



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTIETH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

THIRD REGULAR SESSION, 2018

## LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

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1<sup>st</sup> Day, Third Regular Session

Friday, January 26, 2018

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*The House of Representatives of the Twentieth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Day, Third Regular Session on Friday, January 26, 2018 at 2:20 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.*

*The Honorable Janet U. Maratita, Vice Speaker of the House, presided.*

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### ROLL CALL

*The Clerk called the roll and seventeen members were present; Representatives Rafael S. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero and Vinson F. Sablan were absent and excused.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: We move along to the next Order of Business, Public Comments and I recognize the Floor Leader for the motion to amend the day's agenda. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Madame Speaker. At this time, I move to suspend Rule IX, Section 4 (d) so that the House amends its agenda to include unnumbered bills, resolutions and communications not filed within the Clerk's office 72 hours. So move.

### RULE IX. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

#### Section 4. Format of Bills and Resolutions

(d) Bills and resolutions for introduction may be pre-filed with the House Clerk for formal introduction at the next session, provided that it is pre-filed in sufficient time to appear on the session agenda as required under Rule III. The 72-hour notice and agenda requirements may be dispensed with for Special Emergency Sessions and Sessions called by the Governor in accordance with Rule III.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion, the Speaker Pro Tem recognized the Clerk to call the roll.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 4 (d) with the following results:*

Representative Francisco C. Aguon	yes
Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Donald C. Barcinas	yes
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	yes
Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Angel A. Demapan	yes
Speaker Rafael S. Demapan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Alice S. Igitol	yes
Representative Jose I. Itibus	yes
Representative Glenn L. Maratita	yes
Representative Janet U. Maratita	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Gregorio M. Sablan, Jr.	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Vinson F. Sablan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Madame Speaker, all 17 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: With all 17 members present to amend the day’s agenda is hereby carried. Oral testimony may be presented during the meeting pertaining to any items that are on today’s agenda otherwise may submit their comments in writing to the Speaker of the House on or before the meeting date. For the record, please state your name and to whom you speak on behalf be it an agency or department, representing a private entity and/or yourself as a private citizen. The public is given five minutes to present their comments, the Floor Leader will remind the public of their remaining time. With that said, the floor is now open for the first public comments to be received. Just before we do that – please housekeeping rules, turn off all cellular and I respectively ask that all speakers conduct themselves in an orderly fashion, if not then the Sergeant at Arms may remove you from the chamber. Thank you for your cooperation.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following individuals made comments pertaining to the following:

### **H. B. NO. 20-149**

To abolish the Commonwealth Health Corporation and return its functions to the Department of Public Health.

**REP. JANET U. MARATITA** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representatives Edwin P. Aldan, Donald C. Barcinas, Ivan A. Blanco, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Alice S. Igitol, Jose I. Itibus, Gregorio M. Sablan Jr., and John Paul P. Sablan)

SEN. COMM. 20-118: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-69, HS1, entitled, “To amend 2 CMC §§ 1631, 1634, 1636, 1637, and 1644 to authorize the Division of Fish and Wildlife to regulate marine sports and activities within the waters of conservation areas and sanctuaries, and to impose and collect conservation areas management fees by regulation and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate, with amendments on December 14, 2017, in the form of **H. B. NO. 20-69, HS1, SD1**. [*For action on Senate amendments*]

SEN. COMM. 20-119: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-96, entitled, “To amend 1 CMC §2264 to ensure that the Board of Education members receive compensation for committee meetings, which are vital to the development of policy and the

functioning of the Public School System.”, which was passed by the Senate, with amendments on December 14, 2017, in the form of **H. B. NO. 20-96, SD1**. [*For action on Senate amendments*]

SEN. COMM. 20-120: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-135, entitled, “To amend Public Law No. 20-11, Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Act to reflect the revised Fiscal Year 2018 Operations Budget for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation.”, which was passed by the Senate, with amendments on December 14, 2017, in the form of **H. B. NO. 20-135, SD4**. [*For action on Senate amendments*]

**S. C. R. NO. 20-94**: Reporting on S. B. No. 20-21, SS1, SD1, entitled: “To establish a Northern Marianas Technical Institute by adding a new Chapter 11 to Title 3, Division 1 of the Commonwealth Code; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass S. B. NO. 20-21, SS1, SD1, in its current form.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-105**: Reporting on H. B. No. 20-147, entitled: “To appropriate Twenty-Four Million, Twenty-Six Thousand, Fifty-Six dollars and 35/100 (\$24,026,056.35) from the Special Casino Gross Revenue Tax Account, earmarked under 4 CMC §2308.” *Your Committee on Ways and Means recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 20-147, HSI.*

Ms. Mary Lou Ada, State Board of Education  
 Mr. Glenn Muna, Interim for CNMI Public School System  
 Ms. Marissa Ada, Development Director for Micronesian Legal Services Corporation  
 Mr. Lee Pliscou, Executive Director for Micronesian Legal Services Corporation  
 Ms. Agnes Mcphetres, CEO for Northern Marianas Trades Institute  
 Mr. John Gonzales, Northern Marianas Trades Institute Board of Directors  
 Mr. Manny Pangelinan, Director for Fish and Wildlife  
 Mr. Joseph Mendiola  
 Mr. Jesse Tudela, Commonwealth Health Care Corporation  
 Ms. Herminia Fusco  
 Mr. John Doyle  
 Mr. Philip Dauterman  
 Mr. Philipe Atalig, Public Information Officer for Department of Public Works  
 Ms. Sheila Babauta  
 Mr. Alvarez Santos  
 Mr. Jack Muna  
 Mr. Tony Reyes  
 Mr. Jonathan Wilbescheid  
 Ms. Samantha Babauta

*The Speaker Pro Tem directed the members to item III, Adoption of Journals and recognized the Clerk.*

### **ADOPTION OF JOURNALS**

*The Clerk announced that there are five journals for adoption.*

*Ninth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – November 21, 2017*

*Tenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – November 29, 2017*

*Eleventh Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 4, 2017*

*Twelfth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 11, 2017*

*Thirteenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 13, 2017*

*The Speaker Pro Tem recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the Ninth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – November 21, 2017.*

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Discussion? Recognize Representative Joe Guerrero.

Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Madame Speaker in the interest of time, I see there's five journals to be adopted is there any objection from the members and is against our rules to have a blanket adoption of all the journals?

*Several members voiced "no objection".*

Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madame Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Floor?

*The Floor Leader recalled the first motion and offered a motion to adopt the Ninth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – November 21, 2017, the Tenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – November 29, 2017, the Eleventh Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 4, 2017, the Twelfth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 11, 2017 and the Thirteenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 13, 2017 journals.*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt the Ninth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – November 21, 2017, the Tenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – November 29, 2017, the Eleventh Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 4, 2017, the Twelfth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 11, 2017 and the Thirteenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – December 13, 2017 journals was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Members if there's no objection, there's one person in the gallery that would like to make a comment and if there's no objection we'll allow her and we go back to item II for comments?

*Several members voiced "no objection".*

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following individual made comments:

Ms. Marjorie Atalig, Resident Director for Tinian Health Center

Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: I know under public comments it's undebatable. Those that don't know, you can submit written public comments to the committee if you wish to be heard. Thank you.

*The Speaker Pro Tem directed the member to item IV, Introduction of Bills and recognized Representative John Paul Sablan.*

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

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

*Representative John Paul P. Sablan officially introduced the following House Bill on behalf of Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero:*

#### **H. B. NO. 20-148**

To prohibit the operation of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight in excess of 4,000 pounds between 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM from the Beach Road and Micro Beach Road Intersection to the Beach Road and Chalan Monsignor Guerrero Road Intersection.

**REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Thank you, Representative Sablan. If there's no objection from the members, I would like to skip myself and proceed forward to the next member and afterwards move down. Thank you, members. I now recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Madame Vice Speaker. Before I introduce the bill itself, just point of clarification was House Bill 20-148 assigned to a respective committee?

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: House Bill 20-148 will be referred to Transportation Committee. Please take note Chairman Barcinas.

*Representative Glenn L. Maratita officially introduced the following House Bill and request that the bill be placed on the Bill Calendar for action on a later date:*

#### **H. B. NO. 20-150**

To amend 1 CMC §1402(a) for the purpose of the conservation and protection of the precious resource of sweet potato “Kamuti”; and for other purposes.

**REP. GLENN L. MARATITA** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*)

*Several members voiced “no objection”.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Floor, can you effectuate a motion to place?

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: Yes absolutely. At this time, I would like to suspend Rule VII, Section 9, which is the referrals of committee reports so that we can place House Bill 20-150 on the Bill Calendar. So move.

