

RALPH DLG. TORRES  
Governor



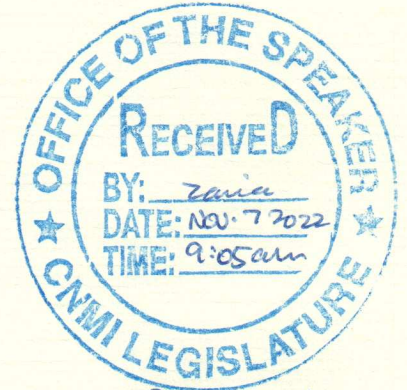
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

GOV. COMM. 22-180  
(HOUSE)

03 NOV 2022

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

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



11/7/22

Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. President:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law **House Bill No. 22-113, SD1** entitled, "To amend 8 CMC §1204 to remove the ten-day restriction to submit a marriage certificate by any religious and/or non-religious entity; 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. 22-25**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

RALPH DLG. TORRES  
Governor

cc: Acting Press Secretary; Attorney General's Office; Commonwealth Superior Court; Clerk of Court; Mayor's Offices; Commonwealth Law Revision Commission; Public Auditor; Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review

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

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FOURTH REGULAR SESSION

AUGUST 29, 2022

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN OF SAIPAN, PRECINCT 2 (*for himself*, Representative(s) Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, and Joel C. Camacho,) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

**H. B. No. 22-113, SD1**

**AN ACT**

**TO AMEND 8 CMC §1204 TO REMOVE THE TEN-DAY RESTRICTION TO SUBMIT A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE BY ANY RELIGIOUS AND/OR NON-RELIGIOUS ENTITY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The Bill was not referred to a House Committee.

**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON  
FIRST AND FINAL READING, AUGUST 29, 2022;**  
*without amendments* and transmitted to **THE SENATE.**

**IN THE SENATE**

The Bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law & Federal Relations.  
**THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, SEPTEMBER 23, 2022;**  
*with amendments* in the form of H. B. No. 22-113, SD1;  
and returned to **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

The House of Representatives accepted the Senate amendments and passed H. B. 22-113, SD1 during its Fourth Day, Fourth Regular Session on October 18, 2022.

**H. B. NO. 22-113, SD1 IS DULY PASSED BY THE TWENTY-SECOND NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE.**

  
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Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



*Twenty-Second Legislature*  
*of the*  
*Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*  
**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FOURTH DAY, FOURTH REGULAR SESSION

OCTOBER 18, 2022

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**H. B. No. 22-113, SD1**

**AN ACT**

**TO AMEND 8 CMC §1204 TO REMOVE THE TEN-DAY RESTRICTION TO SUBMIT A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE BY ANY RELIGIOUS AND/OR NON-RELIGIOUS ENTITY; 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 pursuant to 8 CMC §1204, any person authorized to perform  
3 a marriage is required to submit the respective marriage certificate to the Clerk of Court of the  
4 Commonwealth Trial Court for marriage registry purposes within ten (10) days. Due to various  
5 circumstances, many marriage certificates were not properly filed in a timely manner or may not  
6 have been properly recorded in the courts' marriage registry. Cognizant of such missing  
7 certificates, the Legislature finds that it is crucially pertinent to remove such time restrictions to  
8 allow for the respective religious/non-religious entity to properly file their marriage certificates

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**HOUSE BILL 22-113, SD1**

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1 with the respective Clerk of Court. The benefits of several individuals who have lost their  
2 spouses rely heavily on such record.

3 The Legislature also finds that many widowed spouses who were wedded many years  
4 ago have experienced great hardship in gaining a copy of their respective marriage certificate  
5 from the Commonwealth Trial Courts. Such certificates are necessary for widowed spouses to  
6 legally claim the benefits left by their deceased partners, such as land, funds, and so forth. Due  
7 to the current language of 8 CMC §1204, these respective widows have been left in problematic  
8 circumstances that have contributed great distress to their well-being. In their time of great loss,  
9 it is important to allow widowed spouses to avail of benefits yielded by the passing of their  
10 deceased spouses. Their marriage should be properly recognized regardless of the circumstances  
11 that prohibited their marriage from being filed in the courts' marriage registry.

12 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to amend 8 CMC §1204 to remove the ten-day  
13 restriction to submit a marriage certificate by any religious and/or non-religious entity and to  
14 make the amendments apply retroactively to allow existing marriage certificates to be recognized  
15 by the CNMI government and filed at the Commonwealth Superior Court.

16 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.**

17 8 CMC §1204 is hereby amended to read as follows:

18 **“§1204. Records; Certificates; Register.**

19 It is the duty of every person authorized by any religious or non-religious entity  
20 to perform marriages to make and preserve a record of every marriage performed by that  
21 person, regardless of the citizenship of the parties, showing the names of the persons  
22 married, their places of residence and the date of marriage, and to deliver to the bride  
23 immediately after the ceremony a certificate of the record of the marriage, signed by the  
24 person performing the marriage, two witnesses, if there were as many as two, and the  
25 persons married. The person performing the marriage shall send a copy of the marriage  
26 certificate to the clerk of courts of the Commonwealth Superior Court to be recorded in  
27 the marriage register. Forms issued by the Governor for the marriage certificates shall be

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**HOUSE BILL 22-113, SD1**

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1           used when available, but lack of these forms does not excuse failure to provide the bride  
2           with the certificate and the clerk with the copy required above in substantially the same  
3           form, and containing the same information as in the forms issued by the Governor.”

4           **SECTION 3. RETROACTIVE APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.**

5           Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the amendments to 8 CMC § 1204 as set forth  
6           in Section 3 of this Act shall be applied retroactively. Any existing marriage certificate executed  
7           by a person who was authorized by a religious or non-religious entity to perform the marriage in  
8           the CNMI prior to the effective date of this Act, shall be recognized by the CNMI government  
9           and filed at the Commonwealth Superior Court.

10          **SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.**

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

15          **SECTION 5. SAVINGS CLAUSE.**

16          This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be construed as affecting any  
17          existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule,  
18          regulation, or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect  
19          any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have  
20          the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall  
21          already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

**HOUSE BILL 22-113, SD1**

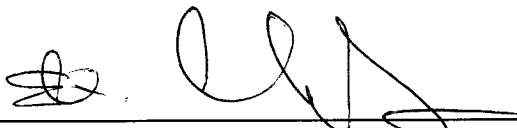
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**SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

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  
22<sup>nd</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature

*Approval* this 5<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022

  
**RALPH DLG. TORRES**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands