



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-SECOND NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2021

LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

2nd Day, First Regular Session

Friday, February 19, 2021

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Second Day, First Regular Session on Friday, February 19, 2021 at 2:33 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll and all twenty members were present.

The Chair directed the members to item II, Public Comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following individual made comments:

Mr. David R. Maratita, Director of Alcoholic Beverage & Tobacco Control, Department of Commerce (*on behalf of Secretary Mark Rabauliman*)

The Chair directed the members to item III, Adoption of Journals and recognized the Clerk.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

The Clerk announced the following journal:

First Day, First Regular Session Journal – January 11, 2021

The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the First Day, First Regular Session Journal – January 11, 2021 and was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt the First Day, First Regular Session Journal – January 11, 2021 was carried by a majority voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair directed the members to item IV, Introduction of Bills.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

House Bills:

The following bills were officially introduced by the author of each bill and referred to its appropriate committee by the Chair.

H. B. NO. 22-1

To establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Civil Remedies for unauthorized disclosure of intimate images Act of 2021; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-2

To amend the Commonwealth Code to authorize civil claims for child sexual abuse to be commenced at any time; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Vicente C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Richard T. Lizama, Edwin K. Propst, and Denita K. Yangetmai)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-3

To amend 9 CMC §2101(d) by requiring the motor vehicle liability insurance expiration to be consistent with the vehicle registration expiration; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-4

To amend the Department of Public Safety’s time period to produce police traffic and criminal investigation reports from 10 days to 3 days.

REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-5

To amend 1 CMC §20175 to include additional members to serve on the Planning and Development Advisory Council (PDAC); and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Ivan A. Blanco, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, and John Paul P. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-6

To amend 4 CMC §1401(d) to increase revenues by properly taxing tobacco products.

REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Ivan A. Blanco, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, and Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-7

To provide clarity relative to the crime of promoting prison contraband, or otherwise known as the Contraband Reform Act of 2021; and for other purposes.

REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Ivan A. Blanco, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, and Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-8

To establish the level of funding for the Legislature and provide the Legislature with control of the expenditure of funds appropriated for its operations.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Ivan A. Blanco, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, and John Paul P. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-9

To regulate trust and fiduciaries; and for other purposes.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, and John Paul P. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND TOURISM)

H. B. NO. 22-10

To prohibit the use of certain disposable food service containers.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, and Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND TOURISM)

H. B. NO. 22-11

To enact a provision to require all CNMI government agencies to prepare and submit a fiscal impact statement and a fiscal revenue statement for related legislations to the Legislature when said agencies are affected and required to do so by law.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, and John Paul P. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-12

To amend 4 CMC § 51420 (b) to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to establish and promulgate reasonable registration and permitting fees through adopted regulations; and for other purposes.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, and John Paul P. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND TOURISM)

H. B. NO. 22-13

To create the Commonwealth Worker Fee Revolving Fund and to designate the Secretary of the Department of Labor as the expenditure authority of said fund; and for other purposes.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, and John Paul P. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-14

To establish the Department of Corrections Residential Mental Health Unit; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joseph A. Flores, and Edmund S. Villagomez)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)

H. B. NO. 22-15

To establish the Foster Care Sponsorship Program under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Division of Youth Services; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, and Representative Angel A. Demapan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)

H. B. NO. 22-16

To temporarily suspend the provisions of 4 CMC section 2159 for the 2021 fiscal year.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, and Representative Angel A. Demapan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-17

To amend 9 CMC § 2401 to authorize the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to regulate chauffeur licenses in the CNMI; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, and Representative Angel A. Demapan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-18

To amend Division 4 of Title 6 of the Commonwealth Code relating to disposition of offenders and sentencing to provide criteria for imposition of enhanced sentencing of defendants for crimes motivated by hate.

REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Celina R. Babauta, Sheila J. Babauta, Richard T. Lizama, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-19

To repeal Title 4 Section 1709 of the Commonwealth Code in order to provide relief for working families by making them eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit; and for other purposes.

