



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-FIRST NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2019

LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

4th Day, First Regular Session

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Fourth Day, First Regular Session on Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at 1:40 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll and seventeen members were present; Representatives Luis John DLG. Castro was absent and excused;

House Clerk Notes: Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero arrived in after roll call and was duly marked present.

Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you Clerk. With seventeen members present. Representative LJ Castro is excused; and Representative Lee Pan is on his way in. The next order of business. Public Comments?

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Floor Leader.

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. At this time I move to suspend Rule IX, Section 4 (d) so that the House amends its agenda to include unnumbered bills, resolutions and communications not filed within the Clerk's office 72 hours' notice. So move.

RULE IX. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Section 4. Format of Bills and Resolutions

(d) Bills and resolutions for introduction may be pre-filed with the House Clerk for formal introduction at the next session, provided that it is pre-filed in sufficient time to appear on the session agenda as required under Rule III. The 72-hour notice and agenda requirements may be dispensed with for Special Emergency Sessions and Sessions called by the Governor in accordance with Rule III.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Floor Leader. The motion has been made and seconded. Discussion on that motion? Clerk, please call the roll.

Several members voiced “ready”.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 4 (d) with the following results:

Representative Sheila J. Babauta	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	yes
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	yes
Representative Antonio SN. Borja	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Luis John DLG. Castro	absent (<i>excused</i>)
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	absent (<i>during voting</i>)
Representative Jose I. Itibus	yes
Representative Richard T. Lizama	yes
Representative Donald M. Manglona	yes
Representative Janet U. Maratita	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Christina M.E. Sablan	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Edmund S. Villagomez	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker. All 17 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With 17 members voting in the affirmative, motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 4 (d) hereby is carried. Thank you, members. Now going down to our Order of Business, which is the Public Comments. Anyone who wishes to comment on any of the items, you may proceed to the podium.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received or presented.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: We will go ahead and move down to our Order of Business, item III, Adoption of Journals. Now recognize the Clerk.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

The Clerk informed the Chair that there are two journals ready for adoption; the Chair recognized the Floor Leader for the motion. The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of the First Day, First Regular Session Journal, January 14, 2019 a motion to adopt the following journal:

First Day, First Regular Session Journal - January 14, 2019

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt the First Day, First Regular Session Journal, January 14, 2019 was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following journal:

Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 8, 2019

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt the Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 8, 2019 was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you. Introduction of Bills, I recognize the first mover.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

House Bills:

H. B. NO. 21-24: To restrict the harvesting, cutting, removing or mutilating of the nigas plant or *Pemphis acidula forst*; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. ANTONIO SN. BORJA of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

H. B. NO. 21-25: To authorize the Department of Public Lands to issue licenses and use permits and charge fees for the use of the public lands located within 150 feet of the high water mark. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEE PAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

H. B. NO. 21-26: To require vexatious litigants to get the approval of a judge before they could file any lawsuits in the future; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JANET U.

MARATITA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representative John Paul P. Sablan) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

H. B. NO. 21-27: To amend Title 4 Section 5523 and to renumber Section 5524 of the Commonwealth's Alcoholic Beverage Control, to provide an exception to licensure requirements for alcoholic beverages produced for home or personal consumption; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Commerce and Tourism.

H. B. NO. 21-28: To prohibit the sale, offer for sale, and distribution in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands of sunscreen containing oxybenzone and octinoxate without a prescription from a licensed healthcare provider. Introduced by REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Luis John DLG. Castro, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Edwin K. Propst, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Commerce and Tourism.

H. B. NO. 21-29: To amend 1 CMC §11102(e) and 1 CMC §11103(i) of the Second Marianas Political Status Commission Act of 2015, to allow the Commission to submit its final report on November 30, 2020; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Luis John DLG. Castro, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Richard T. Lizama, and John Paul P. Sablan) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

[Added-3/12/19] H. B. NO. 21-30: To amend 2 CMC Section 5631 to authorize 1.5 inch net mesh to catch bigeye scad (atulai) during their seasonal run in the Third Senatorial District. Introduced by REP. ROMAN C. BENAVENTE of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, sign Representatives Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Sheila J. Babauta, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources on March 13, 2019.

[Added-3/12/19] H. B. NO. 21-31: To allow senatorial districts to establish and regulate internet gaming; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. LORENZO I. DELEON GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Gaming on March 13, 2019.

There being no further introductions of House Bills the Chair moved to the next item, Introduction of House Local Bills and recognized the first mover.

House Local Bills:

H. L. B. No. 21-10: To amend the Saipan Zoning Law of 2013, 10 CMC § 3511 to include hospitals as a conditional use in Village Commercial Zoning Districts; and for other purposes. Introduced by Rep. Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Luis John DLG. Castro and Ralph N. Yumul) on March 12, 2019.

H. L. B. No. 21-11: To establish fishing license fees in Tinian; and for other purposes. Introduced by Rep. Antonio SN. Borja of Tinian, Precinct 6 (for himself) on March 12, 2019.

[Added-3/12/19] H. L. B. No. 21-12: To appropriate \$434,000 of the funds specifically allotted to the First Senatorial District under 4 CMC §2307(a); and for other purposes. Introduced by: Rep. Donald M. Manglona of Rota, Precinct 7 (for himself) on March 12, 2019.

House Legislative Initiatives: None

There being no further introductions the Chair moved to the next item, Introduction of Resolutions and recognized the first mover.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

House Resolutions:

[Added-3/12/19] H. RES. NO. 21-5: To declare Zaji O. Zajradhara, formerly known as Steven Carl Farmer, a persona non-grata in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Introduced by: REP. JANET U. MARATITA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, and Jose I. Itibus) on March 12, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

There being no further introductions of House Resolutions the Chair moved to the next item, Introduction of House Joint Resolutions and recognized the first mover.

House Joint Resolutions:

H. J. R. NO. 21-2: To congratulate and honor all the women in the Commonwealth as we celebrate their contributions and achievements during the month of March 2019 proclaimed as CNMI Women’s Month and March 8th as International Women’s Day. Introduced by: REP. JANET U. MARATITA of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for herself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Sheila J. Babauta, Roman C. Benavente, Ivan A. Blanco, Antonio SN. Borja, Joel C. Camacho, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Joseph A. Flores, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Jose I. Itibus, Richard T. Lizama, Donald M. Manglona, Edwin K. Propst, Christina M.E. Sablan, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) on March 12, 2019; moved and placed on the Resolution Calendar.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader for the motion to place H.J.R. No. 21-2 on the Resolution Calendar; the motion was made and seconded; being no discussion H.J.R. No. 21-2 was placed on the Resolution Calendar.

There being no further introductions of House Joint Resolutions the Chair moved to the next item, Introduction of House Commemorative Resolutions and stated for the record that in the absence of Representative Castro, C. Res. No. 21-2 will remain on the agenda.

*House Commemorative Resolutions:***C. RES. NO. 21-2**

To recognize the achievements of His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, President of the Asian Football Confederation along with his efforts in promoting the growth of the sport football in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prefiled by: REP. LUIS JOHN DLG. CASTRO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Sheila J. Babauta, Roman C. Benavente, Ivan A. Blanco, Antonio SN. Borja, Joel C. Camacho, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul)

House Concurrent Resolutions: None

The Chair directed the members to item VI, Messages from the Governor and recognized the Clerk.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:

Gov. COMM. 21-17: (2/18/19) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-86, HD1 (CNMI Product Seal Act (To Est)). Became **Public Law 20-89** [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-18: (2/18/19) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-188, HD1 (Vehicle Code Amdt). Became **Public Law 20-90** [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-19: (2/18/19) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. NO. 20-13 (Susupe Lake Wildlife Park (To Designate & Est)). Became **Public Law 20-91** [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-20: (2/18/19) Informing the House that he signed into law, S. B. NO. 20-106, SD1, HD1 (“Career and Technical Training Act of 2018”). Became **Public Law 20-92** [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-21: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the reappointment of Mr. Mark Rabauliman to serve as Secretary to the Department of Commerce pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-22: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Mr. Robert Hunter to serve as Secretary to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-23: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the reappointment of Mr. Vincent Attao to serve as Secretary to the Department of Corrections pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-24: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Mr. Claudio Norita to serve as Secretary to the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-25: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Ms. Victoria Benavente to serve as Secretary to the Department of Labor pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-26: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Mr. Anthony Benavente to serve as Secretary to the Department of Lands and Natural Resources pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-27: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Ms. Marianne Concepcion-Teregeyo to serve as Secretary to the Department of Public Lands pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-28: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Mr. Robert Guerrero to serve as Secretary to the Department of Public Safety pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-29: (2/18/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Mr. James A. Ada to serve as Secretary to the Department of Public Works pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-30: (2/20/19) Informing Departments and Agency Heads of the delegation of authority and reappointment of Mr. Roman Tudela to serve as Resident Executive for Indigenous Affairs pending advice and consent of the Senate. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-31: (2/21/19) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. L. B. NO. 21-4, D1 (“Allotting \$225,633.60 pursuant to 4 CMC §2307(b) to the Second Senatorial District; amending TLL 20-15; repealing Sections 1-6 of TLL 20-18; and for other purposes.”). Became **Tinian Local Law 21-1** [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-32: (2/27/19) Certifying and granting approval for Mr. Jose P. Mafnas, Jr., Assistant Attorney General, at the Office of Attorney General to receive an annual salary of \$61,000. [*For info*]

Gov. COMM. 21-33: (3/5/19) Certifying and granting approval for Mr. David DLG. Atalig, Special Assistant to the Governor for Finance and Audit, at the Office of the Governor to receive an annual salary of \$65,000. [*For info*]

[Added-3/12/19] Gov. COMM. 21-34: (received 3/11/19) Informing the legislature of projected reduction in estimated general fund resources for current fiscal year ending September 30, 2019 (projected shortfall reported in revenue by 4.7% or \$12,048,000). [*For info*] – *Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means on March 12, 2019*

The Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized Representative Antonio Borja.

Representative Antonio SN. Borja: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Just to extend *un dangkulu na si Yu'us ma'ase* to the Governor for signing House Local Bill 21-4 for Tinian. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative Edmund S. Villagomez.

Representative Edmund S. Villagomez: I just want to thank you everyone and the Governor too for signing the CNMI Product Seal. It has been a long time coming; I did not get the news until a constituent shared it with me a couple of days after he signed it. Again thank you to the Governor and to everyone involved in putting this Act together.

The Chair recognized Representative Ivan A. Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: I understand that there is a GOV. COMM. 21-34 on each members desk. I understand that it is the latest information that was transmitted to the Speaker and the President of the Senate. I just encourage when you do have time to look through it for the Q&A session tomorrow with OMB and Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you Representative Blanco. GOV. COMM. 21-34 will be referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means and I respectfully ask the committee Chair and its members to start working on the numbers; work with our Fiscal Analyst; and also look at the Concurrent Resolution that we had in adopting what is now PL 20-67 so we can proceed with that. In addition I highly recommend the committee to look at the last four or five fiscal years that we have worked on in the legislature and what we have done over the years and the audit reports that are currently available for the members access. I believe the latest one we have is audit report 2017; if we have 2018 that will be really good but please Chairman and your members I respectfully ask that you look into the audit reports and the concurrent resolutions and the public laws lead us up to PL 20-67 inclusive of the most difficult times and the growing times of the CNMI. Thank you, members.

The Chair recognized Representative Ralph N. Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Continuing on with GOV. COMM. 21-34; the numbers are pretty alarming. And I believe that they are asking for a budget cut across the board but just looking at one of the figures the business gross revenue tax projected this year for fiscal year 2019 at \$87 million and as to date we received \$26 million. So that is 30% half of the year is gone; I think 15% is way too low. We are looking at a 50% budget cut assuming FEMA does not pay on time; I know there is supposed to be some drawdowns in the next couple of months that is not guaranteed. But if you are looking at \$26 million to date, I am concerned for the CNMI; I am concerned with the businesses out there that rely on the government purchasing and paying on time. We are looking at maybe another \$20 - \$40 million shortfall. I mean I just went through two numbers which is the BGRT and the wage and salary; we only collected 30% for BGRT, 41% on wage and salary, corporate tax we only collected 14% to date these numbers are really – it is dangerous. And I am not trying to scare anyone but if the government does not pay its obligations it could put a halt to the whole CNMI economy. So this is something that we really need to look at and pretty much control and not stop – I know that in every business the minute there is a shortfall we stop spending and the government is actually totally reversed of that, you actually have to spend more knowing the fact that we are not going to collect and that is to let the business continue to thrive in the CNMI. So I am very concern, it is going to be a big task; I know the budget is coming up next month and we need to look at everything

and even salaries of everybody not just operations; we are talking about we have to be very honest and clear about this. I know the task of Chairman Blanco is going to be tough this year and I am hoping that the House supports him this reductions. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel C. Camacho.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I just want to go back to Chairman Yumul's statement. You stated that on top of the \$12 million from Gov. Comm. 21-34, you said there is an additional shortfall? Can you point that out?

The Chair recognized Representative Ralph N. Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Well if you look at the spreadsheet, fiscal year 2019 – pretty much just a simple math; you take the year to date and divide by the target and that is how much we have collected so far in percentages. So half of the year is gone; I understand that businesses are starting to get up on its feet so payments are slowly coming in. So it is very concerning because if you look at 30% we can assume that we will collect another 30% it is safe to say. So we are going to be in essence short of another \$30 million maybe – I have not really done the actual math I am just doing it in percentage wise, but that is just one part of the revenue, I have not gone through the hotel tax – the hotel industry is still suffering right now; there are a couple of hotels that are not online; so there is a lot of shortages as far as year to date; and that is based off on the projected budget this fiscal year.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: That is an addition to the non-guarantee of the FEMA reimbursement, correct?

The Chair recognized Representative Ralph N. Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Yeah, well FEMA has not – is not taken into consideration yet; I am not sure of the actual reimbursement; we have been informed I think it is April that they will be paying in excess of \$60-\$70 million dollars I believe – I am not sure if that is correct Mr. Speaker, but it is next month I believe. So it is not yet taken into consideration.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: Mr. Speaker if I may, can I redirect my question to the Chairman of Ways and Means. Mr. Chairman, but I just wanted to know if you have any of the figures pertaining to the total cost of FEMA reimbursements; do you have that number yet?

The Chair recognized Representative Ivan A. Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: That is a negative, and we hope to have that question answered tomorrow.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel C. Camacho.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: And how much does the CNMI anticipate to fork out for our cost share?

The Chair recognized Representative Ivan A. Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: That will depend on what the communication is from the Executive Branch and what FEMA has waived as 100% and what FEMA would still require the 10%.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel C. Camacho.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: So we are still looking at 10%.

The Chair recognized Representative Ivan A. Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: It depends. I understand that there are also programs that FEMA will waive the matching so that it will be all paid for by federal funds; what those are I have not received official communication yet.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative Christina Sablan.

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you, and Representative Yumul, and Representative Blanco have made clear, we are facing some very trying and urgent fiscal crisis at this time. And I could not help but notice from the governor's communications and including this latest letter which we just received today that there is no mention of who our acting Secretary of Finance is, although he makes reference to an acting Secretary. Do we know who that person is at this time?

Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Representative Sablan I have yet to receive any official communication. But from what I have heard from the Department of Finance staff it is David Atalig right now is the acting Secretary. But there is no official communication. If my office receives an official communication every member will get that communication.

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: Okay. And just for your information my office was advise by Finance staff today that Ms. Larson is still the Secretary. So I would be interested in seeing who shows up to the Ways and Means committee meeting tomorrow. Maybe you know Representative Blanco?

The Chair recognized Representative Ivan A. Blanco.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: So I have reached out to Finance and the person who is going to be here is confirmed for tomorrow is Mr. David Atalig. Whether I have received an official document saying he is the acting Secretary, I did not. We are still in the dark.

The Chair recognized Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: Point of clarification, Mr, Speaker. I am reading this letter from the Department of Finance which was signed by acting Secretary David Atalig. I am wondering whether this submission was the product of Mr. Atalig knowing that his time with Finance to find out these numbers is kind of ironic. I want to know actually who did this analysis of the shortfall if Mr. Atalig is the acting Secretary here which he just got recently appointed Special Assistant of Finance and Analysis and now acting Secretary I am kind of confused.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: You have a good point there, Representative Guerrero. Like I said, the Speaker’s office have not received any official documentation or communication from the Executive Branch as to an appointment of an acting Secretary at this particular time. But if you refer to the March 11, 2019 letter from the Department of Finance it is signed by an acting Secretary David Atalig, but we have not received an official communication of his appointment as acting secretary at this point.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: So I am assuming that the Chair of Ways and Means made aware to the members that the acting secretary will be here tomorrow.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: I believe we have heard the exact same thing from the Chairman of Ways and Means that the person that will be representing the Department of Finance in tomorrow’s meeting will be David Atalig, acting secretary.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: I will yield this time, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative Sheila J. Babauta.

Representative Sheila J. Babauta: Thank you, Speaker. I look forward to tomorrow’s meeting. And I was also informed Ryan Camacho has been Secretary Larson’s right-hand and he has been instrumental in advising and creating some of our spreadsheets. So it may be wise of us to may be invite him for tomorrow’s meeting.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Babauta. Chairman of Ways and Means, please take note on that if we can formulate a communication to include Mr. Ryan Camacho in tomorrow’s meeting. Are there any other discussion? Representative Camacho, recognized.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: I would just like to thank Representative Babauta. That was the recommendation I was going to make to the Chairman of Ways and Means.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you Representative Camacho. Members, Gov. Comm. 21-34, I know that we referred this to the committee on Ways and Means; we also have the task of the new submission of a budget that will be coming in for 2020 so that is going to be a big task for the committee members, but I ask each member if we can help each take care of the 2019 to move forward with 2020 budget. The one thing that we really need to consider is to look at the history of a lot of our documents; and look at the numbers. I believe that a lot of it and this communication is talking about operations; we got to recognize that there is other entities in the

CNMI government that pays its personnel under operations; so we have to be creative in the way we work this legislation; we look at different angles group health life insurance and other ways; we also look at earmarks and all that kind of stuff. Because right now this is not recognizing the earmarks, but we also need to considerate the earmarks. So please Chairman, as Speaker of the House of the 21st, I stand ready to help your committee proceed with any necessary documents and any moves that we need to do to make this a workable budget for 2019 to clear out the year and to produce a 2020 budget that is going to be good for our people. Are there any other discussions from the Governor? Ready.

The Chair recognized Representative Jose I. Itibus.

Representative Jose I. Itibus: Thank you, Speaker. Maybe this will be related to our legal counsel. On the page 2 of three on the last paragraph of Gov. Comm. 21-34 states “this directive applies to the entire Executive Branch including semi-autonomous agencies and entities”, can you just specify who are the semi-autonomous agencies?

The Chair recognized Legal Counsel.

Legal Counsel John F. Cool: It is probably more than are subject to the across the board reduction. But the semi-autonomous agencies would be agencies like, CUC, CDA, CPA, CHCC would be one also. There are differences between the autonomous agencies; some of them are regulatory and some are basically executive function. And I do not know if he is drawing a distinction between the executive function ones and regulatory or not. Otherwise it will include all governmental corporations and autonomous agencies even the regulatory ones.

Representative Jose I. Itibus: Thank you. I will yield.

There being no further discussion the Chair directed the members to Senate Communications.

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

None

There being no communications from the Senate, the Chair directed the members to House Communications and recognized the Clerk.

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following House Communications:

HSE. COMM. 21-28: (From the House Minority Bloc requesting guidance from the Office of the Public Auditor and the Office of the Attorney General pertaining to 21st HOR Rules of Procedure. [*For info*] [This communication was submitted on the House floor on 2/20/19])

HSE. COMM. 21-29: (2/15/19) From Representative Flores informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal leave from Saturday, February 16, 2019 to Wednesday, February 20, 2019 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 21-30: (2/22/19) From Representative Guerrero informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal matters beginning February 25, 2019 to March 6, 2019, and request to be excused from any and all official functions during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 21-31: (2/25/19) From the Speaker informing all Members that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal matters beginning February 26, 2019 and will return on March 8, 2019 and designates Vice Speaker Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero as Acting Speaker. Furthermore, authorizes Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero to officially introduce pending legislations on his behalf. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 21-32: (2/26/19) From Representative Camacho informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal leave beginning February 28, 2019 to March 6, 2019, and request to be excused from any and all official functions during his absence. [*For info*]

HSE. COMM. 21-33: (3/6/19) From Representative Castro informing the Acting Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on official business beginning Sunday, March 10, 2019 to Saturday, March 16, 2019 and request to be excused from all scheduled meetings and session during his absence. [*For info*]

The Chair open the floor for discussions and recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Under Hse. Comm. 21-28, if I may just ask the House Minority bloc if there are any response to the letter that was sent to the Public Auditor and the Attorney General. And if there are, can we put it on the record for today's agenda. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Christina M.E. Sablan.

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: Thank you Floor Leader for that question. We did receive a letter from the Office of the Public Auditor confirming the receipt of our request for guidance and the office confirmed that they will be providing that guidance. However it would not be ready until the next session. But Representative Propst and I met with the Public Auditor and one of his Senior Auditors this week and they said that they are working on a document and that will be forthcoming. And of course, we will make that available to the members. And then as for the Attorney General, with my last communication with him, he said that he was looking forward to reviewing our request and we were actually supposed to have a meeting this week, but the session scheduled interrupted that and so we hope to reschedule that soon. And we will again keep all of the members informed.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I yield.

There being no further discussion the Chair directed the members to item IX, Communications from Judicial Branch and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

JUD. BR. COMM. 21-1: (3/1/19) CNMI Judiciary FY 2020 budget request submission. [*For info*]

The Chair referred Jud. Br. Comm. 21-1 to the House Committee on Ways and Means on March 12, 2019

There being no discussions the Chair directed the members to item X, Communications from Judicial Branch and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

The Clerk announced the following Departments & Agencies:

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 21-6: (2/25/19) From the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) submitting FY 2019 First Quarter Expenditure Report pursuant to PL 20-67 (FY19 Appropriations Act). [*For info*]

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 21-7: (2/27/19) Commonwealth Casino Commission FY 2020 budget request submission. [*For info*]

The Chair referred Dept./Agcy. Comm. 21-6 and Dept./Agcy. Comm. 21-7 to the House Committee on Ways and Means on March 12, 2019

There being no discussions the Chair directed the members to item XI, Miscellaneous Communications.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communications:

MISC. COMM. 21-7: (1/25/19) From the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia transmitting certified copy of Congressional Resolution No. 20-167, C.D.1. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 21-8: (2/25/19) From the Chairman of the Twenty-First Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation informing the House of being duly organized and of its elected Officers of the 21st SNILD. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 21-9: (2/22/19) From the 15th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council requesting funding assistance. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 21-10: (2/26/19) From the 15th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council submission of FY 2020 Budget request to the Special Assistant for Office of Management and Budget (OMB). [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 21-11: (2/22/19) FY 2020 Legislative Bureau and CNMI Youth Congress Budget submission. [*For info*]

[Added-3/12/19] MISC. COMM. 21-12: (3/6/19) From the Latte Training Academy funding request of \$150,000 by the Saipan and Northern Islands Delegation. [*For info*]

[Added-3/12/19] MISC. COMM. 21-13: (3/1/19) From the CNMI Youth Congress informing the House of the elected Youth Senators for the 17th CNMI Youth Congress.

