

TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

P.O. BOX 500586  
SAIPAN, MP 96950  
cnmileg.net

December 18, 2024

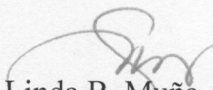
HOUSE  
FILE

The Honorable Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero  
President  
The Senate  
Twenty-Third Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Capitol Hill  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Senate President DeLeon Guerrero:

I have the honor of transmitting herewith for Senate *action* **H. B. No. 23-55, HD1**, entitled: **“To advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI.”**, which was passed by the House of Representatives on First and Final Reading, with the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members voting, a quorum being present, during its Sixth Day, Fourth Regular Session on December 18, 2024.

Sincerely yours,

  
Linda B. Muña, MPA  
House Clerk

Attachment

*Transmittal to the SENATE*

Received by: 

Date: 12/18/24

Time: 3:44 pm

**TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH**

**LEGISLATURE**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**JUNE 20, 2023**

**Third Special Session, 2023**

**H. B. 23-55, HD1**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

To advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 23<sup>RD</sup> NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1           **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Chamorro and  
2 Carolinian Language Education Act of 2023.”

3           **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that Article 15,  
4 Section 1(a) of the CNMI Constitution makes it clear that the educational system  
5 shall recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage and indigenous way of life  
6 of the people and shall be committed to provide for the language needs of the people  
7 and the preservation of their cultural integrity within a global community.

8           On August 17, 2024, the Nineteenth CNMI Youth Congress adopted Youth  
9 Congress Bill No. 19-01, YCD 1, “To require all public schools within the CNMI:  
10 elementary, middle and high schools to teach at least one full year of the Chamorro  
11 and/or Carolinian languages.” In their findings, the Youth Congress acknowledged  
12 that there is a limited number of residents in the CNMI who fluently speak



1 Chamorro and/or Carolinian. Further, the Youth Congress found that “[s]aving  
2 these indigenous languages is crucial to ensure the protection of the cultural dignity  
3 of our indigenous people, and safeguard our traditional heritage.”

4 The Legislature further recognizes that despite the CNMI Public School  
5 System’s (PSS) constitutional mandate to support Chamorro and Carolinian  
6 bilingual programs, resources allocated to bilingual teacher compensation,  
7 instructional contact hours, and instructional materials remains inequitable. Some  
8 bilingual teachers make as little as \$19,000 per year and are treated as teaching  
9 assistants despite performing the work of a fulltime teacher, like planning lessons,  
10 developing curriculum, and leading classrooms. Therefore, it is the purpose of this  
11 Act to address issues relating to the CNMI Public School System’s Chamorro &  
12 Carolinian language requirements; school personnel; and salary parity for people  
13 who hold Chamorro and/or Carolinian bilingual language and culture certificates.

14 **Section 3. Enactment.** Subject to codification by the CNMI Law Revision  
15 Commission, the following provisions are hereby enacted:

16 **“§ 101. Chamorro & Carolinian Language Requirements.**

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

1 (b) PSS shall hire individuals who are qualified to teach either  
2 language at the level in which they are assigned. In addition to other PSS  
3 teacher qualification requirements, in order to be qualified to teach a  
4 Chamorro or Carolinian language class at PSS, the individual must hold a  
5 Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate as provided  
6 in § 102.

7 (c) Chamorro and Carolinian language classes shall be counted as a  
8 foreign language credit that is required as a prerequisite for graduation from  
9 high school. PSS shall implement Chamorro and Carolinian language  
10 classes within their curriculum by School Year 2025-26.”

11 **§ 102. Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture**  
12 **Certificates.**

13 (a) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Northern  
14 Marianas College, shall develop a 16-week academic program specifically  
15 designed for Chamorro and/or Carolinian bilingual language and culture  
16 teachers to introduce the fundamental theories and practices of teaching and  
17 learning, educational psychology, inclusive practices for students with  
18 learning needs, instructional strategies and classroom management, along  
19 with a comprehensive examination of the rationale and methods for  
20 curriculum planning, including integrating curriculum content through the  
21 use of thematic approaches.



