

## THE SENATE TWENTY-FIRST NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE



## SENATE JOURNAL

SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION – 2019

SJ 21-08

---

**First Day**


---

**Wednesday & Thursday, July 17 & 18, 2019**


---

In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President, Victor B. Hocog, issued a session call on July 15, 2019 that the Senate of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature will convene this open and public session. The notice, the official session call, and the session agenda was filed in the Office of the Senate Clerk; released to the media; and posted at the Entrance Halls of the Office of the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives, posted on the Commonwealth Legislature’s website at [www.cnmileg.gov.mp](http://www.cnmileg.gov.mp).

The Senate of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Day, Sixth Special Session, on July 17, 2019, at 1:45 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Victor B. Hocog, President of the Senate, presided.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll, eight members are “present” and one “absent.”

**President Hocog:** Thank you, madam Clerk. With eight members present we hereby constitute a quorum to conduct our Order Business for this afternoon. I would like the record to reflect that Senator Borja is hereby excused for this session. I like also to recognize a former Speaker, Pedro Guerrero, you’ve been hiding from the other members so I like to recognize your presence this afternoon. Thank you. We are now on Item B, Public Comments.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**President Hocog:** Anyone from the public would like to speak on today’s agenda? Sorry madam, I didn’t recognize you because you were hiding too in the back.

**Ms. Maria “Frica” T. Pangelinan:** Good afternoon, Mr. President and members of this body, the Senate. My comment is very short, I just want to comment on House Bill No. 21-44, HS1, has passed by the House does not need any other amendment it’s sufficient for MPLT requirement to continue its review on the request for the loan, and that is all I’m going to say, Mr. President. Thank you.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, former Senator Frica. Anyone else from the gallery? If none, let me recognize the Floor Leader.

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, due to some confirmations needed on today's session made by the Governor for Board Members, I move to Item M on the agenda so we can first act on the confirmation of Members to the Board of Directors. Thank you.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: There's a motion to move our Order of Business to Item M to address the appointment for boards and commissions made by the Governor for action, if no objection from the members.

There was no objection raised.

**President Hocog**: Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. We are now on Item M of the Order of Business under Reports of Standing Committee.

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

**President Hocog**: And at that this time, I would like to recognize Chairman Cruz or if I may, can I call the nominees or the appointees up front please? Sorry, Senator Cruz, let me first recognized the Floor Leader before I recognize you. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, on Item M, No. 10, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-26, the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mr. Joaquin P. Omar to serve as a Member of the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Development Authority.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: Discussion? Senator Cruz?

**Senator Cruz**: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President and members of the Senate, your Committee on the Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present Standing Committee Report No. 21-26 and it is the executive appointment of Mr. Joaquin P. Omar to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors to represent the Third Senatorial District, Saipan. Your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Mr. Omar to serve as a Member of the

Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors begs leave to report as follows: After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Omar's appointment to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the executive appointment of Mr. Omar to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Joaquin P. Omar's overall credentials to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are 3 written testimonies in support of the appointee, 1 oral testimony in support of the appointee, and no written or oral testimonies in opposition of the appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Based on the overall assessment of Mr. Omar's credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Mr. Omar has the qualifications and leadership skills necessary to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors. Mr. Omar was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Govern Arnold I. Palacios on May 14, 2019 to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors. The public hearing was conducted on July 12, 2019 here at the Senate Chamber, Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearings certain recommendations, issues and concerns were raised for the appointee to address and look into when confirmed as a Board of Directors member. In conclusion all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the appointment of Mr. Omar to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors to represent the Third Senatorial District in accordance with 4 CMC § 10301(b). Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Mr. Joaquin P. Omar to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors. Again, I ask the full members today to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-26. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Any other member would like to make any comments? Ready? Madam Clerk?

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK**: Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** Thank you, madam Clerk. With all eight members voting affirmative to confirm the appointment of Mr. Joaquin P. Omar, I wish to report to full body that Mr. Omar is hereby confirmed by the Senate. Congratulations, Mr. Omar. [APPLAUSE] Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-27, from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mr. Rafael S. Demapan to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Development Authority, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There is a motion and it has been seconded, discussion? Chairman Cruz?

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, this is the second Standing Committee Report under the subcommittee of the Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present to the full Senate members and this is the executive appointment of Mr. Rafael S. Demapan to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors to represent the Third Senatorial District, Saipan. Mr. President, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Mr. Demapan to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors begs leave to report as follows: After review and consideration of testimonies provided your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Demapan's appointment to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the executive appointment of Mr. Demapan to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Rafael S. Demapan's overall credentials to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee there are 2 written testimonies in support of the appointee, 1 oral testimony in support of the appointee, and no written or oral testimonies in opposition of the appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Based on the overall assessment of Mr. Demapan's credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Mr. Demapan has the qualifications and leadership skills necessary to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors. Mr. Demapan was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Govern Arnold I. Palacios on May 14, 2019 to serve as a member of the CDA Board of Directors. The appointment packet was forwarded to the Senate on June 3, 2019. The public hearing was conducted on July 12, 2019, Senate Chamber, Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearings certain recommendations, issues and concerns were raised for the appointee to address and look into when confirmed as a Board of Member. In conclusion, all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the appointment of Mr. Demapan to serve as a Member of the Commonwealth Development Authority Board of Directors in accordance with 4 CMC § 10301(b). Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Mr.

Rafael S. Demapan to serve as a Member of the CDA Board of Directors. Again, I ask the full members to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-27. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Any further discussion? Senator Igisomar, recognized.

**Senator Igisomar**: Thank you very much, Mr. President. For the record, I am highly favorable for the appointment of our former Speaker. And I just wanted to add, I reviewed the comments received from both individuals and I just wanted to add for the record, in addition to all the items that were itemized with respect to the findings and recommendations for their review with CDA is if they may include within their review a collaboration with the current CNMI SBDC (Small Business Development Center) and to include the usage of any properties of CDA to promote business incubator within the CNMI. I do know that we have a lot of young children of ours that are really into an entrepreneurship to start a business, but they are having difficulties finding a place to rent to have a business so having such usage of such properties of CDA to allow these individuals to whatever collaboration of business partnership with CDA, I'm sure we can help them to flourish in our community. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, Senator Igisomar. Ready? Madam Clerk, please call the roll.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK**: Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog**: With eight members voting “yes” on Standing Committee Report No. 21-27, I wish to announce that the appointment of Mr. Rafael S. Demapan to serve as a Member of the Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Development Authority is hereby confirmed by the Senate. Congratulations, Mr. Demapan. [APPLAUSE] Next, Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, on No. 12, under Reports of Standing Committees, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee No. 21-28, from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on Mr. Thomas T.H. Liu to serve as a Member of the Board of Directors for the Marianas Visitors Authority.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There's a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-28 for the appointment of Mr. Thomas T.H. Liu to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors, discussion? Chairman Cruz?

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you, Mr. President. This is the last of Standing Committee Report that your subcommittee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present to the full Senate members, and this is Standing Committee Report No. 21-28, the executive appointment of Mr. Thomas T.H. Liu to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors to represent the Third Senatorial District, Saipan. Mr. President, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Mr. Thomas T.H. Liu to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors begs leave to report as follows: After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Liu's appointment to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the executive appointment of Mr. Liu to serve as a Member of the MVA Board of Directors. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Thomas T.H. Liu's overall credentials to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are 3 written and 4 oral testimonies in support of the appointee. No written or oral testimonies in opposition of the appointee were received by the Committee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Based on the overall assessment of Mr. Liu's credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Mr. Liu has the qualifications and leadership skills necessary to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors. Mr. Liu was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Governor Arnold I. Palacios on June 4, 2019 to serve as a member of the MVA Board of Directors. The public hearing was conducted on July 12, 2019, here at the Senate Chamber, Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearings certain recommendations, issues and concerns were raised for the appointee to address and look into when confirmed as a Board of Directors member of the Marianas Visitors Authority. In conclusion, all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the appointment of Mr. Liu to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors in accordance with 4 CMC §2111(b). Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Mr. Thomas T.H. Liu to serve as a Member of the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors. Again, I ask the full members of this body to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-28. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Any additional comments? Recognized, Senator Mangloña.

**Senator Mangloña:** Thank you, Mr. President. I thank the Chairman of EAGI for the comprehensive recommendation brought to the attention of the nominee in particular this item on looking into the possibility of adding new inter-islands flights. As you know Tom, you've lived on Tinian for many

years, this is something that really has concern especially the people of Rota. Right now, there are only three flights daily between Saipan to Rota using a small aircraft only good for seven passengers each way so you are only talking about twenty-one seats to Rota every day for the last almost one year and specially, worse for Guam because there is only one flight in the afternoon, and so I hope that you can work with your colleagues to see what kind of incentive and it's good that CDA is here that we can give to even existing airlines like, Arctic Circle. They have been out of business for about a year now Arctic Circle. They have their craft, but they are still shut down. And I know that Star Marianas have several aircrafts, they are doing good in this tour above the island here, and I know they can expand that to Rota. They have issues with CPA, so I just appreciate if we can seriously look into this with CPA. I have heard stories were people especially those that are for medical referral, they have actually taking several of them with a small speed boat to Guam, because they really can't get a seat on Star Marianas and that is very alarming. People are posting on Facebook such trips by patients on the small speed boat. So, I hope that MVA, CPA and CDA can look into working even with existing companies. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Mangloña. Senator Cruz?

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you. I just notice, Mr. President, on page 3, line 2, we are reading and this is not the appropriate language on line 2, on the last sentence, instead of "Trustee" its "Board of Directors" if the counsel and the clerk can change this, this is not appropriate language to be in this committee report, and we can make corrections on any others in the pages that are stated "Trustee" change to "Board of Directors." Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Clerk and counsel, do you acknowledge that recommendation? Thank you. Well Tom, I have one, I would like to congratulate you for considering this appointment to serve as one member for the Marians Visitors Authority Board of Directors and being here in the CNMI for so many years, I am very confident that you acknowledge in terms of promoting tourism, you have that mechanism to infuse new vision and ideas with the other members of MVA. And we look forward for your recommendation to new ideas that will bring us back more attention to the CNMI in terms of tourism most particularly you are presently still engaged in the hotel industry and that will play a major vision on how we can stimulate more of our tourism coming to all the CNMI. And I like to add that we are working on a new airline that may come to the CNMI by the end of October, we'll really also be part of the assistance in gaining tourist destination to both Rota and Tinian and we need the assistance of MVA to collaborate with this new airline that will provide us the more flights and services to Tinian, Rota and Guam and back to Saipan. So, I have all the confidence too that you'll be able to induce more fresh ideas into the authority so can move forward to the road of prosperity for that. Thank you. Senator Igisomar?

