

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend Title 9, Division 5 of the Commonwealth Code to establish “Higher Fine Zones,” imposing increased penalties for traffic violations within designated areas such as school zones, construction zones, and other high-risk areas; and for other purposes also known as the Patrick Henry Camacho Castro Act.

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Higher Fine Zone Act of
2 2025,” also known as the “*Patrick Henry Camacho Castro Act*”.

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that dangerous driving
4 behavior, including speeding and other moving violations, in school zones, construction
5 zones, and other areas of heightened risk poses a serious threat to public safety. Children,
6 pedestrians, and workers are particularly vulnerable in these areas. It is critical to
7 implement policies to provide safer roadways and streets for our citizens.

8 The Legislature recognizes *Patrick Henry Camacho Castro*, who was tragically
9 killed by a motorist on October 4, 2025, in Sadog Tâsi, Saipan, an area known for its high
10 rate of traffic accidents. This Act is named in his memory to serve as a solemn reminder of
11 the devastating consequences of reckless driving and the urgent need for stricter deterrents
12 within our roadways.

13 The Legislature further finds that other jurisdictions, such as Hawaii, Florida, and
14 Washington, D.C., have successfully implemented “Higher Fine Zones,” where traffic
15 fines are increased to deter such behavior and protect the public. Accordingly, the purpose
16 of this Act is to establish higher fine zones within the Commonwealth of the Northern
17 Mariana Islands (CNMI) to deter reckless driving, promote safety, and strengthen
18 enforcement in areas where public exposure to traffic hazards is greatest.

1 **Section 3. Amendment.** Title 9, Division 5 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby
2 amended by adding a new chapter 11 to read as follows:

3 **“Chapter 11. Higher Fine Zones.**

4 **§ 101. Short Title.** This chapter may be cited as the “Higher Fine Zone Act of
5 2025,” also known as the “Patrick Henry Camacho Castro Act”.

6 **§ 102. Codification and Definitions.** Subject to the codification of this Act in
7 Title 9, Division 5, Chapter 11 of the Commonwealth Code, and to be construed in *pari*
8 *materia* with existing traffic laws and regulations of the Commonwealth, the following
9 definitions apply for the purposes of this chapter:

10 (a) “Construction Zone” means any area on or adjacent to a roadway where
11 construction, repair, or maintenance work is being performed, designated by the
12 Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Department of Public Works (DPW).

13 (b) “Higher Fine Zone” means an area designated by the DPS where increased
14 penalties apply for violations of traffic laws under this chapter, including but not limited to
15 school zones, construction zones, and high-risk areas.

16 (c) “High-Risk Area” means any roadway or location designated by DPS where
17 conditions, traffic volume, decreased visibility, pedestrian activity, or prior accident history
18 indicate a significantly increased potential for traffic-related injury or danger to the public.
19 Such areas may include but are not limited to school crossings, hospital approaches,
20 recreational parks, or heavily trafficked pedestrian corridors.

21 (d) “Official Signage” means posted traffic signs approved by DPS clearly
22 indicating the start and end of a Higher Fine Zone and stating that fines are increased within
23 the zone.

24 (e) “School Zone” means the area surrounding a school or educational facility
25 where children are likely to cross or walk along the roadway, as designated by DPS in
26 consultation with the Public School System (PSS).

27 **§ 103. Designation and Signage.**

1 (a) DPS, in coordination with DPW and PSS, shall designate all Higher Fine Zones
2 throughout the Commonwealth, including school zones, construction zones, and high-risk
3 areas.

4 (b) No person shall be subject to increased penalties under this chapter unless the
5 zone is clearly marked with official signage stating:

6 “Higher Fine Zone – Traffic Fines Doubled.”

7 (c) DPS may utilize automated enforcement technologies, including radar, safety
8 cameras, or other approved devices, to enforce compliance within these zones.

9 **§ 104. Increased Penalties.**

10 (a) Any person who violates any provision of this chapter within a Higher Fine
11 Zone shall be subject to an increased fine of double the standard fine otherwise prescribed
12 for the same offense.

13 (b) For repeat offenses within a twelve (12)-month period, the following
14 progressive penalties shall apply:

15 (1) First offense: Double the standard fine;

16 (2) Second offense: Triple the standard fine; and

17 (3) Third offense: Triple the standard fine and suspension of driver’s license
18 for up to one hundred and eighty (180) days or six (6) months.

19 (c) The court may also impose additional punitive penalties such as community
20 service or mandatory traffic safety education or repeat or egregious violations.

21 **§ 105. Rules and Regulations.** DPS shall promulgate regulations consistent with
22 this chapter within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Act, including:

23 (a) Criteria for designating Higher Fine Zones;

24 (b) Standards for official signage; and

25 (c) Procedures for enforcement and fine collection.”


26 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
27 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent
28 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
29 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

1 **Section 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
2 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under
3 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.
4 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant
5 to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any
6 way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the
7 date this Act becomes effective.

8 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect immediately upon its approval
9 by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

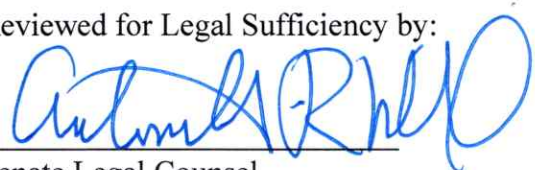
Date: 19 Dec 25

Introduced By: _____



Senator Celina R. Babauta

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:



Senate Legal Counsel