



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-SECOND NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2021

LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

3rd Day, First Regular Session

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Third Day, First Regular Session on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 10:03 a.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 individuals made comments:

Mr. Manny Pangelinan, Director of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. John Gourley, Micronesia Environmental Services

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

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

The Clerk announced the following journal ready for adoption:

Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 19, 2021

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 19, 2021.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt the Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 19, 2021 was carried by a majority “aye” 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 introduced by the author of each bill and referred to its appropriate committee by the Chair.

H. B. NO. 22-24

To adopt the state model language for implementation of Public Law 110-289, TITLE V— S.A.F.E. MORTGAGE LICENSING ACT.

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

H. B. NO. 22-25

To provide relief to CNMI taxpayers affected by disasters by allowing relief from penalties and interest on unpaid taxes; 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, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, and Patrick H. San Nicolas)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-26

To amend 3 CMC §2204(e) to remove the limitation of terms for members to serve on the Health Care Professions Licensing Board; and for other purposes.

REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Celina R. Babauta, Sheila J. Babauta, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)

H. B. NO. 22-27

To amend 4 CMC §1407(b) to remove the 15-day grace period and to provide the Division of Customs with the authority to promulgate and establish application fees for low-risk importer applicants; and for other purposes.

REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-28

To rename the structure for the Center for Living Independently in the CNMI to “The Lydia D. Igitol Center for Living Independently in the CNMI”; and for other purposes.

REP. EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ of Saipan, Precinct 3, (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Richard T. Lizama, and Denita K. Yangetmai)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-29

To amend 1 CMC § 121 in order to eradicate the unconstitutional public purpose presumption for legislative expenditures.

REP. CHRISTINA M.E. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for herself*, Representatives Celina R. Babauta, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, and Denita K. Yangetmai)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-30

To grant the Legislature a reasonable allowance, to define a “reasonable allowance”, to set the amount of the allowance, and to certify it as a public purpose.

REP. CHRISTINA M.E. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for herself*, Representatives Celina R. Babauta, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, and Denita K. Yangetmai)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-31

To authorize the Department of Public Lands to issue licenses and use permits and charge fees for the use of the public lands located within 150 feet of the highwater mark.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angel A. Demapan, and Joseph A. Flores)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES)

H. B. NO. 22-32

To amend the Litter Control Act to the prohibit the possession of glass containers while on public beaches; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angel A. Demapan, and Joseph A. Flores)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES)

H. B. NO. 22-33

To require legislative appropriation for all Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund monies allocated for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands by the U.S. Congress pursuant to Title VI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 801 et seq.) as amended by [the American Rescue Plan]; and for other purposes.

REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*, Representatives, Celina R. Babauta, Richard T. Lizama, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, and Denita K. Yangetmai)

Representative Donald M. Manglona: At this time, Mr. Speaker, I move to place this bill on the Bill Calendar, but not for action on today’s session.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Donald. I now recognize the Floor Leader for the proper motion.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Objection Mr. Speaker on the motion.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Can we have the mover explain what's the sense of urgency of placing this legislation to the Bill Calendar for the record?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you for that Representative Sablan and Representative Leepan. Recognize Representative Donald Manglona.

Representative Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the way the law is written the money is expected to come within 60 days and we hope to move on with this legislation in order for the legislation to act on its appropriation. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Leepan.

Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero: Mr. Speaker, absent of plans of how this money is going to be used – how do we know that there's no said in motion by the feds in how this money should be used. For one, I would like to ask counsel because the language of this bill is to appropriate. This is federal money, it's not money that we collected. I don't see that we are authorized to appropriate federal money and I want the counsel to explain to me how is that that we have the authority to appropriate federal money.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Counsel.

Legal Counsel Joseph Tajjeron: Congressman Leepan, I actually agree with you and I think Representative Donald Manglona sees the need to actually establish the authority and that's what this bill – this legislation is putting forth exactly. Until this bill passes into law, there is no prohibition or enabling legislation. It's the law, it's silent on whether or not \$515 Million Dollars will see legislative approval or disapproval. So that's why this legislation is being put on the table.

Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero: But do we have assurance from the federal that we can do this? That's what I'm trying to allude. I mean I want something in black and white that the federal is saying "yes, CNMI you can appropriate this funding." We haven't seen this money. We haven't seen the guidelines. I want to see the guidelines. I haven't had the opportunity to chime in with our Delegate to Washington, I don't know and now that we're basically moving forward to put this on calendar. I object Mr. Speaker. I want to see a standing plan. I want to see everything because what if its language in there and the authority remains with the Governor. What's the purpose of this piece of legislation?

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Privilege Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Sablan.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Thank you. I think we're getting ahead of ourselves in debating the legislation. I would like to note that the motion that was offered by Chairman Donald Manglona is to place it on our calendar not for action today. I will also note that the American Rescue Plan is providing to the Commonwealth as well as other US Territories of unprecedented windfall of federal monies that's intended to support the government operations and to replace shortfalls in revenues that we do absolutely have the authority to appropriate. What this bill proposes is to assert that authority to require the expenditure plan that would be reviewed by the legislature prior to certification to the US treasury. The process is spelled out in the American Rescue Plan Act, we're not acting on this today – that's not what's being proposed today and members will have time to review the specific legislation that the language in American Rescue Plan and also review the merit of what this bill is proposing. Checks and balances, transparency and accountability for a lot of money that have never seen before that we are expected to spend responsibly over the next year. So to finish my privilege motion Mr. Speaker or request for the colleagues attention and understanding is that we – the privilege motion that I'm making today or the statement I'm making today is that we are not going to act on this today, but there will be time for members to better understand what is being proposed and why it's important that we act quickly because as Chairman Donald explained time is of the essence. And if the money comes in and there's no checks and balances then there will be no opportunity for us to act proactively and ensuring that these funds are responsibly managed. Thank you.

Vice Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Privilege Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Vice Speaker.

Vice Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Colleagues, we're discussing the legislation and there's really no motion that has been made yet. So, we need to get to that motion so we can get to a discussion level before we even entertain anything else. Rep. Donald Manglona has no authority in the rules to make a motion to place it on calendar. It's the Floor Leader himself so absent that motion there's no discussion on the legislation itself. So with that thank you members, thank you Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Vice Speaker. Representative John Paul Sablan your point of clarification.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: That was the point of clarification. I mean there's got to be proper motion from the Floor Leader's authority and then we get into a deeper debate on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Okay, I recognize the Floor Leader for the proper motion.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, there's a lot of concerns. With that I am going to offer a rule to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 Referral of Bills and Resolution to place House Bill 22-33 on Bill Calendar. So move.

RULE IX. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS
Section 8. Referral of Bills and Resolutions

(a) Bills and resolutions shall be read by title upon introduction and (except as provided in subsection (b), the Speaker shall refer such measures to an appropriate committee or to more than one committee, jointly or sequentially. The Clerk shall endorse such reference on the measure before duplication and shall enter such reference upon the Journal. In the case of error of reference, correction may be made by the House, with debate, immediately after the reading and approval of the Journal, by unanimous consent, or upon motion of either committee claiming jurisdiction or the committee to which the measure has been erroneously referred.

(b) The Speaker may place a resolution directly on the Resolution Calendar, rather than refer it to a committee, subject to appeal to the House.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: A motion has been made by the Floor Leader and has been seconded. Discussion? Recognize Representative Angel Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, there were some statements made out of order, but now that we're back in order, I appreciate the feedback that we've received from our colleagues here and one of the comments here is that time is of the essence, but there is 60 days approximately until these funds come to the CNMI. There is some time to refer this bill to committee like we did 32 other bills before this. I believe the committee has ample time within a sixty-day window to educate the public and most of all educate ourselves the members before we vote on this legislation. There are probably potentially advantages and disadvantages and I think we need to hear it. I recognize that the motion is to place it on calendar and not to act on it today, but that just means we act on it on the next legislative. I don't think that between now and the next legislative day the money will come in. I don't think we should shortchange the time period for us to discuss this bill thoroughly. This is a significant bill. It's not just one of the other two thirty bills, the impact is big. We're going to see money that we've never seen before come at one time and I think that the members as much as the public deserve that this bill be thoroughly reviewed in committee as is stated in our rules without suspending the rule. Thank you very much.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Demapan. I recognize Representative Ivan Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I understand we will be entertaining this bill next Friday, so that does not give the public or any other members to review the merits of the bill. In fact, we don't know if this bill will actually restrict our use of the recovery funds. If the feds are more flexible then we become more restrictive I we would be shooting ourselves in the foot. So, Mr. Speaker and members I respectfully offer a subsidiary that we send this to committee. So move, Mr. Speaker.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Blanco. A secondary motion has been made and seconded. Discussion?

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Can we request for a roll call subsidiary motion?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Short recess real quick.

The House recessed at 10:29 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 11:12 a.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: We rise back up to session from recess. I now recognize Representative – my apologies – we’re live. We’re back from session, I now recognize Representative Ivan Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. First, I’d like to commend the mover of the bill, surely has good intent and all the cosponsors. After discussions and compromise with several members of the leadership on the merits of the bill and some unanswered questions from the bill, I think it deserves further review. At this time, Mr. Speaker and members I respectfully withdraw my subsidiary motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Several members voiced “no objection.”