**Senator Igisomar:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. And Mr. Tom Liu, I just wanted to add, to thank you also for taking this opportunity and the challenge and hoping that you would continue to support MVA. Support them in their efforts for the expansion and exploration of tourists on our culture. As we all been talking about before and sometimes we may sound repetitive. We are out there in the international world showcasing our culture and traditional dances and a lot of these people and I know we are still working on it, when they come and visit our islands, they would like to see this culture be presented to them, but they find themselves with a lot of nothing more than a concrete and a beach

only with no side of particular locals who are dressed up in the exhibition's so we do overseas. So, I hope you can continue to support MVA in this effort. And just a quick story, I went to Palau a long time ago I was with CDA, to work on the airline that was supposed to be materialized, and when I was in that hotel, I was so happy to see that it was the senior citizens who were in the hotel lobby making arts and crafts, with their culture and tradition showcasing it. And I hope one day we can have that in every hotel in the CNMI and US MVA Tourism working in collaboration with the hotel HANMI, and hopefully, in collaboration with the Aging, in collaboration with the Indigenous Affairs, in collaboration with CAO, MVA can be the champion and/or finding the proper catalyst to be able to make this happen. And we're all here to support whatever ideas you guys may come up with so we can continue to assist our community. I just really want to envision that day, that I will see that our people can be showcase themselves by being in this hotel lobbies, whatever arrangements you can make so they can show what our culture is and why they're here. With that, thank you very much for taking this opportunity. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Igisomar. Senator Hofschneider are we ready? Clerk, can you please call the roll for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-28.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Yes
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 21-28, I wish to inform the appointee that you are hereby confirmed by the Senate this afternoon. And congratulations for your new endeavor. [APPLAUSE] At this time, I would like to call for a short recess.

The Senate recessed at 2:15 p.m.

### RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 2:30 p.m.

**President Hocog:** We are back to our plenary session after a short recess. Floor Leader, can you effectuate a motion to go back to our Order of Business?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion to return to Item C on today's Order of Business.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There's a motion and it has been seconded to return back to Item C on our Order of Business, with that, we are now on Item C of our Order of Business for today's session. Floor Leader?

### READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, I move for the adoption of Senate Journal 21-07, 1<sup>st</sup> Day, 5<sup>th</sup> Special Session.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There is a motion on the floor and it has been seconded, to adopt Senate Journal 21-07, 1<sup>st</sup> Day, Sixth Special Session, discussion? Ready? Those in favor of the motion to adopt Senate Journal 21-07 say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog:** Motion carries. Senate Journal 21-07 is hereby adopted. Madam Clerk?

### MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Clerk voiced Governor's Messages Nos. 21-76 to 21-93.

**President Hocog:** Any comments from any of the Governor's Communications? Vice President?

**Senator Hofschneider:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. And reference to Governor's Message No. 21-92 reference to Executive Order 2019-09, establishing a Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, I would like to comment that I wish to commend the administration, Governor Torres and Lieutenant Governor Palacios, for creating such entity or organization under his office, simply, because of the increase in the active participation of the administration and of all the municipalities in all the department of defense engagement in the Commonwealth, be it training, EIS of several sorts and most notably and most recent is the record of decision to construct the U.S. Air Force divert field on Tinian. I am certain that this would not be the only interest or plans in the region, therefore, the creation of this section is very crucial in this time and day as now, it is important that any visitors coming in to the CNMI for courtesy visit in reference to any of the military developments here must heed to this creation and therefore, the protocol in terms with the visits that they take heed in this section or division at the administration. Equally important too, having being the representatives from Tinian, we also would like to take heed in this creation and that the Mayor of Tinian, Mayor Aldan

and the leadership are very much appreciative of this undertaken by the administration. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Madam counsel, you think it is appropriate that we just go ahead and accept this communication from the Governor or we don't have to?

**Counsel Villagomez**: Mr. President, the Constitution says that if any change in the government is offered by the Governor, he shall set forth the change in the executive order, which shall be submitted to the Legislature and shall become effective sixty (60) days after submission. Unless, specifically modified or disapproved by majority of each House. So, just by submitting it after sixty (60) days it becomes law. Or if you would like to amend within the sixty (60) days than you have to act on it.

**President Hocog**: So, my question than follows in the event that we do not take action for or against or House will reject this Executive Order, where does the Executive Order stands than?

**Counsel Villagomez**: The Constitution says it has to be disapproved by majority of the members of each house. I believe if only one house disapproves it, it is still deemed valid it needs both House.

**President Hocog**: So the Senate doesn't have to act on either accepting this communication?

**Counsel Villagomez**: Not officially, but I think it will be okay if you wish to support and approve the Executive Order if that is what you want.

**President Hocog**: If there is no objection from the members, I would like to express our sentiment regarding this communication whether we are approving it or disapproving it. Floor Leader, may you effectuate a proper motion to act on this?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. I move to accept and approve Governor's Message No. 21-92, on Executive Order No. 2019-09, "Establishing a Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs."

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: There is a motion and it has been seconded, any further discussion? If none, I will call the roll to approve and accept Governor's Message No. 21-92, "Establishing a Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs." Madam Clerk?

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)

Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” on Governor’s Message No. 21-92, establishing Executive Order No. 2019-09 is hereby approved by the Senate. Any other members that would like to make any comments from Governor’s Communications? Senator Santos?

**Senator Santos:** Thank you, Mr. President. This is in reference to Governor’s Messages Nos. 21-78, 21-88 and 21-91. Let me proceed with 21-78, I would like to commend our honorable Governor and Lieutenant Governor for the signing of Public Law No. 21-2, which gave reprogramming authority to the administration, to the Chief Justice, the Director of the Legislative Bureau, the respective Mayors and the Municipal Councils of each Senatorial District. And this reprogramming authority, as we all know, it is important in order for our CNMI government to avoid fiscal crisis and deficit spending, and that it will provide much needed flexibility to move funds around to critical areas. It is sad, Mr. President and members that the colleague from the First Senatorial District who chooses to criticize me out in one of the local newspapers neglected to support this legislation that meet Public Law 21-2 that would help provide the necessary again flexibility to our government which is required in this difficult time, and to my colleague from the First Senatorial District, this is what we called the “pot” calling the “kettle black.” Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you.

**Senator Santos:** And in reference to Governor’s Message No. 21-88, I would like to thank our honorable Governor and Lieutenant Government for the resubmission of the nomination of Mr. Aniceto H. Mundo to serve as a Member of the Board of Trustees for NMTI and also commend them for resubmission for the nomination of Ms. Diana B. Hocog to serve as a Member of the Scholarship Board of Directors representing the First Senatorial District. We trust that Mr. Mundo and Ms. Hocog would serve our CNMI well most especially the First Senatorial District. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Santos. Any other member? If none, let me add to that since I was part of the criticism about the funding for the municipality of Rota. Communication 21-28 which is now Public Law 21-2, I want to make this public that by allowing the municipalities to have the 100% reprogramming authority those people or those employees that have been furlough in the absence of this authority are now seeing the light of opportunity that they can have a gainful employment back by virtue that the Mayor from the respective senatorial district can mobilize now funding from below going up like using all the others to fund personnel. So, as a result of action in voting this 100% makes it possible for these employees to return back to a gainful employment after several weeks of being furloughed or being unemployed due to the fact of the impact of our austerity. So, I just want to clarify the impact of Public Law 21-2. Anyone else wants to make any comments from the Governor's Messages? If none, from the House, madam Clerk.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY**

None

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS**

None

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE**

The Clerk voiced House Communications Nos. 21-20 to 21-33.

**President Hocog:** Any member would like to make any statements or comments on the House Communications? None. Let us move to our next Order of Business. Madam Clerk.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SENATE**

The Clerk voiced Senate Communications Nos. 21-42 to 21-59.

**President Hocog:** Any one would like to make any comments on our own communications? None. Let us go to Item I.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE WASHINGTON DELEGATE**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**PRE-FILED BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**

1. **Senate Bill No. 21-34:** To amend 3 CMC § 2212 to require that Medical Assistants be licensed, certified, registered, or otherwise regulated by the Health Care Professions Licensing Board. [SEN. VINNIE F. SABLAN – 06/25/19]
2. **Senate Local Bill No. 21-04:** To amend 10 CMC §§ 2312 and 2313 to designate Acting Mayor and Acting Municipal Council when the Mayor or Municipal Council Chair is outside the Commonwealth. [SEN. FRANCISCO M. BORJA – 07/09/19]

**President Hocog:** Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** Mr. President, there are two pre-filed legislations and I ask the author to officially air out the bills.

**President Hocog:** I now recognize the author of Senate Bill No. 21-24. Short recess.

The Senate recessed at 2:45

**RECESS**

The Senate reconvened at 2:45

**President Hocog**: We are back again after a short recess. Recognized, Senator Sablan.

**Senator Sablan**: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to officially introduce Senate Bill No. 21-34, “A Bill for an Act to amend 3 CMC § 2212 to require that Medical Assistants be licensed, certified registered, or otherwise regulated by the Health Care Professional Licensing Board.” So offered, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President, if I may, since Chairman Francisco M. Borja is excused today, I will read out his Senate Local Bill No. 21-04, “To amend 10 CMC §§ 2312 and 2313 to designate Acting Mayor and Acting Municipal Council when the Mayor or Municipal Council Chair is outside the Commonwealth.”

**President Hocog**: This is a Senate Local Bill.

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Senate Local Bill, Mr. President.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

**President Hocog**: We are on Item L, no more introductions? We are done on Item M.

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President?

**President Hocog**: Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President, on Item M, No. 6, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-22, from the Committee on Fiscal Affairs reporting on House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, “To amend Public Law No. 20-66 and 4 CMC § 53001, et seq. the Taulamwaar Sensible CNMI Cannabis Act of 2018,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: There is a motion to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 21-22, discussion? Vice President Hofschneider?

**Senator Hofschneider**: *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. Good afternoon to everyone. Before you, Mr. President, is the product work that was put into your Fiscal Affairs Committee on the bill before us, and not to labor the session any further, I will be formally introducing a substitute bill on House Bill No. 21-13, and the meat or the important key points of the amendments being offered by the

committee is articulated in the committee report for everyone's review. But as the Chair of your committee, I would like to ask the members for their support as this piece of legislation is a very crucial to the progression of industry that we recently supported to be one of the arms of the economic activity here in the CNMI. If I am not out of order, Mr. President, I would also like to recognized the former Speaker of the House, and he is also the Special Assistant to the Industry in the administration, Mr. Joe Guerrero is here in the gallery and I have the short time to show him what the product of the Senate is and he is ready to support also as well to work with the context of the bill. So again, I humbly ask for the support of the committee to move forward with this legislation. *Si Yu'us ma'ase.*

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Vice President. Anyone else would like to make comments on Standing Committee Report No. 21-22? Ready to vote? Madam Clerk.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting "yes."

**President Hocog:** Thank you, madam Clerk. With eight members voting "yes" to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 21-22, is hereby passed the Senate. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** Mr. President, that is the Standing Committee Report that we will take action on today's session, if there is no objection, we will move down to Item O, Resolution Calendar.

**President Hocog:** There is no objection. Those in favor of moving down to Item O of our agenda please say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog:** Motion carries. We are now on Item O, Resolution Calendar.

## RESOLUTION CALENDAR

**President Hocog:** Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-3, on the CNMI CDBG application, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Ready? Those in favor of the motion to adopt House Joint Resolution No. 21-3 say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog:** Motion carries. House Joint Resolution No. 21-3 is hereby adopted. Thank you. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-4, HD2, to limit birth tourism in the CNMI, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There's a motion for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-4, discussion? Senator Sablan?

**Senator Sablan:** Thank you, Mr. President. This is in reference to this House Joint Resolution No. 21-4, which aims to prevail and prevent birth tourism here in the CNMI. I am in full support of this resolution, but I just want to say for the record, we need to voice our concerns and ensure that there are more efforts from our federal partners to really control this activity in the CNMI. We're not the only jurisdiction that suffers from this practice this extends out in Southern California and other jurisdictions under United States. It is a hole that has been there and has not been filled, so I think, if we have more presence with our federal partners here, I think we can come to more agreements and more ideas on how to curtail this. I did introduce a surrogacy bill here in the Senate, and this is another thing that is kind of attached to birth tourism. But as we are out in the community, people stress their concerns about this, and stress that we do something about it here in the Legislature, but you know it is not under our jurisdiction and we plea the Federal Government to come in and have more efforts put more presence here on our islands so we can battle this activity that it's really hurting us especially on media coverage. We've been aired on certain media channels and media outlets, magazines, and online subscriptions as you know the place for birth tourism. So, more dialog with everybody, this is a whole aircraft, there are policies on an aircraft if you're at thirty-six weeks, you can't get on this aircraft that travels, so these are part of the strategic behaviors that these individuals take here so more dialog with everybody so that we can curtail this. And I just want to point out something, that is why I was kind of lost on the pre-filed portion of our agenda, because I was so concentrating on this House Joint Resolution. I don't know if we can treat this as a technical counsel, but if you refer to page 4, line 3, and since it will be further resolve that this document will be transmitted to the President of the United States and the Senate Majority Leader, as well as the House Speaker, we want to make sure that our language is correct and if this can be treated as a technical, line 3 says, "The Senate concurring that the House hereby consents to cooperation with the United States," I would like to see it if we can treat that as a technical and change "cooperation" to the word "cooperates" so it makes more sense on

the document. So, instead of it saying, “Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, the Senate concurring that the House hereby consents to cooperation with the United States Government to modify Article III,” is it “cooperate” can we treat that as a technical, should it be “cooperate” oppose to “cooperation”?

**President Hocog**: Let me call for a short recess.

The Senate recessed at 2:56 p.m.

### RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 3:19 p.m.

**President Hocog**: We’re back again to our plenary session and prior to our short recess we’re still on Item O, Resolution Calendar as it pertains to House Joint Resolution No. 21-4, HD2. And at this time, I would like again to recognize Senator Sablan to continue with his concern reference to page, 3 of the resolution.

**Senator Sablan**: Thank you, Mr. President. Before we went on recess, I just wanted to point out the technical of the language on page 4, and after consulting with our legal counsel and her consulting with the House legal counsel, it will be treated as a technical and the appropriate language will be included in the resolution that you we were about to pass. Before I end, I just want to say that, when House Joint Resolution No. 21-4, is pass, it will be transmitted to the appropriate bodies to introduce legislation to effectuate the amendment that is stated this resolution. In the meantime, I really feel that it's vital that the Legislature, even our U.S. Delegate or Governor please to the Federal Government to have more presence of their officers here and give more effort to really curtail and prevent this practice. I was just researching in different jurisdictions that are battling birth tourism, there are many efforts that are being put into work. Houses are broken into because these so called birthing center factories and what not, so just in the meantime, we don’t know if the legislation will go through, I think it's just a simple fix to plea for more presence of our immigration personnel here since it is under the jurisdiction of the United States. And I am sure that, if there’s more presence and there’s more efforts to really stop this which is a concern of the Federal Government then there will be some positive moves towards that. And with that and also I just mentioned, we are receiving CW-1 fees and immigration fees, but they are receiving fees as well, so I think that is only fair that we get the fair share of presence and activities so that our borders will be protected and we can really fight these concerns that we’re going through right now. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Madam counsel, what is it in the resolution that we need to authorize technical change?

**Counsel Villagomez**: On line 3, “that the House” change to “Legislature hereby consents to” change “cooperation” to “cooperate.”

**President Hocog**: So that is the technical that we’ll consent you with the understanding of the House legal counsel, right? Okay. With that technical amendment, any other? Senator Igisomar, recognized.

**Senator Igisomar**: Thank you, Mr. President. I have two items but the first item is, with the technical amendment of “cooperation” whether that word is different from “collaboration” and I’m wondering whether we should technically make that in “collaboration” instead of “cooperation,” if the counsel may comfort the inquiry of the difference of the two, if we can use “collaboration” as a technical amendment to the word “cooperation”? This is the first question.

**President Hocog**: Counsel?

**Counsel Villagomez**: I didn’t discuss that with the House counsel, only changing “cooperation” to “cooperate.”

**Senator Igisomar**: Thank you. Mr. President, on that first item, I will thank and hope counsel can work whatever outcome, I am ok whether “collaboration” or “cooperation”, but I’m just hoping to see if she can look into the word “collaboration” if it considered an allowable technical amendment change from “cooperation” to “collaboration”. On the second item, I would like to actually thank the Governor for his effort in working with the 902 with the United States Government in trying to come up with an amendment and I’m hoping and this is a good sign that there’s good benefits coming out of this 902 negotiation. However, I hope the United State Government and the President can also be forthcoming in aiding the CNMI in other Covenant discussions that have been ongoing most specifically and importantly on our labor issues. And I believe, our labor issues, CW-1, the reason why we got here is to do some enforcement issues and/or regulations or statutes of sections of U.S. Constitution and Laws with respect to the term of staying of the people that are here overseas, and I think that, if we can do something like this with this current resolution whereby we are reviewing a discussion negotiation with the President to review certain United State Constitution sections to waive for the benefit of preventing and helping reduced the birth tourism then I think we surely can also discuss waiver of certain U.S. Constitutions and Laws to be able to allow for labor forces to be here, without so much strict restrictions on CW-1. *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Thank you. Any other member? Recognized, Senator Mangloña.

**Senator Mangloña**: Mr. President, first of all maybe a question to our legal counsel, Section 303, as it is presently written, what does it say, counsel? How does it read?

**Counsel Villagomez**: Section 303 is right there and the original language is on line 7 through 9 and then line 10, it says –

**Senator Mangloña**: So basically, that is the U.S. Constitution, right? As far as – let me ask you counsel, I guess in the 902 because we don’t have the actual report before us of what the recommendation is in the 902, do we have immigration experts representing us in that 902 as far as representing the CNMI? And I guess I just ask this because my next question would be for example, I know Guam is using this as a sales pitch in getting investors to Guam, and I know that Phil Long on Tinian is using it also, Bob Jones, and this is just one of the many immigration benefits that we promote in bringing in investors such as the EB5, the EB5 investors, so my question is, an EB5 investor today,

would they be covered by the language of 303 as presently propose and EB5 investor who is here today would they be covered under this language?

**Counsel Villagomez:** Not today, when the amendment takes effect and ratified.

**Senator Mangloña:** I mean let say, when it takes effect today and we have and EB5 today, if they have children would they be the U.S. citizens?

**Counsel Villagomez:** The language here says that, “having been born to a person domiciled or legally employed in the U.S. or holding U.S. citizenship in order for your child to be a U.S. citizen.

**Senator Mangloña:** They are not to be legally employed because they're working, they are not holding U.S. citizenship are they qualified under domiciled than?

**Counsel Villagomez:** I don't know.

**Senator Mangloña:** So, we're not sure. Because even the FSM we make a special exemption obviously the House made the amendment on the last sentence and if the FSM without this last sentence is not qualified then I have the opinion that the EB5 investor will not be qualified, because FSM has to be specially recognize here than I'm sure EB5 or EB, you know I'm not an expert, but I know there is EB1, EB2, EB3, and they are all different categories some are not employment related. They're like people that are for example genius in science, and they don't have to work, they give them special EB5 or EB something for they don't have to work, like the EB5 you don't have to work as long as you are an investor. So I'm just saying, we have to be careful what we ask for if we pass this and telling them what we want on section 303, technically as a lawmaker I am saying, this is the language that I want in there and I approve it. But if we are just saying, something to the effect of something like this, because I know that we are doing this today because of the discretionary parole program that we have, and we don't want to in advertently disadvantage ourselves, for example, to an investor trying to decide whether he wants to go to Guam or CNMI. He is going to say, oh, if I go to Guam, if I have children they will become US, if I go to the CNMI according to their Constitution, you're not, so therefore, we lose out. I am not saying it is good or what, but I'm just saying that we are talking about U.S. Immigration advantages or protection and all that, and I just hope that this Section 303 as written here doesn't mean that that is it, and that's the Legislature's intent. I hope that they still have the flexibility to re-language this to something more that an expert immigration representing our interest when they meet later on after today they can work on the language. So, I just want to say for the record, should they be talking about this in the future that, if I were to vote on this my intension would be some language like this, but not necessarily edge in concrete, you know that this is the language that it has to be. Because I am worried about some immigration programs that we might want to market so that we can get investors or good people coming to our islands under the U.S. Immigration, so I just want to comment on that. I guess there is no question for H1 right or H2? Because they are legally employed, so if they come here there is no question with them because they're being employed, right? And that is okay, is that our intent, it is okay for H1, H2 was that the 902 discussion? I just want to point that out. *Enao-ha, si Yu'us ma'ase.*

**President Hocog:** Thank you. Senator Santos?

**Senator Santos:** Thank you, Mr. President. I too, give my full support for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-4, HD2, which seeks to provide mutual consent to amend Article III, Section 303 of the Covenant to establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States of America to live birth tourism here. I would like also to reiterate the concern raised earlier by Senator Sablan that if Guam gets 100% of the USCIS fees, such as CW fees or other USCIS immigration processing fees in lieu of this House Joint Resolution by helping the USCIS address the birth tourism issues here the Commonwealth that our CNMI Government also must be accorded 100% of that USCIS fees. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you. I thought that this resolution is just to end female coming in to give birth, I don't know if male can give birth in the CNMI? But I think we should be as what Mr. Cool explained that this resolution was drafted by the 902 Negotiator, that means that it involves our local representative in 902 that produce this product of resolution. So, with that perhaps that upon us approving this we will bring this matter to the attention of the 902 members that will be meeting again to further ascertain what was delivered in today's session. So with that, we will keep our heads up and see what happened to this resolution when adopted and further use as a document for the closer of the immigration during the 902 Talk and we will definitely raise that concern to the Governor of what we raised today. Yes, recognized Chairman Igisomar.

**Senator Igisomar:** Thank you, Mr. President. I know that just going back a little bit when you and I attended portion of that 902, which was being discussed with respect to this birth tourism, and this is just a processed the Governor is showing his assurance to the 902 Negotiators from the U.S. Congress, that we would do our part in this negotiation, and one of the biggest thing is this birth tourism, how do we deal with it? It even goes as far as discussion whether the hospital our clinics here in the CNMI should jacked up to \$5,000 or \$10,000 per delivery for foreigners? And it was getting a little bit ridiculous and I believe the Governor's effort with the 902 maybe the best leverage for now. If the Legislature, the House and the Senate can agree to something, which is this and the Governor can use this to go to the U.S. Congress and say, here is my negotiation based on what we're discussing. Can we use this to further our negotiations so that you can continue to give us all these economic benefits to the CNMI as being under the Covenant? So it is a process and a step, and I know that Senator Mangloña is saying that I would like to see it, but I think the Governor should be giving us reports on the success of his negotiations. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** More like what Senator Sablan was saying, that there are lots of birth tourism in the interstate and now, I don't think that this is really a CNMI problem about having this birth tourism here in the CNMI. We are not the door keeper of who is coming in. Because if we are responsible of our own immigration and we allow this to happen then I will say, probably that's why they are coming forth to stop this. But if you allow on your jurisdiction for me to enter your house, why would you blame Floor Leader Quitugua, why are you in my house? But because of the discussion that transpired during their 902 Talk, maybe they have some other plans for us and also for them that perhaps we can curtail this non-resident and taking advantage as tourist to give birth here to become U.S. citizen. But maybe that is one way of saying, Senator Igisomar, give us back our immigration and we will assure that there will be no more birth tourism in the CNMI. And if we look at the record back, I think we have better control with our immigration than what it is today. But, whatever the case maybe, let us

help what the 902 Negotiator wants and we'll see what take place, and we'll definitely continue to follow the trend of this resolution what we did accomplish for us as well. Ready? Those in favor of the motion to adopt House Joint Resolution No. 21-4, HD2, also authorizing for technical change by our legal counsel say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. House Joint Resolution 21-4 is hereby adopted. With the condition of allowing the counsel to make that necessary technical amendment. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President, we move to Item P, Bill Calendar.

### **BILL CALENDAR**

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: A motion for the passage of House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, "To amend Public Law No. 20-66 and 4 CMC § 53001, et seq., the Taulamwaar Sensible Cannabis Act of 2018," so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: There is a motion for the passage of House Bill No. 21-13, short recess.

The Senate recessed at 3:40 p.m.

### **RECESS**

The Senate reconvened at 3:41 p.m.

**President Hocog**: We are back again to our session. There's a motion on the floor and it has been seconded to pass House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, discussion on the motion?

**Senator Hofschneider**: Mr. President?

**President Hocog**: Recognized, Senator Hofschneider.

**Senator Hofschneider**: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. I wish to formally offer an amendment to House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, in the form of a substitute bill. The reason being it substitute because of its substantive changes that have been made from the original bill that we received from the House in which it was again, articulated in the committee report that we recently adopted, and I so introduce the amendment.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There is a motion on the floor to amend House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, in the form of SS1, discussion? Ready? Clerk, call the roll please.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” Senate Substitute 1, hereby adopted by the Senate. Thank you.

**Senator Hofschneider:** Recognized Vice President.

**Senator Hofschneider:** Just to clarify that we are going now to be voting on the main motion for the passage of the main bill. Thank you.

**President Hocog:** What we passed is the amendment so can you effectuate a proper motion now to pass the bill as amended in the form of SS1?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. I move for the passage on Final Reading House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, SS1, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion on the motion for the passage on Final Reading House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, in the form of SS1? Ready? Madam Clerk, we are voting for the main bill.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes

Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” House Bill No. 21-13, HD1, SS1, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Thank you. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. A motion for the passage on Final Reading House Bill No. 21-44, HS1, “To Authorize a loan between the Commonwealth Government and the Marianas Public Land Trust in the amount of \$15,000,000 and appropriate and authorize the Marianas Public Land Trust to withhold and to retain Net Annual Distributable Interest Income starting Fiscal Year 2019 for repayment and security of the loan,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There is a motion on the floor for the passage, discussion? Senator Mangloña?

**Senator Mangloña:** Thank you, Mr. President. I really want to thank MPLT for bending backwards in trying to accommodate the government in its financial problems. I really don’t have any problem with MPLT. I think they went and work with their legal counsel and they ask all the right questions. The only concern may be coming from them is, I guess as each have their own fiduciary duties, is this a wise investment, but I will not go into that. My problem is not with the loaning institution it is with the borrower. My concern that I have is the CNMI government. First off, I provided copies to all the members on my June 12<sup>th</sup> letter to the Governor on the CNMI financial crisis and up to today, I have not gotten a response from either the Governor or the Secretary of Finance, whom I have requested if they can respond to some of the items I stated in my letter. And it is for this reason, I cannot support this loan or House Bill No. 21-44, HS1. In particular, and I keep mentioning it even in previous sessions, I keep bringing up the issue of the \$20,000,000 casino community benefit fund, how much this \$20,000,000 community benefit fund? It is a required contribution imposed on IPI pursuant to the Casino License Agreement between the CNMI Lottery and Best Sunshine. And one of my question is, how much of this can be used to subsidize our Public School System, Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation, Department of Public Safety and the other agencies? We all know, that there should be already \$20,000,000 by now, and in a few months October 1<sup>st</sup> there should be another \$20,000,000 and every October thereafter. And I keep saying this because the Casino License Agreement initially signed between IPI and the Casino Lottery Commission was written perfectly. I think it protected the Commonwealth people knowing that this is an exclusive casino license agreement and the original agreement states that all these benefits should be there and on top of that, they created a DPAC, this is Development Planning Advisory Council, and this DPAC is supposed to consists of an appointee for IPI and an appointee from the Governor representing the CNMI interest and they’re supposed to follow-up on this agreement as well as the planning and the completion of this project. What concerns me, Mr. President, is knowing that there are austerity messages to be impose soon knowing that we have so many financial concerns that we need to address. I just respectfully and I meant this, sincerely respectfully, wish that the House and the Senate can really sit down with IPI and find out, is this really true? Is this something that we can expect? Or if this is hard, can we expect at least \$10,000,000 a

year and then we'll work out the difference later on five years from now? I think we need to call them in just like MPLT knowing that, every year we have about a million and a half to two million dollars of interest income coming into the CNMI. We went to them, knock on their door and say, we have no risk, we can borrow \$15,000,000 pay it off two million a year, and there you go, you are helping the government's financials and at the same time you have no risk. So, why didn't we go to IPI and say, we have \$20,000,000 a year, but let us just say, even just \$10,000,000 a year, can you give us all, borrow a bank or somebody out there and give us \$15,000,000 so we can cover our deficit or meet our expenses? And so, this is something that I feel I keep asking and I don't know if I'm wrong, I keep going back to the casino license agreement to read it and each time I read it, it is there and I'm asking myself, is this true, is this a dream or what or why is it that the rest of us are not asking that question? And if in fact, it's not to be realized then I think it is incumbent upon us to call in the Lottery Commission, because before we know it, they are going to be calling for another meeting and they're going to be extending again the construction period, which we should do. We should never let go, but I'm saying that in every extension process I think there should be consideration and consideration should not be all one way. And the reason why I say one way, is because from the beginning we keep extending it several amendments, maybe six or seven and every time they change the Casino License Agreement it seems like, it's always to their benefit and to our detriment and I say that because for example, in the Regional License Agreement they have \$200,000 a day liquidated damages, now that is gone. As I mentioned earlier about DPAC, now I heard, DPAC does not even have any responsibility with this Garapan Casino Hotel project. I am told that, they don't have any jurisdiction there now and that their only jurisdiction as amended recently, is only for the Marpi Phase I Project, and am asking myself, why? Who in their right mind, the Casino Lottery Commission would agree to that? And I don't know if you know this, but this is coming from a reliable person, saying that DPAC doesn't have responsibility on the Garapan project. So now, my question is, who is advising our government, who is there advising the Lottery Commission that in your meetings, in your consideration of their request, this is in the best interest of the CNMI government. So, that is all, Mr. President. And I was talking to a friend of mine and he reminded me about his son coming to him saying, "dad, can I borrow \$200?" And the dad goes, "but son you just, *un bendenguan yo esta ni babui*, you sold the pig for \$500 just last week and you're here asking me for \$200?" So again, my question is, I think that the Department of Finance has to show us, I guess the resources so that we can compare it with the revenue and how do we expect to run our government for the balance of the fiscal year and for next fiscal year, and how we are asking our employees to sacrifice along the way? *Pues este ha, si Yu'us ma'ase.*

**President Hocog:** Thank you. Senator Santos?

**Senator Santos:** Thank you, Mr. President. I understand that House Bill No. 21-44, HS1, is a legislation that will authorize a loan between the CNMI government and MPLT in the amount of \$15,000,000 to pay for disaster recover expenses which will be definitely infuse into our aiding economy to provide for the much needed financial assistance or recovering toward our economic situation. I like to put this on record, Mr. President, that my colleague from the First Senatorial District was very critical of my absence during a Delegation Session sometime last week. Instead of helping the people of the Commonwealth including our people of Rota, left the House Session without casting his vote on this particular very important legislation. Let me remind my colleague, that in order to appropriate money, you must have money to appropriate and this was the opportune time for him to

act. In fact, this is also our opportune time, the Senate to act on this very critical legislation that would perhaps help enhance our economic crisis. As a lone representative from the island Rota in the House of Representatives, which is vested with the power of the first, he should have exercise his fiduciary duty for the interest of our people. A wise friend once told me, “don’t burn bridges especially if you transfer frequently.” We must set aside our differences and work together during this difficult time. Mr. President, we always hear this from our ancestors, let us embrace what culture has invaded us such as, *ta fan áfamaolek, ta fan águaiya, lao espesiatmenti hu guaha respetu*, our people deserve it. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Santos. Recognize, Senator Igisomar.

**Senator Igisomar:** Thank you, Mr. President. I’m not going to make mine long, but I’ll just share a story. I am a Republican, but I am going to quote President Obama or paraphrase his statement, President Obama was asked why during the market crash of 2008, *hafa na ta ñukot este siha i banko? Hafa ya ta ñukot ya tana halom siha gi presu, ya ilekña si President Obama*, I know, *ombres guaho sen malago yo baihu ñuko todo este siha taotao banko*. I really want to put all the bankers in prison. Lao, however, *para minaolek taotao-ta*, for the benefit of the Americans, I cannot put all these bankers into prison, I must bail them out for the benefit of the American people. So similarly, *sen siña ha baihu fan tanchó ya baihu sangan ha hafa na ti un choggue che’chó-mu, babamu hafa este? Lao, para pago na tiempo nu este na* bill, this bill for now, is the best solution we have to help our government, to help Finance, to help our government to help Finance to help Governor and to help us recover from Yutu. Yutu, I know that people are saying, stop saying Yutu, but Yutu really devastated us. And if you were sitting in the Governor's Office, I don’t know if you are just going to be quiet and sit there and say, Finance Secretary, *munga ma apasi enao, sota ha. Malago yo na todo enao siha* businesses *hufan huyong ya hufan ma cho’cho’*. *Todo enao siha tanken hanom na hanao magi para hafa ma apasi, choggue enao, choggue enao*. It doesn’t work that way. For the betterment of the people our government had to incur debts and expenses. He made our people work overtime so now it is the Finance Secretary based on his wisdom with our Governor. He is saying, for now, with our crisis of the shortage on fiscal year 2018, and now with 2019, this is the best we can do now. And in the private world, we always leverage debts. We have to take up debt, it may not be the best thing but for now it’s the best thing. So, similarly to what former President Obama said, yeah, I'm not here to put blame on people, but I am just going to vote on this bill because it is for the betterment of the CNMI people. *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** You are going to be the next Obama here. Well, you know when critical time faces us, critical decisions must be extended out too. I don’t like to commit debts, but if that's the only way to survive our Commonwealth and help our people and restore what is it that we need to put back in place as we continue to exert more recent to recover then we will and we shall recover. Like I said, if any demise of any company in the past continue to be rebirth today as it tries to recover, it will never revive. Because it will continue to be sucked into the airbag and nothing is going to happen. Now, we are all gambling. You know, with an opportunity to see how we can expedite recovery how can we restore back our fiscal responsibility? And like I said, if we allow BSI to collapse tell me what is the next economic road map? If BSI collapse, I am telling you people, all these investors that are doing construction for another hotel will also collapse, because there's no contributing element that will help them move forward with why they are building us another hotel? But, I understand your