1           (b) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the  
2 Chamorro-Carolinian Language Policy Commission, shall develop  
3 proficiency tests designed to assess the fluency of an individual's Chamorro  
4 and/or Carolinian language skills and their knowledge of cultural and  
5 traditional practices.

6           (c) Upon successful completion of the program described in  
7 subsection (a) along with passing the Chamorro and/or Carolinian  
8 proficiency tests described in subsection (b), the State Board of Education  
9 shall issue the successful individual a Chamorro and/or Carolinian  
10 Language and Culture Certificate. Holding a Chamorro and/or Carolinian  
11 Language and Culture Certificate indicates that the person is proficient in  
12 the Chamorro and/or Carolinian language and culture and has met the  
13 requirements stated in § 101(b) to teach Chamorro and/or Carolinian  
14 language classes at PSS. A baccalaureate degree is not required for a person  
15 to be issued a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture  
16 Certificate.

1                   **§ 103. Annual Salary for Chamorro & Carolinian Teachers.**

2                   Any person who receives a Chamorro and/or Carolinian language and  
3                   culture certificate in accordance with § 101 shall receive a minimum annual  
4                   salary equivalent to Pay Level VI, Step 03 in accordance with NMIAC § 60-  
5                   30.2-215 (Alignment with PSS Classification and Salary Schedule).”

6                   **Section 4. Regulations.** The Board of Education is hereby authorized to  
7                   promulgate rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the intent and purpose of  
8                   this Act, including, but not limited to, rules and regulations related to the  
9                   administration of the proficiency tests; establishment of passing scores; retake  
10                  policies; certification renewal requirements, if any; and standards for recognizing  
11                  equivalent qualifications or experience.

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

17                  **Section 6. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall  
18                  not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired  
19                  under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the  
20                  statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted  
21                  under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect



HOUSE BILL 23-55, HD1

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1 of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall  
2 already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

3           **Section 7. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by  
4 the Governor, or it becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 6/15/2023

Date: 6/15/2023

Introduced by: /s/ Rep. Manny G.T. Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ John M. Bradley  
House Legal Counsel

HB 23-55, HD1, was reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

/s/ Joseph M. Hallahan            Date: 10/24/2024  
House Legal Counsel



TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
P.O. BOX 500586 SAIPAN, MP 96950

**MANNY GREGORY T. CASTRO**  
CHAIRMAN

*Adopted - 12/18/2024*

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 23-94

DATE: October 24, 2024

RE: House Bill No. 23-55

The Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Twenty-Third Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Capitol Hill  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Education to which was referred:

**House Bill No. 23-55:** “To advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI.”

begs leave to report as follows:

**I. RECOMMENDATION:**

After considerable discussion, your Committee recommends that House Bill No. 23-55 be passed by the House in the form of House Draft 1 (HD1).

HOUSE CLERK'S OFFICE  
RECEIVED BY *[Signature]*  
DATE *11/20/2024* TIME *7:11P*



## II. ANALYSIS:

### A. Purpose:

The purpose of this bill is to address issues relating to the CNMI Public School System's Chamorro & Carolinian language requirements; school personnel; and salary parity for people who hold Chamorro and/or Carolinian bilingual language and culture certificates.

### B. Committee Amendments:

As reflected in the "House Standing Committee on Education Floor Amendment to HB 23-55," the Committee agreed to the following amendments:

1. Page 2, Line 1: Added additional language to the "Findings and Purpose" section to read as follows:

"On August 17, 2024, the Nineteenth CNMI Youth Congress adopted Youth Congress Bill No. 19-01, YCD 1, "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." In their findings, the Youth Congress acknowledged that there is a limited number of residents in the CNMI who fluently speak Chamorro and/or Carolinian. Further, the Youth Congress found that "[s]aving these indigenous languages is crucial to ensure the protection of the cultural dignity of our indigenous people, and safeguard our traditional heritage."