REP. CHRISTINA M.E. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for herself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Celina R. Babauta, Sheila J. Babauta, Vicente C. Camacho, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, Edmund S. Villagomez and Ralph N. Yumul)

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-20

To amend Title 2, Division 2, Chapter 1 of the Commonwealth Code to grant the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) – Ports Police with law enforcement authority.

REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Celina R. Babauta, Vicente C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-21

To strengthen the tools and powers of the CNMI Government to promote and expand economic development and to establish the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority.

REP. ANGEL A. DEMAPAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMECE AND TOURISM)

H. B. NO. 22-22

To establish laws to regulate bioprospecting activities within the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in order to ensure prior, informed consent and equitable sharing of benefits.

REP. ANGEL A. DEMAPAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Ivan A. Blanco, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, and Patrick H. San Nicolas)

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES)

H. B. NO. 22-23

To enact provisions regarding confinement of dogs, enforcement authority to the office of the mayor for each senatorial district, and fines for registered pet owners who fail to secure their dogs; and for other purposes.

REP. RICHARD T. LIZAMA of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*, Representatives Celina R. Babauta, and Leila H.F.C. Staffler)

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)

The Chair directed the members to House Local Bills.

House Local Bills:

The following bills were officially introduced by the author of each bill:

H. L. B. NO. 22-1

To appropriate sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) from the Rota Municipal Scholarship Foundation Reserve Account (specifically under BU 2301); and for other purposes.

REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*)

H. L. B. NO. 22-2

To appropriate sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) from the Poker Licensing Fee Account (specifically under BU 3302); and for other purposes.

REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*)

H. L. B. NO. 22-3

To appropriate up to Six Hundred Eighteen Thousand One Hundred Thirty-Eight US Dollars (\$618,138) of the Earned Bond Interest Income collected for the Third Senatorial District that has been identified by the Commonwealth Development Authority as available for appropriations; and for other purposes.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Richard T. Lizama, John Paul P. Sablan, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

House Legislative Initiatives: None

The Chair directed the members to item V, Introduction of Resolutions and recognized Representative Ivan A. Blanco.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

House Resolutions:

Representative Ivan A. Blanco officially introduced the following resolution and request that the resolution be introduced as a Committee of the Whole:

H. RES. NO. 22-2

To extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Bob Reynolds and to honor his memory whose worthy endeavors contributed to the quality of life in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*)

Several members voiced “no objection.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: If there’s no objection the Chair would like to place this on calendar for action.

Several members voiced “no objection.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, members. I now recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul officially introduced the following resolution and request that the resolution be introduced as a Committee of the Whole:

H. RES. NO. 22-3

To amend the House of Representatives Rules of Procedure that was adopted on January 11, 2021; and for other purposes.

REP. RALPH N. YUMUL of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Sheila J. Babauta, and Christina M.E. Sablan)

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Members, if there's no objection, I would like to place this on the calendar but we will not take action on it on this session.

Several members voiced "no objection."

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Okay, thank you members.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since we're not acting on this legislative – the rules – I'm asking all the members if they have any concerns to send any possible amendments or concerns to my office as soon as possible so we can address your concerns. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Floor Leader. Any other discussions? Yes, recognize Representative Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc for that opportunity for other members who may not have the time to provide comments on the rules. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Noted. Thank you. Anymore discussions?

Several members voiced "ready."

House Joint Resolutions: None

House Commemorative Resolutions: None

House Concurrent Resolutions: None

The Chair directed the members to item VI, Messages from the Governor and recognized the Clerk.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:

GOV. COMM. 22-1: (1/5/2020) Submitting the annual report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020.

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

GOV. COMM. 22-2: (received 1/13/2021) **Executive Order 2021-01** – RENEWAL–Declaration of State of Public Health Emergency and continued Declaration of State of Significant Emergency establishing response, quarantine, and preventive containment measures concerning coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19); and RENEWAL–Order directing the Homeland Security & Emergency Management Office through the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force in partnership with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation to undertake necessary COVID-19 containment measures by means of the development of Emergency Directives to protect the health and safety of the public.

