins globally, it's a hundred-billion-dollar market. 1% of that market is \$1 billion. This legislation stands to in a moment, in a time where we're going through so much economic hardships, I find it difficult that we're constantly having to step over obstacles. When we're trying to incentivize and look for ways to bring in revenue that don't affect our environment, that don't require a brick and mortar, that don't impact our land by having, figuring out how they're going to treat their sewage. This is in line with economic diversification, which is a much needed is, which is much needed here in the Marianas as we know that the economy has yet to bounce back from our pre-pandemic levels. And there's no really no way to forecast when we will get back to that level. With that again, I ask the member of the support of the members for the override. Thank you and I yield.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Senator Karl King-Nabors. Any other members member wishing to make a comment? Recognize Senator Celina Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Thank you Mr. President and thank you Senator Karl. I wish to express my concerns with respect to this bill. There's so much this is a new industry that we're trying to, if I understand it correctly for the island of Tinian and I support that. I support the intent of the bill to create municipalities that are self-sufficient and with the least amount of resistance from Central Government. However, my deepest concern is that this Tinian Stable Token would create a similar form of payment like bitcoin is cryptocurrency, basically, is that?

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Recognize Senator Karl Nabors.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: If I may, just to correct it not like Bitcoin. It will be using similar technology as to Bitcoin because the two most prevalent coins currently in the market is Bitcoin and Ethereum. Ethereum has been hacked multiple times and has caused a lot of problems. The Bitcoin. Itself is actually in reference to an online currency that doesn't go to this one-to-one mechanism. It is actually a fixed amount of Bitcoin that is in the market, which is why it is used as a vehicle for investment in stock because that volatility of not having the one-to-one chain exchange rate will make it a problem. And which is why we going through lengthy efforts to ensure that what we were rolling out would be not only suitable for the community, but was also safe and would allow for extreme transparency if implemented. I yield.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Nabors. Back to Senator Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Thank you, Mr. President. My concern is that we lack the resources, we lack the expertise or the knowledge to enforce these. Especially when we're dealing with internet and online gambling. We are restricted by federal statutes and must comply with that. And I understand that you earlier alluded to basically adopting some of the federal statute language into this bill. But I have deep concerns with respect to the lack of resources, the lack of in terms of manpower, in terms of the internet technology we have in the government to enforce these types of investments or transactions. So that is where my concerns lie. Like I said, I, and you also alluded to the fact that, we struggle with trying to find creative and innovative ways to diversify our economy and our industries. But this is my personal opinion, I don't believe that gambling is the only thing that we can be. Looking forward to every single time there's an investor that comes in. That's why I have not laid out any initiative with respect to gambling because I don't believe in a gambling at senior someone. But there are so many social ills that come with gambling, and I'm very cautious and very conservative when it comes to supporting bills with gambling in it. I yield.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Babauta. Any other members? Wishing to make a comment. Senator King-Nabors.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Mr. President, if I may, just to clarify. Okay. And it'll be brief Senator Babauta. Okay. With all due respect I appreciate your concern, however, that the regulatory component and the expertise is left to the people of the island of Tinian and is our responsibility because that is our initiative. We have been operating casinos since the nineties, as a matter of fact. We were the first to have online gaming in our language, in our initiative for gaming. So that answers that component. I believe there was another thing you had mentioned you had an issue with the implementation resources and the resources. So, the resources that part is, with all due respect, that should be for us to worry about how we are going to roll it out. If we're

going to roll it out. We're just asking for the authority. So, the second component, which you're talking about gambling, is not the option. I want to be very clear. This is not online gambling within the CNMI. This is allowing the CNMI, as a matter of fact, in the language, it will not be here. This is going to be inter-jurisdictional. We cannot do gaming with Vegas, with Atlantic City. This is going to be for a multitude of other locations. So, this is going to be international. All of the software tracks all of the metadata. So, at any point in time that the Federal Government. Deems it that they need to go and look into any transaction that seems suspicious they have access to it because we have tracked it from birth to death, so to speak. So, any questions regarding this are not gambling for the CNMI. This is allowing Tinian to do online gambling outside of our waters in the CNMI and using a stable coin as a payment method through the Tinian Treasury. And with that I yield.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Nabors. I now recognize Senator Manny Castro.