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

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Speaker. With that in line with Representative Blanco, I offer to withdraw my suspension of Rule IX, Section 8. So move.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to withdraw the suspension of Rule IX, Section 8 was carried by a majority “aye” vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: So motions have been both withdrawn, House Bill 22-33 remains on agenda. I now recognize Representative Celina Babauta.

Each bill was officially introduced by the author and referred to its appropriate committee by the Chair.

H. B. NO. 22-34

To provide a tax credit for taxpayers who make donations of cash or food supplies to a qualified local food pantry, homeless shelter, or soup kitchen.

REP. CELINA R. BABAUTA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*)

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-35

To add a provision to prohibit convicted felons from possessing firearms and/or ammunition; and for other purposes.

REP. CELINA R. BABAUTA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*)

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-36

To repeal and reenact 6 CMC §4115 to provide better clarity for trial courts to impose sentences.

REP. CELINA R. BABAUTA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-37

To amend Title 6, Division 3, Chapter 2 of the Commonwealth Code by establishing a penalty provision for criminal defendants who fail to appear in court on their scheduled date.

REP. CELINA R. BABAUTA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-38

To amend Title 6, Division 5, Chapter 3, Article 2. Protection of Abused Children, to enact a new §5326. Discovery of evidence of child abuse or recordings of child witnesses, and for other purposes.

REP. CELINA R. BABAUTA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representative Christina M.E. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-39

To amend Title 6, Division 6, Chapter 5. Witnesses, by adding a new §6503. Witness to Child Outcry of Abuse, and for other purposes.

REP. CELINA R. BABAUTA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representative Christina M.E. Sablan)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-40

To establish provisions for jaywalking; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-41

To amend 9 CMC §8209 by removing the seven-day grace period for motorists who violate 9 CMC §§8203 and 8204; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

H. B. NO. 22-42

To amend 4 CMC §1943 to authorize developer infrastructure tax credits for appropriate Chamorro and Carolinian culture designs; and for other purposes.

REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-43

To create an anti-littering incentive program by providing a reward for persons reporting violations of the Litter Control Act; and for other purposes.

REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO of Saipan, Precinct 4 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Ivan A. Blanco, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, and Patrick H. San Nicolas)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES)

H. B. NO. 22-44

To conserve, protect, and enhance the CNMI’s native plants and trees for generations to come and for other purposes.

REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO of Saipan, Precinct 4 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Celina R. Babauta, Ivan A. Blanco, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, Donald M. Manglona, and Patrick H. San Nicolas)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES)

H. B. NO. 22-45

To authorize the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Finance in consultation with Department of Public Works to enter into a loan agreement for a sum up to \$16,800,000.00 for the construction and improvement of roads in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Celina R. Babauta, Ivan A. Blanco, Joel C. Camacho, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC UTILITIES, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS/WAYS AND MEANS)

H. B. NO. 22-46

To repeal and re-enact 4 CMC 1402 (g) to allocate 10 percent of the excise tax to the Solid Waste Management Revolving Fund.

REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Celina R. Babauta, Ivan A. Blanco, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, Richard T. Lizama, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)
(MOVED TO BILL CALENDAR)

Vice Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: With the indulgence of the members and our Floor Leader, I would like to move to place this on calendar through the Floor Leader. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Vice Speaker. Before we entertain your request, I’d like to note that House Bill 22-45 will be referred to the committees on Ways and Means and PUTC and on House Bill 22-46, I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I will offer a motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 so we can refer House Bill 22-46 to the calendar. So move.

RULE IX. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Section 8. Referral of Bills and Resolutions

(a) Bills and resolutions shall be read by title upon introduction and (except as provided in subsection (b), the Speaker shall refer such measures to an appropriate committee or to more than one committee, jointly or sequentially. The Clerk shall endorse such reference on the measure before duplication and shall enter such reference upon the Journal. In the case of error of reference, correction may be made by the House, with debate, immediately after the reading and approval of the Journal, by unanimous consent, or upon motion of either committee claiming jurisdiction or the committee to which the measure has been erroneously referred.

(b) The Speaker may place a resolution directly on the Resolution Calendar, rather than refer it to a committee, subject to appeal to the House.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 and to place House Bill 22-46 on the Bill Calendar was carried by a majority “aye” vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair directed the members to House Local Bills.