The Chair referred the following Miscellaneous Communications to the House Committee on Ways and Means on March 12, 2019:

MISC. COMM. 21-9: (2/22/19) From the 15th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council requesting funding assistance. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 21-10: (2/26/19) From the 15th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council submission of FY 2020 Budget request to the Special Assistant for Office of Management and Budget (OMB). [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 21-11: (2/22/19) FY 2020 Legislative Bureau and CNMI Youth Congress Budget submission. [*For info*]

[Added-3/12/19] MISC. COMM. 21-12: (3/6/19) From the Latte Training Academy funding request of \$150,000 by the Saipan and Northern Islands Delegation. [*For info*]

There being no discussions the Chair directed the members the Resolution Calendar and recognized the Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

None

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of House Resolution No. 21-4, HD1:

H. RES. NO. 21-4, HD1

A House Resolution to amend the House of Representatives Rules of Procedure that was adopted on January 14, 2019; and for other purposes.

The motion was seconded and the Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Just a recap for the benefit of the viewing public on what had transpired in the last House Session on House Resolution 21-4 which now reflects HD1. We have adopted a floor amendment which is on page 5 starting on line 19 through 21 of the resolution; these were provisions adopted through a floor amendment; also on the attachment that same floor amendment is reflected on page 28 under c. Also Mr. Speaker I did raise the question to the legal counsel in our leadership meeting – what is the number that the three-fourths count is based on because we only have 19 members that are certified and has taken oath and we are awaiting on the special election on the vacant seat; and the response of the legal counsel even with 19 the three-fourth is a little bit over 14 therefore three-fourth is 15. So we must muster a 15 yes vote in order for the House to adopt such a house resolution; also Mr. Speaker and members for your information, tomorrow will be the 60th day as provided in the interim rules to act upon a Rule that will be permanent to guide us in our future business forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative Christina M.E. Sablan.

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: First just a quick clarification that the amendment that was adopted at our last session from Chairman Blanco should read “each member shall maintain a record of all transactions and corresponding public purpose justifications” I assume that is just a typographical error and I would just like to make sure that it is clear in our Rules and corrected.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Alright. Clerk please just make note to add an “s” under “justifications”.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader under point of order.

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: Before Representative Tina further ask the question; I just like to ask the legal counsel if we can treat that as a technical?

The Chair recognized the Legal Counsel.

Legal Counsel John F. Cool: Yes, it can be treated as a technical.

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative Christina M.E. Sablan.

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: Thank you. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I first want to thank you, your leadership, and the ad hoc rules committee, for taking into consideration and accepting some of the amendments to the rules that we have proposed from the minority. This is, to our knowledge, the first time that a truly bipartisan ethics committee is being established in the legislature. Membership in the Ways and Means Committee is being increased, allowing for additional representation from the minority. And an old and unfair rule borrowed from the Senate that would impose restrictions only on the minority is being struck out. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Floor Leader, and the rules committee. Your fairness and reasonableness are very much appreciated. We also appreciate that the rules have been amended to explicitly require that all members who opt to draw an allowance must keep records of all transactions and their corresponding public purpose justifications. The paramount concern for the minority regarding these allowances was always to ensure transparency and accountability for these public funds. So thank you, Chairman Ivan Blanco, for championing that amendment, and all members here who supported it. Only Congressman Lee Pan did not support it, but he said he's not drawing the allowance anyway so - he should be ok. Unfortunately, the other amendments proposed by the minority did not pass at our last session. One amendment would have clarified the types of details required in the members' quarterly financial reports to the Speaker. Another would have imposed a penalty for members who do not timely file their reports or who fail to report public purpose justifications. And another would have reinforced the requirement that member allowances be spent for public purposes, consistent with all CNMI laws, rules, and regulations. Those particular rules were not adopted, but the public discussion that ensued in this body was instructive and, hopefully, reassuring for the people we represent. And I'd just like to reiterate, for the record, the points that were made by the members here with respect to the allowances. First and foremost was the general agreement among the members that the allowances provided by our rules are public funds. And we acknowledged that we are bound by the constitution and laws of our commonwealth, and now, by our rules, to spend public funds only for public purposes. Our rules further require that our purchases be consistent with CNMI procurement regulations. The second was the general agreement that we must be transparent in our expenditures. Our rules require that we submit reports for travel, and that we submit quarterly financial reports to the Speaker. Our first report to the Speaker is due in April. With the Blanco amendment, our rules will further require that any member who draws an allowance must maintain records of all transactions, and their corresponding public purpose justifications. We are also, of course, bound by the ethics code in everything we do, and our records are public records under the Open Government Act and under our rules. Although there is no penalty in our rules, as Rep. Sheila Babauta proposed, to keep members accountable if they do not file their financial reports with the Speaker, we are liable under the law for any public funds that are misspent for personal or political purposes. And so we'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the commitment you made to work with Rep. Babauta and the other minority members to go even beyond our rules to develop legislation that would strengthen reporting requirements from all public expenditure authorities, not just lawmakers, in the Planning and Budgeting act. I stand ready to support that effort. Lastly, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, as you are aware, the members of the minority have sought further guidance from the Public Auditor and the Attorney General, with respect to the allowances. We look forward to receiving that guidance and sharing it with all of you. In closing, our hope is that in the end we show by our rules and by our conduct that we can be bipartisan. We can be fair and reasonable with each other, whether we are in the majority or the minority. And we can find a balance between affording members greater flexibility and efficiency in their operations if they choose to draw an allowance, and ensuring

transparency and accountability to preserve the public trust and protect the integrity of this body. I thank you again colleagues for the healthy debate and I am ready to vote in support of this resolution.

