

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TWELFTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE  
SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2000

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

November 9, 2000

The House of Representatives of the Twelfth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened in its Twenty-Seventh Day, Second Regular Session, on Thursday, November 9, 2000, at 10:53 a.m., in the House Chamber, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Benigno R. Fitial, Speaker of the House presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

In accordance with Rule XIII, § 2(a), sixteen members were recorded present. Representatives Dino M. Jones and Norman S. Palacios were excused.

Speaker Fitial: A quorum is duly constituted for the Twenty-Seventh Day of our Second Regular Session. All members absent are excused.

**ADOPTION OF JOURNALS**

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Babauta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for the adoption of the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Days of our Second Regular Session journals.

The motion was seconded.

**25<sup>th</sup> Day (11/7/00) & 26<sup>th</sup> Day (11/8/00), 2<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session**

Speaker Fitial: Discussion?

Rep. Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point.

Speaker Fitial: Representative Hofschneider, recognized.

Rep. Hofschneider: On the journal on page 11 – do we have problem with our microphone still?

Speaker Fitial: Page 11?

Rep. Hofschneider: Yes, the appeal, “inaudible”.

Speaker Fitial: Maybe we can just substitute that instead of “inaudible” we put “laughter”.

Rep. Hofschneider: Do we still have problem with our microphone? I was little bit shouting.

Speaker Fitial: I don’t think you would have any problem because –

Rep. Hofschneider: -- the microphone is scared. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, maybe we should invest in a new system, we’re beginning to have more problems with our PA system here.

Speaker Fitial: Either that or we sent our staff for training. Representative Pangelinan?

Rep. Pangelinan: Please, let the record show that I was late and I was not absent for whatever reason.

Speaker Fitial: So noted. Further discussion?

Several members voiced, “ready”.

The motion to adopt the 25<sup>th</sup> Day and 26<sup>th</sup> Day, Second Regular Session journals was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Fitial: The motion carries.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

H. B. NO. 12-290: A Bill for an Act to establish a Master Settlement Agreement Trust Fund for the initial deposit of all funds received by the CNMI pursuant to the Tobacco Industry Settlement, to ensure the preservation of all such funds until the CNMI legislature determines the appropriate allocation of the funds; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Rep. Maria “Malua” T. Peter and one other  
Referred to: Committee on Ways and Means

H. B. NO. 12-291: A Bill for an Act to amend 3 CMC § 1342(b); and for other purposes.

Offered by: Rep. Brigida DLG. Ichihara and one other  
Referred to: Committee on Education

### **INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

H. R. NO. 12-97: A House Resolution requesting the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to provide every major military command post the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands flag.

Offered by: Rep. Antonio M. Camacho and one other  
Referred to: Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations

### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

None

### **RESOLUTION CALENDAR**

None

### **BILL CALENDAR**

None

### **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Babauta: Mr. Speaker, last several days I've been visited by the agencies of our government apparently the concern is the FY'2001 budget. I wonder if any member in this Chamber have any knowledge when would the Senate would be acting on the 2001 budget?

Speaker Fitial: Any member wishes to respond?

Chairman A. Camacho: They are still debating, Mr. Speaker. They are still calculating.

Speaker Fitial: I received the summary with considerable changes made by the Senate Committee. I believe that summary came from Representative Attao.

Rep. Attao: Yes, I received a draft copy of the budget from the Senate.

Speaker Fitial: That was the Senate –

Rep. Attao: Copy of the summary, yes, I gave a copy to Chairwoman Peter, but I did not make any changes or input on the budget.

Speaker Fitial: No. The copy of the Senate summary came from you. Anyway, if any one of you wishes to look at that summary, I have a copy provided by Representative Peter, who confided in the resource of the copy.

Floor Leader Babauta: Representative Attao should have the fiscal resources –

Speaker Fitial: But it is quite a substantial deviation from House version. Representative Peter?

Chairwoman Peter: Mr. Speaker, the bill I introduced this morning needs to be acted on as soon as possible. We've received so much sitting on our account and we've not done anything about it because of the absence of this legislation. I would like to ask to whatever committee this bill is to be referred to should act on it as soon as possible. If they don't have time then I would like for the bill to be referred to my committee and work on it as soon as possible since I have all the information of that bill. Thank you.