2. Page 2, Line 15: Revised language in the "Findings and Purpose" section to read as follows:

"Therefore, it is the purpose of this Act to address issues relating to the CNMI Public School System's Chamorro & Carolinian language requirements; school personnel; and requiring salary parity for people who hold Chamorro and/or Carolinian bilingual language and culture certificates."

3. Page 3, Line 1: Added a new Subsection 101 to read as follows and renumbered all subsequent subsections accordingly.

#### **"§ 101. Chamorro & Carolinian Language Requirements.**

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

(b) PSS shall hire individuals who are qualified to teach either language at the level in which they are assigned. In addition to other PSS teacher qualification requirements, in order to be qualified to teach a Chamorro or Carolinian language class at PSS, the

individual must hold a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate as provided in § 102.

(c) Chamorro and Carolinian language classes shall be counted as a foreign language credit that is required as a prerequisite for graduation from high school. PSS shall implement Chamorro and Carolinian language classes within their curriculum by School Year 2025-26.”

4. Page 4, Line 6: The last sentence of the paragraph was deleted in its entirety.

“A baccalaureate degree is not required for the person applying for this certificate.”

5. Page 4, Line 8: A new § 102 (b) was inserted to read as follows:

“(b) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Chamorro-Carolinian Language Policy Commission, shall develop proficiency tests designed to assess the fluency of an individual’s Chamorro and/or Carolinian language skills and their knowledge of cultural and traditional practices.”

6. Page 4, Line 13: A new § 102 (c) was added to read as follows:

“(c) Upon successful completion of such the program described in subsection (a) along with passing the Chamorro and/or Carolinian language proficiency tests described in subsection (b), the State Board of Education shall issue the successful individual a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate. language and culture certificate to a Holding a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate indicates that the person is proficient in the Chamorro and/or Carolinian language and culture and has met the requirements stated in § 101(b) to teach Chamorro and/or Carolinian language classes at PSS. A baccalaureate degree is not required for a person to be issued a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate.”

7. Page 5, Line 9: A new Section 4 was inserted to read as follows:

“Section 4. Regulations. The Board of Education is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the intent and purpose of this Act, including, but not limited to, rules and regulations related to the administration of the proficiency tests; establishment of passing scores; retake policies; certification renewal requirements, if any; and standards for recognizing equivalent qualifications or experience.”

In addition, the Committee made other non-substantive technical amendments, such as capitalizing terms in the title of § 102.



C. Committee Findings:

Your Committee finds that Article 15, Section 1(a) of the CNMI Constitution states that the educational system in the CNMI “shall recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage and indigenous way of life of the people and shall be committed to provide for the language needs of the people and the preservation of their cultural integrity within a global community.” Your Committee acknowledges that, despite the constitutional mandate of the CNMI Public School System (PSS) to support Chamorro and Carolinian language classes, progress in providing such classes at PSS has been slow. This bill seeks to accelerate efforts and advance the implementation of Chamorro and Carolinian language classes at PSS by requiring high school students pass one full year of Chamorro or Carolinian language classes to graduate and by establishing a framework to identify and train Chamorro and/or Carolinian language instructors.

Your Committee finds that on August 17, 2024, the Nineteenth CNMI Youth Congress adopted Youth Congress Bill No. 19-01, YCD 1, “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.” In their findings, the Youth Congress acknowledged that there is a limited number of residents in the CNMI who fluently speak Chamorro and/or Carolinian. Further, the Youth Congress found that “[s]aving these indigenous languages is crucial to ensure the protection of the cultural dignity of our indigenous people, and safeguard our traditional heritage.” In order to resolve the concerns of the CNMI Youth, your Committee has elected to incorporate portions of Youth Congress Bill No. 19-01, YCD1, into the original bill.

As such, your Committee finds that this bill will require PSS to hire individuals who are qualified to teach Chamorro and/or Carolinian language at the level in which they are assigned. In addition to other PSS teacher qualification requirements, in order to be qualified to teach a Chamorro and/or Carolinian language class at PSS, the individual must hold a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate.