House Local Bills:

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

H. L. B. NO. 22-4

To appropriate up to Two Hundred Two Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety-Six US Dollars (\$202,996.00) of the Earned Bond Interest Income collected for the Second Senatorial District that has been identified by the Commonwealth Development Authority as available for appropriations; and for other purposes.

REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*)

H. L. B. NO. 22-5

To appropriate funds specifically allotted to the Second Senatorial District under Public Law 18-30, as amended; and for other purposes.

REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*)

H. L. B. NO. 22-6

To appropriate funds specifically allotted to the First Senatorial District under Public Law 18-30, as amended; and for other purposes.

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

House Legislative Initiatives: None

The Chair directed the members to item V, Introduction of Resolutions and recognized Representative Denita K. Yangetmai.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

House Resolutions:

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai officially introduced the following resolution and welcomed the members to cosponsor the resolution:

H. RES. NO. 22-4

To congratulate and honor all the women in the Commonwealth as we celebrate their contributions and achievements during the month of March 2021 proclaimed as CNMI Women’s Month and March 8th as International Women’s Day.

REP. DENITA K. YANGETMAI of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Celina R. Babauta, Vicente C. Camacho, Richard T. Lizama, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, and Leila H.F.C. Staffler)

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Yangetmai. I’m pretty sure all of us here is in support of Women’s Month and if it’s okay with the author if we can introduced this as a committee of the whole?

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai: Yes.

Several members voiced “no objection.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Yangetmai and members. If there’s no objection this would be placed on the resolution calendar for action today. Thank you.

The Chair directed the members to House Joint Resolution and recognized Representative Denita K. Yangetmai.

House Joint Resolutions:

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai made a motion to withdraw the following resolution:

H. J. R. NO. 22-1

To congratulate and honor all the women in the Commonwealth as we celebrate their contributions and achievements during the month of March 2021 proclaimed as CNMI Women’s Month and March 8th as International Women’s Day.

REP. DENITA K. YANGETMAI of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself*, Representative Christina M.E. Sablan)

Several members voiced “no objection.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you very much members. House Joint Resolution 22-1 has been withdrawn. I now recognize the Vice Speaker.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao officially introduced the following resolution and welcomed the members to cosponsor the resolution:

H. J. R. NO. 22-2

Strongly supports a delay in the proposed coral critical habitat designation process by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) until such time as the 5-year coral status review and coral recovery plan can be completed, and have the Department of Lands and Natural Resources work in coordination with NMFS in identifying appropriate coral critical habitat for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) using Best Scientific Information Available.

REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Ivan A. Blanco, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Vice Speaker. The house joint resolution will be referred to the committee on NR and due to the time period mentioned by those that commented during public comments, I urge the Chairwoman to please work on these expeditiously. Now down to House Commemorative Resolutions, I recognize Representative Patrick San Nicolas.

House Commemorative Resolutions:

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas officially introduced the following resolutions:

C. RES. NO. 22-1

To extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Honorable Michael Napu King Aldan and to honor his memory whose worthy endeavors contributed to the quality of life in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Celina R. Babauta, Sheila J. Babauta, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, John Paul P. Sablan, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

C. RES. NO. 22-2

To extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Honorable Joaquin Hoashi Borja and to honor his memory whose admirable endeavors contributed to the quality of life in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Celina R. Babauta, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative San Nicolas. I know due to these unexpected unfortunate sad events you were not able to get to all the members, so is it okay if we introduce these resolutions as a committee of the whole?

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas: I have no objection Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you very much Representative San Nicolas. I now recognize Representative Celina Babauta.

Representative Celina R. Babauta officially introduced the following resolutions:

C. RES. NO. 22-3

To honor and commend Rose Lifoifoi Igitol for her utmost dedication and commitment to the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and the Guam-CNMI Committee.

REP. CELINA R. BABAUTA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joseph A. Flores, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Commemorative resolution will be placed on calendar for action today.

Representative Celina R. Babauta: Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Again, if there’s no objection from you or the members if we can introduced this as a committee of the whole.

Representative Celina R. Babauta: I have no objections.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, members. All house commemorative resolutions on today’s agenda will be placed on resolution calendar for action.