Senator Manny G.T. Castro: Thank you, Mr. President. With respect to respect to this bill I tried to actually introduce a digital economy advancement bill in the House. Unfortunately, it didn't make it but the main focus here is related diversification. If we already have the regulations for an industry, we have the systems in place. We really should look into other forms of revenue generation and improving our current economic situation with respect to some of the statements that were made earlier, even though I introduced that digital economy advancement bill during my time in the House of Representatives, Tinian and Rota were actually going to benefit the most because they already have the regulations and the structures in place to, it's pretty much package ready. Although it's scary, a lot of times we fear things we don't understand. But one thing to note is that internet-based business has the highest gross profit margin in any industry. It's bigger than tourism, it's bigger than other industries. I, with the with all due respect I think we really need to look at the long-term benefits of this. If we can do something like this, that takes away the poker machines on island this may be the method where we're getting so much revenue from off island because we have limited natural resources, right? So, internet-based industry makes sense. We have Google that's already bringing in a line. We have, star link from here. So, we have, again, limited natural resource. What do we have? We have people. We have the internet, we have the world, and we need to tap into that market. So, if in any business, it's usually the first movers that enter an industry that win, so why not us? Thank you.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Senator Castro. Recognize Senator Hofschneider.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Mr. President thank you. And I was just listening to the exchange between the members and I appreciate the conversation in as much as we, some of us have been very prevalent in terms of that being anti casino. But I always want to remind our people really that, it's unfortunate that IPI has to be in that situation today, but let me remind everyone again. It generated a total of about \$284,912,400 of resources, which includes \$173 million of casino gross revenue receipts, \$99 million and change for license and fees, and about \$11 million of operating transfers in and out from the General Fund. If I will not even read the remaining numbers because the fact of the matter is, it is the sole action that the leaders in leadership then that took the boat move and save the Retirement Fund, save about 3000 families from diminishing their income in overnight. It's unfortunate again that today, it is where it's at today, but it is for this reason that we

are going to continue seeking for ways to try and diversify. Tourism is not going to come back anytime soon. It is not going to come back. Thank God for some excise tax being generated by collectively supporting the military footprints here in the CNMI, and it is creating some excise tax, much needed excise tax. But even at that, *ti nahong para un sustene i obligasion* and we all know that, especially us in the Legislature, we know that what's before us right now with the budget, we're on the hook to try and find money for the minimum annual payment for the Retirement Fund. We're being asked to credit ourselves out of debt again. So, this action that we are considering it's a component of a collective effort, a collaborative effort amongst many of us that we need to try finding other solution to generate the funds. And as what Senate Vice President was saying, it's a little bit different than the typical, brick and mortar casino gaming establishment. We are changing that. We've evolved into where we're at today to get into the online gaming, as a matter of fact had an opportunity to meet with one of the proponents of those sports betting out of Vegas and where there's challenges for bad actors. Absolutely, there's always, but what we need to do is we need to grow and try to do our best to we without those bad actors. The bottom line is we really need to find a solution with our dying revenue stream. It would be interesting the budget process, if we are going to go 80 hours, it would be interesting on a budget that we are about to entertain in the next few months if we are not going to ask someone in the community to cut. Had this legislation been approved, then we could have been like, people would be knocking our doors to come in and try it out. Now, as far as creating the robust software system, it's in the component, it's in the regulatory component of the gaming commission now. It's not new, the gaming commissioners here and even in Rota, and they always hire experts, subject matter expert from also to help us guide through. As what the Vice President again alluded to earlier, we're getting monies from like jurisdictions that allow that into the portal that we are going to sponsor here. Respectfully ask that we, I guess thank you for the support, but respectfully ask everyone, the public really, that are watching, please support this initiative. It's not a bad thing really to try different things. We're asking it to be lawful. That's why we're here today. We're talking about it, but again, I cannot overemphasize and please, I'm going to remind people again, *yanggen ti casino industry matai i Retirement Fund, yan trentan miyon \$30 million dollars un na halom i licensee*. Para hu save i retirement. *Pues kada sakkan kinse miyon un na fatto ni para kontinua ma'passe bente sinko* [inaudible] *siento. Pues hafa ti pa' explore enao na option. Todo tiempo guaha bad actors lao ti chi'cho'ta enao para tafan suha enao*. It's not immune to the CNMI enao bad actors. Even in the Asian jurisdiction, they always deal with it almost daily. What do we do? They keep trying their best. We keep trying. We cannot stop. Thank you.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Senator Hofschneider. Any other members? Clerk call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta

I wish to express that I'm sorry without further knowledge about what this industry will bring my vote will have to be, "No".