Under the bill, the Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate will be awarded to individuals that have successfully completed approved teacher training programs and that have passed the required Chamorro and/or Carolinian language and culture proficiency tests.

The teacher training program, which will be developed by the State Board of Education in collaboration with the Northern Marianas College, is a 16-week course designed for Chamorro and Carolinian language and culture teachers. It focuses on fundamental teaching theories, educational psychology, strategies for students with learning needs, instructional methods, classroom management, and curriculum planning.

The Chamorro and/or Carolinian proficiency tests, which will be developed by the State Board of Education in collaboration with the Chamorro-Carolinian Language Policy Commission, will assess the fluency of an individual’s Chamorro and/or Carolinian language skills and their knowledge of cultural and traditional practices.

Upon successful completion of the teacher training program along with passing the Chamorro and/or Carolinian proficiency tests, the State Board of Education will issue the successful individual a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate. Holding a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate indicates that the person is proficient in Chamorro and/or Carolinian language and culture and has met the requirement stated in section 101(b) of the bill. The bill also indicates that any teacher who receives a Chamorro and/or Carolinian Language and Culture Certificate shall receive a minimum annual salary equivalent to Pay Level VI, Step 03, in accordance with NMIAC § 60-30.2-215 (Alignment with PSS Classification and Salary Schedule).

Last, your Committee finds that this bill will require high school students pass one full year of Chamorro or Carolinian language classes to graduate and that middle school students pass one full year of Chamorro or Carolinian language classes to be promoted. It also requires that PSS offer at least 2 years of Chamorro and Carolinian language classes for those students who wish to continue instruction after the first year. Additionally, the bill states that Chamorro and Carolinian language classes shall be counted as a foreign language credit that is required as a prerequisite for graduation from high school. PSS is required to implement Chamorro and Carolinian language classes within their curriculum by School Year 2025-26.

Based on the foregoing, your Committee agrees with the intent and purpose of House Bill No. 23-55 and recommends that the House pass the legislation in the form of House Draft 1.

#### C. Public Comments/Public Hearing:

The Committee received written comments from the following:

- Agatha Ketebengang, Acting Executive Director, Carolinian Affairs Office

“In the context of House Bill 23-55, which aims to advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI, the use of “and” instead of “and/or” emphasizes the importance of both languages equally. This change reflects a commitment to the preservation and promotion of both the Chamorro and Carolinian languages as integral parts of the cultural heritage of the Northern Mariana Islands. . . . Please amend the language in the legislation as it can significantly affect the interpretation and implementation of the law.”

- Merissa S. Rasa, Administrator, SHEFA

“We commend the commitment demonstrated by the sponsor/s of this bill in acknowledging the significance of our cultural identity and the educational institutions that promote it within our education system. We anticipate the positive effects this legislation will bring to both educators and students.”



- Francisco M. Rabauliman, Secretary, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

“Let me first state that I am in support of the intent of HB 23-55 -To Advance the indigenous languages by removing some of the road blocks that hinder the promotion and expansion of our indigenous languages – through mandating our educational institutions to develop an indigenous language teacher certification program and thereby creating the opportunity for just compensation and parity for bilingual teachers.”

In a public meeting held on October 24, 2024, the Committee received oral testimonies from the following:

- Dr. Lawrence Camacho, Commissioner, CNMI Public School System

Commissioner Camacho stated that he does not oppose House Bill No. 23-55 in the form of House Draft 1. However, the legislation's passage will result in an unfunded liability for PSS. Furthermore, the Commissioner advocated for the implementation of a collaborative strategy to enhance the Act.

- Mr. Juan I. Tenorio, Concerned Citizen

Mr. Tenorio supports and concurs with Commissioner Camacho's testimony and recommendations.

- Ms. Lei Pua, Carolinian Program Manager, PSS CCLHS

Ms. Pua supports the legislation to help ensure our bilingual program flourishes.

Comments have been attached as part of this committee report. Oral testimonies can be viewed in its entirety at the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/Wk5qUXGYzNI?feature=share>

#### D. Legislative History:

House Bill No. 23-55 was introduced by Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro on June 20, 2023, and was subsequently referred to the House Standing Committee on Education for disposition.

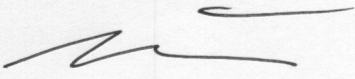
E. Cost-Benefit Analysis:

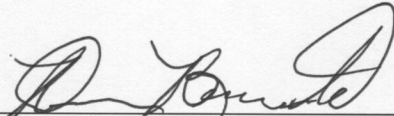
The enactment of House Bill No. 23-55 will result in additional cost to the CNMI Government to effectively carry out the intent of the proposed legislation. However, the long-term benefits of enhancing bilingual programs to preserve and promote the Chamorro and Carolinian languages and cultures will far outweigh such costs.

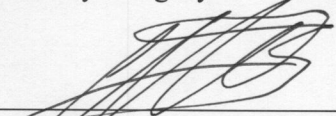
**III. CONCLUSION:**

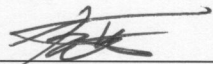
The Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of House Bill No. 23-55 and recommends its passage in the form of House Draft 1.

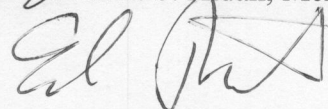
Respectfully submitted,

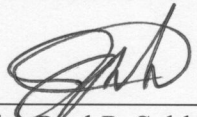
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. Manny Gregory T. Castro, Chairman


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. Roman C. Benavente, Vice Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. Vincent R. S. Aldan, Member

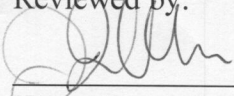
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. Edwin K. Propst, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. John Paul P. Sablan, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rep. Ralph N. Yumul, Member

Reviewed by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
House Legal Counsel

Attachment: Comments from Agatha Ketebengang, Acting Executive Director, Carolinian Affairs Office  
Comments from Merissa S. Rasa, Administrator, SHEFA  
Comments from Francisco M. Rabauliman, Secretary, DCCA





## CAROLINIAN AFFAIRS OFFICE

*"Bwulasiyool Refaluwasch"*

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Beach Rd., Garapan

P.O. Box 10007, Saipan MP 96950 \* Tel: 234-6385 Fax: 235-5088



October 22, 2024

Honorable Manny Gregory T. Castro  
House of Representative  
23rd CNMI Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

RECEIVED  
10/22/2024 2:22 pm  
Pedro Tawai

Dear Representative Castro,

Tirow me Hafa Adai!

In the context of House Bill 23-55, which aims to advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI, the use of "and" instead of "and/or" emphasizes the importance of both languages equally. This change reflects a commitment to the preservation and promotion of both the Chamorro and Carolinian languages as integral parts of the cultural heritage of the Northern Mariana Islands. It is a recognition of the value that each language holds and an acknowledgment of their significance in the community's identity and daily life. The precise wording in such legislation ensures clarity and purpose, guiding educational policies and practices towards inclusive and comprehensive language education.

Please amend the language in the legislation as it can significantly affect the interpretation and implementation of the law.

Ghilissow yan Si Yu'us Ma'ase,

Agatha Ketebengang  
Acting Executive Assistant  
Carolinian Affairs Office  
670-234-6384/5

GOOD AFTERNOON MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY ON HB-23-55 OR "THE CHAMORRO AND CAROLINIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION ACT OF 23"

MR CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS, FOR THE RECORD, MY NAME IS FRANCISCO M RABULIMAN, AND I SERVE YOU AS THE SECRETARY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS. THE CHAMORRO AND CAROLINIAN LANGUAGE COMMISSION, IS A DIVISION UNDER THE DCCA. LET ME FIRST STATE THAT I AM IN SUPPORT OF THE INTENT OF HB 23-55 -TO ADVANCE THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES BY REMOVING SOME OF THE ROAD BLOCKS THAT HINDER THE PROMOTION AND EXPANSION OF OUR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES – THROUGH MANDATING OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM AND THEREBY CREATING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR JUST COMPENSATION AND PARITY FOR BILINGUAL TEACHERS.

BUT I BELIEVE THAT A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES IS WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PRESERVING OUR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES. DO WE MEAN CHAMORRO AND/OR CAROLINIAN? MR CHARIMAN, EVEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS OF THIS LEGISLATION, IT CLEARLY STATES THAT THE LEGISLATURE FINDS THAT ARTICLE 15 OF THE CNMI CONSTITUTION AND COMPELLS THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO RECOGNIZE "THE DISTINCT AND UNIQUE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS WAY OF LIFE". IF WE WANT, NOT ONLY TO PRESERVE BOTH INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES BUT TO SEE THEM FLOURISH LIKE THE RENAISSANCE WE SEE IN HAWAII AND GUAM, THEN WE MUST PROMOTE BOTH LANGUAGES WITH VIGOR AS REFERENCED IN ARTICLE 15. IF WE WANT TO PRESERVE AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE, THEN YES, CHAMORRO AND / OR CAROLINIAN SHOULD BE IN EVERY PROVISION AND IN EVERY BOOK., AS IT IS CURRENTLY WRITTEN IN PSS BOE POLICY.

LET ME CLOSE BY REITERATING WHAT HAS BEEN SAID IN MANY FORUMS AND UNDER MANY MOONS AGO. WE UTTER THE WORDS LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AS A PUNCH LINE AND NEVER A CALL TO ARMS. THE FACT IS, THE PROBLEM IS SYSTEMIC . WE LACK THE WILL TO DO THE WORK AND SEE OUR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES FLOURISH. THE LANGUAGE COMMISSION, FOR EXAMPLE, IS INUNDATED WITH AGENCY REQUESTS FOR TRANSLATIONS. WE DID 59 TRANSLATIONS AND 3 COURT INTERPRETATIONS IN 2024 – WE HAVE PLENTY BACK LOGS WITH ONLY 1 TRANSLATOR FOR EACH INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE. ESSENTIALLY TWO STAFF TRANSLATING, THE OTHER DOING ADMINISTRATIVE WORK. I AM CERTAIN THAT THE CHALLENGE FOR LACK OF RESOURCES IS NO DIFFERENT IN THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM. LET US NOT THROW ALL THE BLAME ON THE GOVERNMENT – I AM CURIOUS TO KNOW HOW MANY HOMES/ FAMILIES SPEAK THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AS THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE AT HOME. THE PROBLEM IS SYSTEMIC AND REQUIRES THE WILL OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.





**SHEFA**

**Phone** 670-233-5995/235-1021/20  
**Address** CTC Building  
2nd Floor of the Mayor of Saipan  
Office, Teer Drive, San Jose,  
Saipan MP 96950

**Board of Directors**

October 24, 2024

Kaelani B. Demapan  
Chairwoman  
Chairwoman,  
Committee on Awards

Representative Manny Gregorio Tenorio Castro  
Chairman

Henry Kyle B.  
Hofschneider  
Vice-Chairman  
Chairman, Committee  
on Policy and  
Procedure Committee

House Standing Committee on Education  
Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation  
P.O. Box 500586  
Saipan, MP 96950

RE: Response to H.B. 23-55

Eluene Baza  
Treasurer  
Chairwoman,  
Committee on  
Program and  
Development

Dear Chairman Castro and Members of the Committee on Education:

We commend the commitment demonstrated by the sponsor/s of this bill in acknowledging the significance of our cultural identity and the educational institutions that promote it within our education system. We anticipate the positive effects this legislation will bring to both educators and students.

Florence Calvo  
Secretary  
Chairwoman,  
Committee on Appeals

Sincerely,

Merissa S. Rasa  
Administrator

Guadalupe Attao  
Member  
Chairwoman,  
Committee on Fiscal,  
Legislative, and  
Community Affairs