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 Message from the Governor:

GOV. COMM. 22-21: (received 2/18/2021) **Executive Order 2021-04 – 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)

The Chair referred Governor’s Communication 22-21 to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Senate Communications:

SEN. COMM. 22-5: (2/25/2021) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 22-29, entitled, “*To authorize government agencies, boards, and commissions to promulgate regulations to utilize electronic means to participate in official meetings.*”, which was passed by the Senate on February 25, 2021. [*For action*]
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

SEN. COMM. 22-6: (3/2/2021) Transmitting a certified copy of Senate Resolution No. 22-3, entitled, “*To commemorate the distinguished and honorable life of the late Michael Napu King Aldan and to recognize his outstanding accomplishments and exemplary public service to the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.*”, which was adopted by the Senate on February 25, 2021. [*For info*]

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader made a motion to accept Senate Communications 22-5 and 22-6 so they may become property of the House.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to accept Senate Communications 22-5 and 22-6 so they may become property of the House was carried by a majority “aye” vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair referred Senate Communication 22-5 to the Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

The Chair directed the members to item IX, Communications from the Judicial Branch and recognized the Clerk.

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Clerk announced the following Communication from the Judicial Branch:

JUD. BR. COMM. 22-1: (3/2/2021) From the CNMI Judiciary re: *submission of FY 2022 Budget Request.* [*For info*]
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

The Chair referred Judicial Branch Communication 22-1 to the Committee on Ways and Means and directed the members to item X, Communications from Department and Agencies and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

The Clerk announced the following Communications from Department & Agencies:

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-5: (2/18/2021) From the Secretary of the Department of Finance submitting comments on H. B. No. 22-5, entitled, “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. Introduced by REP. CHRISTINA M.E. SABLAN + 10 others and is currently in the *House Committee on Ways and Means on February 19, 2021. [For info]*
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-6: (received 2/17/2021) From the Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT) submitting: *FY 2019—Annual Report. [For info]*
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-7: (2/26/2021) From the Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA) re: *FY 2022 Budget Submission. [For info]*
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-8: (2/26/2021) Commonwealth Casino Commission (Commission) re: *FY 2022 Budget Submission. [For info]*
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 22-9: (3/11/2021) From the Office of the Public Auditor submitting *Report on CNMI Agencies’ Implementation of Audit Recommendations as of December 31, 2020. [For info]*
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)

The Chair referred Department and Agency Communications 22-5 to 22-8 to the Committee on Ways and Means and Department and Agency Communication 22-9 to the Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Mr. Speaker?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Yes.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: May I make a comment?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognized.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Thank you. On Department Communication 22-5, the letter from the Secretary of Finance to the Speaker and the members of the House of Representatives on the bill that I introduced along with other members of the leadership to restore the earned income tax credit to qualify tax payers in the commonwealth. I would like to note for the members’ awareness if you’re not yet aware the America Rescue Plan Act did just get signed into law very recently. That act does fully and permanently fund the earned income tax credit for the CNMI and other territories the value of that earned income tax credit is estimated by finance to be approximately \$25 Million Dollars that’s based on 2019 data but,

that's the data that they have. The next step for us is to expeditiously move to repeal that section of our law – our local CNMI law that imposes a 100% tax on the earned income tax credit for working families here. So, I'd like to urge for your support colleagues to make sure that we remove that barrier for our people to receive the EITC and to make sure that these funds are delivered as quickly as possible because people really need this help and it's money that would go right back to the local economy and it would be its own kind of stimulus as well, which I think we all understand is needed at this time. So, I thank you colleagues and I look forward to taking up this measure expeditiously.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Sablan.

There was no further discussion; the Chair directed the members to item XI, Miscellaneous Communications and recognized the Clerk.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communications and was referred to committee by the Chair.

MISC. COMM. 22-7: (2/4/2021) From the 16th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council re: *open discussions on pending matters of the SNI Municipal Council inclusive with the upcoming FY 2022.* [For info]

MISC. COMM. 22-8: (received 2/9/2021) From the Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTI) Committee on Transition submitting transition report. [For info]
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION)

MISC. COMM. 22-9: (2/12/2021) From the Commonwealth Election Commission Board (CEC) appointing Ms. Kayla S. Igitol to serve as the Executive Director of the CEC. [For info]

MISC. COMM. 22-10: (2/18/2021) From the Legislative Bureau and the CNMI Youth Congress submitting: *FY 2021—First Quarter Expenditure Report.* [For info]
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

MISC. COMM. 22-11: (received 2/18/2021) Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTI) submitting: *Expenditure Plan for FY 2021.* [For info]
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION)

MISC. COMM. 22-12: (2/22/2021) From the Mayor of Saipan re: *notice of intent to celebrate 2021 Fourth of July Liberation and request guidance of implementing COVID-19 safety measures.* [For info]
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)

MISC. COMM. 22-13: (2/24/2021) From the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) re: *request for State appropriation for FY 2022.* [For info]
(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

MISC. COMM. 22-14: (received 2/25/2021) From the Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTI) Committee on Transition submitting transition report – *See also MISC. COMM. 22-8.* [For info]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION)

MISC. COMM. 22-15: (3/5/2021) From the Legislative Bureau submitting *FY 2022 Budget Proposal to the Office of Management and Budget*. [For info]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)

MISC. COMM. 22-16: (3/10/2021) Congressman Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan, Delegate U.S House of Representatives requesting the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) to *submit information on needs and costs analyses for core infrastructure from the CUC*. [For info]

(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UTILITIES, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS)

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. 22-4

To congratulate and honor all the women in the Commonwealth as we celebrate their contributions and achievements during the month of March 2021 proclaimed as CNMI Women's Month and March 8th as International Women's Day.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt House Resolution 22-4 was carried by a majority "aye" vote. There was no "nay" vote.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

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

C. RES. NO. 22-1

To extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Honorable Michael Napu King Aldan and to honor his memory whose worthy endeavors contributed to the quality of life in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt House Commemorative Resolution 22-1 was carried by a majority “aye” vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

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

C. RES. NO. 22-2

To extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Honorable Joaquin Hoashi Borja and to honor his memory whose admirable endeavors contributed to the quality of life in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The motion was seconded.

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

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

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

C. RES. NO. 22-3

To honor and commend Rose Lifofoi Igitol for her utmost dedication and commitment to the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and the Guam-CNMI Committee.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt House Commemorative Resolution 22-3 was carried by a majority “aye” vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you members. I would like to call for a short two-minute recess.

The House recessed at 11:36 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 12:05 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Alright members we'll rise back to session.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Privilege Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Before we head to the Bill Calendar. Can we be informed why we're not touching House Resolution 22-3 on the Resolution Calendar.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because the House Rule is the House Rule right now so why are we going to touch it.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Should we make a motion to refer this back to the Ad Hoc?

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: No. In all honesty there is some amendments to be made so we are still fixing the rules and I believe there are other amendments that we are planning to put when we amend the rules that's why we're not discussing the rules today.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you. So clarified.

No action taken for the following legislation:

H. RES. NO. 22-3

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

The Chair directed the members to item XVI, Bill Calendar and recognized the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR

The Floor Leader made a motion to withdraw House Bill 22-19 from committee and place on the Bill Calendar.

RULE II. TERMS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

Section 4. Floor Leader.

(c) To have the sole authority to recall any bill, report, resolution and/or other legislative document from committee. This authority to recall shall not be subject to appeal to the House.

(d) To have the sole authority to pass on the calendar and/or agenda on any item. This authority to pass on the calendar and/or agenda shall not be subject to appeal to the House.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: A motion has been made to withdraw House Bill 22-19 from committee to place it on calendar the EITC bill authored by Representative Christina Sablan and has been seconded. Discussion? Members, ready?

Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero: Privilege Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Leepan Guerrero.

Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero: I want too to move my bill to calendar. I mean all bills that have been introduced are vitally important. I don't understand why only House Bill 22-19, we're going to act on today. In due fairness to everyone, we should allow others to place their bill on calendar.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Guerrero. Just for the clarification it's just for placement on calendar. If the author would like to explain the urgency of this bill?

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you colleagues. This is a motion that the Floor Leader has made to place the bill on calendar so that we may act expeditiously, but we're not going to act on it today. That's not what the leadership is proposing at this time, but what has just happened as I stated earlier on my comments on the Secretary of Finance's letter regarding this bill is that the American Rescue Plan Act has made available to the Commonwealth as soon as it was enacted into law by President Biden's signature close to half – over half a billion dollars actually and of that \$25 Million is available for the Earned Income Tax Credit to fully and permanently fund the EITC here in the Marianas and for us to make these funds available to our people to qualified, struggling, working tax payers and families; we have to repeal a section of the law that slaps a 100% tax on the EITC. Otherwise, those funds will not get to the people that need it. Now that the funding is available, the money should be transferred to the CNMI government in very short order and people need this money. So, there will be time for all of you to review the American Rescue Plan Act particularly as it pertains to the EITC. It's very straight forward. It's a hundred percent permanent funding for the EITC, but we have to do our part as a commonwealth and restore the EITC in our own law before these funds can be available to our people. So that is the urgency. I would also note for our colleagues information that the American Rescue Plan Act is a massive bill. At one point \$9 Trillion Dollars stimulus package for the American people including the Marianas and all the territories and they recognize the urgency of also responding to the health and social economic impacts of this COVID-19 pandemic. EITC is part of that we also have to act expeditiously. Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions between now and when we do act on this bill.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Tina Sablan. Further discussion? Representative Ivan Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Rep. Sablan you did mention earlier that the recovery act that was signed into law will fund the EITC a hundred percent and that's a good thing, but I have not seen the documentation of such and I would think that we would need that in light of what Department of Finance I guess wrote to the Speaker that there's concerns regarding the – I don't know if it's the original bill or the current bill and that they had offered a substitute bill. If I may Mr. Speaker, I can read it.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Proceed.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Okay. What the Department of Finance has offered is that the tax imposed on the subsection (a) shall not apply to any overpayment arising from a tax credit that is accounted for by any authorized funding source. So, I have not seen the black and white from the law. I think it would be fair if you can share that it would be a hundred percent funded