concern Senator Mangloña, and for your own information, that is one of the reason that I have never attended your call for session, because I was very busy negotiating how to revive the Commonwealth. And for your information, we're on the right track to see that our austerity will end probably before the end of the fiscal year and there will be probably no austerity in the beginning of the next fiscal year. And that I will promise, and this is a commitment that we all work together to ensure that we find the necessary road map to ensure that we are back in tract with our fiscal needs to continue the revival of our economic development on the island of the CNMI. I know that this is not all our failure that we're experiencing this today and assuming that the Governor never execute to use his authority to spend our local funding, our local revenue, would anybody come in his right mind that the recovery today is what we're seeing or the recovery will still be probably 40% today? And that is really contributed to our fiscal problem not to mention the medical expenses that we experience from our indigent cost that our patients convincing collapse of corporations paying for is a lot of things that may come together that we experienced this hardship. But if we come together to help one another, I'm pretty sure that we can reach the point where we will recover and that's why we continue to say when we talk that, the people are very resilient at times of disaster. So, we need to be resilient in how do we commit and try to move forward and help one another to expeditiously go back on track with building again a prosperous Commonwealth. But, I want to assure you that the concerns raised this afternoon is pretty much address whereas even the Attorney General is deeply involved in moving this recovery forward realizing that we get out of this turbulence for our people most particularly, our retirees and our government employee, and we would like to weather out the austerity comes in the new fiscal year. So with that, please bear with us and work with us that together we can reach back again the manual where Typhoon Yutu left us. So with that, any other member would like to make any statement? Senator Santos?

**Senator Santos:** Mr. President, so how many vote is required for this legislation to pass? Is it just simple or?

**President Hocog:** We have enough votes to pass.

**Senator Santos:** Thank you.

**Senator Hofschneider:** Mr. President, we are still on discussion, right?

**President Hocog:** Yes.

**Senator Hofschneider:** Thank you, Mr. President. I couldn't articulate it more than what you were just saying earlier, but I wanted to say, this legislation is almost like a template agreement, although we have never seen the agreement with MPLT and the administration, it appears that it's almost a template of agreement that was executed between MPLT and the Secretary of Finance. Just earlier, we heard one of the members requesting that we support the provisions contained in this particular bill and not make any further amendment. They are comfortable and they also hold their fiduciary very seriously in the highest level and for them to approve something of this magnitude in this time and day with the support of course from the administration, I think it is comforting to know that even at that level of confidence that was given to the administration to enter in this agreement. Furthermore, as what was mentioned earlier, this is part of our responsibility *nai, yanggen man keke matai-hit ta*

*check hafa taimano ni para ta rescue i gobetnamento yan i comunidat-ta.* This is nothing new, we did this loan if I am not mistake with the CHCC, CUC, so it is nothing new, it's a blown venture that again, I am going back to the Board of Trustees of MPLT. I've heard about this couple of months ago maybe more when this was first start be discussed and I've heard also exchanges that MPLT was not very comfortable in the beginning because of the conditions or maybe the appearance or a manner. So, I think today is the day that we support the guidance from our local investment here, which is MPLT and administration to rave up and to retire some of those obligations. I am just looking at the numbers, Mr. President, almost \$30,000,000 just the Yutu experience and the government fronted that one. The CNMI government fronted that one because they cannot wait for the Federal Government to foot the bill in the midst of the crisis that is upon us. The operations, the vendors that we need to engage, but I'm also pleased to learn that of that \$29,000,000 in whole, the above and beyond it is almost \$100,000,000 that we realize the estimated cost. But of that, there some reimbursements that are being realize, of course FEMA, the federal government will not just be giving you, dolling out their dollars they have cross check first, and sometimes you know it requires X amount of time to make sure that the documents are into form. So putting all that together, I am comfortable and I'm confident to engage and authorize the Finance to engage in this portfolio and I appreciate the presence of the Chairman of MPLT for being here and hanging out in the duration of our session. So again, Mr. President, *estague na man gaige hit guini para ta ayuda-yi i comunidat-ta ya hu fafaisin kao siña tafan ayuda ya ta konsigi mona nu este na* legislation. Thank you.

**President Hocog:** Let me ask before we vote, how would anyone feel if we secure \$30,000,000? Have you guys hear that we secure \$30,000,000 or \$36,000,000, \$40,000,000 in advance before the end of fiscal year or the beginning of the fiscal year? How would you guys feel? You feel that we have something to spend so that is why I'm asking, let us work together and help this move forward because we will not put this aside and let the future general suffer from what our action today. In our action today, we need to really instill recovery before their time. So, I am very confident that each one us have the vision. So with that, madam Clerk, for the passage of House Bill No. 21-44, HS1.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	No
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, seven members voting "yes" one voting "no."

**President Hocog:** Seven members voting "yes" and one "no", House Bill No. 21-44, HS1, passes the Senate with two thirds votes, seven (7) "yes" and one (1) "no." Thank you. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: With that last legislation, I move to recess and reconvene tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: Those in favor of the motion to recess and reconvene tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. say, "Aye." Those who oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. The Senate session stands recess until tomorrow at ten o'clock in the morning.

The Senate recessed at 4:15 p.m.

*The Senate reconvened on July 18, 2019 at 10:45 a.m. in the Senate Chamber  
Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan.*

**President Hocog:** This morning's session is a continuation after we have recessed yesterday and we will continue the rest of our agenda on today's session. At this time, I would like to recognize the Floor Leader.

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, in continuation of our session and in accordance to Rule 6, Section 2, of the Official Rules of the 21<sup>st</sup> Senate, I move to amend today's Order of Business to include under Item M, Reports of Standing Committees the following: on page 6, of our Order of Business, after No. 12, add No. 13, which reads, Standing Committee Report No. 21-29 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mrs. Felicitas P. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission; following No. 13 add No. 14, which reads, Standing Committee Report No. 21-30 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. And Mr. President, this motion needs roll call for all member's approval.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There is a motion to amend our Order of Business to include the Standing Committee Reports for the two appointees, discussion on the motion? Clerk, can you roll call to reconsider our amendment to include these Standing Committee Reports for the two appointees today?

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting "yes."

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting "yes" to amend our Order of Business for today to consider the two Standing Committee Report hereby passes the Senate. Floor Leader?

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President, *si Yu'us ma'ase*. Mr. President, in continuing our Order of Business, we will start on Item M, Reports of Standing Committees, and because we have some people in the audience that needs to go back to work, I move that we first adopt the Standing Committee Report No. 21-29 and 21-30, so a motion is being offered for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-29 from the Committee on Executives Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mrs. Felicitas P. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: If there's no objection from the members, we go back to Item M and entertain the two Standing Committee Reports offered by the Floor Leader, those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those who opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President, before we proceed on the discussion of the Committee Report, if no objection from the members and you, Mr. President, may we ask the Sergeant-At-Arms to escort the two nominees so that they can be in the Chamber.

**President Hocog**: Sergeant-At-Arms, can you please bring in the two nominees? Welcome, Ms. Abraham and Mr. Maratita. Now you may proceed, Floor Leader.

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President, I think we are under discussion under Standing Committee Report 21-29.

**President Hocog**: At this time, any member would like to make any statement before I recognize Chairman Cruz? None, let me recognize Chairman Cruz.

**Senator Cruz**: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, your subcommittee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present Standing Committee Report No. 21-29 and this is the executive appointment of Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission representing the Third Senatorial District, Saipan. Your Committee on Executive appointments and Government Investigations, to which was referred the appointment of Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission begs leave to report as follows: After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your committee recommends the confirmation of Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham's appointment to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the executive appointment of Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham's

overall credentials to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are 6 oral testimonies in support of the appointee and no oral testimonies in opposition of the appointee. No written testimony in support or opposition was received by the Committee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Based on the overall assessment of Ms. Abraham's credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Ms. Abraham has the qualification and leadership skills necessary to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Governor Arnold I. Palacios on February 11, 2019, to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. A public hearing was conducted on May 20, 2019, Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearing, certain recommendations, issues and concerns were raised for the appointee to address, including providing requested information such as data, reports, lists, etc. The required action on the part of the appointee must be provided or accomplished within 90 days after the appointee is confirmed. And in conclusion all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the appointment of Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission meets all the necessary requirements pursuant to 1 CMC §8111 and 1 CMC §2902. Therefore, your Committee consents to the confirmation of Ms. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. Again, I ask the full Senate members to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-29. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Just before I ask to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 21-29, does any member wants to make any statement? Recognize, Vice President?

**Senator Hofschneider:** Thank you, Mr. President. *Buenas dias, para todos hamyo*, most importantly, *para este two na* nominees to Civil Service Commission. I just wanted to first thank you, in accepting the additional responsibility which you guys are going to be undertaking once confirm. I just wanted to ask, that once you are done and sworn-in, please follow-up with the amendments to the sick leave bank and the sick leave donation as you guys have made the efforts to amend that to serve some of our much needed constituents out there who are in need of help because of their health reasons that they need the extended leave, and I believe that one covers the patient itself as well as the escort. So, *baihu faisen hamyo kao siña in* follow-up *ha talo, mano china etyo na* amendment *sa gi kada diha para ta nanga pat tita adopta etyo estague i taotao-ta na man mamamaisin. Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Hofschneider. Any other member? Are you ready? Clerk, we are now voting for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-29 for the appointment of Ms. Felicitas P. Abraham to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja  
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz

Excused  
Yes

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** Thank you, madam Clerk. With eight members voting “yes” for the adoption of the Standing Committee Report No. 21-29, I wish to inform the nominee that you are hereby confirmed by the full Senate. And congratulations, for your time to serve again our Civil Service employees in the next four years. Thank you and congratulation with this endeavor. [APPLAUSE] Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-30 on the Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There is a motion and it has been seconded, discussion? Before I give the Chairman, any other member would like to make comments? Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu’us ma’ase*. Mr. Chairman, just to remind the two nominees to please look at the statute that we enacted in the 20<sup>th</sup> Legislature for the returning students who have completed their AA Degree or BA or BS Degree, so that they will not be denied jobs in the government when they submit their applications due to the lack of work experience. The statute is to ensure that our returning students are provided opportunities rather than being told that they’re not qualified because of the lack of experience. I am hopeful that the two members, in addition to the others in the Civil Service who make our students who are returning, feel that they are welcome to the CNMI and the opportunities are provided. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Floor Leader Quitugua. Any other member? Chairman Cruz, you may proceed.