Senator Ronnie M. Calvo

Yes

Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro

Hunggan (Yes)

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz

Yes

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors	Yes
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Excused
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Dennis C. Mendiola (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, seven (7) members voting yes, one (1) no and one (1) absent.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. With seven members voting yes to override Governor's veto of Senate Local Bill No. 24-01, D1 we hereby override in the Senate. Communication number two we will leave it an Unfinished Business and handle this on our next session. Next item on the agenda, Item K, Pre-filed Bills, Initiatives, Local Bills and Resolutions. Recognize the Floor Leader.

PRE-FILED BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. At this time on behalf of the author, I introduce Senate Bill 24-34; To restructure the electricity market in the CNMI by deregulating electric services and for other purposes. Authored by Senator Corina Magofna. And if I may, Senate President, I'd like to also introduce Senate Bill 24-35; To amend Title 4, Division 8 of the Commonwealth Code to exempt certain childcare providers from being charged commercial utility rates; and for other purposes. Introduced by myself and welcome others. Thank you.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. I recognize Senator Francisco Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. This is to formally introduce Senate Bill No. 24-36; To enact a "Castle Doctrine" law for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, affirming the right of individuals to defend themselves, their families, and their property against intruders and attackers and for other purposes. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Senator Cruz. I recognize Senator Celina Babauta.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Point of order Mr. President, I think these are supposed to be introduced in the next agenda item.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you for that clarification. Senator Cruz and Senator Cruz. I'm going to have to recognize you on Item L to go ahead and reintroduce that. We are on Item K, this is our actually existing bills that are already pre-filed. We would go ahead and move to the next item of the agenda, which is Item L. And I recognize Senator Francisco Cruz. Please go ahead and restate your bill please.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, this is to formally introduce Senate Bill No. 24-36; A Bill for an Act, to enact a "Castle Doctrine" law for the Commonwealth

of the Northern Mariana Islands, affirming the right of individuals to defend themselves, their families, and their property against intruders and attackers and for other purposes. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Francisco Cruz. Again, my apologies that I jumped the gun. There's a lot of excitement here. I recognize Senator Celina Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase Siñot Presidente.* I would like to introduce Senate Resolution 24-04; To call for Taiwan's inclusion in the World Health Assembly (WHA), the International Police Criminal Organization (INTERPOL), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). And I would like to respectfully ask this body to please move it to the Resolution Calendar for action today. If there are no objections.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Any objections from the members.

All members voiced, "no objection".

No objection. We will go ahead and put that on the Resolution Calendar. Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to place Senate Resolution 24-04 on today's Resolution Calendar.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There's a motion placing Senate Resolution 24-04 on today's Resolution Calendar and it was seconded. Any discussion? All those in favor of that, please say aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

The ayes have it. Motion carries. Thank you. I'll now recognize, I guess myself to go ahead and formally introduce Senate Joint Resolution No. 24-04. This is to call for a Joint Session of the Legislature to receive the Governor's State of the Commonwealth Address. The only difference from the initial rejected SOCA is the date, we're going to put it on the 29th versus the 30th. It's a Thursday, I'm asking the members if there's no objection, if we can go ahead and act on this today as well. And I'm asking all the members to jump on this and sign off on being co-authors of this. Thank you. Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to place Senate Joint Resolution No. 24-04 on today's Resolution Calendar.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Floor Leader. There's a motion to place Senate Joint Resolution 24-04 on today's calendar for action and it has been seconded. Any discussion? All in favor of that motion, say aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

Motion carries. Recognize Senator Karl King-Nabors.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Mr. President. At this moment I would like to introduce Senate Bill 24-37; To amend the authority for compliance officers to staff treatment programs in the Judiciary.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Nabors. Any other members wishing to introduce a bill today? If there's none moving on. Next item of the agenda, Reports of Standing Committee. May I recognize the Floor Leader to make the proper motion to suspend rules to accept Standing Committee Report from the EAGI Committee. Recognize Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. I'm sorry the rule was suspended in the beginning. Sorry for that confusion.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: And so, at this time Mr. President, if I may, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-06 from the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications reporting on the informational hearing with Commonwealth Utilities Corporation.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There's a motion to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 24-06 and it was seconded. Any discussions from the members? Ready? All in favor of that motion say aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