## **RULE VII. COMMITTEES GENERALLY**

### **Section 9. Committee Reports; Other documents**

- (a) Standing or Special Committees shall submit a written report to the Speaker within 60 days from the date the matter was referred to the committee, unless a shorter or longer time is ordered by the Speaker pursuant to a decision by the House

- Leadership. Subcommittees shall submit reports on matters referred to them as prescribed by the Standing Committee Chair. Standing, special and conference committees shall submit their reports in writing and provide an electronic copy to the Clerk who shall number the reports consecutively in the order received, cause such reports to be reviewed for legal sufficiency, reproduced, and furnished each member of the House at least twenty-four hours prior to the session at which it is to be considered. A committee report shall state findings of facts and conclusions based thereon together with a specific recommendation as to the manner in which the bill, resolution, or other matter referred to the committee should be disposed of by the House. A report recommending a bill or resolution for passage shall clearly state the purpose of the bill. A report on a bill or resolution shall show clearly any proposed amendments and the Clerk shall place such a bill or resolution on the appropriate calendar.
- (b) A report shall be considered adopted by a committee when the Chairperson and a majority of the members of the committee have signed the report concurring therein. A member or members not concurring in the report of the majority may so indicate by submitting a minority report which shall be attached to the committee report or by signing with "I do not concur".
  - (c) When a committee recommends that a bill or resolution be formally filed (indefinitely postponed), the recommendation is reported to the House floor as a committee report to be confirmed by majority vote. Adoption of the committee report by the members has the effect of officially filing the bill.
  - (d) When, by majority vote, the House adopts a committee report recommending favorable action on a bill or resolution, the bill or resolution as reported by the committee shall be placed on the appropriate calendar for House floor action.
  - (e) All documents, testimonies, or other evidence submitted to any standing or special committee or subcommittee in connection with any matter referred to the committee or subcommittee shall be the property of the House. The Chair of any committee or subcommittee shall deliver all such documents, testimonies, or other evidence to the House Clerk upon expiration of the term of the House. Such documents, testimonies or other evidence may be attached to committee reports as supporting documents.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and to place House Bill 20-150 on the Bill Calendar was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

*The Speaker Pro Tem directed the members to item (b) House Local Bills and recognized the Floor Leader.*

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

*Representative Glenn L. Maratita officially introduced the following House Local Bills:*

**H. L. B. NO. 20-54**

To appropriate \$75,000 from the funds specifically allotted to the First Senatorial District under Public Law No. 18-56 to fund the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation extension office in Rota; and for other purposes.

**REP. GLENN L. MARATITA** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*)

**H. L. B. NO. 20-55**

To appropriate \$1,402,811 specifically allotted to the First Senatorial District under Public Law No. 18-56; and for other purposes.

**REP. GLENN L. MARATITA** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*)

*House Legislative Initiatives: None*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Now members I would like to go back to the Introduction of Bills so that I may be able to officially introduce my bill and without objections again from the members before I introduce House Bill 20-149.

*Several members voiced “no objection”.*

**House Bills:**

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Thank you members. First, I would like to address to all of you present here in the gallery and our viewing public at home or elsewhere. *Bienbinidu, buenas tades yan si Yu’us Ma’ase pot i finatton miyo magi para en sangan o sino esta monhayan en sangan gi ti atman na tiempo pat sino tafan konbetsasion pot asunto ni umaffekta, para u afekta hit yan todo i residenten i tano-ta Marianas. Patkulamenti, pot i House Bill 20-149, proposito para u ma nasuha i Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation yan para u mana’lalu tatte guato para i manehanten yan i direksion i gobietnamenton i Commonwealth.* My Dear people, I speak before you this afternoon to address my intentions in drafting House Bill 20-149 entitled, “To abolish the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation and return its functions to the Department of Public Health.” It is my hope that the statements I am able to make today eases some of the concerns you may have regarding this crucial piece of legislation and in the case that my statements fail to do so, I encourage you to reach out to my office for any further inquiries for which I will be happy to address with you personally. What House Bill 20-149 seeks to accomplish? The findings section of House Bill 20-149 simply states that because CHCC has failed to meet the needs of the people of the Commonwealth, the corporation should be abolished and its functions be returned to the Department of Public Health. This bill will repeal Public Law 19-78 and Public Law 16-51; thus, it will revive the laws that existed prior to their enactments. Further the transition of the management of the commonwealth care facilities from CHCC to the Department of Public Health shall be coordinated by the Office of the Governor. Additionally, where separate appropriations currently exist for CHCC as a governmental corporation as determined by Public Law 20-11, appropriations shall be made in accord with the Department of Public Health. Public Law 16-51, on October 1, 2011, CNMI Public Law 16-51 was enacted to establish the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC). Prior to the creation of this law, public healthcare services, the Commonwealth Health Center remained a governmental responsibility chiefly reliant on the CNMI’s general fund for its day to day operational expenses. The original of Public Law 16-51 was to allow CHCC the opportunity to become a professionally managed, nationally credited and financially self-sufficient public healthcare institution independent of the Commonwealth government. Public Law 16-51, among other conditions,

required CHCC to establish an accounting system, produce monthly financial statements, establish required cash funds, establish a fee structure, develop a strategic plan, prudently collect account receivables and develop annual budgets. As of today and over six years after the enactment of Public Law 16-51, CHCC has yet to achieve any of these requirements as reflected in audit reports directly from the Office of the Public Auditor for FY 12, 13, 14, and 15 FY 16 and 17 pending. Despite Public Law 16-51's requiring of the autonomous agency to become self-sufficient and its wide-ranging latitude to do so during the past six years, CHCC continues to place blame for its inability to provide quality healthcare services to the CNMI citizens and residents on the CNMI government's underfunding of the corporation. Notwithstanding, my colleagues at the Legislature and I in consideration of the essentialness of our lone public hospital have continued to prioritize the needs of CHCC and have appropriated millions of dollars from the general fund for hospital equipment, supplies and other expenses including uncompensated care costs for indigent members of our community. Regrettably, because CHCC remains an autonomous agency, we have little to no say in how this funding is to be spent. Moreover, we are unable to access any documentation post expenditure regarding how the funding was actually spent. Still, the Legislature has eagerly extended communication efforts to CHCC in hopes of addressing the many concerns expressed to us by our very own citizens, in particular, those who have consistently disappointed with the healthcare services provided to them and their loved ones by CHCC. These efforts is in no way have been intended to hinder CHCC's growth as an autonomous agency, but rather to offer our assistance in attaining the needs of the hospital as we have seen very little progress within the corporation since Public Law 16-51's enactment. These efforts, however, have been unsuccessful as CHCC's management has persistently remained uncooperative in sharing information relating to the agency. On one particular occasion following my review of CHCC's fiscal year 2014 audit report and in my capacity as Chairwoman of Health and Welfare for the Saipan Northern Island Delegation, I had noticed that an excessive sum of funding in the amount of \$203,107,017 of accounts receivables was written off from CHCC's books. In light of this discovery, I drafted a letter to CHCC CEO Mrs. Esther Muña respectfully requesting that these funds be justified. Specifically, I requested for the following documents: aging of accounts receivables, processed insurance claims, policies and procedures in the following areas: personnel, procurement, accounting system, revenue cycle system, strategic plan from 2015 to 2020, a business plan, budgets for FY 2012 through FY 2018, assessment of the multi-year strategic plan and many more. Since my letter was transmitted and received by Mrs. Muña over a month ago, the only response I've received from CHCC regarding the matter is a short justification that the \$203,107,017 write off was recommended by the public auditor. In my recent communication with OPA, however, I was informed that they could not find in their correspondence with CHCC any mention of this alleged recommendation. Further, while I understand that my appeal to Mrs. Muña for the list of documents was lengthy, I find it unsettling that not even some of this information is readily available as many of these policies and procedures should already be in place, especially those relating to accounting, billing and collections. I must also share that as a basis for disclaimer of opinion reflected in FY 12, 13, 14 and 15 audit reports by Deloitte, CHC could not substantiate general ledger balances due to inadequacies in accounting records. In addition, the report stated that management is responsible for the preparation and fair representation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this included the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statement that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. Furthermore, I would like to share OPA's audit of CHCC's patient revenue cycle

