

REFERRED To: J60
(HOUSE)
5/13/2024

TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH

LEGISLATURE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

may 10, 2024

Sec. Spe Session, 2024

H. B. 23- 108

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To provide the Public Auditor with the power and duty to establish, develop, and implement a training program on ethics and related matters for all government employees and public officials of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 23RD NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that in order to
2 promote ethical conduct, it is imperative that employees and publicly elected and
3 appointed officials of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
4 Government receive training on these matters. This training should inform these
5 individuals of ethical principles and theories, ethical decision-making, case studies
6 and scenarios, legal and regulatory compliance, social contracts, and the
7 importance of setting a good example for the public. Furthermore, the training
8 should emphasize the complexity of ethical reasoning, provide a decision-making
9 framework that aligns with constitutional values, and consider the diverse
10 population present in the CNMI. By providing a comprehensive ethics module,
11 government employees and officials will be equipped with the necessary tools to
12 recognize ethical dilemmas, analyze those dilemmas, and make informed ethical

1 decisions in the best interest of the public. Additionally, the training should address
2 specific topics, such as conflicts of interest; transparency; accountability; campaign
3 finance law and regulations; the avoidance of corruption and bribery; and values
4 that strengthen public life, like responsiveness, fairness, integrity, and competence.

5 The Legislature further finds this training will assist CNMI Government
6 employees in making informed decisions during the employee selection process by
7 making clear the behaviors that would disqualify an applicant from being hired.
8 Moreover, by providing training on government ethics and related matters,
9 employees will better understand their own legal obligations and the consequences
10 of unethical behavior. Based on the foregoing, it is clear that this legislation will
11 foster a culture of integrity, professionalism, and accountability within the
12 government.

13 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to provide the Public Auditor with the
14 power and duty to establish, develop, and implement a training program on ethics
15 and related matters for all government employees and public officials of the
16 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

17 **Section 2. Amendment.** 1 CMC § 2303 is hereby amended to add a new
18 subsection (e) that shall read as follows:

19 **“§ 2303. Public Auditor: Duties.**

20 (a) through (d) shall remain unchanged.

21 (e) The Public Auditor shall establish, develop, and implement a training

1 program on ethics and related matters for all employees and public officials,
2 including elected and appointed public officials, of the Government of the
3 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”

4 **Section 3. Amendment.** 1 CMC § 8561 is hereby amended to add a new
5 subsection (k) that shall read as follows:

6 **“§ 8561. Powers and Duties.**

7 In addition to other powers and duties specifically mentioned in this chapter,
8 the Public Auditor shall have the following powers and duties:

9 (a) through (j) shall remain unchanged.

10 (k) To establish, develop, and implement a training program on ethics and
11 related matters for all employees and public officials, including elected and
12 appointed officials, of the Government of the Commonwealth of the
13 Northern Mariana Islands.”

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

19 **Section 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein
20 shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or
21 acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted

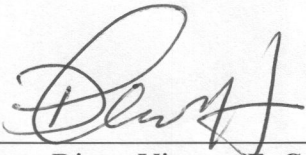
1 under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding
2 instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have
3 the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal,
4 which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

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

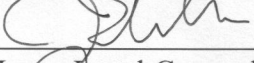
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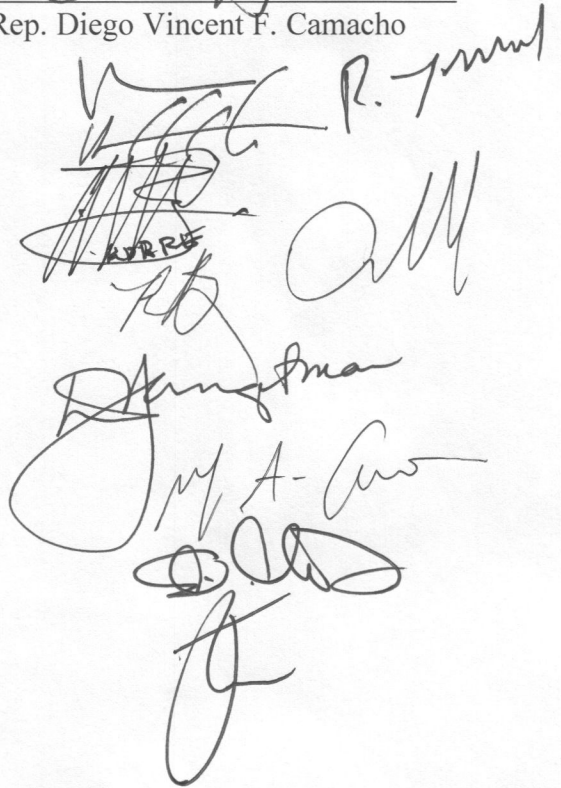
Date: _____

Introduced by: _____


Rep. Diego Vincent F. Camacho

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

 5/9/24
House Legal Counsel


R. T...
RB
M.A. C...
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