Motion carries. Standing Committee Report 24-06 is hereby adopted. Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 24-07 reporting on the executive appointment of Mr. Lilio B. Tipples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There's a motion offered by the Floor Leader to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 24-07 to confirm Mr. Tiples and it was seconded. Any discussions from the members? Recognize Senator Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate accepting this report due to Mr. Tiples' appointment will expire this month on the 17th, so I appreciate the support of everyone Mr. President. This is the Standing Committee Report No. 24-07. This is the executive appointment of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District. Your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District, begs leave to report as follows: After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples' executive appointment to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the appointment of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Tiples' overall credentials to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are three oral testimonies in support of the appointee, of which one hard copy of the testimonies stated was submitted during the hearing, three written testimonies in support of the Appointee; and no written or oral testimonies in opposition of the Appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the Appointee that are included in this report. Therefore, based on the overall assessment of Mr. Tiples' credentials, experiences, testimonies, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District. Your committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District. The public hearing was conducted on April 23, 2025, in the Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. And during the hearing, certain recommendation issues and concerns were raised for appointee to look into when confirmed. In conclusion, all the required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the executive appointment of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District is in accordance with 4 CMC § 3102. Therefore, your Committee consents to the confirmation of Mr. Lilio B. Tiples to serve as a member of the Board of Professional Licensing representing the Third Senatorial District. Again, I ask the body of the Senate to kindly support Standing Committee Report No. 24-07. Thank you.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Cruz. Any other members wishing to make a comment. Great. Okay. I do wish to make a comment on this. And I did watch the Committee hearing and I'm a little bit concerned on some of the response during that hearing. Although I do support the confirmation I do wish to make this statement and hopefully that the EAGI Committee can stay on top of some of these, individuals being appointed and confirmed by this body and, making sure that we exercise our fiduciary responsibility and staying on top of them and making sure that the issues that were raised are actually being addressed at their level. I just wish to make that statement. Any other members? If there's none, clerk please [...] Recognize Senator Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. Since this is not a paying valid position and it's very hard to find individuals in this capacity volunteers. I kindly, ask for your patience and understanding and the consideration of the body to support. Thank you.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Senator Cruz. Clerk call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors	Yes
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Excused
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Dennis C. Mendiola (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting yes.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. With eight members voting yes, Standing Committee Report 24-07 is hereby adopted and confirms Mr. Lilio Tiples. Thank you. Moving on to Resolution Calendar. I recognize the Floor Leader.

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. I move to adopt Senate Joint Resolution 24-03; To support the passage of H.R. 2132, which aims to reestablish eligibility for NMI Airports to participate in the Essential Air Service.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There is a motion offered by the Floor Leader to adopt Senate Joint Resolution 24-03 and it has been seconded. All those in favor to adopt Senate Joint Resolution 24-03 say aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

Motion carries. Moving on. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. Next is Senate Resolution 24-04; To call for Taiwan's inclusion in the World Health Assembly (WHA), the International Police Criminal Organization (INTERPOL), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. Recognize Senator Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Leader in world technology with their microchip industry which is second to none and their democrat dedication to democratic governance and respect for the rule of law. They have desire to be a participant of the Interpol organization as well. Taiwan, in particular for those who do not know. During the early stages when the COVID-19 virus was breaking out in China, Taiwan immediately assembled all their medical professionals. And in fact, it was Taiwan that created the vaccine to stay the effects of COVID-19. So, in other words, they don't just talk the talk, they walk the talk, they practice what they preach. And I would like to ask for everyone's support for the adoption of this resolution and I welcome other sponsors as well. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Babauta. Any other members wish to make a comment? Recognize Senator Hofschneider.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: May I request for a short recess, please? I wanted to just do an offline conversation.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Short recess.