management in report no. AR-17-01 issued March 16, 2017 in which they identified 11 audit recommendations. The report on the CNMI Agencies' Implementation of Audit Recommendations dated June 28, 2017 reported that all of these recommendations remain unresolved. My only desire in attempting to acquire this information from CHCC was to gain some understanding of its financial status in order to properly assess ways in which to best assist them. CHCC's unwillingness to work collaboratively, its refusal to provide relevant documentation of expenditures, its inability to showcase tangible progress in the six years of its autonomy such as a forward-looking healthcare and business plan or a working billing system in which is long overdue, and most importantly, the continued dissatisfaction and suffering of our sick and those in need of healthcare services, has left me to conclude that there is no other alternative but to revert CHCC back under the supervision of the CNMI government. In returning CHCC to its status as a line department, the Legislative and Executive branches will be better positioned to take the necessary steps to improve our hospital's delivery of services so that quality healthcare and nothing less, can be attainable to the CNMI people in the near future. Again, I want to make clear that this bill is not intended to impair our hospital or its employees or patients. When CHCC presently remains financially dependent on government funds, this measure will only allow for the Legislature to continue to ensure that our lone hospital remains adequately funded as well as to ensure that accountability exists in all hospital spending measures. Next, it is imperative that we reflect on the extreme amounts of money we have expended to refer our patients off-island to seek medical service that our hospital cannot provide. In December 2014, Mrs. Muña acknowledged that "for decades, the people who called the CNMI 'home,' have travelled off-island, sometimes to foreign countries, spending thousands of dollars for health care. Leaving your family behind to seek care for medical or behavioral health is not only expensive and financially straining on the patient and his or her family, but the necessary emotional support is also limited when a patient must leave off-island." Since FY 2012, Medical Referral costs have more than doubled, from over \$5 Million for 645 patients, to close to \$12 Million for 1,557 patients. For this reason, we must continue to fight for affordable and accessible healthcare here at home, and this is the ultimate goal with the enactment of this bill. On January 26, 2016, I pledged to prioritize the improvement of our hospital and the healthcare services they provide to the best of my ability. Today, exactly two years later, the objective continues to be of the highest importance to me as a member of the CNMI's 20<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Likewise, my colleagues in both the House and Senate have shared in these same sentiments, therefore, I am confident that they will not hesitate to assist me in accomplishing this critical endeavor. As an elected official, my duty is not to assign blame onto others for the shortcomings of CHCC or any other agency, autonomous or not. Instead, it is to seek the necessary means to enhance existing deficiencies. Moreover, my duties require that I make tough decisions when necessary always with the public's best interests in mind. For this reason, I stand by my decision and intentions in drafting House Bill 20-149. Lastly, and contrary to the belief of House Bill 20-149's critics, I firmly deny any accusations that my drafting of this bill is in any way politically motivated. It was never. Just like many of you, CHCC is and has always been the primary healthcare provider for not just myself, but for my own children, grandchildren and families. I have nothing to gain from bringing harm onto CHCC, nor do I wish to do so. I have drafted this bill with the sole purpose of allowing our lone hospital the best opportunity to provide quality healthcare services achievable. It is my hope that in meeting this goal, the quality of life for all CNMI citizens and residents will also be achieved. To my colleagues and those listening today, I leave you with these final words, if you want nothing to change, then you should change nothing. In order for us to grow, we must act. I thank you members for allowing me to express this

statement. With that said, the Chair now officially introduces House Bill 20-149 and I am pleased, pursuant to Rule VII, I hereby assign this to a special committee Chaired by myself, Vice Chaired by Representative Alice Igitol, Representative BJ Attao, Representative Itibus, Representative Greg Sablan. Now we move to the next Order of Business, Introduction of Resolutions, but before we go there, I would like to ask the indulgence of the members and for Floor Leader to effectuate a motion to dissolve as Committee as a Whole so that our fiscal analyst may be accorded to do a presentation for the members in the gallery and the viewing public.

**H. B. NO. 20-149**

To abolish the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation and return its functions to the Department of Public Health.

**REP. JANET U. MARATITA** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representatives Edwin P. Aldan, Donald C. Barcinas, Ivan A. Blanco, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Alice S. Igitol, Jose I. Itibus, Gregorio M. Sablan Jr., and John Paul P. Sablan)

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Priviledge Madame Speaker. I'm sorry we're going to dissolve into Committee as a Whole for what purpose?

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: To allow our fiscal analyst Mr. Dave Demapan in accordance – in consistent with my – I mean consistent with my earlier statement.

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Madame Speaker, if I may – if we're going to have the fiscal analyst and we're going to move into Committee as a Whole, if there are no objections, can we also ask to be fair the CFO of CHCC and as well as the CEO to also comment is that okay?

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Representative Propst, I appreciate that recommendation however, they will be given that opportunity once this bill is referred to the committee as we are going to be calling public hearings and other meetings with CHC, but for now we just want the fiscal analyst to show this and then we'll proceed on with the agenda.

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Point of clarification. I am sorry, but – so what is the purpose of the fiscal analyst speaking and we're moving into the Committee as a Whole. What is the purpose? I would like to also ask my colleagues to also chime in here, thank you.

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: Madame Speaker, if I may. Can we take a short recess?

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Short recess.

*The House recessed at 4:18 p.m.*

**RECESS**

*The House reconvened at 4:47 p.m.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: We are back from recess. We now move to item V of our next Order of Business and Introduction of Resolutions. Recognize Representative Demapan.

## INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

*House Resolutions: None*

*House Joint Resolutions:*

*Representative Angel A. Demapan officially introduced the following House Joint Resolution:*

**H. J. R. 20-8**

To support the passage of S. 2325, the Northern Mariana Islands U. S. Work Force Act, introduced by Senator Lisa Murkowski in the Senate of the United States Congress.

**REP. ANGEL A. DEMAPAN** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Madame Speaker, this bill is up for hearing on February 6 in Washington D.C. and because of time sensitivity I am hereby requesting that this joint resolution be placed on the Resolution Calendar, understanding that it does not meet the 72-hour requirement to act on it today. I would like to ask for placement on the Resolution Calendar for action in next week's session.

*Several members voiced "no objection."*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Representative Joe Guerrero.

Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you Madame Chair. Is there any objection from the mover or any member if this resolution would be introduced by the Committee as a Whole?

*Several members voiced "no objection."*

Representative Angel A. Demapan: That was the next line of my remarks. For the record, if there's no objection from the members, I would also like to move that the joint resolution be adopted in Committee as a Whole.

*Several members voiced "no objection."*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Discussion?

*Several members voiced "ready."*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: With that said, House Joint Resolution will be placed on calendar and will be acted on our next session.

*House Commemorative Resolutions: None*

***House Concurrent Resolutions: None***

*The Speaker Pro Tem directed the members to item VI, Messages from the Governor and recognized the Clerk.*

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

*The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:*

GOV. COMM. 20-135: (12/11/17) Informing the House that he vetoed H. B. No. 20-67, (To amend 1 CMC § 1402 for the purpose of the conservation and protection of the precious resource of sweet potato “Kamuti”; and for other purposes.).

GOV. COMM. 20-136: (12/11/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-14, (“To improve the justice system’s response to domestic violence, and for other purposes.”). Became **Public Law 20-28** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-137: (12/11/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-18, (“To amend 6 CMC §2256 (a) (10), the hours of operation for shooting galleries and shooting ranges; and for other purposes.”). Became **Public Law 20-29** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 13-138: (12/11/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-22, (“To amend 1 CMC Section 1502 clarifying the activities subject to the Occupancy Tax.”). Became **Public Law 20-30** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-139: (12/11/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-12, (“To reform drug sentencing laws to effectuate the rehabilitation and treatment principles of evidence-based sentencing.”). Became **Public Law 20-31** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-140: (12/11/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. NO. 20-38, D1, (“To appropriate Two Million US Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) specifically allotted to the First Senatorial District under Public Law No. 18-56; and for other purposes.”). Became **Rota Local Law 20-7** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-141: (12/15/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-131, HD1, (“To appropriate three million, three hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$3,375,000.00) from the Tobacco Control Fund, earmarked under 3 CMC §2177, to support and supplement awareness, detection and prevention programs relating to cancer and other tobacco related illnesses.”). Became **Public Law 20-32** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-142: (12/15/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-10, SD1, (“To establish the Settlement Fund Revolving Fund Account and the Bond Payment Revolving Fund Account; and for other purposes.”). Became **Public Law 20-33** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-143: (12/15/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-129, HD1, HS1, SD1, (“To amend 4 CMC §2308 to address concerns of the