that we do not end up voting “yes” on it and then “whoops, we were not aware of this particular tax requirement.” Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Rep. Blanco. Recognize Rep. Tina Sablan.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Leader Blanco for raising that question. The Secretary of Finance’s comments were submitted when the American Rescue Plan Act was still in reconciliation and at the time what was in the language was a 75% coverage, but that changed. It went through the Senate and then it became a hundred percent permanent funding. And thanks to our Congressman Kilili for also for all of his efforts in making that happen. So the act was just signed into law last week by President Biden and so I would be more than happy to share with you the excerpt of the act that makes it very clear that this is a hundred percent and it’s permanent EITC for the territories. I will share that with you. I just got it myself a few days ago. We knew that this is in the works, but now it’s in the law and we do have to act quickly. So yes I will get that to you. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Rep. Sablan. Any further discussion? Recognize Representative John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Speaker and to the author. I believe we all are in agreeance we should reinstate the EIC and I know that a lot of these documents from the feds have not yet come to our indulgence for review, but I don’t see why we don’t have confidence on the committee on Ways and Means to review this. Probably the next few days and give us a comprehensive report on the urgency and the need to reenact such public law. I’m sure our good colleague – can we hear from our good colleague, Chairman of Ways and Means. Are you in position of acquiring information for such a proposed legislation?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Manglona.

Representative Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Based on the information that Rep. Sablan has shared it is the understanding of the committee that we do have the necessary information to act on this legislation. Again, time is of the essence and we’re just trying to get the monies out to the people in need. So, Rep. Sablan has shared that she will disseminate that information to the rest of you who may have not seen that yet and so she does have those documents ready for your review. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Rep. Manglona. Rep. John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can avail to that document as soon as possible. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Sablan. Representative Tina, please get those documents for them.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Yes, I will provide that to the members today.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you very much. Any further discussion?

Several members voiced “ready.”

There was no further discussion and the motion to withdraw House Bill 22-19 from committee and to place on the Bill Calendar was carried by a majority “aye” vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, members. We now proceed down to number–

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Privilege Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since this body is in the spirit of withdrawing bills from committees and putting them on calendar then I would also reiterate a request that I’ve made to you Mr. Speaker. As you know this body on February 26, the economic counsel presented to the House and one of the recommendations was the transformation of CDA to CEDA. Prior to that presentation, I already introduced House Bill 22-21. On the same day of the presentation Mr. Speaker, you are appointed to the economic counsel and since then the economic counsel has followed up with my office on the status of House Bill 22-21, which has been referred to the Committee on Commerce and Tourism. Today, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce just 30 minutes ago just transmitted a letter of support to my office, unaware that the bill was referred to Commerce and Tourism, but I will share this letter from the chamber to the Chairwoman and to you Mr. Speaker and the members in support of the bill highlighting that it is truly a generating revenue bill and that providing the new tools and authority to what would become CEDA would realize new and diversified investment in the CNMI. CDA, the entity that will be impacted through the transformation also support this bill. In my discussion with you Mr. Speaker on March 3rd, you got back to me a few days later that you had spoken to the Chair that there would be movement on this bill. Unfortunately, we haven’t had time to do that. Yesterday, I want to thank the Floor Leader who yesterday again made a request to the leadership to move 22-21 to the calendar for action. Given that the bill is rather short and very straightforward, but impactful in terms of revenue generation and so as much as we support allowing the committee to do it’s work for the bills referred to it but we have opened the door today to withdrawing bills that are critical and time is of the essence and in that regard and that spirit, I’m also asking the Floor Leader at this time to withdraw 22-21 and placement for bill calendar. Thank you very much.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Demapan. If there’s no objection from the members I’d like to give the chairwoman the floor to give us an update on the bill. Representative Yangetmai.

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We’ve been trying to get the comments – send out the letter for comments from different agencies and we’re also doing research on this thing. May I ask you, what is the difference between CDA and CEDA besides the letter E.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The difference is as written in the bill the addition of five new subsections of authority and tools to empower CDA to now have a renewed focus or greater focus on economic diversification through the flexibility of attracting US investments to the commonwealth and to help diversify our economy and strengthen the creation of jobs here in the CNMI. At present without the five additional tools, they're operating on status quo and as you can see the status quo is not attracting. There is no focus on attracting the investments here and so that is the difference is five new tools and authority to expand their role in making sure our economy grows and our people have new jobs. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Rep. Demapan and I recognize the Chairwoman.