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)

GOV. COMM. 22-3: (1/7/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 21-19, HS1, (To impose a higher fee structure for the Department of Commerce, Office of the Registrar of Corporations; and for other purposes.). Became **Public Law 21-37** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 21-4: (1/7/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 21-11, HS1, SD1, SD3, (To clarify the powers of the Commonwealth Casino Commission and to make needed changes to the Commonwealth Code given the unique regulatory oversight of the Casino Industry in the Commonwealth; and for other purposes.). Became **Public Law 21-38** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-5: (1/18/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 21-50, D1, (To appropriate \$90,000 from the local license fees collected for pachinko slot machines and poker machines in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes.). Became **Tinian Local Law 21-14** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-6: (1/19/2021) Informing the House that he vetoed H. B. No. 21-106, HS1 (To amend 1 CMC §20175 to include additional members to serve on the Planning and Development Advisory Council (PDAC); and for other purposes.). [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-7: (received 1/20/2021) **Executive Order 2021-02** – RENEWING AUTHORITY—Order authorizing the Secretary of Finance to reprogram or transfer funds from accounts of any department, agency, office, board, commission, corporation, instrumentality or other entity of all branches of the Commonwealth Government in order to meet the threat of COVID-19.

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

GOV. COMM. 22-8: (1/19/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, S. B. No. 21-69, (To establish the Commonwealth Recorder’s Act of 2020; and for other purposes.). Became **Public Law 21-39** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-9: (1/19/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, S. L. B. No. 21-9, (To amend 10 CMC §3922 to remove the automatic confirmation of a SHEFA board appointment in the event no action is taken within 30 days from the date of appointment; and for other purposes.). Became **Saipan Local Law 21-18** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-10: (1/21/2021) Certifying and granting approval for Mr. Lance Seibenhener, Assistant Attorney General, at the Office of the Attorney General to receive an annual salary of \$70,000. [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-11: (1/21/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 21-92, HD1, HS1, SD1, (To amend 4 CMC § 50144(b) to increase the penalties to businesses that gives, sells, or permits to be given or sold any tobacco product to an

individual under the age of 21; and for other purposes.). Became **Public Law 21-40** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-12: (1/27/2021 Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. No. 21-53, S1, (To make limited appropriations for personnel and operations of the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission, the Office of the Mayor of Tinian, the Tinian Municipal Council and the Tinian Municipal Treasury for Fiscal Year 2021 pursuant to 10 CMC § 2581 [Tinian Local Law 21-9] and 1 CMC § 1405(a) [Public 11-17].). Became **Tinian Local Law 21-15** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-13: (2/5/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 21-99, (To amend 4 CMC § 5567 to provide clarity for the handling and sales of alcoholic beverages at off-sale premises and to amend 4 CMC § 5568 to provide clarity on penalties; and for other purposes.). Became **Public Law 21-41** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-14: (2/5/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 21-104, HS1, SD1, CCS1, (To reduce the thirty-day period within which to pay the excise tax in respect to dutiable goods requiring Customs inspection and clearance to be paid upon clearing Customs; and for other purposes.). Became **Public Law 21-42** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-15: (2/5/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 21-108, (To provide the Department of Lands and Natural Resources with explicit authority to hold and manage public lands transferred to it from the Department of Public Lands and the Division of Agriculture with the authority to issue licenses and permits in respect to the Kagman Commercial Farm Plot program.). Became **Public Law 21-43** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-16: (2/5/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 21-43, HD3, HS1, SD1, CCS1, (To amend 2 CMC §43104(a)(5) to provide proper eligibility for people who wish to avail of the village and agricultural homesteading programs under the Department of Public Lands; and for other purposes.). Became **Public Law 21-44** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-17: (2/5/2021) Informing the House that he signed into law, S. L. B. No. 21-11, D1, (To amend 10 CMC §§2521 (a) and (g), as established by Tinian Local Law 21-09 to clarify a commissioner's term in office and to change the compensation of the members of the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission; and for other purposes.). Became **Tinian Local Law 21-16** [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-18: (2/5/2021) Informing the House that he vetoed S. B. No. 21-61 (To amend 2 CMC § 7221(e) to remove the automatic confirmation of a zoning board appointment in the event no action is taken within 30 days from date of appointment; and for other purposes.). [For info]

