

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

**7TH REGULAR** Session, 2024

Y.C.B. No. 19- **04**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

To repeal and re-enact the CNMI Youth Congress  
Act; 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 Youth  
2 Congress Reform Act of 2024.”

3           **Section 2. Finding and Purpose.** The Youth Congress finds that Public  
4 Law 17-22 “CNMI Youth Congress Reform Act of 2010”, repealed and re-enacted  
5 the amended Public Law 8-27, which established the CNMI Youth Congress under  
6 the administrative supervision of the Legislative Bureau of the Northern Mariana  
7 Commonwealth Legislature to provide a system which allows the youth to prepare  
8 to meet the challenges of the future and to make recommendations to the policy  
9 makers on youth programs. The Youth Congress finds that it is necessary to repeal  
10 Public Law 17-22, which is codified at 1 CMC § 1601 *et seq.*, in order to maximize  
11 efficiency regarding the representation and participation from the youth.

12           **Section 3. Repealer and Re-enactment.** Title 1, Division 1, Chapter 6 of  
13 the Commonwealth Code is hereby repealed and re-enacted to read as follows:

1    **“Chapter 6. Northern Marianas Youth Congress.**

2           **§ 1601. Definitions.** As used in this chapter, the following terms shall,  
3 unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, have the following meanings.

4           (a) “Director” means the director of the Legislative Bureau.

5           (b) “Bureau” means the Legislative Bureau of the Northern Mariana Islands  
6 Commonwealth Legislature.

7           (c) “CNMI” means the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

8           (d) “Meetings” means all meetings and sessions of the Youth Congress.

9           (e) “Youth” means a person between the ages of 14 and 18.

10          (f) “Senator” means a member of the Youth Congress

11          (g) “Youth Congress” means the Northern Mariana Islands Youth  
12 Congress.

13          (h) “Enrolled student” means any person who is enrolled in his/her  
14 respective school as a full-time student.

15           **§ 1602. Establishment.** There is hereby established a Commonwealth of  
16 the Northern Mariana Islands Youth Congress under the administrative supervision  
17 of the Legislative Bureau of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

18           **§ 1603. Functions.** The Youth Congress shall act as a legislative body with  
19 power to make its own rules, establish committees, hold hearings, pass resolutions,  
20 and prepare and pass bills, which will be forwarded to the Governor and the  
21 presiding officers of the legislature for disposition. The Youth Congress represents

1 the youth of the Commonwealth, their desires and aspirations, and shall serve as  
2 training for the Commonwealth's future leaders. The Youth Congress shall hold a  
3 youth conference within the Commonwealth at least once a year to report and  
4 discuss essential matters pertaining to the youth of the Commonwealth.

5       **§ 1604. Composition.** The Youth Congress shall be composed of members  
6 to be recognized as senators, to be elected from private and public schools as  
7 follows:

8           (a) Each private and public high school, with a student population of 20, is  
9 mandated to have one senator.

10          (b) There shall be a minimum of one (1) senator from each private and  
11 public high school.

12       **§ 1605. Eligibility of Senators and Voters.**

13           (a) A United States citizen residing in the CNMI between the age of  
14 fourteen (14) and eighteen (18) shall be eligible to vote for a candidate for senator  
15 provided that which person is duly registered to vote in his/her respective school  
16 and has not been convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude unless  
17 he/she has received pardon restoring his/her civil rights.

18           (b) A candidate for senator of the Youth Congress must be between the age  
19 of fourteen (14) and seventeen (17), freshman, sophomore, or junior of his/her  
20 respective school, a United States citizen, registered to vote in that respective

1 school, and has not been convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude  
2 unless he/she has received pardon restoring his/her civil rights.

3 (c) All voters must be an enrolled student in their respective school in which  
4 they are registering to vote.

5 **§ 1606. Elections.** The general election for the Youth Congress shall be  
6 held on the first Tuesday in March, and every two (2) years thereafter.

7 (a) The elections for senators shall be conducted by the principals of the  
8 schools the eligible senators and voters attend, and at which the voters are officially  
9 enrolled. Each voter shall be entitled to vote for the number of candidates  
10 authorized for his/her school election provided in Section 7 of this Act. A voter  
11 shall only vote once.

12 (b) It shall be the responsibility of the school principal or the Legislative  
13 Bureau as appropriate to provide forms for petitions, ballots and tally sheets, the  
14 necessary ballot boxes and personnel to supervise the election, count and tally the  
15 ballots. The Legislative Bureau and the school shall cooperate and make available  
16 to the greatest extent practicable, the resources of the Legislative Bureau to support  
17 the tasks and activities of the youth congress elections at no cost.

18 (c) Results of the election shall be verified by the respective school  
19 principals, then forwarded to the Floor Leader of the House of Representatives, for  
20 certification within three days after the election. The certified results shall be

1 forwarded to the Governor, Commissioner of Education, the respective school  
2 principals, and the presiding officers of the legislature.

3 (d) Any disputes resulting from the election shall be resolved by the  
4 chairman of the House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental  
5 Operations or its successor.

6 § 1607. **Petitions.** Candidates for elections shall be nonpartisan and all  
7 candidates must obtain at least 20 signatures by petition in their schools from  
8 individuals qualified to vote under Section 8 of this Act.