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you, Mr. President. And before I ask, if there is no objection, from the members to include in the report that I stated earlier, that Ms. Felicitas is representing the Third Senatorial District to be included in that statement that I mentioned earlier. Mr. President, this is the second Standing Committee Report for today, from the subcommittee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations and this Standing Committee Report No. 21-30 an executive appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission to represent the Third Senatorial District, Saipan. Your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita to serve as a Member of

the Civil Service Commission begs to leave to report as follows: After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Jake U. Maratita's appointment to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission representing the Third Senatorial District, Saipan. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the executive appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita's overall credentials to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are 2 written and 6 oral testimonies in support of the appointee. No oral or written testimony in opposition was received by the Committee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the appointee that are included in this report. Based on the overall assessment of Mr. Maratita's credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Mr. Maratita has the qualification and leadership skills necessary to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission. A public hearing to receive testimonies on the executive appointment of Mr. Maratita was conducted on May 20, 2019, Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. During the hearing, certain recommendations, issues and concerns were raised for the appointee to address, including providing requested information such as data, reports, lists, etc. The required action on the part of the appointee must be provided or accomplished within 90 days after the appointee is confirmed. And in conclusion, all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. And based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission meets all the necessary requirements pursuant to 1 CMC §8111 and 1 CMC §2902. Therefore, your Committee consents to the confirmation of Mr. Maratita to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission, representing the Third Senatorial District. Again, I ask the full members of the Senate to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-30. Thank you. Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Recognize, Senator Santos.

**Senator Santos:** Thank you, Mr. President. First, I would like to commend our honorable Governor and Lieutenant Governor for their appointments of Mrs. Abraham and Mr. Maratita to the Civil Service Commission. Also, I would like to extend our gratitude for your acceptance to this commission. We have full confidence on your appointment as both of you have garnered our support, we receive favorable testimonies from the general public including review of your resume. May we ask the Commission again, to review legislations or matters critical to the welfare of our people, and by legislations that were brought up earlier by Senator Jude U. Hofschneider, and also Senator Quitugua. May I also say, that this should not be limited to those grievances submitted to the Civil Service Commission. I have heard of several grievances or appeals that were submitted and have yet to receive a closure by the Commission. So may we ask that the Commission look into this and facilitate closing these cases? Thank you

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Santos. Recognize again, Senator Cruz.

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you, Mr. President. And before we adopt the Committee Report, if there's no objection from the members, I ask that if there's any typo errors occur in this report, I ask that the counsel and the clerk make corrections. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Well taken. Counsel, take note on that and the Clerk. I have short statement to make. Mr. Maratita, I look at you as very energetic and young, and what Floor Leader Quitugua was mentioning earlier about seriously looking into those students that have gone away from here and decided to come back and work, that they will be seriously considered and not to be trump by their none work experience but to consider their educational accomplishments that they might have contribute to the welfare of our Commonwealth. And I am very confident that Ms. Abraham being there, and as long term experience with the personnel and civil service, you also can provide this concern and ensure that our graduating students coming back to the island will be given also top consideration. I don't know if I have a BA Degree and I want to work in a certain field here that I will be given a notice as to being not qualified because I don't have the work experience. But I do have my passport to demonstrate that I have acquired this high level of education to come and provide assistance to the department that I want to work with. So, can we make a balance of how do we proceeds with hiring people coming back from finishing their education abroad? And I am very confident, Ms. Abraham, that with your experience you can navigate the opportunity for these students. Otherwise, they will be disappointed and will leave again the CNMI and search for another area to work and we're losing out our human resources after they have acquired the necessary tool to bring back to our people. So, please consider that as one of your objective when you reconvene your commission meeting and look into how we can work with this kind of situation? I know, work experience also counted, but we also would like to see our intellectual students coming back to provide service be also considered our priority. Thank you. Clerk?

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting "yes."

**President Hocog:** Thank you, madam Clerk. With eight members voting "yes" for the adoption of the Standing Committee Report No. 21-30 for the appointment of Mr. Jake U. Maratita, to serve as a Member of the Civil Service Commission is hereby adopted. Thereby giving you, Mr. Maratita our full confirmation by the full Senate, this morning. Congratulations! [APPLAUSE] At this time, I will just take a short recess and greet the newly confirmed Civil Service Commission Members and their families. Thank you.

The Senate recessed at 11:10 a.m.

**RECESS**

The Senate reconvened at 11:30 a.m.

**President Hocog**: We are back to our plenary session after taking a short recess and we are on Item M. So, we would like to go back again to Item P of our agenda, is that right Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: M.

**President Hocog**: We are back on Item M, under Reports of Standing Committees. May I recognize the Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-14, from the Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations reporting Senate Bill No. 21-03, "To repeal and re-enact 2 CMC § 7142 and § 7145, relative to adopting the International Building Code as the official building code of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and for other purposes," so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: Discussion? Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-15, from the Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations, reporting on Senate Bill No. 21-06, "To establish mandatory presentation of valid personal photo identification for any debit card or credit card transaction and any check cash exchange or purchase for all business establishments in the Commonwealth."

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: There is a motion and has been seconded, discussion? Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** Moving along under Standing Committee Report No. 3, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-16, from the Committee Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations reporting on Senate Bill No. 21-07, "To amend 4 CMC § 50144(b) to increase the penalty for giving, selling, or permitting to be given or sold any tobacco products to an individual under the age of 18 years old; and for other purposes," so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Those in favor of that motion say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog:** Motion carries. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** On No. 4, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-17, from the Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs, reporting on Senate Bill No. 21-10, "To amend 2 CMC § 4308 to mandate the Department of Public Lands to issue the Deed of Conveyance within 45 calendar days to homesteaders who had entered the homestead on or before January 1, 2014 and complied with the laws and regulations pertaining to homesteads; and for other purposes."

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion on that motion? Are you sure you don't want to discuss the Standing Committee Report? Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voice, "Aye."

**President Hocog:** Motion carries. Floor Leader, you may continue.

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** No. 5, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-20 from the Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs, reporting on Senate Legislative Initiative No. 21-01, "To require the Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT) and its Board of Trustees to exercise transparency and accountability as a Commonwealth government entity, to provide for reasonable expenses of administration by law, and to require the annual operating budget of MPLT to be approved and appropriated by the legislature by amending Article XI, Section 6 of the Constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands," so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog:** Motion carries. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: No. 7, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-23 from the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare reporting on Senate Bill No. 21-28, “To amend 3 CMC § 2824, to establish a claims and clinical data warehouse at CHCC and to improve accountability for how health insurance premiums are spent by requiring health insurance insurers and health care providers to submit reports on claims and clinical data to the insurance commissioner; and for other purposes,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: Discussion on the motion? Those in favor of the motion say, “Aye.” Those opposed say, “Nay.”

All members voiced, “Aye.”

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. The last one, Floor Leader.

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: On No. 8, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-24, from the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare reporting on Senate Bill No. 21-29, “To amend 3 CMC §1331(b) by removing the offset provision of the Northern Marianas College annual budget funded by the Legislature; and for other purposes,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: Discussion on the motion? Those in favor of the motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-24 say, “Aye.” Those opposed say, “Nay.”

All members voiced, “Aye.”

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. One more, Floor Leader.

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: No. 9, the last one on Item M, I move for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-25 from the Committee on Fiscal Affairs reporting on Senate Bill No. 21-05, “To amend 2 CMC §3551 to change the expenditure authority, management, and control of the solid waste sub-accounts for the First and Second Senatorial Districts to the mayor of each respective municipality; and for other purposes,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: Discussion on the motion? Ready? Those in favor of the motion to adopt that Standing Committee Report say, “Aye.” Those opposed say, “Nay.”

All members voiced, “Aye.”

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. Floor Leader?

**BILL CALENDAR**

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** On the Bill Calendar, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** You may proceed.

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** I move for the passage of House Bill No. 21-63, “To amend 4 CMC §10465(a) and 1 CMC §8491(d) and §8491(e); and for other purposes,” this is the Bond Payment Act of 2019, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion on the motion? Senator Hofschneider?

**Senator Hofschneider:** I was just to say, Mr. President, we have the opportunity to discussed this morning with the Bond Administrator which in this case CDA, and he gave us the assurances that also the bill before us to entertain was evaded and reviewed by the Attorney General’s Office and the Governor’s Office. And again, earlier today, we are ready to proceed with the bill.

**President Hocog:** Anyone else? Senator Santos?

**Senator Santos:** I too, Mr. President, have the opportunity to briefly go over this piece of legislation with the Director of CDA who has indicated that basically this legislation will provide the flexibility for CDA to be able to draft the terms and conditions of the pending obligation bond of the Commonwealth. Thank you.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Santos. Senator Mangloña, does the Director answer your concern before we proceed with the voting? Thank you. Now, for the passage of House Bill No. 21-63, “To amend 4 CMC §10465(a) and 1 CMC §8491(d) and §8491(e); and for other purposes.” Are we ready? Clerk, please take the roll.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” on House Bill No. 21-63 hereby passes the Senate without amendment and I ask the Clerk to expedite the engrossment for the transmittal to the Governor’s office. Thank you. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** Thank you, Mr. President. For the passage on Final Reading Senate Bill No. 21-03, SD1, “To repeal and re-enact 2 CMC § 7142 and § 7145, relative to adopting the International Building Code as the official building code of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and for other purposes,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Senator Sablan?

**Senator Sablan:** Thank you, Mr. President. I just like to thank the author for introducing this bill which we are about to act on the International Building Code that we currently are following is the Code from 2009. Just a little brief information of my meetings with U.S. EPA, and I just like to kind a let the body know that there had been discussions. What this bill does is, it upgrades our International Building Code from 2009 to 2018, and again, I would like to thank Senator Igisomar, for putting in the amendment. Because initially, it was supposed only to go to 2012, but now the bill will bring us up to the 2018 standard, which many of the U.S. jurisdictions are on. What this opens up for the CNMI is, there’s more available federal funding from OIA, FEMA and U.S. EPA, and the discussions that I’ve had with the U.S. EPA executives was that these findings were only to be available for the CNMI if the Code was lifted to 2018. What will now have happened and what has been pledge with U.S. EPA is that they will have a staffer being paid by the U.S. Federal government through U.S. EPA to help DPW implement these changes to initiate the on the standards of International Building Code for 2018 from there this person will train the engineers and staff at DPW to actually move into a transition from 2009 to 2018. This is a great move for the CNMI as we’ve been devastated in the past seven years by several typhoons, Typhoon Yutu, before that Typhoon Soudelor, Typhoon Mangkhut, this will be more resiliency for community and better everybody's quality of life, especially, in their dwellings. So you know, the passage of this bill will be very beneficial for our people not to mention just funding, but I'm also just moving into improving our Building Code so that we can all be safe. I just want to bring that up and inform all the members of what this bill brings to the CNMI. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Sablan. Senator Igisomar?

**Senator Igisomar:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. And I thank as well our Senator Sablan, for a beautiful remark on this to further on its benefit. However, my statement is to the public, I understand that our residents and our businesses are not necessarily too happy or favorable to our building code and adopting this, but let us assured them that we worked on this bill with DPW and they assured us that they will review all the building codes that we are trying to follow and mandated by this bill that they will assist the businesses and our residents, and of course, we can really see what can happen if we don't have building codes. Well, Yutu showed us, that if we do not adhere to certain

building codes even a concrete can collapse. And of course, we've heard a lot of earthquake catastrophe's in world globally and we've seen what these other nations have to suffer for not having building code emplace. So, as our Senator Sablan has mentioning is really to assist our residents and businesses for their safety. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, Senator Igisomar. Senator Mangloña.

