

SIXTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

SESSION, 2008

H. B. 16-209

A BILL FOR AN ACT

TO REQUIRE ALL PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO COMPLETE A GOVERNMENT ETHICS CODE TRAINING PROGRAM ANNUALLY BY AMENDING TITLE 1, DIVISION 8, PART 4, CHAPTER 1 OF THE COMMONWEALTH CODE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE SIXTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1 **Section 1. Title.** This Act may be cited as the “Government Ethics Code
2 Training Act of 2008.”

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that many public
4 officials, especially the newly elected or appointed officials, must be educated on the
5 Commonwealth Government Ethics Code. Although the Office of the Public Auditor has
6 conducted many training sessions on the Government Ethics Code throughout the years,
7 attendance at such ethics training sessions have been voluntary on the part of public
8 officials.

9 The Legislature further finds that public officials, who are the leaders of the
10 Commonwealth, should not claim ignorance of the Government Ethics Code when
11 confronted with ethical issues or concerns. Moreover, all public officials must
12 understand and adhere to the Government Ethics Code so as to enforce such ethical
13 standards within their own public offices.

14 The Legislature finds that the number of public corruption cases involving public
15 officials in the Commonwealth has increased throughout the past several years which in
16 part may be a clear indication of the lack of knowledge and understanding of the
17 Government Ethics Code among public officials. Therefore, the purpose of this
18 legislation is to require all public officials to complete an annual Government Ethics
19 Code Training Program conducted by the Office of the Public Auditor. Each public
20 official must pay a program fee of \$100.00 out of his or her own personal pocket and the

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1 Office of Public Auditor will publish the annual program results in a general circulation
2 newspaper in the Commonwealth.

3 **Section 3. Amendment.** Title 1, Division 8, Part 4, Chapter 1 of the
4 Commonwealth Code is amended by adding new sections 8504, 8505, and 8506 to read
5 as follows:

6 **“§ 8504. Government Ethics Code Training Program.**

7 (a) Each public official holding any elected office of the Commonwealth
8 or any appointed, nonemployee member of the Commonwealth government,
9 including members of boards, commissions, and task forces must complete, at
10 least annually beginning in 2009, an ethics training program conducted by the
11 Office of the Public Auditor.

12 (b) The Office of the Public Auditor shall adopt rules and regulations to
13 implement the Government Ethics Code Training Program and set standards and
14 determine the hours and frequency of training necessary for each position or
15 category of positions. A person who fills a vacancy in an elective or appointed
16 position that requires training must complete his or her initial ethics training
17 within 6 months after commencement of his or her term of office.

18 **§ 8505. Government Ethics Code Training Program Fee.** Each public
19 official as defined in § 8504(a) shall pay a non-refundable fee of \$100.000 for the
20 ethics training program from non-public funds.

21 **§ 8506. Government Ethics Code Training Program Results.** The
22 Office of the Public Auditor shall publish the annual Government Ethics Code
23 Training program results of all public officials, at least once, in a general
24 circulation newspaper in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”

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

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

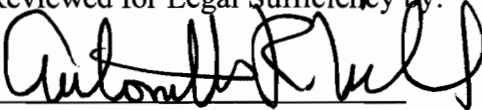
8 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
9 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

Prefiled: 1/7/09

Date: 1/7/09

Introduced By: 
Rep. Joseph M. Camacho

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:


House Legal Counsel