The Senate recessed at 2:25 p.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 2:32 p.m.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Recognize Senator Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Mr. President. Prior to the recess, of course, we were discussing this resolution and I wanted to bring it up to the attention of the Clerk and the Counsel. If they would consider it a technical amendment on page three, line 10, towards the middle of that line it says, director semicolon, Mary Rodriguez. I believe that should be Rodriguez and that is the only typographical error that I caught on the final draft. So, if we can consider that a technical and move forward, please. Thank you.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

P-

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Babauta. I think the Clerk can just go ahead and make that correction. So, there is a motion offered by the Floor Leader to adopt Senate Resolution No. 24-04 and it was seconded. Any other discussions from the members? All in favor of that motion, say aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

Motion carries Senate Resolution No. 24-04 is hereby adopted. Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to adopt Senate Joint Resolution No. 24-04; To call for a joint session of the Legislature to receive the Governor's State of the Commonwealth Address.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There is a motion to adopt Senate Joint Resolution 24-04 for the State of the Commonwealth Address and it was seconded.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Point of order. Point of order. I believe the Floor Leader calls for the adoption of Senate Resolution. Oh, I'm sorry. It says joint resolution. My apologies. Same number. Yes. That's what the confusion is.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: The order is pointed. Thank you, Senator. There is a motion offered by the Floor Leader to adopt Senate Joint Resolution No. 24-04 and I was seconded. Any discussions by the members before we adopt this? I just wanted to state again, for the record that the only clarification on this as we admit introduce this and adopt it today is really just the date. So, I just want to state that for the record. All in favor of that motion, say aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

Motion carries. Senate Joint Resolution No. 24-04 is hereby adopted. Moving on Bill Calendar, recognize the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. Before we act on either the bills, at this time, I move for the suspension of Rule 7, Section 10 to withdraw bills from Committee.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Again, thank you Floor Leader. There is a motion offered by the Floor Leader to suspend pertinent rules for action for today's session and it was seconded. Any discussions by the members? All in favor of that motion say aye. Those opposed, say nay.

All members voiced, "aye".

Those rules stated by the Floor Leader is hereby suspended. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: First up on the Bill Calendar we have House Bill No. 24-17; To amend 2 CMC § 2174 to provide the Commonwealth Ports Authority greater autonomy in managing its finances. I move for its passage.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There's there a motion to pass House Bill No. 24-17 and it was seconded. Any discussions by the members? Recognize Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you again, Mr. President. At this time, I would like to motion to amend House Bill 24-17 and if you can follow along, starting on page one to replace the word removing with suspending. Sorry, Section 1, starting from line 2. And then on line 6, replacing the word removes with suspense. Same with line 4, page 2. Line 8 on page 4 line 8 to replace repeal with suspension. Line 16 to add for five years after reallocate funds. Line 18 add language provided further than any reallocation of funds of the airport and seaport shall be first used to restore the work hours of the employees to 40 hours per week. On page 3, starting on line 13, we are adding the language that the House has had stricken off because we are going, I'm going to propose to add an additional section, and so we're reinstating the language that was on Section 2(c). Additionally, on page 4 to add a Section E for a period of five years after the enactment of this act. All income, revenue, or funds of whatever nature arising out of or derived from activities in connection with or from the use of the airports and seaports under the control of the authority may be reallocated and expended for airport and or seaport related activities. Provided that any reallocation of airport and seaport funds shall be first used to restore the work hours of the employees to 40 hours per week. And then on line 15 on page 4, add a Section 3 suspension clause 4 CMC Section 2174(c) is suspended for five years after the enactment of this act and all section numberings will follow thereafter. And so moved.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There is a secondary motion offered by the Floor Leader to make amendments in the form of SD1, and it was seconded. Discussions on that motion. Recognize Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. Again, these are discussions that were made in the Committee before CPA reallocates funds from the seaport to the airport. We wanted to ensure that the CPA employees their hours are reinstated to four 40 hours per week. We understand that since the austerity measures were set into place CPA never really got back to the full work schedule, and so they have been at a 72-hour work or per pay period for these past couple of months. And so, while there are funds that were identified in the Seaport revenues that could be used to address some of the operational needs of both airport and seaport, we wanted to ensure that the employees are well taken care of with the understanding that there has been a lot of employees that have resigned to seek greener pastures because they can make up for these hours elsewhere. And so, we wanted to support them in that way so that we don't go through any issues with high turnover and for, to lose additional employees. Additionally, I am proposing that the five, that 4 CMC Section 2124(c) will be suspended for five years so that we can reassess or reevaluate after five years if this show. Whether it is necessary to continue with the suspension. And that again we don't want to make this permanent and that we can also whoever the legislators are and after five years, if this is something that is needed, again it can be revisited. And so, that's all I wanted to share. Thank you.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Floor Leader. Any other discussions from the members? Ready? There is a secondary motion offered by the Floor Leader to make amendments on House Bill 24-17 as stated in the form of SD1 and it was seconded. Clerk call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors	Yes
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Excused
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Dennis C. Mendiola (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting yes.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. With eight members voting yes for the motion offered by the Floor Leader. House Bill 24-17, SD1 is hereby or the amendments are now passed. Going back to the original motion, recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. So, I move for the passage of House Bill 24-17 as amended.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Okay, thank you. Floor Leader. There's a motion offered by the Floor Leader and it was seconded for House Bill 24-17, SD1. It was seconded. Any discussions by the members? Clerk, call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors	Yes
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Excused
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Dennis C. Mendiola (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting yes.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. With eight members voting yes, House Bill No. 24-17, SD1 hereby passes the Senate. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. At this time, I move for the passage of House Bill 24-20; To require conspicuous warning labels be placed on all betel nut products and containers that are imported or sold in the CNMI.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There's a motion offered by the Floor Leader to pass House Bill No. 24-20 and it was seconded. Any discussions by the members? Recognize Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you. I just wanted to share that while this did not make committee, we did receive support from the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Saipan Seventh Day Adventist Dental Clinic and Medical Associates of Pacific LLC all in, again, all in support of this legislation. From my understanding and from my discussions with the Commonwealth Cancer Association CCA will be funding the labels for the first two years and then the producers will take over after that, but it's a start in the right direction and trying to ensure that labels are placed and to provide that warning for the consumers. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. Any other discussions? Clerk call the roll.