GOV. COMM. 22-19: (2/9/2021) Informing the legislature re: Initiation of Reduction-in-Force Procedures. [For info]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

GOV. COMM. 22-20: (received 2/12/2021) **Executive Order 2021-03** – RENEWAL–Declaration of State of Public Health Emergency and continued Declaration of State of Significant Emergency establishing response, quarantine, and preventive containment measures concerning coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19); and RENEWAL–Order

directing the Homeland Security & Emergency Management Office through the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force in partnership with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation to undertake necessary COVID-19 containment measures by means of the development of Emergency Directives to protect the health and safety of the public.

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. Any comments or discussions regarding Governor's Communication? Recognize Representative Joel Camacho.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to formally and officially thank the Governor for signing into law Public Law 21-40, Public Law 21-41 and Public Law 21-44. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Camacho. Anymore discussion? Recognize Representative Tina Sablan.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is on Governor's Communications 22-1, 22-2, 22-7 and 22-20 – so regarding the fiscal condition of the government and these continued renewals of public health emergency declarations and the 100% authority that continues for the Secretary of Finance to reprogram our transfer funds in order to meet the threat of COVID-19. Just for the members' information, the Health and Welfare committee has invited the Chairman of the COVID-19 Taskforce and the Governor's authorized representative for the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response Mr. Patrick Guerrero to come and provide a briefing for the committee and it's open of course to all the members. I would like to extend the invitation to everybody whether you're a member of the committee or not to come and ask questions and that meeting has been set for February 26 at 1:30 p.m. here at the House chamber. We are asking for members who may have questions to submit those questions ahead of time so that we can allow the Chairman to prepare for that briefing.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Sablan. Noted. Please make sure that the notice that each member is notified about the meeting and all the information. Any more discussions? With that said, Governor's Communication 22-1 will be referred to Ways and Means for information purposes. 22-2 will be referred to Health and Welfare. Governor's Communication 22-7 will be referred to Ways and Means. Governor's Communication 22-19 will also be referred to Ways and Means. Governor's Communication 22-20 will be referred to the Committee on Health and Welfare.

There was no further discussion; the Chair directed the members to item VII, Senate Communications and recognized the Floor Leader.

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

The Floor Leader made a motion to accept Senate Communications 22-1 to 22-4 so they may become property of the House.

SEN. COMM. 22-1: (1/20/2021) From the Senate President re: *appointment of the 22nd Senate Standing Committee Chairpersons.* [For Info]

SEN. COMM. 22-2: (1/26/2021) From Senator Karl King-Nabors, Judiciary, Government, Law & Federal Relations Chair, appointing members to the Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law & Federal Relations. [*For info*]

SEN. COMM. 22-3: (2/3/2021) From the Senate President re: *proposed revenue generating legislation—Money Transmission Transaction Fees*. [*For info*]

SEN. COMM. 22-4: (2/12/2021) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 22-9, SD1, entitled, “*To amend 4 CMC §2313(g) relative to the compensation of the commissioners; to amend 4 CMC §2314 to separate the regulation of the casino gaming and the hotel facilities; and for other purposes.*”, which was passed by the Senate on February 11, 2021. [*For action*]

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to accept Senate Communications 22-1 to 22-4 so they may become property of the House was carried by a majority voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair referred the following Senate Communication accordingly:

- *Senate Communication 22-4 (S.B. 22-22-9, SD1) referred to the Committee on Gaming*

The Chair directed the members to item VIII, House Communications and recognized the Clerk.