The Chair recognized Vice Speaker Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero.

Vice Speaker Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Mr. Speaker I would like to ask this question. If we are to offer a floor amendment and is adopted today, it will mean we will have to calendar the main question for the next, correct, counsel?

Legal Counsel John F. Cool: Yes.

Vice Speaker Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you. I yield for now.

The Chair recognized Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: Thank you Mr. Speaker. In lieu of this house rules on allowance we just received the governor's communication and the finance saying that we are heading at the direction of Pagan to explode again; and here we are with this allowance issue; what is the probability if any of the members will request for drawdown would they get that allowance. That is my question. Because if there is no money in the jar what other jar are you going to stick your hand into. So I am kind of hesitant to vote on this house rules because I want assurance from finance that there is money – that if any member wants to drawdown there is money in there You do not want to hear from them wait we are trying to find – there is no waiting game on this. Just as a concern I wanted to share, thank you Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you Representative Lee Pan, as for now the members' allocation is still at \$7,500 a month. It has not changed yet and as we all know collections determines the paper money. So is there any further discussion on the resolution? Ready. Clerk please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to adopt House Resolution 21-4, HD1, with the following results:

Representative Sheila J. Babauta	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	yes
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	yes
Representative Antonio SN. Borja	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Luis John DLG. Castro	absent (<i>excused</i>)
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	yes
Representative Jose I. Itibus	yes
Representative Richard T. Lizama	yes
Representative Donald M. Manglona	yes
Representative Janet U. Maratita	yes

Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Christina M.E. Sablan	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Edmund S. Villagomez	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker. All 18 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With all 18 members present voting yes, hereby constitutes the three-fourth votes and House Resolution 21-4, HD1 is hereby adopted by this body. Next, Floor Leader please.

The Floor Leader moved for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-2:

H. J. R. NO. 21-2

A House Joint Resolution to congratulate and honor all the women in the Commonwealth as we celebrate their contributions and achievements during the month of March 2019 proclaimed as CNMI Women’s Month and March 8th as International Women’s Day.

The motion was seconded and the Chair opened the floor; there being no discussions on the floor the Chair recognized the Clerk for the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to adopt House Joint Resolution 21-2, with the following results:

Representative Sheila J. Babauta	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	yes
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	yes
Representative Antonio SN. Borja	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Luis John DLG. Castro	absent (<i>excused</i>)
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	yes
Representative Jose I. Itibus	yes
Representative Richard T. Lizama	yes
Representative Donald M. Manglona	yes
Representative Janet U. Maratita	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Christina M.E. Sablan	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Edmund S. Villagomez	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker. All 18 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With all 18 members voting yes, House Joint Resolution 21-2 is hereby adopted.

There being no further resolutions to be acted upon the Chair directed the members to Miscellaneous Business and recognized Representative Sheila J. Babauta.

BILL CALENDAR

None

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Representative Sheila J. Babauta: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify early while we were talking about the budget and Ways and Means committee, did I hear correctly that the legislature will work together to form our own budget to be submitted to OMB?

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Well if we are going to work on the budget itself because executive branch can only touch executive branch and if there is anything that needs to be done overall in the entire government it has to go to the legislative body so we can make the proper adjustments to the 2019 budget.

Representative Sheila J. Babauta: Thank you for that. Per our rules it states that the Speaker shall issue a budget plan for the expenditure of House funds and shall therefore issue an annual report. Is this something we will work on the Ways and Means Committee?

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: That is in the rules that is separate from the general budget that we were talking about the meeting with the OMB and the acting Secretary of Finance tomorrow; that is the CNMI’s budget. The budget that we are talking about the legislature is going to be a separate one.

Representative Sheila J. Babauta: Well is that something that we will work on as a body?

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: We will be working that as a body but most especially through the committee on Ways and Means – we are probably going to be looking at the 2020 budget which is the end-result number is what we are going to be working on. But the 2019 numbers is the one that we need to fix right now.

Representative Sheila J. Babauta: Yes, urgent for sure. Thank you. And then another question breaking news where MVA Managing Director resigned, have we received any other formal communication regarding that, the acting?

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: We have not received any formal communication. I also just saw that about 30 minutes before session on the news – whether the general public is not aware you will find in the news that the Managing Director of MVA had resigned effective today.

Representative Sheila J. Babauta: Thank you, yes, unfortunately that was shocking news for me and I just wanted to commend Chris Concepcion for all his hard work and job well done at MVA.

The Chair recognized Representative Roman C. Benavente.

Representative Roman C. Benavente: Thank you Mr. Speaker. And thank you colleague Sheila for mentioning with regards to MVA because I would just like to know from your office if Chris – and you say that Chris had already resigned – I have a scheduled meeting with him tomorrow with regards to MVA and unfortunately just this afternoon I heard that he came out that he had resign. We will miss him because he is very energetic and an individual that gets things done as far as his duties and responsibilities in that area. It is sad but I hope we hear something from him because it is surprising. Thank you.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you Representative Benavente. Like I said I got it from the news; nothing is set in stone – I have not received an official communication, but if we do every member will get a copy of that communication. Representative Tina Sablan, please.