**Senator Mangloña**: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Chairman, I understand the language here for example, on page 2, allows for the building safety official to adopt by regulation updates to whatever new edition, is that a new provision in the law or is that an existing provision? I'm just wondering, whether do we need to always come in every year or every other year and pass a law to require them to update, but can they just do it by themselves by the building safety official in the future?

**Senator Igisomar**: Mr. President, may I?

**President Hocog**: Recognized, Senator Igisomar.

**Senator Igisomar**: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Mangloña, I believe the thing that we're changing by statute is that we are allowing to adopt the 2018. Now, the regulations that they will push is to update their building code regulations to follow 2018. And I believe if they are to move up to 2019 or 2020 that will require statute. I don't think they are automatically given the authority to just switch over to the next year or next edition of building code. I hope that answers the question.

**Senator Mangloña**: The way I am reading it, is on page 2, line 10, the building safety official may adopt by regulation update to new editions so my edition is I'm thinking it is the year. I guess my concern is that, I hope that the building official or whoever the head is can be able to just do it on their own if they see the need to without having the Legislature come in every year. That is all.

**Senator Igisomar**: Yes, I think you are right. And I believe, Mr. President, Senator Sablan has additional comments.

**President Hocog**: Recognized, Senator Sablan.

**Senator Sablan**: Thank you, Mr. President. Just to help Senator Mangloña's question, the building safety official may adopt changes and updates, what will happen is, because the 2018 IBC the standards of the building code will be implemented. This is a single document, the International Building Code of 2018 is a single document, but not all the content in the document pertain to the CNMI. For example, building codes and safety codes on say, snow or on extreme weather, like hot weather or any other disasters that take place so the person that will be placed at DPW through the U.S. EPA will be the one to kind a help the building safety official craft language in the regulations that uniquely pertains to the CNMI Building Code or what the Building Code should be. So, these are the things that going to happen, they are going to look at the codes and strikeouts stuff that is not needed here in the CNMI. Say, you know anything that is needed for sake of a cold, extreme cold weather that Alaska has to follow, so these are the things that kind a crafted.

**Senator Mangloña**: Mr. Chairman, just like we amended the 2012 to 2018, we are amending today, I guess my question is, does that language there allow them to amend 2018 to 2019 on their own without coming in in the future to change that? I guess that is my question. I realize some are not relevant to the CNMI, but just as we are doing today, changing 2012 to 2018, can they also do that on their own without the Legislature? That is all I want to ask.

**President Hocog**: Recognize, Senator Sablan.

**Senator Sablan**: I am not sure, may be the counsel can answer that but I think it's safer to change this by statute in case of any legal issues. If someone get sued, safety concerns you know someone falls down from a structure or what not. I think having these regulations pass through by statute should be more beneficial for that but can they change it on their own? I get where you are coming at and how you are reading the language, and probably the counsel can chime in. I think what this section in the bill allow just for them to kind a creatively craft or remove or add different aspects into the regulation.

**Senator Igisomar**: Mr. President and Senator Mangloña, may I?

**Senator Mangloña**: I'm just to clarify, they are going to be reading our discussion today in the future and that's why I think it is important to kind a like address that so when they refer back to the discussion, they can see what they can do. Thank you.

**Senator Igisomar**: I truly understand where Senator Mangloña is coming from, but here's the concept on the bill was drafted and also it's elaborated on page 2, line 10, is that we are accepting the 2018 then DPW will publish a regulation immediately adopting 2018 and certain sections. Now, the statute is saying, the main binder the corpus of the building code is 2018 and then they will do a regulation and adopt to finalize. Now, any changes forward right, changes forward let say, there's a 2019, 2020, in order for them, right now, they cannot just outright and say, I dump the 2018 five years from now I'm going to use 2019. So, what they will be doing is actively engaging in adopting the 2018 by amending the 2018 through the regulations but the main corpus of the building code remains at 2018. Unless, into the future of five or ten years from now, we decided that 2018 with amendment is obsolete then we will adopt in the future by statute whether we're going for 2020, 2022, 2023. I hope that's making sense so we are authorizing 2018 building code as the main corpus moving forward if it becomes law that any changes in future editions that are released, they must adopt certain provisions of it to amend which will require public comments and input, but they cannot just outright remove the 2018 edition if it becomes law and substitute with 2019. So, I hope that makes sense, I am assuming the 2019 would have it.

**Senator Mangloña**: Thank you, Mr. President. Which in effect is adopting whatever the future is by just taking what portions they want from that?

**Senator Igisomar**: Yes.

**Senator Mangloña**: Thank you.

**President Hocog**: Any other member? Ready? For the final passage of Senate Bill No. 21-03, SD1, madam Clerk.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK**: Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog**: With eight members voting “yes” Senate Bill No. 21-03, SD1, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: For the passage on Final Reading Senate Bill No. 21-05, SD1, “To amend 2 CMC §3551 to change the expenditure authority, management, and control of the solid waste sub-accounts for the First and Second Senatorial Districts to the mayor of each respective municipality; and for other purposes,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: Discussion? Senator Hofschneider?

**Senator Hofschneider**: Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to go on record just to indicate that upon introducing this bill, we seek comments from the AG's Office, Department of Public Works, with the respective mayors of Luta and Tinian, we address some of the concerns that were raised by the AG's office and we made reference to the recommendation that they raised as well as the issue or the recommendation that was raised by the Secretary of Public Works. In addition, Mr. President, the Fiscal Affairs Committee, we had a meeting with DPW and Department of Finance about a week and a half ago, to address some of the issues that they had with the bill, and with that, your committee had incorporated and included in the draft version in which we're about to dispose of today. So, I seek the members support on this bill without any amendment. And I thank the committee and also the staff for their assistance in making this bill come into today's session. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, Senator Hofschneider. Anyone else? Senator Santos?

**Senator Santos**: Thank you, Mr. President. I understand that this is restorative bill from the Twentieth Legislature and I'm happy to hear that the author of this legislation has address those concerns that were raised by the Attorney General including the Acting Secretary for DPW, and we all know that

the First and Second Senatorial Districts, mayors are in support of this legislation. We see the need for the municipality of the First and Seconded Districts to be able to manage and control the solid waste sub-accounts. Thank you.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, Senator Santos. Senator Igisomar, do you have any concern?

**Senator Igisomar**: Mr. President, thank you. I was just consulting with the Chairman on Fiscal Affairs with this bill, just to mention for the information and for the record, as I'm glad Senator Mangloña mentioned, to try and have this elaborate communications and discussion is on this particular authorization. No. 1, just to make sure that the agencies or departments or senatorial districts communicates as well as the Secretary vice versa communicates with everybody involved in this program to make sure there's a seamless support coming from both sides to manage. Because there's not a lot of money involved in here and when we're talking more solid waste it can suck up millions of dollars that we don't have. So, I really hope that they communicate and also what was discussed that something will entertain next year's fiscal budget is to assist employees that are hired under these accounts into our general fund so that it can free up more of this money to help the Solid Waste Management in in our territories or senatorial districts. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, Senator Igisomar. Ready for the question? For the final passage of Senate Bill No. 21-05, SD1, madam Clerk.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK**: Mr. President, all eight members voting "yes."

**President Hocog**: With eight members voting "yes" Senate Bill No. 21-05, SD1, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Thank you, Mr. President. For the passage on Final Reading Senate Bill No. 21-06, SD1, "To establish mandatory presentation of valid personal photo identification for any debit card or credit card transaction and any check cash exchange or purchase for all business establishments in the Commonwealth," so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Ready? Senator Cruz?

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you. Since my colleague there on the other side of the isle keep waving at me since I'm the author of the bill to elaborate little bit about the reason why I come up with such legislation. Mr. President and members of the Senate, after receiving some complaints from the general public in regards to debit card and credit card at establishment, they are accepting credit card without any ID's to make sure that card holder belongs to the person that appears at the establishment. And at the moment, there is no such regulation here in the Commonwealth to protect the people from theft through the use of stolen credit cards or debit cards. I believe that it is a need to establishing a regulation so that any establishment in the Commonwealth is mandate to require presentation of valid identification card to protect our credit or debit card holders. And I see that it is problematic and such regulation must be put emplace to protect our people. So, I ask the members of this body, I believe this legislation has been sitting in the Senate and I ask for your support for the betterment of our people here in the Commonwealth. *Si Yu'us ma'ase.*

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Cruz. Although, I will support your bill, it just imposed on my part another work for me to be giving somebody my debit or credit card to do errand for me, so, you give me an extra job to write to the store for the purpose of presenting my credit card myself. Senator Sablan?

**Senator Sablan:** Thank you, Mr. President. Yes, I also support the bill much needed and just asking a question of your comment, maybe the counsel can answer also. So scenario say, the President hands his credit card to his granddaughter and also gives the granddaughter the identification of the President, does the bill cover that? Just to make sure, maybe the counsel can add to that. So, there is a mandatory identification check, just to make sure it covers it because it might, right? Someone might go and say, there is a mandatory check, but I have my mom's ID and her credit card, can I use it? I just want to know if that is covered?

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Sablan. Let me recognize, Senator Igisomar before I recognize the author of the bill.

**Senator Igisomar:** Mr. President, I was going to make a comment on your comment and then Senator Sablan starting to ask a very serious question. But I was going to state that, Senator Cruz is going to have to explain to my wife why she cannot use my debit card and walk into Joeten, but that is a very guilt concern and I think you're alluding to fraud right, or somebody burglarized your house and takes your card and your ID, and right now you're asking for an actual physical appearance, Senator, just want to clarify whether that is your question?

**Senator Sablan:** That is. That is the main reason behind my question was not only the familiar errands, but what if someone, I'm happy that you brought that up, what if someone steals my card and my ID and it goes and was allowed to purchase products? So, you know something, if it states in the bill or statute that that is not allow than that is fine, but just to straighten the intact.

**President Hocog:** Thank you. The bill has a very, very valid and safety concern. I just make that statement because I have a habit of asking my granddaughter, my daughter to do an errand for me and

sometime I give them my check card and debit card, so all I'm saying is that, this legislation will give me an extra obligation to personally go to the store and buy me something instead of giving my debit card to a family member to go and purchase, but for safety and for other reason, compelling reason, it is a good legislation. And I hope that the legislation if it requires programming of regulation that perhaps a signature authorization an individual that is given the debit or credit card to go to the store will be recognized. Senator Cruz, do you have anything to mention?

**Senator Cruz:** I think you mentioned what I was about to mention about authorization in regards to Senator Sablan's concern. And I don't want to go further on this to discourage the members to support bill, but again, I solicit from you guys if this can be done today, I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Senator Cruz, your bill is a very good bill. It protects the card holder from being otherwise having his debit card being emptied by somebody who steal it or ran away with your card somewhere. But you have a good intent, very good intent. Senator Mangloña?

**Senator Mangloña:** Thank you, Mr. President. And I assume that just like an ATM machine, where you come up and insert your card put your password, I assume that this will not cover a store where they ask you to punch in your pin number, I don't think they will require you. I think, Mr. President, you can still send your daughter as long as you give them the code, the four number code and they can just punch in, so I assume that will be treated like an ATM machine also so that it is not a requirement. So, I hope that that flexibility is allowed for if there's a modernize technology as the Chamber of Commerce mentioned here, is implemented in the various establishment, just like the ATM. Thank you.

**President Hocog:** And I guess, if I give my granddaughter my card and she was asked to put in my pin number and she knows my pin number, I don't think it will be rejected. Unless, I forced the clerk to say, "no" my grandfather gave me this so I don't know his pin number so there might be more question about that. Senator Igisomar?

**Senator Igisomar:** *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Just to assure my Chairman from EAGI, I really support this bill and the best intension about it is at least, generally speaking, we're trying our best to inform these stores and businesses, *pot fabot*, before you even just swipe card, *famaisen ni* ID, that will help. And I am sure, everybody knows you already at that store, I think you should be fine, but at least, this is trying to protect the owner of the card so that nobody can just walk away without the owner's permission. So, at face value general, it is a very awesome bill. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Are you satisfied, Chairman Cruz, about the statement being delivered on this bill?

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Igisomar, for your support. Like I said, I don't want to discourage the members, actually, even at any bank, even your own wife cannot even access your account. So, if you're talking about sending someone to the store with your card, I think a letter of authorization must be accompanied with the card. I am not a lawyer, but I guess that's a very simple thing to do, just give a letter of authorization accompanied by the card that you are going

to purchase at the store. Unless, the store or the establishment does not recognize that. Otherwise, we will follow what is in this legislation. Thank you. Thank you for your support colleagues.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Senator Cruz. I suspect that the concern raised by Senator raised by Senator Igisomar will have an impact on his part, most especially, if there is a change or routine procedure for him to give the card to the wife she might be wondering why the change of attitude, so maybe that is one of the concern here. But the bill, Senator Cruz, have a very good intent. With that, Clerk, for the Final Reading of Senate Bill No. 21-06, SD1.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Hunggan (Yes)

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” on Senate Bill No. 21-06, SD1, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. For Final Reading for the passage of Senate Bill No. 21-07, “To amend 4 CMC § 50144(b) to increase the penalty for giving, selling, or permitting to be given or sold any tobacco products to an individual under the age of 18 years old; and for other purposes,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** There is a motion and it has been seconded, discussion on the motion? Senator Igisomar?

**Senator Igisomar:** Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to applaud our Senator Cruz again, for introducing this bill. I know I used the word “super awesome bill” but the reason why I state that, is because currently in our statutes when stores sale tobacco to minors and they have to go through the Department of Commerce, they go through the regulations posted by Commerce and now current statute is a little bit too lenient and believe it or not, if a store violates and sells a tobacco to a minor, there will be a revoked license but only for a year, next year they open up again. So some of these stores continue to violate, so with this, one of the key amendments is, aside from the increase fines and penalties, is revocation of license is not for a year that's forever. So in essence, we’ve been very stern to make sure that no one under no circumstances, if you enjoy making money and selling products

to the people, do not sell to our minor's tobacco products. Otherwise, you are gone forever. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*.

**President Hocog**: Thank you. Senator Hofschneider, do you have anything?

**Senator Hofschneider**: Mr. President, just to express my support to my colleague's bill, I want to just share this story, it happened in Tinian when it's commendable to hear that the division of ABTC is actually going out there and educating our businesses, but this is in regards to alcohol. Actually, the stores are getting the message, because I remember going there once and it was 10:01 p.m., and they look at the time and they insist that although it is one minute they insist that they don't want to do it. Then I ask what happened? He goes, well I already got my citation from the ABTC and I don't risk that. So, I guess the message is clear that these businesses are being made aware of the consequences so other than making more money for the government, in this case, the Department of Commerce, I think the bigger picture here is that educating these businesses that we're very serious about selling tobacco products to people that are not of adult, that are not at the age of 18, so this bill is commendable. Thank you, Senator Cruz for sponsoring this bill.

**President Hocog**: Ready? Madam Clerk, can you call the roll for the final passage of Senate Bill – sorry, Mr. author.

**Senator Cruz**: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Igisomar and Senator Hofschneider. Again, the legislation that is here before us, the idea of this legislation is again, from the members of the general public that approach me in regards of witnessing minors that continue to purchase tobacco or alcohol at the store counter and I think there is a need although some are being acknowledge the consequences. But I believe imposing a higher fee will also send a great message to them to discontinue giving minors with tobacco or alcohol under the age of 18 and under. Like I said, all the ideas here, comes from the members of the general public and I truly believe that such a legislation must be address. And I ask again, from the members of this body to support Senate Bill No. 21-07. And I thank you, Mr. President, also for your support on this legislation. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*.

**President Hocog**: Thank you, Senator Cruz. Are we ready to act on its Final Reading Senate Bill No. 21-07? Madam Clerk, can you please call the roll?

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Hunggan (Yes)

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” Senate Bill No. 21-07, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Floor Leader, we have one, two, three, four more to go.

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I move for the passage of Senate Bill No. 21-10, SD1, “To amend 2 CMC § 4308 to mandate the Department of Public Lands to issue the Deed of Conveyance within 45 calendar days to homesteaders who had entered the homestead on or before January 1, 2014 and complied with the laws and regulations pertaining to homesteads; and for other purposes,” on Final Reading.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Senator Cruz?

**Senator Cruz:** Thank you. I believe this is my last bill that I’m going to solicit again to the full body for support. Mr. President and members, I know that I’ve been asking the Secretary of Public Lands to consider, and I know that she had send comments on this I believe referring to the infringement of responsibility, but I’ve discussed with her personally, that I don’t see why this legislation should infringe the responsibility. This legislation does transfer the responsibility to another entity, but rather just shortening the two year’s period after three years of complying with regulation and additional two years thereafter that is when you receive the deed of conveyance. And I think it is not necessary for DPL to take that loan after complying with within three years it takes another two years. So, I believe forty-five (45) days, in my opinion, it is a reasonable time for the homesteaders to receive their deed. And the reason why I came up with this legislation, because I’ve introduced a legislation related to this legislation in regards to regulation. We’ve passed a legislation removing one of the biggest requirements at the Department of Public Lands in regards to homesteaders building a structure, a dwelling at their property, there is no opposition on that regards, which that is the biggest responsibility for homesteaders to build a dwelling. The DPL did not oppose to that and this is only forty-five (45) days to shorten the two year’s grace period. And that’s the reason why I came up with this because I believe the homesteaders have received or rather they have raffled in 2009 and DPL did not give the permit for all those homesteaders to enter the property. And homesteaders, all those years that past commodities keep rising, some of the homesteader left the island either to further their education or join the army forces. So, from 2009 to 2014 when they release the permit to enter their property to follow whatever public lands regulation is. And after they receive that permit, homesteaders were called back and inform them that they cannot build a dwelling due to the fact that DEQ advised them without water infrastructure they cannot build a dwelling because of the EPA requirements. So, I see that this is not the homesteaders fault that the permit is being released. I think regulatory agency should be communicating, that communication within the regulatory agency and before even issuing permit, they should make sure that all infrastructures are in place and not to burden the homesteaders of whatever the Federal requirement is. And this is the reason why I came with up this legislation because until now, those homesteaders that are been giving in 2014 still what they do at the moment is, the only thing they are doing right now is cleaning their homestead and we cannot even build. I believe we should give them also some credits and not to make it a lengthy for them to receive their deed of conveyance, and that is the reason why I came up with a forty-five (45) calendar day

legislation. So that they can have with them their deed rather than keep wondering whether they are to have a deed or not. So with that again, I solicit again your support members of this body. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Any other member? This bill address only for the residential homestead or include also agricultural homestead, Chairman Cruz?

**Senator Cruz:** This is for residential. I believe, Mr. President and members of the Senate, I think water infrastructure and agricultural is not mandate that you can just bring water to aggregate your plant. But because of the *kommon san hiyong*, they don't require by EPA to build an outside Chamorro type bathroom because of the contamination of the water reservoir.

**President Hocog:** So, this only addresses the village residential homesteads?

**Senator Cruz:** This is for residential only.

**President Hocog:** Thank you for that clarification. If no further discussion on Senate Bill No. 21-10, SD1, I would like to ask the Clerk to call the roll for its Final Reading.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Hunggan (Yes)

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” Senate Bill No. 21-10, SD1, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Floor Leader, we have one, two, three more to go.

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, for passage on Final Reading Senate Legislative Initiative No. 21-01, SD1, “To require the Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT) and its Board of Trustees to exercise transparency and accountability as a Commonwealth government entity, to provide for reasonable expenses of administration by law, and to require the annual operating budget of MPLT to be approved and appropriated by the legislature by amending Article XI, Section 6 of the Constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Ready? Madam Clerk, for the Final Reading of Senate Legislative Initiative No. 21-01, SD1.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” Senate Legislative Initiative No. 21-01, SD1, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. For the passage on Final Reading, Senate Bill No. 21-28, “To amend 3 CMC § 2824, to establish a claims and clinical data warehouse at CHCC and to improve accountability for how health insurance premiums are spent by requiring health insurance insurers and health care providers to submit reports on claims and clinical data to the insurance commissioner; and for other purposes,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Madam Clerk, for the Final Reading of Senate Bill No. 21-28.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Hunggan (Yes)

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members voting “yes” Senate Bill No. 21-28, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. The last bill on today's Calendar, for the passage on Final Reading Senate Bill No. 21-29, “To amend 3 CMC § 1331(b) by removing the offset provision of the Northern Marianas College annual budget funded by the Legislature,” so move.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog:** Discussion? Senator Santos, recognized.

**Senator Santos:** Thank you, Mr. President. I support the intent and purpose of this very important legislation for only accredited college here in the Commonwealth. Our Intern President of college including the Director of NMTI also highly supports this legislation. It is my recollection that each fiscal year when we deliver on the budget, NMC has always been submitting a budget proposal of not less than six million dollars (\$6,000,000) and with again passage of this legislation it would greatly affect our NMC, our Intern President as indicated that it would enhance programs and services beneficial to the thousands of our students going to NMC, it would also stabilize NMC’s financial resources and would continue to expand workforce development including that of our NMC’s academic program. Again, I fully support this legislation. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Hocog:** Thank you. Ready for the question? For the Final Reading of Senate Bill No. 21-29. madam Clerk, please call the roll.

**CLERK** called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Hunggan (Yes)

**CLERK:** Mr. President, all eight members voting “yes.”

**President Hocog:** With eight members again voting “yes” Senate Bill No. 21-29, hereby passes the Senate on its Final Reading. Any other bill, Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Quitugua:** That is the last one on today’s Calendar, Mr. President. Mr. President, if you want me to continue I will make a motion for adjournment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**President Hocog**: There is a motion to adjourn –

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: Mr. President?

**President Hocog**: Oh, that is not a motion?

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: No.

**President Hocog**: So, you may proceed, Floor Leader.

**Floor Leader Quitugua**: If nothing else to discuss on the Agenda, Mr. President, I move to adjourn today's session subject to the call of the Chair.

The motion has been seconded.

**President Hocog**: There is a motion to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair, those in favor of the motion to adjourn say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

**President Hocog**: Motion carries. The Senate Session is hereby adjourned subject to the call of the Chair. Thank you my fellow colleagues.

The Senate adjourned at 12:35 p.m. on July 18, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Frances Joan P. Kaipat  
Senate Journal Clerk