Settlement Fund Trustee and reserve funds generated from the Casino Gross Revenue Tax.”). Became **Public Law 20-34** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-144: (12/15/17) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-145, (“To appropriate \$22,000,000.00 set aside in the Casino GRT Account for the payment of the 25% of the Settlement Class Members full benefits and payment of a Bonus for all retirees.”). Became **Public Law 20-35** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-145: (12/20/17) Certifying and granting approval for Mr. Charles E. Brasington, Chief Solicitor, Office of the Attorney General to receive an annual salary of \$65,000. [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-146: (12/22/17) Pursuant 1 CMC, Division 11, Section 11101, informing of the Second Marianas Political Status Commission appointments of the respective senatorial districts: First Senatorial District: Mr. Fermin M. Atalig, and Ms. Aubry M. Hocog; Second Senatorial District: Ms. Kimberly Hinds, and Mr. Richard Lazaro; and the Third Senatorial District: Mr. John DLR. Gonzales, Ms. Elizabeth D. Rechebei, Mr. Frank M. Rabauliman, Ms. Rosemond B. Santos, and Mr. Pete P. Reyes. [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-147: (12/29/18) Certifying and granting approval for Ms. Jacqueline A. Nicolas, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General to receive an annual salary of \$54,000. [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-148: (1/5/18) Certifying and granting approval for Mr. David Stevens, Assistant Public Defender, Office of the Public Defender to receive an annual salary of \$62,000. [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-149: (1/5/18) Certifying and granting approval for Mr. Benjamin Haile, Assistant Public Defender, Office of the Public Defender to receive an annual salary of \$62,000. [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-150: (1/5/18) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-9, (“To require all scuba dive shop operators to impose a \$10.00 surcharge per tank usage to purchase, install, operate, and maintain decompression chambers in the CNMI; and for other purposes.”). Became **Public Law 20-36** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-151: (1/8/18) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. NO. 20-43, (“To re-appropriate \$18,865.39 allotted under Saipan Local Law 18-17, under BUS Unit 4961P; and for other purposes.”). Became **Saipan Local Law 20-17** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-152: (1/8/18) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. NO. 20-46, D1, (“To appropriate \$2,214,000.00 from the Exclusive Gaming Annual License Fees allotted to the Third Senatorial District; and for other purposes.”). Became **Saipan Local Law 20-18** [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 20-153: (1/10/18) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. NO. 20-49, S1, D1, (“To appropriate \$6,286,000.00 from the Exclusive Gaming Annual License Fees allotted to the Third Senatorial District; and for other purposes.”). Became **Saipan Local Law 20-19** [*For info*]

Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz: Privilege Madame Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: State your privilege Representative Dela Cruz.

Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz: Thank you. I know that before we went to our last recess, there were statements made to invite the fiscal analyst and for the body to go into the Committee as a Whole. I know that we still have some guests here which pertains to House Bill 20-149. I wanted to see whether we would still be falling into the Committee as a Whole or has that been postponed or cancelled so that maybe some of the folks in the audience that may want to leave if this is not to be taken up can do so. So just for clarification. Thank you, Madame Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Thank you, Representative Dela Cruz. With that said, the leadership has decided not to dissolve into Committee as a Whole and again the House Bill as introduced by myself – House Bill 20-149 has already been referred to the Special Committee to address that bill. So those of you in the gallery, we will not be acting on House Bill 20-149. So, we will be calling for a hearing then we will proceed from there. Thank you. Further? None. Recognize the Floor Leader.

### **SENATE COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Floor Leader made a motion to accept Senate Communications 20-114 to 20-126 so they may become property of the House.*

SEN. COMM. 20-114: (12/12/17) Transmitting a certified copy of Senate Commemorative Resolution No. 20-5, entitled, “To pay tribute to the life and memory of the late David Mareham Magofna for his services to the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands through his longstanding service in the United States Armed Forces.”, which was adopted by the Senate on December 9, 2017. [*For info*]

SEN. COMM. 20-115: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-145 (To appropriate \$22,000,000.00 set aside in the Casino GRT Account for the payment of the 25% of the Settlement Class Members full benefits and payment of a Bonus for all retirees.), which was passed by the Senate, without amendments on December 14, 2017. [*For info-Will go to Governor*]

SEN. COMM. 20-116: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-101, HD1, (To amend 1 CMC §8364, as amended by public law 15-70, to allow annuitants to enroll in the commonwealth government health insurance program; and for other purposes.), which was passed by the Senate, without amendments on December 14, 2017. [*For info-Will go to Governor*]

SEN. COMM. 20-117: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-118, HD1, (To generate funding for the repair and maintenance of CNMI roads and highways by increasing fees for registration and licenses and establishing a Temporary Operator’s License category; and for other purposes.), which was passed by the Senate, without amendments on December 14, 2017. [*For info-Will go to Governor*]

SEN. COMM. 20-118: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-69, HS1, entitled, “To amend 2 CMC §§ 1631, 1634, 1636, 1637, and 1644 to authorize the Division of Fish and Wildlife to regulate marine sports and activities within the waters of conservation areas and sanctuaries, and to impose and collect conservation areas management fees by regulation and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate, with amendments on December 14, 2017, in the form of **H. B. NO. 20-69, HS1, SD1**. [*For action on Senate amendments*]

SEN. COMM. 20-119: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-96, entitled, “To amend 1 CMC §2264 to ensure that the Board of Education members receive compensation for committee meetings, which are vital to the development of policy and the functioning of the Public School System.”, which was passed by the Senate, with amendments on December 14, 2017, in the form of **H. B. NO. 20-96, SD1**. [*For action on Senate amendments*]

SEN. COMM. 20-120: (12/14/17) Returning H. B. No. 20-135, entitled, “To amend Public Law No. 20-11, Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Act to reflect the revised Fiscal Year 2018 Operations Budget for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation.”, which was passed by the Senate, with amendments on December 14, 2017, in the form of **H. B. NO. 20-135, SD4**. [*For action on Senate amendments*]

SEN. COMM. 20-121: (12/15/17) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 20-51, SD1, entitled, “To amend 1 CMC §8602 by establishing a zero tolerance one strike rule for any law enforcement in the Commonwealth who test positive for drug use; and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate on December 14, 2017. [*For action*]

SEN. COMM. 20-122: (12/15/17) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 20-71, SS1, SD1, entitled, “To establish a Nursing School Scholarship for students admitted into the nursing program at the Northern Marianas College; and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate on December 14, 2017. [*For action*]

SEN. COMM. 20-123: (12/15/17) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 20-79, SD2, entitled, “To amend 1 CMC §5103 to authorize the governor to appoint a qualified person subject to the advice and consent of the Senate when there is a vacancy in the office of the mayor and less than half of the term of the mayor remains; and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate on December 14, 2017. [*For action*]

SEN. COMM. 20-124: (12/15/17) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 20-82, entitled, “To amend 3 CMC §2177(a) to include the CHCC Diabetes Care and Control Center as a program recipient of the Tobacco Control Fund; and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate on December 14, 2017. [*For action*]

SEN. COMM. 20-125: (12/15/17) Transmitting a certified copy of Senate Resolution No. 20-18, entitled, “Recognizing Ms. Eterina Aldis Calvo for her outstanding achievement in being chosen as the Sinapalo Elementary School 2017-2018 Teacher of the Year and commending her for her over 20 years of dedication and commitment to her students.”, which was adopted by the Senate on December 14, 2017. [*For info*]

SEN. COMM. 20-126: (12/15/17) Transmitting a certified copy of Senate Resolution No. 20-19, entitled, “To congratulate and acknowledge Ms. Antenille Mendiola Santos on her recognition as the 2018 Teacher of the Year for the Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr. Sr. High

School and to recognize her for her outstanding contribution to her students and the CNMI Public School System.”, which was adopted by the Senate on December 14, 2017.  
[For info]

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to accept Senate Communications 20-114 to 20-126 so they may become property of the House was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

*The Speaker Pro Tem recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 so they may place House Bill 20-69, HS1, SD1 reference to Senate Communication 20-118 on the Bill Calendar.*

## **RULE VII. COMMITTEES GENERALLY**

### **Section 9. Committee Reports; Other documents**

(a) Standing or Special Committees shall submit a written report to the Speaker within 60 days from the date the matter was referred to the committee, unless a shorter or longer time is ordered by the Speaker pursuant to a decision by the House Leadership. Subcommittees shall submit reports on matters referred to them as prescribed by the Standing Committee Chair. Standing, special and conference committees shall submit their reports in writing and provide an electronic copy to the Clerk who shall number the reports consecutively in the order received, cause such reports to be reviewed for legal sufficiency, reproduced, and furnished each member of the House at least twenty-four hours prior to the session at which it is to be considered. A committee report shall state findings of facts and conclusions based thereon together with a specific recommendation as to the manner in which the bill, resolution, or other matter referred to the committee should be disposed of by the House. A report recommending a bill or resolution for passage shall clearly state the purpose of the bill. A report on a bill or resolution shall show clearly any proposed amendments and the Clerk shall place such a bill or resolution on the appropriate calendar.

(b) A report shall be considered adopted by a committee when the Chairperson and a majority of the members of the committee have signed the report concurring therein. A member or members not concurring in the report of the majority may so indicate by submitting a minority report which shall be attached to the committee report or by signing with "I do not concur".

(c) When a committee recommends that a bill or resolution be formally filed (indefinitely postponed), the recommendation is reported to the House floor as a committee report to be confirmed by majority vote. Adoption of the committee report by the members has the effect of officially filing the bill.

(d) When, by majority vote, the House adopts a committee report recommending favorable action on a bill or resolution, the bill or resolution as reported by the committee shall be placed on the appropriate calendar for House floor action.

(e) All documents, testimonies, or other evidence submitted to any standing or special committee or subcommittee in connection with any matter referred to the committee or subcommittee shall be the property of the House. The Chair of any committee or subcommittee shall deliver all such documents, testimonies, or other evidence to the House Clerk upon expiration of the term of the House. Such documents, testimonies or other evidence may be attached to committee reports as supporting documents.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 so they may place House Bill 20-69, HS1, SD1 reference to Senate Communication 20-118 on the Bill Calendar was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

*The Speaker Pro Tem recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 so they may place House Bill 20-135, SD4 reference to Senate Communication 20-120 on the Bill Calendar.*

## **RULE VII. COMMITTEES GENERALLY**

### **Section 9. Committee Reports; Other documents**

(a) Standing or Special Committees shall submit a written report to the Speaker within 60 days from the date the matter was referred to the committee, unless a shorter or longer time is ordered by the Speaker pursuant to a decision by the House Leadership. Subcommittees shall submit reports on matters referred to them as prescribed by the Standing Committee Chair. Standing, special and conference committees shall submit their reports in writing and provide an electronic copy to the Clerk who shall number the reports consecutively in the order received, cause such reports to be reviewed for legal sufficiency, reproduced, and furnished each member of the House at least twenty-four hours prior to the session at which it is to be considered. A committee report shall state findings of facts and conclusions based thereon together with a specific recommendation as to the manner in which the bill, resolution, or other matter referred to the committee should be disposed of by the House. A report recommending a bill or resolution for passage shall clearly state the purpose of the bill. A report on a bill or resolution shall show clearly any proposed amendments and the Clerk shall place such a bill or resolution on the appropriate calendar.

(b) A report shall be considered adopted by a committee when the Chairperson and a majority of the members of the committee have signed the report concurring therein. A member or members not concurring in the report of the majority may so indicate by submitting a minority report which shall be attached to the committee report or by signing with "I do not concur".

(c) When a committee recommends that a bill or resolution be formally filed (indefinitely postponed), the recommendation is reported to the House floor as a committee report to be confirmed by majority vote. Adoption of the committee report by the members has the effect of officially filing the bill.

(d) When, by majority vote, the House adopts a committee report recommending favorable action on a bill or resolution, the bill or resolution as reported by the committee shall be placed on the appropriate calendar for House floor action.

(e) All documents, testimonies, or other evidence submitted to any standing or special committee or subcommittee in connection with any matter referred to the committee or subcommittee shall be the property of the House. The Chair of any committee or subcommittee shall deliver all such documents, testimonies, or other evidence to the House Clerk upon expiration of the term of the House. Such documents, testimonies or other evidence may be attached to committee reports as supporting documents.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 so they may place House Bill 20-135, SD4 reference to Senate Communication 20-120 on the Bill Calendar was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Members please note that those on the agenda that requires action will be referred and will be acted on a later date. Now we move to item VIII.

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: Madame Speaker, if I may.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Proceed.

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: Can we go ahead and revert back to item VII, Senate Communication. I do want to offer a motion as well for Senate Communication 119. Although we're not going to take action today, but I do want to place it on the calendar.

*Several members voiced "no objection."*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 so they may place House Bill 20-96, SD1 reference to Senate Communication 20-119 on the Bill Calendar.*

## **RULE VII. COMMITTEES GENERALLY**

### **Section 9. Committee Reports; Other documents**

(a) Standing or Special Committees shall submit a written report to the Speaker within 60 days from the date the matter was referred to the committee, unless a shorter or longer time is ordered by the Speaker pursuant to a decision by the House Leadership. Subcommittees shall submit reports on matters referred to them as prescribed by the Standing Committee Chair. Standing, special and conference committees shall submit their reports in writing and provide an electronic copy to the Clerk who shall number the reports consecutively in the order received, cause such reports to be reviewed for legal sufficiency, reproduced, and furnished each member of the House at least twenty-four hours prior to the session at which it is to be considered. A committee report shall state findings of facts and conclusions based thereon together with a specific recommendation as to the manner in which the bill, resolution, or other matter referred to the committee should be disposed of by the House. A report recommending a bill or resolution for passage shall clearly state the purpose of the bill. A report on a bill or resolution shall show clearly any proposed amendments and the Clerk shall place such a bill or resolution on the appropriate calendar.

(b) A report shall be considered adopted by a committee when the Chairperson and a majority of the members of the committee have signed the report concurring therein. A member or members not concurring in the report of the majority may so indicate by submitting a minority report which shall be attached to the committee report or by signing with "I do not concur".

(c) When a committee recommends that a bill or resolution be formally filed (indefinitely postponed), the recommendation is reported to the House floor as a committee report to be confirmed by majority vote. Adoption of the committee report by the members has the effect of officially filing the bill.

(d) When, by majority vote, the House adopts a committee report recommending favorable action on a bill or resolution, the bill or resolution as reported by the committee shall be placed on the appropriate calendar for House floor action.

(e) All documents, testimonies, or other evidence submitted to any standing or special committee or subcommittee in connection with any matter referred to the committee or subcommittee shall be the property of the House. The Chair of any committee or subcommittee shall deliver all such documents, testimonies, or other evidence to the House Clerk upon expiration of the term of the House. Such documents, testimonies or other evidence may be attached to committee reports as supporting documents.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 so they may place House Bill 20-96, SD1 reference to Senate Communication 20-119 on the Bill Calendar was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

*The Speaker Pro Tem directed the members to item VIII, House Communications and recognized the Clerk.*

## **HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Clerk announced the following House Communications:*

HSE. COMM. 20-81: (12/15/17) From Representative Blanco informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on official business beginning Saturday, December 16, 2017 and returning Tuesday, December 19, 2017 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-82: (12/27/17) From the Speaker informing all Members that he will be out of the Commonwealth on official business from December 28, 2017 to December 29, 2017 and designates Vice Speaker Janet U. Maratita as Acting Speaker. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-83: (1/5/18) From the Speaker informing all Members that he will be out of the Commonwealth on official business from January 8, 2018 to January 14, 2018 and designates Vice Speaker Janet U. Maratita as Acting Speaker. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-84: (1/8/18) From Acting Speaker Janet U. Maratita informing all Members that she will be out of the Commonwealth on official business from January 9, 2018 to January 10, 2018 and designates Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita as Acting Speaker. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-85: (1/8/18) From Representative Guerrero informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on official business from January 8, 2018 to January 15, 2018 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-86: (1/8/18) From Representative Itibus informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on official business from January 9, 2018 to January 11, 2018 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-87: (1/8/18) From Representative Igitol informing the Speaker that she will be out of the Commonwealth on official business from January 9, 2018 to January 10, 2018 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during her absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-88: (1/19/18) From the Speaker informing all Members that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal leave from January 21, 2018 to January 26, 2018 and designates Vice Speaker Janet U. Maratita as Acting Speaker. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-89: (1/19/18) From Representative Guerrero informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal matters from January 20, 2018 to January 30, 2018 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-90: (1/19/18) From Representative Vinson F. Sablan informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal matters from January 22, 2018 to January 31, 2018 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 20-91: (1/24/18) From Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero informing the Acting Speaker Janet U. Maratita that Representative John Paul P. Sablan will be introducing House Bill 20-148 on his behalf. [*For info*]

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Madame Speaker, point of information please.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: State your point.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Madame Speaker. I know we’ve adopted all the Senate Communications to be property of the House. We’ve placed Senate Communication 20-118, 20-119 and 20-120 on calendar for action, those are the motions that – are we going to be referring 20-121, 122, 123, 124 to committee or are we going to keep it on agenda until further?

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: We will refer to a later date.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Okay, thank you Madame Speaker.

*The Speaker Pro Tem directed the members to item X, Communications from the Department and Agencies and recognized the Clerk.*

## **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

None

## **COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES**

*The Clerk announced the following Communications from Department and Agencies:*

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 20-9: (10/16/17 received 10/17/17) From the Department of Public Lands submitting packet for the Legislature's review and consideration of Construction & Material Supply, Inc., request to extend the term of its lease (LA No. 89-03S) for an additional 15 years pursuant to Article XI, Section 5(c) of the NMI Constitution. [*For consideration*]

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 20-10: (12/1/17) From the Department of Public Lands submitting packet for the Legislature's review and consideration of Pacific Telecom, Inc., request to extend the term of its lease (LA No. 90-14S; LA No. 90-15S; and LA No. 90-16S) for an additional 15 years pursuant to Article XI, Section 5(c) of the NMI Constitution. [*For consideration*]

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 20-11: (12/20/17 received 12/21/17) From the Department of Public Lands resubmitting draft lease renewal agreement packet with Article 36 modification for the Legislature's review and consideration of Pacific Telecom, Inc., request to extend the term of its lease (LA No. 90-14S; LA No. 90-15S; and LA No. 90-16S) for an additional 15 years pursuant to Article XI, Section 5(c) of the NMI Constitution. [*For consideration*]

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 20-12: (12/20/17 received 12/21/17) From the Department of Public Lands resubmitting lease renewal agreement packets for the Legislature's review and consideration: *Construction & Material Supply, Inc. LA No. 89-03S; Pacific Telecom, Inc. LA No. 90-14S, LA No. 90-15S, AND LA No. 90-16S; and Bank Guam Properties, Inc. LA No. 90-10S*, of which requests to extend the term of its lease for an additional 15 years pursuant to Article XI, Section 5(c) of the NMI Constitution. [*For info with exception of Pacific Telecom Lease – for consideration*]

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Representative Guerrero.

Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you. Just as we discussed in the leadership under Communications from Department and Agencies that all four communications would be referred to committee?

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Right.

Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Okay. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Any other member? We now move to item XII, Reports of Standing Committee. Floor Leader, please effectuate a motion.

## MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

None

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: As discussed with the members of the leadership Madame Speaker, Standing Committee Reports 20-93 to 104 will be adopted at a later date but we will take action on 20-105 for today.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following Standing Committee Report:*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-105:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-147, entitled: “To appropriate Twenty-Four Million, Twenty-Six Thousand, Fifty-Six dollars and 35/100 (\$24,026,056.35) from the Special Casino Gross Revenue Tax Account, earmarked under 4 CMC §2308.” *Your Committee on Ways and Means recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 20-147, HSI.*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt Standing Committee Report 20-105 was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

*No action taken for the following Standing Committee Reports:*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-93:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-29, entitled: “To appropriate Five Hundred Thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) from the Cancer Fund Special Account, earmarked under 4 CMC §1402(g)(2), to support and expand cancer awareness, detection and prevention programs.” *Your Committee on Ways and Means recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 20-29, HDI.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-94:** Reporting on S. B. No. 20-21, SS1, SD1, entitled: “To establish a Northern Marianas Technical Institute by adding a new Chapter 11 to Title 3, Division 1 of the Commonwealth Code; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass S. B. NO. 20-21, SSI, SDI, in its current form.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-95:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-3, SD1, entitled: “To amend and repeal provisions of the Vehicle Code to allow for e-citation implementation; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. NO. 20- 3, SDI, in its current form.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-96:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-123, entitled: “To limit the excise tax exemption to tobacco products and alcoholic beverages to items brought in by individuals arriving at the airport and seaport.” *Your Committee on Ways and Means recommends that the House pass H. B. NO. 20-123 in its current form.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-97:** Reporting on S. B. NO. 20-34, SS1, entitled: “To amend Section 302(a) of PL 19-75 to mandate CUC to immediately apply the subsidy to residential customer accounts upon the transfer of funds to CUC; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Public Utilities and Communications recommends that the House file S. B. NO. 20-34, SSI.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-98:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-124, entitled: “To authorize and establish expedited partner therapy for certain sexually transmitted infections.” *Your Committee on Health recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 20-124, HDI.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-99:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-49, entitled: “To amend the Commonwealth Museum Act under Title 2, Division 4, Chapter 8, Article 6 of the Commonwealth Code to include representatives from the Indigenous Affairs Office, Carolinian Affairs Office, and the Marianas Visitors Authority to be included in the Museum Board of Governors; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. NO. 20-49 in its current form.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-100:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-140, entitled: “To repeal and reenact Title 3, Division 2, Chapter 4, Article 3 of the Commonwealth Code, to designate the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs as the program administering authority for the respite services program; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 20-140, HDI.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-101:** Reporting on S. B. No. 20-24, SD1, entitled: “To amend 4 CMC § 50143(a) to provide immunity for minors assisting in tobacco control undercover investigations; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass S. B. NO. 20-24, SDI in its current form.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-102:** Reporting on S. B. No. 20-65, SD1, entitled: “To establish a license suspension program for non-custodial parents who are in non-compliance with an order of support; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass S. B. NO. 20-65, SDI in its current form.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-103:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-143, entitled: “To amend 1 CMC § 8265 (c) Public Employment definition of “Immediate Family Member”.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 20-143, HD1.*

**S. C. R. NO. 20-104:** Reporting on H. B. No. 20-144, entitled: “To amend Title 1, General Provisions, Chapter 4, Article 3 by adding a new § 439 naming the Rota Fire Station 8 the “Robert O. Hocog Fire Station”; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. NO. 20-144 in its current form.*

*There was no further discussion, the Speaker Pro Tem directed the members to item XVI, Bill Calendar and recognized the Floor Leader.*

## REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

## RESOLUTION CALENDAR

None

## BILL CALENDAR

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following on First and Final Reading:*

**H. B. No. 20-135, SD4**

To amend Public Law No. 20-11, Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Act to reflect the revised Fiscal Year 2018 Operations Budget for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation. [SEN. COMM. 20-120]

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion, the Speaker Pro Tem recognized the Clerk to call the roll.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion to pass House Bill 20-135, Senate Draft 4 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Francisco C. Aguon	yes
Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Donald C. Barcinas	yes
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	yes
Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Angel A. Demapan	yes
Speaker Rafael S. Demapan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Alice S. Igitol	yes

Representative Jose I. Itibus	yes
Representative Glenn L. Maratita	yes
Representative Janet U. Maratita	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Gregorio M. Sablan, Jr.	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Vinson F. Sablan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Madame Speaker, all 17 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Thank you, Clerk. With all 17 members in the affirmative, House Bill 20-135, SD4 hereby passes the House. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following on First and Final Reading:*

**H. B. NO. 20-69, HS1, SD1**

To amend 2 CMC §§ 1631, 1634, 1636, 1637, and 1644 to authorize the Division of Fish and Wildlife to regulate marine sports and activities within the waters of conservation areas and sanctuaries, and to impose and collect conservation areas management fees by regulation and for other purposes. [SEN. COMM. 20-118]

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion, the Speaker Pro Tem recognized the Clerk to call the roll.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion to pass House Bill 20-69, House Substitute 1, Senate Draft 1 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Francisco C. Aguon	yes
Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Donald C. Barcinas	yes
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	yes
Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Angel A. Demapan	yes
Speaker Rafael S. Demapan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Alice S. Igitol	yes
Representative Jose I. Itibus	yes
Representative Glenn L. Maratita	yes
Representative Janet U. Maratita	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Gregorio M. Sablan, Jr.	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Vinson F. Sablan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Madame Speaker, all 17 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: With all 17 members present in the affirmative, House Bill 20-69, HS1, SD1 hereby pass the House. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following on First and Final Reading:*

**H. B. NO. 20-147, HS1**

To appropriate Twenty-Four Million, Twenty-Six Thousand, fifty-six dollars and 35/100 (\$24,026,056.35) from the Special Casino Gross Revenue Tax Account, earmarked under 4 CMC §2308. [S. C. R. NO. 20-105]

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Discussion? Recognize Representative Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Madame Speaker. At this time, I would like to offer a floor amendment and this floor amendment has been distributed to the members. Part of this floor amendment comes as a result of further discussion with PSS and the Board of Education and the Board of Education seeking to move \$150,000.00 to the Board of Education account to fund various programs such as the Student Attendance Review Committee, commutes for PSS events, Committee and Board Meetings, Professional Development for the Board and Staff, Computer and Networked-Telecommunications Equipment and Systems and the Board Building CIP Improvement and Parking. These programs are budgeted in the PSS side of the budget, but to correct the structural organization, we will move \$150,000 by way of this amendment from the PSS Business Unit to the Board of Education Business Unit. And so if you see the amendment that is now reflecting \$11,850,000 for PSS, but it's still at a grand total of \$12,000,000 when you add back the \$150,000 that's going to fund these programs under the Board of Education. Subsequently, I also have another amendment included to provide the methodology of disbursement for the funds of the \$12,000,000.00 allocated to PSS that \$6,000,000 shall be made available for PSS use immediately and the other remaining \$6,000,000 will be made proportionately available on a monthly basis for the remaining portion of this fiscal year. Finally, there's an amendment to – in discussion with the Northern Marianas College and that's shown on line 6 to delete the provision that says, "The funds appropriated shall be used for repairs and construction of student facilities in the Northern Marianas College" to allow the college to have flexibility on the use of the \$1,000,000.00 being appropriated to the college. With that being said Madame Vice Speaker, I offer all these floor amendments contained and distributed copies to the members for action. So offered.

**Floor Amendment**

**To:** House Bill No. 20-147, HS1

**Offered by:** Representative Angel A. Demapan

**AMENDMENTS:**

1. Page 2, Line 13:

Delete “Twelve Million dollars (\$12,000,000.00)” and Insert “Eleven Million Eight Hundred and Fifty Thousand (\$11,850,000.00)”.

2. Page 3, Line 6:

Delete “Funds under this sub-section shall not be reprogrammed for any other purpose.”

3. Page 3, Line 17:

Delete “Two Million, Two Hundred Fifty Thousand dollars (\$2,250,000.00)” and Insert “Two Million, One Hundred Thousand dollars (\$2,100,000.00)”.

4. Page 4, Line 3: Insert a new (11) to read as follows:

“(11) Provided the Six Million dollars (\$6,000,000.00) shall be made available for PSS use immediately and the remainder shall be made proportionately available on a monthly basis for the remaining portion of this fiscal year.”

5. Page 4, Line 4: Insert a new (b) to read as follows and to renumber all subsections accordingly.

(b) One Hundred and Fifty Thousand dollars (\$150,000.00) to the State Board of Education. The Chairperson of the State Board of Education shall be the expenditure authority for the funds appropriated under this section.

(1) Provided that, of the funds appropriated under this section, Sixty Thousand dollars (\$60,000.00) shall be allocated to the Student Attendance Review Committee (SARC) (CNMI Inter-agency partnership); and

(2) Twenty-Five Thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) shall be allocated for commutes for PSS events, Committee and Board Meetings for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota; and

(3) Thirty Thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) shall be allocated for Professional Development for the Board and Staff; and

(4) Twenty Thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) shall be allocated for Computer and Networked-Telecommunications Equipment and Systems; and

(5) Fifteen Thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) shall be allocated to the Board Building CIP Improvements and Parking.”

6. Page 4, Line 21 to page 5, Line 1:

Delete “The funds appropriated shall be used for repairs and construction of student facilities in the Northern Marianas College.”

7. Page 8, Line 19:

After the number “2”, insert the letter “(a),”.

8. Page 8, Line 19:

After the letter “(m)”, delete “and (n)” and insert “, (n) and (o)”.

Consistent with the intent of the forgoing amendment(s), I hereby also move to allow the Legal Counsel together with the House Clerk to make further non-substantive technical amendments that are strictly necessary to effectuate the intent of this floor amendment prior to transmittal.

Date: January 26, 2018

Offered by: /s/ Rep. Angel A. Demapan

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Legal Counsel Joseph Taijeron

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt the floor amendment offered by Representative Angel A. Demapan was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: We are going back to the main motion. Discussion? Recognize Representative Larry Guerrero?

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madame Acting Speaker. I wanted to ask the mover maybe, you’re proposing to delete on page 4, line 21 deleting “The funds appropriated shall be used for repairs and construction of student facilities in the Northern Marianas College.” So, if we’re deleting that, so what is the funds going to be used for?

Representative Angel A. Demapan: The funds are going to – Madame Speaker, may I respond?

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Recognize Representative Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Representative Deleon Guerrero. In response to your question, the funds are going to still be appropriated to the Northern Marianas College, however having this provision specifically only for repairs and constructional student facilities would prohibit the college from using it to repair any other facilities on the campus or even to supplement any shortfall in personnel.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Chairman Demapan. I yield for now. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Clerk, roll call please.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Madame Speaker, the Floor Leader has yet to make the main motion.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Please Floor Leader make that motion.

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: As amended Madame Vice Speaker, I move for the passage on House Bill 20-147, HS1, so move.

*The motion was seconded.*

Legal Counsel Joseph Tajjeron: Just to clarify, Floor Leader it's HS1, HD1.

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: As amended, correct.

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion to pass House Bill 20-147, House Substitute 1, House Draft 1 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Francisco C. Aguon	yes
Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao	yes
Representative Donald C. Barcinas	yes
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	yes
Representative Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Angel A. Demapan	yes
Speaker Rafael S. Demapan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Alice S. Igitol	yes
Representative Jose I. Itibus	yes
Representative Glenn L. Maratita	yes
Representative Janet U. Maratita	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Gregorio M. Sablan, Jr.	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Vinson F. Sablan	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Madame Speaker, all 17 members present voted "yes."

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: With all members voting in the affirmative, House Bill 20-147, HS1, as amended hereby passes the House.

*No action taken for the following legislations:*

**H. B. NO. 20-96, SD1**

To amend 1 CMC §2264 to ensure that the Board of Education members receive compensation for committee meetings, which are vital to the development of policy and the functioning of the Public School System. [SEN. COMM. 20-119]

**H. B. NO. 20-71, HS1**

A Bill for an Act to make the Department of Lands and Natural Resources responsible for collecting the Managaha Fee and removing the Department of Public Lands as recipient of the Managaha Fees; and for other purposes. *See* [S. C. R. NO. 20-47]

**H. B. No. 20-113, HD1**

A Bill for an Act to establish a criminal provision for pedestrians crossing a road, highway, or crosswalk while using a mobile electronic device; and for other purposes. *See* [S. C. R. NO. 20-78]

**H. B. No. 20-35, HD1**

A Bill for an Act to repeal and reenact 1 CMC §§ 8245-8248 to increase compensation for appointed officials and increase the salary ceiling; and for other purposes. *See* [S. C. R. NO. 20-83]

**H. B. No. 20-36, HD1**

A Bill for an Act to amend 1 CMC § 8357, to reestablish the special annuity for the Governor and Lieutenant Governor; and for other purposes. *See* [S. C. R. NO. 20-84]

**H. B. No. 20-19**

A Bill for an Act to amend 6 CMC §3156 (b) by requiring a hotel or resort attached to a golf course to have a minimum of eighteen (18) holes in order to be eligible to conduct electronic gaming activities as defined in 6 CMC §3156(a)(6). *See* [S. C. R. NO. 20-92]

**H. B. NO. 20-146**

A Bill for an Act to apply the Casino BGRT subsidy to the Fuel Adjustment Charge and the actual electrical usage of CUC residential customers.

*The Speaker Pro Tem directed the members to item XVII, Miscellaneous Business and recognized Representative Edwin K. Propst.*

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Thank you, Madame Speaker. I know it's Friday, it's late and we all want to go home. I just wanted to thank everyone for today's session. I know there was a hotly contested bill on the calendar, Madame Speaker and I want to thank everyone for everybody keeping cool, calm and collected and that we discussed amicably and civilly. I appreciate the fact that we did have people come up and make public comments. I just want to remind us all that we do have these challenges, but we always make it a point to ensure that we do have that mutual respect for each other and we maintain that it is focused on the bill. I hope after this – I know this bill is going to committee – that we can consider just a couple of things and if that's okay, a couple of minutes. One of the things that the CHCC's Director of Medical Services, Mr. Jesse Tudela said was that "the problem is not the corporation, the problem is funding." I just want us to remember a couple of things that have not been discussed all too often. We need to remember that CHCC since 2012 that the Medicaid portion, the fifty-five cents for every dollar – for every Medicaid patient that goes – enters CHCC's doors – fifty-five cents has been paid from the federal side. From the local side, the forty-five cents, we have not paid that since 2012. So, with that said CHCC just by that alone average is about \$9.5 Million Dollars or lost revenue. Add to the fact that we still have to address the money that they don't get because of the indigent funds or what we call uncompensated care and charity care. This is nondebatable, we know that in 2017 it totaled over \$13 Million Dollars, that's a substantial amount of money. They have been given a budget for fiscal year 2018 of less than \$800,000.00. These are things that we do have to address as a body and hope we can. We will have differences of opinion and we have to respect that, but our job, each and every one of us is to come here and do our best to defend not just our position, but how we feel about our constituents' position and what is in the best interest of the CNMI. So, I mean no disrespect to any of you, Madame Speaker and my colleagues when we do debate this and when I object to certain things. This is not personal, this is the work that we must do. I do want to thank Madame Speaker and everyone here that after we leave this – we leave it on the floor and we go out and we maintain our friendship and relationships that's always been important because that is the CNMI, the island way. Thank you, Madame Speaker for the time, I appreciate your friendship each and every one of you. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: Thank you, Representative Propst. Any – Recognize Representative Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Madame Speaker. If there's no objection, I would like to make a follow up to our colleague's comments. I just want to add that the ongoing discussion in our community about funding, our health care system is a valid one and something