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors	Yes
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Excused
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Dennis C. Mendiola (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting yes.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. With eight members voting yes House Bill No. 24-20 hereby passes the Senate. Next item the agenda. Item Q. Clerk?

PETITIONS, MEMORIALS AND MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Senate Clerk: Mr. President, we have 4 on our agenda Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-33 to 24-37.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you clerk. Discussions by the members? Moving on Item R, Announcements. Any members wishing to make announcement? Recognize Senator Babauta.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator Celina R. Babauta: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Mr. President. I just wanted to make an announcement that the U.S. Army Reserve will no longer be issuing military ID's or (CAC cards) for Veterans Service members in the CNMI and that causes a financial burden and logistical burden, most especially to the municipalities of Tinian and Rota. I did write a letter yesterday to the commanding General of the 9th MSC Military Support Command, and I am awaiting his response on that. I have called for the immediate restoration of the issuance of ID card, and I understand that [inaudible] has already received my letter. So, I will keep everyone abreast of that. I know it affects many veterans' reservists and also federal employees on TDY in the CNMI. So, I would be letting everybody know, almost especially the Senate so that we can support whatever initiatives or resolutions we can to have the Department of Defense have an inclusive discussion with us, especially if it affects our families, and I'm deeply concerned about that. And I just wanted to let everyone know that I welcome your support to continue this push towards having the DOD be accountable to the CNMI residents and also to the CNMI veterans Service members and their dependents. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you, Senator Babauta, along the same line on, I saw the papers today on your initiative, and I strongly encourage that you also visit maybe and along with your husband who is serving at Homeland Security Advisor who is a retired Colonel. I know that you guys are strong advocates of the military. I hope that you guys can influence the Veterans Affairs and a lot of these initiatives that's being pushed so that we can probably start activating the municipalities, veterans, and bringing more support to the municipalities. So, I thank you for that

effort and I thank you for pointing out this hardship that our municipalities is going to be facing when they suspend this CAC card access. Any other members that's wishing to make a statement or announcement. Thank you. Further announcement, I know that we didn't handle the unfinished minutes. We didn't handle item two, which is the Governor's Message No. 24-40. We would be coming out and be putting I will be getting with the team to try and set another session so that we can address this. Just be looking out for that. Thank you, members. Next item of the agenda, adjournment. Recognize the Floor Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: At this time. Mr. President, I move for adjourn of today's Senate session subject to your call.

Senator Karl R. King-Nabors: Second.

The motion has been seconded.

President Dennis C. Mendiola: Thank you Floor Leader. There's a motion offered to adjourn today's session and it has been seconded. All in favor of that motion, say, aye. Those opposed say nay.

All members voiced. "aye".

Today's session is hereby adjourned.

The Senate session adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted.



Chanele C. Borja
Senate Journal Clerk