Speaker Fitial: But I think we need to try and make another attempt to meet with our counterparts in the Senate because I don't think the people are being rightfully served with the way things are happening up at the Senate. We have introduced 290 bills so far versus 88 even if they multiply that by 2. They will claim that we have eighteen members versus them nine. I think they believe in the Constitution of the United States. Representative Hofschneider?

Rep. Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise an issue – I know we are under Miscellaneous, we cannot debate, but I am just raising this so maybe we can get Chairman Rosiky Camacho to answer or anyone that has the knowledge. Is there such thing as universal charge for long distance versus universal user fee that are both appearing on customers billing? I believe the universal charge is 5% of your telephone bill and the universal user fee is roughly \$.34 per month, they're of the same. We take a look if they are double charging, or is it legitimate, or is it been approve by CUC for those charges to appear on customer charges?

Speaker Fitial: Chairman Rosiky Camacho, I have a little knowledge about the issue raised by Representative Hofschneider, and those are very legitimate concerns, so can you look into it thoroughly and come back with a comprehensive explanation?

Chairman Rosiky Camacho: It is well taken, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Fitial: You are correct.

Rep. Hofschneider: People are beginning to notice their home fees are increasing, more importantly is whether the legislature consented or the agency appropriately assigned to look into fees has consented those charges appearing on customer's billing.

Speaker Fitial: When the leadership met with – I don't know who were present at that meeting with MTC – they discussed that, but they said it is something that was agreed upon. But let us get the facts in detail because we would like to know who agreed and under what authority was that agreement on.

Chairman Rosiky Camacho: Mr. Speaker, are we still under Miscellaneous?

Speaker Fitial: Yes.

Chairman Rosiky Camacho: Mr. Speaker, the issues are becoming very sticky especially the telecom issue. We need to unite ourselves. One of the things that happened recently that I think it is something to be recommended by the Attorney General is that when the government changed from IT&E to GTE. That kind of settlement, government changing phones, has to be looked at internally, because we know for a fact that the government is trying to sue MTC for a reason. I've been discussing that issue to be looked under the commission, because the legislature, when they start mingling into business enterprise activities, it becomes a very sticky matter. And when we give it to an independent individual that is not a politician or is not an elected official, things would be a lot more open in terms of things that are happening. The other thing is GTE, which is MTC, is also changing with V-Horizon, this is a big issue that when the whole telecommunication market is becoming more complex then a body needs to look into it because it is not an easy industry to be looked at. I would like to answer the universal charges versus user fee, this is actually established based on some of the information I recalled is to e-rate. When we comply with federal programs it is allowable for an industry to come in to get that rate here, but I will look into that matter more in detail to get more substantial information for this body. I would like now again to emphasize that the bill is in the Senate and if it is bad, the way they see it that it is too restrictive for the commission, change it. I am open for changes. We cannot continue to prolong an issue that we don't know what is all about. That is why we need an executive person, a person to be hired that is expert in telecommunication to look at that particular body and that is the whole bottom line. If they don't want what is being written for the commission to follow in that proposed bill, change it. I am open to sit down and look at the whole issue and that is my concern when we are faced with facts that it is hard. One classic example is the electronic signature, it is not an easy thing. It is not something that we solve within the day, but we put in the framework. Framework of this government need to start looking at and start working on issues and as a body of policymakers, we are only there to establish the framework like any other body that wants to let another body to look at what to do, that is what we are trying to do here. I hope that the rest of our Representatives who voted against that call the Senate and say, we are reconsidering our vote. Those are issues we need to look at, Mr. Speaker. I am not here to debate. Thank you.

Speaker Fitial: Anymore undebatable Miscellaneous? Recess, Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Babauta: Move to recess, Mr. Speaker, until Monday morning at 10:00.

The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Fitial: The House stands recess until Monday morning at 10:00.

The House recessed at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan P. Kaipat, Journal Clerk  
House of Representatives

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**APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS**

**H. L. B. NO. 12-19:** A HOUSE LOCAL BILL FOR AN ACT TO REPEAL SAIPAN LOCAL LAW 9-1; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. (REP. HEINZ S. HOFSCHEIDER +4 11/8/00)[**2<sup>ND</sup> APPEARANCE**]