that I think our work has consistently reflected that we continue to try to address every opportunity we get. My comments are not directed at any member of this body, but the general argument that's being presented in the community is a little bit misleading and I think requires clarification. During the transition of the Department of Public Health to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation, I was a part of the executive branch committee that oversaw the transition and that was led by former Secretary of Public Health Joseph Gavin Villagomez. What was discussed at that table was that every year the hospital revenues went to the general fund and the legislatures of that time just took that hospital revenues in the general fund and appropriated it back to the Department of Public Health. So, if there was \$40,000,000.00 in projected revenue and hospital revenues – all of that got appropriated back to the Department of Public Health. When the corporation happened, the hospital got to keep all their revenues. None of that makes it to the general fund that is why we don't see appropriations in the amount of \$40,000,000.00. It's not a result of this body not wanting to give \$40,000,000.00 to the hospital. It's because the revenue they project to generate stays there. So, that alleviates the legislature and the central government from at least appropriating up to \$40,000,000.00. This year the hospital projected \$70,000,000.00 in hospital revenue. They projected to generate \$70,000,000.00, \$30,000,000 more than they projected last fiscal year. So, what that tells us if they're confident in that projection it means that they've increased their efforts to bill and collect. It means they've increased their efforts to become solvent and also increase their probability to meet the mandate of the law that says they should be self-sustaining at some point in time. However, I am just bringing this up because in the discussion about funding our hospital, nobody ever talks about the hospital revenues not being part of the general fund. That's what produced the big numbers in the past. Those legislatures and those administrations that passed, did not pull \$40,000,000.00 out of the sky. It was generated. In the same way the hospitals on track in their projection to generate \$70,000,000.00 this fiscal year. Now fast forward beyond the hospital revenues. This body has appropriated the most outside of hospital revenues in any time in our Commonwealth. As of today, just this past two weeks between the delegation and this session - \$5,000,000.00 outside of the hospital revenues. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislature we paid for CHCC's past due utility bills that's an appropriation. There was never a time that we've dipped into hospital revenues. They kept every single penny. So, I'm saying today that funding our healthcare system is something we all share. It's a valid discussion. It's something we have to continue talking about, but when we talk about it let's not leave out important pieces of information because at the end of the day we take the brunt as a body but we take the brunt on misguided information. People deserve to know. The reason why we cannot appropriate \$40,000,000.00 is because those revenues in the hospital are not a part of the general fund. I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you very much.

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Privilege Madame Speaker. I do need to add to that if that's okay. Normally it's nondebatable, but I did allow for that so thank you. Chairman, you're correct with everything you said. However, it's also important to mention that when you do talk about the revenues that they keep. You have to talk to the CFO and talk to the accountants and talk about their expenses that they also incur because every business whether you're public or private you will incur such expenses and the point is their focus is not to be a for profit corporation, but to break even. Here's the facts that were not mentioned, you know just as we do that about 52% of our people are uninsured. The poverty is about half as well, so it's about half and that's below the federal poverty guidelines. So what CHC has a challenge, what they have to do is that when they have people that are indigent or don't have money or either uninsured or underinsured they cannot by law and by virtue turn them away. So, they treat them, they take care of them and then

guess what? Those become bad debt or uncollectable or what we call uncompensated care. There's no getting around this because they're not like the private clinics where they can turn people away, they have to service them. Even with that revenue kept, let's not forget that CHC was looking at raising their rates just so they could break even, that's what we have to have the discussions with. That's what we have to ask. They wanted to raise the rates and everybody went crazy. We had a meeting with Chairman Itibus was in there, our Health Chairman and also our Minority Leader where we discussed with the health insurance providers about this and if CHC rates increase so that they can break even guess what? The health insurance providers also increase their rates and it's what they called and I quote "a death spiral." Everybody loses. People pull out of the insurance that they are in and then guess what happens? We have more people that are uninsured and that means the uncompensated care cost increase. We have to work together and do everything we can to ensure that does not happen. So, with regards to them keeping all this money, they spend over 90% for accountable for things that they so desperately need. And as far as travel or traveling all the time it's less than half of percent of their budget for travel, which is necessary because of certifications and everything else. So, I do want to add to that. So, Chairman thank you.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Privilege Madame Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Janet U. Maratita: State your privilege.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: I would just like the record to reflect that I am not disputing anything that the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation is currently budgeting and spending. I am disputing the lack of information being provided to the community. The statement that we only give \$800,000.00 that's what I'm disputing because if you go back to the way it was being done then essentially if their projection of \$70,000,000.00 in revenue is correct, we've essentially appropriated \$70,800,000.00. Thank you, Madame Speaker.

*There was no further discussion, the Speaker Pro Tem recognized the Floor Leader for adjournment.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Floor Leader Glenn L. Maratita: One love. One love. At this time, I would like to make a motion that we adjourn subject to your call.

*The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.*

*The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Venetia S. Rosario  
House Journal Clerk

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**APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS**

**FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY:** 1<sup>st</sup> Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

**SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:** NONE

**THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:** NONE

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*Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session on December 11, 2017 and December 13, 2017:*

H. B. NO. 20-145: To appropriate \$22,000,000.00 set aside in the Casino GRT Account for the payment of the 25% of the Settlement Class Members full benefits and payment of a Bonus for all retirees. Introduced by REP. RAFAEL S. DEMAPAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Francisco C. Aguon, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Donald C. Barcinas, Francisco S. Dela Cruz, and Gregorio M. Sablan, Jr.) on December 11, 2017; subsequently moved and placed on the Bill Calendar.

[ADDED-12/11/17] H. L. B. NO. 20-50: To re-appropriate thirteen thousand (\$13,000) allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-2, specifically under Section 2(d); and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. LORENZO I. DELEON GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*) on December 11, 2017.

H. RES. NO. 20-18: Congratulating Ms. Antenille Mendiola Santos on being selected as the 2018 CNMI Teacher of the Year and commending her for dedication and devotion to providing her students with a quality education. Introduced by REP. GLENN L. MARATITA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*, Representatives Francisco C. Aguon, Edwin P. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Donald C. Barcinas, Ivan A. Blanco, Francisco S. Dela Cruz, Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Rafael S. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Alice S. Igitol, Jose I. Itibus, Glenn L. Maratita, Janet U. Maratita, Edwin K. Propst, Gregorio M. Sablan Jr., John Paul P. Sablan, Vinson F. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez) on December 11, 2017; subsequently placed on the Resolution Calendar.

[Added-12/13/17] H. B. NO. 20-146: To apply the Casino BGRT subsidy to the Fuel Adjustment Charge and the actual electrical usage of CUC residential customers. Introduced by REP. FRANCISCO S. DELA CRUZ of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*) on December 13, 2017; subsequently moved and placed on the Bill Calendar.

[Added-12/13/17] H. B. NO. 20-147: To appropriate Twenty-Four Million, Twenty-Six Thousand, Fifty-Six dollars and 35/100 (\$24,026,056.35) from the Special Casino Gross Revenue Tax Account, earmarked under 4 CMC §2308. Introduced by REP. ANGEL A. DEMAPAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Francisco C. Aguon, Edwin P. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Donald C. Barcinas, Ivan A. Blanco, Francisco S. Dela Cruz, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Rafael S. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Alice S. Igitol, Jose I. Itibus, Glenn L. Maratita, Janet U. Maratita, Edwin K. Propst, Gregorio M. Sablan Jr., John Paul P. Sablan, Vinson F. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez) on December 13, 2017; subsequently referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

[Added-12/13/17] H. L. B. NO. 20-51: To appropriate the Accrued Bond Interest Income collected for the First Senatorial District in the amount of Eighteen Thousand Six Hundred Seventy dollars (\$18,670.00). Introduced by REP. GLENN L. MARATITA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*) on December 13, 2017.

[Added-13/13/17] H. L. B. NO. 20-52: To appropriate funds specifically allotted to the First Senatorial District under Public Law No. 18-30 in the amount of Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000.00 USD); and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. GLENN L. MARATITA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*) on December 13, 2017.

[Added-12/13/17] H. L. B. NO. 20-53: To appropriate the CIP Bonds Accrued Interest Income collected for the Third Senatorial District in the amount of One Hundred Seventy-One Thousand and Forty dollars (\$171,040.00). Introduced by REP. JANET U. MARATITA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, and Representatives Francisco C. Aguon, Francisco S. Dela Cruz, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Alice S. Igitol, Edwin K. Propst, Gregorio M. Sablan Jr., and John Paul P. Sablan) on December 13, 2017.

[Added-12/13/17] C. RES. NO. 20-15: To Congratulate Frank “The Crank” Camacho on becoming the second resident of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to compete in the Ultimate Fighting Championship and also to honor him for being a great ambassador for our islands and role model to our youths. Introduced by REP. VINSON F. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 4, (*for himself*, Representatives Francisco C. Aguon, Edwin P. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Donald C. Barcinas, Ivan A. Blanco, Francisco S. Dela Cruz, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Rafael S. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Alice S. Igitol, Jose I. Itibus, Glenn L. Maratita, Janet U. Maratita, Edwin K. Propst, Gregorio M. Sablan Jr., John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez) on December 13, 2017; subsequently placed on the Resolution Calendar.

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*House information on deadlines for override: None*