

**TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE**

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Session, 2023

H. B. 23- **55**

A BILL FOR AN ACT

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

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 23RD 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
6 life of the people and shall be committed to provide for the language needs of the
7 people and the preservation of their cultural integrity within a global community.
8 The Legislature recognizes that despite The Public School System's (PSS)
9 constitutional mandate to support Chamorro and Carolinian bilingual programs,
10 resources allocated to bilingual teacher compensation, instructional contact hours,
11 instructional materials remains inequitable. Some bilingual teachers make as little
12 as \$19,000 per year and are treated as teaching assistants despite performing the

1 work of a fulltime teacher, like planning lessons, developing curriculum, and
2 leading classrooms. Therefore, it is the purpose of this Act to address issues
3 relating to school personnel; requiring salary parity for people who hold
4 Chamorro and/or Carolinian bilingual language and culture certificates.

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

7 “§101. Chamorro and/or Carolinian language and culture certificates.
8 The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Northern
9 Marianas College, shall develop a 16-week academic program specifically
10 designed for Chamorro and/or Carolinian bilingual language and culture
11 teachers to introduce the fundamental theories and practices of teaching
12 and learning, educational psychology, inclusive practices for students with
13 learning needs, instructional strategies and classroom management, along
14 with a comprehensive examination of the rationale and methods for
15 curriculum planning including integrating curriculum content through the
16 use of thematic approaches. Upon completion of such program along with
17 Chamorro and/or Carolinian language proficiency test, the State Board of
18 Education shall issue a Chamorro and/or Carolinian language and culture
19 certificate to a person proficient in the Chamorro and/or Carolinian
20 language and culture. A baccalaureate degree is not required for the person
21 applying for this certificate.

1 §102. 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
4 annual salary equivalent to Pay Level VI, Step 03 in accordance with
5 NMIAC §60-30.2-215 (Alignment with PSS Classification and Salary
6 Schedule)."

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


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

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

Prefiled: 6/15/2023

Date: 6/15/23

Introduced by: 
Rep. Manny Gregory Tenorio Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:
 6-15-23
House Legal Counsel