



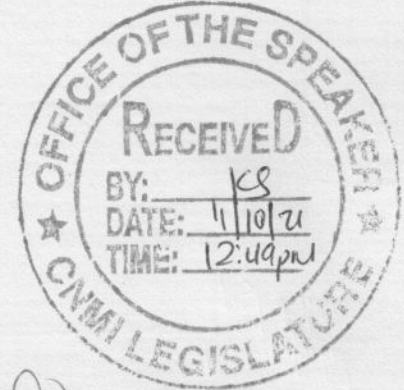
RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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

The Honorable Jude U. Hofschneider
Senate President, The Senate
Twenty-Second Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950



[Signature] 11/10/21

Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **House Bill No. 22-2, SD1**, entitled, "To amend the Commonwealth Code to authorize civil claims for child sexual abuse to be commenced at any time; and for other purposes.," which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

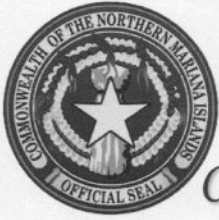
This bill becomes **Public Law No. 22-12**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

cc: Press Secretary; Chief of Staff; Senior Policy Advisor; Attorney General's Office; CNMI Superior Court; CNMI Supreme Court; Law Revision Commission; Public Auditor; Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review

HOUSE CLERK'S OFC
RECEIVED BY *[Signature]*
DATE 11/16/2021 TIME 11:20a



*Twenty-Second Legislature
of the
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

FEBRUARY 19, 2021

REPRESENTATIVE 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 Kaipat Yangetmai) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

H. B. No. 22-2, SD1

AN ACT

TO AMEND THE COMMONWEALTH CODE TO AUTHORIZE CIVIL CLAIMS FOR CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TO BE COMMENCED AT ANY TIME; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Bill was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations, which submitted Standing Committee Report 22-5; adopted 5/28/2021.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
FIRST AND FINAL READING, MAY 28, 2021;
without amendments and transmitted to
THE SENATE.**

The Bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations, which submitted Standing Committee Report 22-47; adopted 9/14/2021.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021;
with amendments in the form of H. B. No. 22-2, SD1.**

H. B. No. 22-2, SD1 WAS RETURNED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2021.

The House of Representatives accepted the Senate amendments and passed H. B. No. 22-2, SD1, during its 4th Day, Second Regular Session on October 1, 2021.

THE BILL WAS FINALLY PASSED ON OCTOBER 1, 2021.



Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



*Twenty-Second Legislature
of the
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THIRD DAY, SECOND REGULAR SESSION

OCTOBER 1, 2021

H. B. No. 22-2, SD1

AN ACT

**TO AMEND THE COMMONWEALTH CODE TO AUTHORIZE CIVIL
CLAIMS FOR CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TO BE COMMENCED
AT ANY TIME; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-SECOND NORTHERN
MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 The Legislature finds that sexual crimes committed against persons under the age of
3 eighteen (18) are very sensitive cases that can severely traumatize young victims. Often times,
4 these incidents are left unreported due to the victim's fear of revealing such disturbing
5 information, threats made by the abuser, or familial connections of the abuser.

6 The Legislature finds that for many child victims, the trauma itself prevents them from
7 coming forward earlier. As adults, victims may not connect the assault to its long-lasting
8 impact until they seek therapeutic help years later, often referred to as delayed discovery.

HOUSE BILL 22-2, SD1

1 Delayed discovery is a result of emotional or psychological trauma that is often accompanied
2 with repression in a person's memory that the abuse actually took place, in which the
3 psychological injuries are not realized until adulthood after undergoing counseling or therapy.
4 Many of the injuries associated with childhood sexual abuse do not manifest themselves until
5 much later in life.

6 The Legislature further finds that criminal prosecution is not barred by a statute of
7 limitation and prosecution may be pursued at any time for a case in which an adult discovers
8 that he or she was a victim of sexual abuse as a child under the age of eighteen. The criminal
9 prosecution option remains open regardless of the passage of time pursuant to 6 CMC § 107(a).
10 However, the same option is not available for civil cases involving sexual abuse of victims that
11 occurred when they were under 18 years of age; however, such victims realized or discovered
12 the sexual abuse during their adulthood after more than 6 six years have elapsed. This type of
13 case, if pursued through civil litigation, is barred by the current six-years statute of limitation
14 under 7 CMC § 2505.

15 The Legislature finds that the expiration of the applicable statute of limitations for child
16 sexual abuse victims during this period resulted in barring many meritorious civil claims. This
17 has allowed many child sexual abusers to escape civil liability. If evidence is sufficient to prove
18 civil liability, the mere passage of time should not prevent child sexual abuse victims from
19 seeking justice.

20 Furthermore, eliminating the time limitation for civil actions involving sexual abuse of
21 minors will prove to be beneficial for it will give the victims, regardless of age and duration
22 since the alleged incident, the opportunity to build their confidence and report such incidents

HOUSE BILL 22-2, SD1

1 knowing that they can begin at any time regardless of the time duration since the victim reached
2 the age of eighteen (18) and still be made whole. Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to amend
3 Title 7 of the Commonwealth Code to add a new section to authorize civil claims for child
4 sexual abuse to be commenced at any time.

5 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.**

6 Title 7, Division 2, Chapter 5 of the Commonwealth Code is amended by adding a new
7 section 2515 to read as follows:

8 "§ 2515. No Limit for Child Sexual Abuse.

9 (a) Any claim arising from an incident of child sexual abuse may be commenced
10 against a person, a legal entity, abusers, their enablers, their aiders or abettors, those
11 acting in concert with them and their institutions at any time.

12 (b) Any claim arising from an incident of child sexual abuse that occurred in
13 the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands which has been barred by virtue
14 of the expiration of the previous civil statute of limitations shall be permitted to be filed
15 in any court of competent jurisdiction."

16 **SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY.**


17 If any provisions of this Act or the application of any such provision to any person or
18 circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this
19 Act or the application of its provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which
20 it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

HOUSE BILL 22-2, SD1

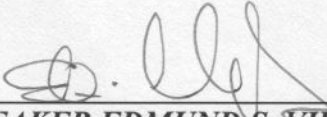
SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor, or its becoming law without such approval.

Attested to by:


Linda B. Muña, House Clerk

Certified by:


SPEAKER EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ
House of Representatives
22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

Approved this 10th day of November, 2021


RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands