

**NINETEENTH COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS YOUTH CONGRESS**

3RD REGULAR Session, 2023

Y.C.B. No. 19- 01

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To require all public schools within the CNMI: elementary, middle and high schools to teach at least one full year of the Chamorro and/or Carolinian languages; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE NINETEENTH COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS YOUTH CONGRESS:**

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act shall be known as “The CNMI Indigenous
2 Language Preservation Act of 2023.”

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Youth Congress recognizes that
4 there is a limited number of residents in the CNMI who fluently speak
5 Chamorro/Carolinian and use either of these languages as an ordinary form of
6 communication. Saving these indigenous languages is crucial to ensure the
7 protection of the cultural dignity of our indigenous people, and safeguard our
8 traditional heritage. According to the CNMI 2020 census, only 29.3% of the entire
9 population claimed they could speak Chamorro and only 5.7% claimed they could
10 speak Carolinian.

11 The CNMI’s statistics point out the lack of cultural enrichment and
12 language comprehension within our islands. A short survey among high school

1 students in Tinian finds that just 18% of youth speak Chamorro or Carolinian at
2 home or among friends and family.

3 **Section 3. Enactment.** Subject to codification by the CNMI Law Revision
4 Commission, the following provision shall hereby be enacted:

5 “§101. Chamorro & Carolinian Language Requirements

6 (a) One full year of Chamorro or Carolinian will be required for high school
7 students to graduate, and middle school students to be promoted. The
8 Public School System (PSS) shall offer at least 2 years of Chamorro or
9 Carolinian language classes for those students who wish to continue
10 instruction after the first year.

11 (b) PSS shall be required to hire individuals who are qualified to be teaching
12 either language at the level in which they are assigned. This qualification
13 should be set in a manner to immediately implement Chamorro and
14 Carolinian languages in schools. PSS should not set instructor requirements
15 in such a way that no classes can be offered in the 2024-25 school year. PSS
16 shall set such instructor or teacher qualifications in such a way that classes
17 can begin immediately. Chamorro and Carolinian teachers or instructors
18 shall not be required to pass the Praxis exams or other similarly required
19 exams for standard teachers.

20 (c) Chamorro and Carolinian classes shall be counted as the foreign language
21 credit that is required as a prerequisite for high school students. PSS shall

1 implement Chamorro and Carolinian language classes within their
2 curriculum by School Year 2024-25.”

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


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

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

Prefiled: 8/9/23

Date: 8/19/23

Introduced by:



Senator Ayden Sean C. Yumul

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:



Legal Counsel