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: Thank you Speaker. And just to build on Representative Babauta’s earlier points and her questions – this is a discussion that we had among members of the minority and with some members of the leadership is the importance of really being proactive in submitting our budget for the legislature for advisory purposes so that the administration can plan for their own budget submissions. Our understanding is that typically and historically we wait for the administration to give us their estimates of what our budget should be and then we make the adjustments – but it just makes sense especially given these very trying times that we are facing for us to really look carefully at our own budget – the legislative bureau has gone and submitted theirs and we are and our rules require to prepare our own budget anyway so we would strongly recommend that that we do so formally as a matter again of advice to the administration that this is the budget for the legislature. So if Chairman Blanco would consider that as well going forward with the Ways and Means committee just to be proactive starting with this budget. And if I may shift gears a little bit, I wanted to congratulate my colleague from Precinct 2 and all the members of the 20th legislature for the designation of the Susupe Wildlife Park that was in the communications today from the Governor. Susupe lake is a very special place for the precinct but also for the island. It is the only freshwater lake on Saipan and it is an exciting initiative, and we look forward to seeing that realized in the months to come.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you Representative Sablan and the opportunity begins tomorrow with the budget actions. Representative Propst and then Representative Yumul.

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Thank you Mr. Speaker and thank you colleagues. Mr. Speaker I will try to keep within my five minutes. I do have a couple of subjects I wanted to talk about. First and foremost I was shocked and saddened to see that the MVA Director Chris Concepcion resigned. I think he is one of the brightest, most hard working people I know and I have known him for many years. And when he was in the private sector he is a man of integrity and he will be missed at MVA and I wish him all the best – I know we all do and we have worked with him. He has always been nonpartisan and always has answered any questions that we have asked him and he has been very opened and kind. So I wish him and his family the very best. I wanted to discuss

one thing that dealt with one of the topics was the generator that Rota will be purchasing a 2 megawatt 27 year old generator that has been in the newspaper but we haven't really talked about it on the floor. So I want to speak about it right now in front of our colleagues. I wanted to first thank our Vice Speaker and Chairman of PUTC Larry Guerrero for actually agreeing that the \$160,000 shipping fee is excessive and for agreeing that CUC rate payers shouldn't have to bear the brunt of that cost. I think that is something that we really need to remember – that we are paying for the rental of an 80 ton crane and that should not be at the expense of our CUC customers at a time when we are hurting financially – we are looking at spending and paying for something subsidizing something that should be paid for a company that is doing business and making profit in Rota that is a stevedoring company RT&T. So I will continue to speak out against this until this is corrected. I hope you will all join me in looking into this. Chairman and Vice Speaker perhaps if we could try and get a meeting with the Attorney General to discuss our concerns. I know that Congresswoman Tina has tried to reach out to the Attorney General we are trying to have a meeting with him but it will be great if you could attend with us just to air our concerns and to hear from you as well and with your leadership. So again that is something that is of a concern and need. On another note something that has come to light and something that I do want to discuss and I hope to find answers tomorrow morning when the Ways and Means committee meets and ask questions. After Yutu a lot of us were out there working and helping our constituents, I am going to tell you right now I didn't receive any overtime. My staff that went out worked on Saturdays and Sundays, we worked up until night time driving our own cars using our own gas and everything and spending our own time helping families. We didn't get any overtime, which is fine because we understand that we have a base salary and we accept that. What I am concerned about is that I've heard from and I've received calls from many frontline workers who are still waiting to be paid their overtime their 2.5 times overtime. What was alarming and disturbing if this turns out to be true is that, I've heard and I hope this is not the case, that cabinet members who are salaried and who makes a much larger salary than the average frontline worker much more than we do by the way, since we only make \$32,000 and we had a 20% salary reduction, that they also received overtime from Yutu at a rate of 2.5 times. Now again I really hope that this is not true because we have heard and I am not the only one, several of my colleagues have heard the same thing that some cabinet members received thirty-sum thousand dollars, forty-sum thousand dollars in overtime. Now if you put that into perspective if that turns out to be true, that is more than our annual salary – that means their work in one or two months in overtime was more than everything that anybody in this House including our Speaker and, in the Senate, did for an entire year. Now despite the criticism that we always get that we don't do anything and we just – we all do, whether we all get along or not – I know you are all out there in the precinct, in the villages and we are all doing our very best. But I seriously ask that we look into this Mr. Speaker and get an answer for this because the thing that is very disturbing is that if I have to apply an open government act request to find out the answer to this, we are going to have to wait at least 10 days, but I believe this body could ask that question tomorrow and find out the truth. Who received, how much, and what is the justification and why are salaried cabinet members who make a great deal of pay as it is would receive that. And again this has come through some sources. We hope it not to be true. But if it does turn out to be true Mr. Speaker I ask that we look into this and do an oversight on it. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Ralph N. Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Just a question to the Minority Leader because I haven't gotten any designated – who is representing the minorities for the budget – okay. I look forward to working with Tina.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: I wanted to respectfully and humbly ask the members' indulgence that if we could timely prefile proposed legislations and not of every legislature suspending our rules. And only for the reasons is to allow for our public to review any legislation 72 hours prior to our session. So that if there are any concerns out there they can take the liberty to come up to the legislature and perhaps provide some public comments if there are any concerns. I just wanted to ask – I know that we suspended the rules due to accepting the governor's communication which is really urgent for the committee on Ways and Means to dilute as we are having a meeting with representatives from OMB and the Secretary of Finance. Thank you.

Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you Floor Leader for that. Just to add on the Floor Leader, I will also try to make sure that we give opportunities especially to our representatives from Rota and Tinian at least a five day notice prior to session so that will give members an additional 48 hours to be able to prefile their legislations. Representative Yumul?