9 § 1608. **Term.** The term of each member shall be two (2) years.

10 (a) Any member who graduates from high school during their term, may  
11 continue to serve the balance of his or her term as long as they are within the  
12 Commonwealth. Any member who drops out of high school shall automatically  
13 forfeit the balance of his/her term.

14 (b) Any member who is outside of the Commonwealth for a total of 90 days  
15 shall forfeit the balance of his/her term.

16 (c) Any member who transfers school from which they are registered to  
17 vote and represent shall forfeit the balance of his/her term and their vacancy must  
18 be announced by the speaker of the Youth Congress in consultation with the  
19 member's former principal.

20 § 1609. **Vacancies.** Each vacancy shall be filled by the candidate who  
21 received the next highest vote in that school, except that no person filling a vacancy

1 shall hold office longer than the remainder of the term for which his/her predecessor  
2 was elected. If there is no candidate to fill a vacancy, the principal of the respective  
3 school in consultation with school counselors where the vacancy exists, shall  
4 appoint an individual qualified to be a senator under Section 8 to fill the remaining  
5 term of his/her predecessor.

6           **§ 1610. Sessions.** Regular sessions of the Youth Congress shall be held  
7 every two (2) months on the third Saturday of the month, exclusive of holidays, for  
8 one day, commencing the third Saturday in April. Additional session days, but not  
9 more than three days, are permitted each year.

10           (a) For the first organizational meeting until a speaker is elected, the  
11 Speaker of the House of Representatives shall preside over the session. In the  
12 absence of the Speaker, the President of the Senate shall preside.

13           (b) Sessions shall be held in the legislative chamber of the House of  
14 Representatives or Senate of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature;  
15 provided that sessions may also be held on Tinian and Rota.

16           (c) The meetings of the Youth Congress and its committees shall be open  
17 to the public and notice of such meetings shall be given three (3) days prior to the  
18 date scheduled.

19           (d) Sessions and meetings of the Youth Congress may be postponed for  
20 good cause.

1       **§ 1611. Organization and Qualification of Members.** The Youth Congress  
2 shall be the judge of the qualification of its members. The members shall elect  
3 officers, consisting of speaker, vice speaker, floor leader, and legislative secretary.  
4 The members shall establish standing and special committees essential to carry out  
5 its functions as set forth in § 1603. The Youth Congress shall adopt rules and  
6 procedures not inconsistent with this act or the rules of the House of  
7 Representatives of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

8       **§ 1612. Quorum.** The quorum of the Youth Congress shall equal one-half  
9 of its members plus one. No bill or resolution shall be considered passed unless, a  
10 quorum being present, a majority of the members present and voting so indicated  
11 by affirmative vote.

12       **§ 1613. Operations.** The Bureau may provide staff services to the Youth  
13 Congress. The Youth Congress is authorized to employ on a full-time or part-time  
14 basis staff consisting of a secretary and other essential personnel subject to the  
15 availability of funds. The Youth Congress shall first consider utilizing the staff of  
16 the Legislative Bureau before hiring necessary personnel.

17       **§ 1614. Expenditure Authority.** The Director of the Legislative Bureau  
18 shall be the expenditure authority of the funds appropriated to the Youth Congress  
19 in consultation with the Speaker of the Youth Congress.

20       **§ 1615. Stipend.** Members of the Youth Congress shall be compensated  
21 with a stipend at the rate of thirty (\$30) dollars for each regular session meeting

1 they attend. Members from Rota and Tinian shall be provided air transportation,  
2 subsistence allowance, and other related travel expenses at the established  
3 Commonwealth Government rates.

4           **§ 1616. Appointment as non-Voting Honorary Members of Boards and**  
5 **Commissions.** The Speaker of the Youth Congress to serve as non-voting honorary  
6 members of each Commonwealth board and commission except those boards and  
7 commissions whose membership is provided for in the Commonwealth  
8 Constitution. Membership on a board or commission shall expire when the  
9 members Youth Congress term expires. Participation by these members shall be  
10 limited to those meetings on which the general public has access pursuant to Public  
11 Law 8-41. Participation by Youth Congress members shall be limited to meetings  
12 held on the islands of the Commonwealth in which the members reside. Youth  
13 Congress members serving in an honorary position are not authorized to travel in  
14 connection with their service on boards and commissions. Youth Congress  
15 members serving in an honorary position shall not receive compensation in any  
16 form for attendance at meetings of the board nor any other compensation such as  
17 subsistence or out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the discharge of their  
18 responsibilities.”

19           **Section 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of  
20 any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court  
21 of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its



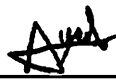
1 provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid  
2 shall not be affected thereby.

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

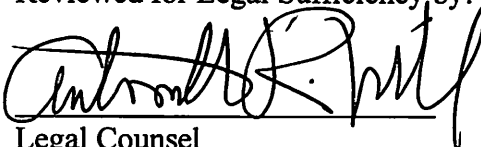
10 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by  
11 the Governor or becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 3/11/2024

Date: 4/12/2024

Introduced by:   
Senator Ayden Sean C. Yumul

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

  
Legal Counsel