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai: Thank you. We will be sending out the comments letters and then we will get back to you. And thank you for the one you got now. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Chairwoman. Representative Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you Madame Chair and I am awaiting the Floor Leader's response to my request. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Can I call for a quick recess? Thank you.

The House recessed at 12:20 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 12:41 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: We're back from recess and I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we came to a compromise and I will invoke my Rule II, Section 4 (c) and (d) and that is to withdraw House Bill 22-21 and place it on today's calendar. So move.

RULE II. TERMS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

Section 4. Floor Leader.

(c) To have the sole authority to recall any bill, report, resolution and/or other legislative document from committee. This authority to recall shall not be subject to appeal to the House.

(d) To have the sole authority to pass on the calendar and/or agenda on any item. This authority to pass on the calendar and/or agenda shall not be subject to appeal to the House.

The motion was seconded.

Under discussion, the Chair recognized Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Floor Leader for making the motion. I would like to just make sure that for the record that the members will be able to avail of the supporting documents that Representative Demapan mentioned he had. My understanding too is that Chairwoman Yangetmai is having a Commerce and Tourism meeting this Thursday and that bill may be up for discussion as well and to receive comments. So, I do look forward to learning more about the merits of the bill and possibly taking it up for action next Friday. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Tina Sablan. Any more discussion?

Several members voiced “ready.”

There was no further discussion and the motion to withdraw House Bill 22-21 from committee and to place on the Bill Calendar was carried by a majority “aye” vote. There was no “nay” vote.

No action taken for the following legislations:

H. B. NO. 22-46

To repeal and re-enact 4 CMC 1402 (g) to allocate 10 percent of the excise tax to the Solid Waste Management Revolving Fund.

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.

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.

The Chair directed the members to item XVII, Miscellaneous Business and recognized Representative Ivan A. Blanco.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that I ever request for a recall of a House Resolution 22-2 as some are requesting additional language to it. So, I’m not sure if I’m the one to make the motion or the Floor Leader to make a motion for recall.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Short recess.

The House recessed at 12:43 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 12:44 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: We’re back into session.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I yield.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Ivan. Any other member under miscellaneous? Alright. Move down to announcement, item XVIII.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: I will be calling a session for 2:00 this Friday. That's the announcement.

Representative Celina R. Babauta: Privilege Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Babauta.

Representative Celina R. Babauta: Does that mean we're going to go on recess today or adjournment?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: No we will be adjourning. I just want to make a correction there. The request of the Clerk if we can move it to 2:30 on Friday. Alright, under announcement, any other member? Alright, I now move down to adjournment. I recognize the Floor for the proper motion.

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that smooth session today, I offer a motion to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair.

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

The House adjourned at 12:45 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 February 19, 2021:

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. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

H. B. NO. 22-9: To regulate trust and fiduciaries; and for other purposes. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Commerce and Tourism.

H. B. NO. 22-10: To prohibit the use of certain disposable food service containers. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

H. B. NO. 22-14: To establish the Department of Corrections Residential Mental Health Unit; and for other purposes. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, and Representative Angel A. Demapan) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, and Representative Angel A. Demapan) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEEPAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, and Representative Angel A. Demapan) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced 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) on February 19, 2021; House 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Celina R. Babauta, Ivan A. Blanco, 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by REP. ANGEL A. DEMAPAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Ivan A. Blanco, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero, and John Paul P. Sablan) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Commerce 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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House 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. Introduced by REP. RICHARD T. LIZAMA of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*, Representatives Celina R. Babauta, and Leila H.F.C. Staffler) on February 19, 2021; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Health and Welfare.

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. Introduced by REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*) on February 19, 2021.

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. Introduced by REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*) on February 19, 2021.

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. Introduced by 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) on February 19, 2021.

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. Introduced by REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada; Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Celina R. Babauta, Sheila J. Babauta, Joel C. Camacho, 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, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Leila H.F.C. Staffler, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita K. Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul) on February 19, 2021 and placed on the Resolution Calendar, there was no objections raised on the floor.

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. Introduced by REP. RALPH N. YUMUL of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Sheila J. Babauta, and Christina M.E. Sablan) on February 19, 2021 and placed on the Resolution Calendar, there was no objections on the floor. [Adopted 02/19/2021 and transmitted]