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following House Communications:

HSE. COMM. 22-1: (1/13/2021) From the minority caucus appointing Representative Ivan A. Blanco as the Minority Leader for the House of Representatives — 22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. [*For Info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-2: (1/20/2021) From Representative Manglona, WM Chair, appointing members to the House Standing Committee on Ways & Means. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-3: (1/20/2021) From Representative Propst, Gaming Chair, appointing members to the House Standing Committee on Gaming. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-4: (1/21/2021) From Representative Staffler, Education Chair, appointing members to the House Standing Committee on Education. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-5: (1/21/2021) From Representative Christina M.E. Sablan, HW Chair, appointing members to the House Standing Committee on Health and Welfare. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-6: (1/22/2021) From Representative Yangetmai, C&T Chair, appointing members to the House Standing Committee on Commerce & Tourism. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-7: (1/22/2021) From Representative Lizama, PUTC Chair, appointing members to the House Standing Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-8: (1/27/2021) From Representative Vicente C. Camacho, FFA Chair, appointing members to the House Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-9: (1/27/2021) From Representative Yangetmai, Cannabis Chair, appointing members to the House Standing Committee on Cannabis. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-10: (1/27/2021) From Representative Celina R. Babauta, JGO Chair, appointing members to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-11: (1/27/2021) From Representative Sheila J. Babauta, NR Chair, appointing members to the House Committee on Natural Resources. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-12: (2/3/2021) From Representative Propst, Gaming Chair, submitting an amended composition to the Gaming Committee appointing Representative San Nicolas as Member in place of Representative Yumul. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-13: (1/26/2021) From Speaker Villagomez informing the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL) of his appointment of Representatives Ivan A. Blanco and Denita K. Yangetmai to serve as Members of on the APIL representing the 22nd CNMI House of Representatives. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 22-14: (2/5/2021) From Speaker Villagomez informing the Governor of his appointment of Representatives Christina M.E. Sablan and Leila Staffler to the COVID-19 Task Force representing the 22nd CNMI House of Representatives. [*For info*]

There was no discussion; the Chair directed the members to item X, Communications from Departments & Agencies and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

The Clerk announced the following Communications from Department & Agencies:

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-1: (1/29/2021) From the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) submitting *CUC's FY 2021—First Quarter Expenditure Report*. [*For info*]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC UTILITIES, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS/WAYS AND MEANS)

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-2: (2/3/2021) From the Department of Public Lands submitting packet for the Legislature's review and consideration of D&W Saipan, Inc., request to extend the term of its lease (LA No. 96-01S—Gualo Rai, Saipan) for an

additional 15 years pursuant to Article XI, Section 5(c) of the NMI Constitution. [*For consideration*]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES)

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-3: (2/4/2021) From the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) submitting *FY 2021—First Quarter Report*. [*For info*]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS/COMMERCE AND TOURISM)

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-4: (2/10/2021) From the Secretary, Department of Finance (DOF) submitting *FY 2021—First Quarter Financial Report*. [*For info*]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

Under discussion; the Chair recognized Representative Donald M. Manglona.

Representative Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is in reference to Department and Agency Communication 22-4, I just wanted to inform and remind the Committee on Ways and Means that we will be having our meeting with the Secretary of Finance on Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. here in the chamber and if any other member of the legislature are interested in participating you're more than welcome to. If you'd like to have any of your questions sent to the Secretary of Finance, please give that to him ahead of time or provide me a copy and I can share that with him so that he can be prepared with your answers on Tuesday. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Manglona. Please make sure that all the members are notified. I now recognize Representative Sheila Babauta.

Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is in regards to Department and Agency Communication 22-2 from the Department of Public Lands submitting their packet for the legislatures review and consideration of the D&W Saipan Inc. Public Land Lease and I just wanted to state for the record that as Chairwoman of the Committee on Natural and Cultural Resources, I am in contract with Secretary of Marian – for the members information this public land lease has been expired since September 30, 2020 and their now on a month-to-month lease. She is now working with the Attorney General's Office to seek opinion on extending an expired lease, which we do have concerns about. So, for the members on the Natural and Cultural Resources committee, we are awaiting that opinion from DPL and we will move forward from there once I receive communication, I will notify the committee and the members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Babauta. Anymore discussions? Ready. With that said, Department and Agency Communication 22-1 will be referred to the Committee of PUTC and Ways and Means. Communication 22-2 will be referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. Communication 22-3 will be referred to Ways and Means and Commerce and Tourism and 22-4 will be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. Thank you, members. We will now proceed down to Miscellaneous Communications and I recognize the Clerk.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communications:

MISC. COMM. 22-1: (1/15/2021) From the Chairperson of the Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation (TALD) informing the House that the 22nd TALD is duly organized and ready to transact business. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 22-2: (1/20/2021) From the Legislative Bureau informing the House re: *House Legislative Assistants' assigned standing committees*. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 22-3: (1/21/2021) From the Chairperson of the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council informing the House that the 16th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council is duly organized and ready to transact business. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 22-4: (2/2/2021) From the Chairman of the Twenty-Second Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation informing the House that the 22nd SNILD is duly organized and ready to transact business. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 22-5: (2/9/2021) From the Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC informing the legislature of its recovery plan and request legislative support that pertains to the annual license fee. [*For info*]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON GAMING/WAYS AND MEANS)

MISC. COMM. 22-6: (2/10/2021) Transmitting a certified copy of TALD Resolution No. 22-1, entitled, "*Official Rules of the Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation TALD*," which was adopted by the Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation on January 14, 2021. [*For info*]

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: I will refer Miscellaneous Communication 22-5 to the Committee of Gaming and Ways and Means.

There was no discussion; the Chair directed the members to item XV, Resolution Calendar and recognized the Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

None

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following resolution:

H. RES. NO. 22-2

To extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Bob Reynolds and to honor his memory whose worthy endeavors contributed to the quality of life in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*)

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt House Resolution 22-2 was carried by a majority voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Members as communicated earlier, House Resolution 22-3 will remain in calendar. Please share your comments, concerns with the Floor Leader Representative Ralph Yumul.

No action taken for the following resolution:

H. RES. NO. 22-3

To amend the House of Representatives Rules of Procedure that was adopted on January 11, 2021; and for other purposes.

REP. RALPH N. YUMUL of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Sheila J. Babauta, and Christina M.E. Sablan)

The Chair directed the members to item XVII, Miscellaneous Business and recognized Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas

BILL CALENDAR

None

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members for a moment of silence to the untimely passing of Vice Chairman Napu King Aldan of the 18th Tinian Municipal Council yesterday.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative San Nicolas.

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas: If no objection.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Can we all please rise for a moment of silence in memory of Councilman Napu Aldan.

A moment of silence was observed.

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and all members.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative San Nicolas. Any other member? Representative Propst.

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Thank you, Speaker and colleagues. I just wanted to bring up a couple of things that I received from a couple of constituents and this is actually for the committee, but I thought it'd be appropriate to discuss with all members so that everyone is aware. I did briefly discuss it with Chairwoman Denita Yangetmai on the – regarding cannabis. First thing, there's a constituent who is trying to open up his business and one of the drawbacks – one of the hardships his finding is that there's a requirement that you must have liability insurance to open up his business. All the insurance company he has checked, there's no insurance company that will do this for cannabis so this is something Madame Chair that I hope we can address and your members. The next one is the high rate of taxes of bringing in hemp cigarettes it's taxed just like cigarettes like tobacco and it's at 60% it's rather high for small business that are bringing it in. Hemp is not cannabis, it's not addictive – I mean certainly not addictive, but it really is a very mild substance and it's used to treat anxiety among other things, but treating it at the high rate of 60% is not conducive to this tough economy and if we want to see businesses grow, importing this and selling it is really not a bad thing. It's agricultural and natural. It's like taxing carrots not that you would smoke carrots, but I'm just saying it's natural and it's agricultural and it's hemp. So, I just feel that Madame Chair if these issues could be addressed from these two different constituents, we would appreciate it and I also welcome any comments on that. Anyone who would like to chime in on that at a later time. Thank you, Speaker and colleagues.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Propst. Any other member? Representative Babauta Sheila.

Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I do have a couple of items I would just like to bring up during this time. First of all, congratulations to Rep. Denita Yangetmai and Rep. Ivan Blanco for their appointments to the APIL representing the 22nd CNMI Legislature. So, APIL is the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, I highly encourage our members to keep us informed and also to be advised of what has happened at the Pacific Islands forum where our Micronesian leaders had to pull out of the forum due to conflict and some members not recognizing a gentlemen's agreement. I want to just recognize our leaders in Micronesia for standing their ground and for uniting in that action. Also, Mr. Speaker I would like to bring up the concern that I have that we still have an Acting Director for the LB, Legislative Bureau and any update on that would be greatly appreciated to the body and I do hope that the viewing public and anyone who's interested in the position does submit their intent and their interest in the position. I hope that there's a deadline to fill the position and I do understand that it is something that must be agreed upon between the House and the Senate, so I look forward to any communications and any updates regarding the Director of the Legislative Bureau. Lastly, Mr. Speaker and members just today our office received a letter from an anonymous person in one of the department's in our government just expressing a grievance complaint and officially filing one with the Office of Personnel Management. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, it's very disheartening to hear that our service members and those who work for the government are experiencing toxic work environments and unhealthy and very abusive workplaces. So, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I will be submitting this as official communication to your office so that it can be shared so that we're all informed and so that it can be referred to

the proper committee so we can address any grievances and follow-up with the proper departments for action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Babauta. Any other member? Ready. Alright we now move down to item XVIII, Announcements. Representative Babauta.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to announce and bring to the attention to the members that today the Marianas History Conference does begin and it is about a two-week long conference hosted by the University of Guam. We do have members in this body who will be a part of the conference including Congresswoman Leila Staffler who will be sharing a short video that she created from her trip to the Northern Islands. I will also be presenting with former Senator Kelly Marsh Taitano tomorrow and so I encourage the members to join in and really hear from members of our community who do such good work to research and maintain records of our history and share that with everyone else. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Babauta. Any other member? Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under Announcement, I guess I'll give a tentative date to submit all concerns so it can be deliberated in the Ad Hoc Committee. So, please have your amendments or concerns or anything that we miss under the rules by February 25. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Floor Leader. Any other announcements? Representative John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Just for point of clarification. I don't have any announcement, but the notion of the Floor Leader by us submitting concerns on the resolution on our rules, because the rules is now on the Resolution Calendar so when we give you our concerns how do you fix the problem when right now the product is on the Resolution Calendar.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you for that question. We plan to listen in case we miss something and so that if there is any discussion or changes that we make we can address it during the discussions section or in the calendar that way we're prepared and not have everything be disorganized. So, I'm just pretty much giving every member to let us know what's going on or if something that we had missed and that way we can address it early and then we can prepare the proper amendments if the members agree to it. Thank you. I hope that answers your question.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you for that clarification.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative John Paul Sablan and Floor Leader. If there's no more under announcements, I now move to – I now recognize Representative Leepan. My apologies.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm kind of concerned that the Floor Leader eluded that we should submit concerns or issue in respect to the Ad Hoc or the House Rules. I think in fairness for the entire body that's why when it's placed on calendar that we discussed it in chamber. I feel that that's the way it should be done. I think the committee had done their share so to me I would like to share with the members if I'm going to support it or not because in fairness with the others especially the new members this the process that we've been doing it in the past. So, this is just my point of clarification because I'm not going to share it with the committee, I will share it when the entire body is here so that everybody hears what I'd have to share. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Floor Leader.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Guerrero. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Representative Guerrero. This is just a courtesy. Now if you don't want to share that is your prerogative, but I am offering it to everybody else. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Floor Leader. Thank you, Representative Guerrero. Any other member? Alright we now move down to Adjournment. I recognize the Floor Leader for the proper motion.

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now offer a motion to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair. So move.

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

The House adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Venetia S. Rosario
House Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY: 1st Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY: NONE

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY: NONE

Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session on January 11, 2021:

H. RES. NO. 22-1: To adopt the Rules for the House of Representatives and to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to review the rules; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ of Saipan, Precinct 3, (*for himself*); adopted January 11, 2021