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Yes and on the same note. What we have discussed the other day, Mr. Speaker with regards to amendments, I asked at least from my committee that any amendments that is planned or is under my committee, I ask that members who are not a member of my committee attend the committee meeting and submit their amendments to the committee so that way it gives us time to prepare the proper language and it makes it a lot smoother during regular sessions. It is not that I do not respect the last minute changes but it helps everybody discuss the amendments in committee level before acting on it. It is not to offend anyone here it's just that I would prefer that. There are a lot of bills that can be discussed at the committee level and like I said, I welcome anyone who are a member of my committee to come in and join and be a part of it; and if they are adamant about changing or making changes to the bill then I welcome it and we can discuss it; now if we cannot compromise then we can put it on the floor and go from there. This is just for my committee. I am not speaking on the other committees. Thank you.

Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you Representative Yumul. And Chairpersons of each committee take note of that maybe that will help the members and authors of specific legislations that go to specific committees; if you think that there is opportunity to improve your legislations please present yourself to the committee that is holding your bills for action during their committee meetings so that we can work on that rather getting it on the floor and give more headache to the members. Are there any further? Representative Blanco?

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Mr. Speaker just really quick I just wanted to recognize Mr. Dave Maratita the Director of the ABTC from Commerce in the gallery.

Speaker Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Good afternoon Mr. Maratita, welcome. And members tomorrow meeting with OMB and Finance. It is a good opportunity to ask questions; if questions won't be answered tomorrow you can make sure that it is written so that they can proceed with

providing each member with your concerns. Please take this opportunity. If it takes a couple of days I am sure that the Chairmen of Ways and Means will take a couple of days to make sure they continue to work with the members the various heads of departments and agencies to work on the numbers that we need for 2019 and hopefully we will make a smoother transition for 2020. Again members, please take the time tomorrow. Without further ado, Floor Leader. I am sorry, are there any announcements. Representative Babauta?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Sheila J. Babauta: Thank you Speaker I just wanted to commend and congratulate the MHS Mock Trial Team. They did take the championship after 14 years and it was a very impressive performance by all of our students. I highly encourage my colleagues to attend next years. It is really so fascinating to see these young children act as lawyers and they are so passionate and enthusiastic and it really gives us hope that our education system is working and that future is bright because these students are going to go off and then come home and contribute to our CNMI. Thank you.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you. Are there any further announcements? Representative Tina Sablan.

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: Last one I promise. I just wanted to announce to the members that Congressman JP and I are hosting a clean-up in our precinct and inviting all volunteers from the community to come on down. We are meeting at sugar dock beach at 8 am and there will be refreshments. And then if you are having clean-ups in your precinct in the coming months please let us know and I'd be happy to chip-in and help out too. Thank you.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: What day, Representative Sablan?

Representative Christina M.E. Sablan: This Saturday, March 16, starting at eight o'clock. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Joel C. Camacho.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: I just want to remind the members of the JGO of our committee meeting tomorrow at 10 am. In lieu of the meeting with OMB and Secretary of Finance maybe to convene and then recess and reconvene maybe Thursday. Thank you.

There being no further announcements *the Chair recognized the Floor Leader for adjournment.*

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader John Paul P. Sablan: On that note, Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn subject to your call.

The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

The House adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Venetia S. Rosario
House Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY: 1st Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:

H. L. B. No. 21-3: To amend Saipan Local Law 20-19, Section 2(e) to authorize the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to procure tractors for the Division of Agriculture; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. IVAN A. BLANCO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Joel C. Camacho, Luis John DLG. Castro, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Joseph A. Flores, Jose I. Itibus, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul) on February 8, 2019

Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session on February 20, 2019:

H. B. No. 21-18: To amend the Litter Control Act to prohibit the possession of glass containers while on public beaches; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEE PAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

H. B. No. 21-19: To repeal and reenact 4 CMC §4263(a) to impose a higher fee structure for the Department of Commerce, Office of the Registrar of Corporations; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEE PAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

H. B. No. 21-20: To amend 9 CMC §5815, to require lease vehicle businesses to provide a Driver’s Handbook in each vehicle leased; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. LORENZO I. DELEON GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

H. B. No. 21-21: To amend 1 CMC §8248(a) and (b) by expanding the salary ceiling exemption for certain professions; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Joel C. Camacho, Luis John DLG. Castro, Joseph A. Flores, Richard T. Lizama, and John Paul P. Sablan) on February 20, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

[Added-2/20/19] H. B. No. 21-22: To facilitate the leasing of public lands to tax exempt organizations at a rental not based on appraised value. Introduced by REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources on February 27, 2019.

[Added-2/20/19] H. B. No. 21-23: To amend Title 1, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 1, Article 8 of the Commonwealth Code by adding a new subsection to §20148 to implement the Emergency Management Assistance Compact; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. LUIS JOHN DLG. CASTRO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Ivan A. Blanco, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Edwin K. Propst, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul) on February 20, 2019; referred to the House Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs on February 27, 2019.

H. L. B. No. 21-6: To amend Rota Local Law 20-8, Section 2(q), to reappropriate the \$100,000 for the Rota Island Specialty Crop Association. Introduced by REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019.

[Added-2/20/19] H. L. B. NO. 21-7: To appropriate \$1,436,967 of the Casino License Fee allocated to the First Senatorial District in accordance with 4 CMC § 2307(a). Introduced by Prefiled by: REP. DONALD M. MANGLONA of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019.

[Added-2/20/19] H. L. B. NO. 21-8: To appropriate \$84,000 from the local license fees collected for pachinko slot machines and poker machines in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. ANTONIO SN. BORJA of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019.

[Added-2/20/19] H. L. B. NO. 21-9: To appropriate funds specifically allotted to the Second Senatorial District under Public Law 18-30, as amended; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. ANTONIO SN. BORJA of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*) on February 20, 2019.