



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-SECOND NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2021

LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

1st Day, First Regular Session

Monday, January 11, 2021

Master of Ceremony Perry John P. Tenorio: *Hafa adai, tirow* and good morning. Welcome to the House of Representatives inaugural ceremony and organizational meeting of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Before I introduce the members-elect, I ask Sergeant-at-Arms Towai to escort to the dais Honorable Alexandro C. Castro, Chief Justice of the CNMI Supreme Court. Please stand. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored to present to you the Representatives-Elect of the Twenty-second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Representing Election District 1 Representative-Elect Roy Christopher Aldan Ada, Representative-Elect Celina Roberto Babauta, Representative-Elect Angel Aldan Demapan, Representative-Elect Joseph Arriola Flores, Representative-Elect Joseph Leepan Tenorio Guerrero and Representative-Elect Edwin Kenneth Propst. Representing Election District 2 Representative-Elect Christina Marie Elise Sablan and Representative-Elect John Paul Palacios Sablan. Representing Election District 3 Representative-Elect Ivan Alafanso Blanco, Representative-Elect Vicente Castro Camacho, Representative-Elect Denita Kaipat Yangetmai and Representative-Elect Ralph Naraja Yumul. Representing Election District 4 Representative-Elect Sheila Therese Jack Babauta and Representative-Elect Joel Castro Camacho. Representing Election District 5 Representative-Elect Richard Tudela Lizama and Representative-Elect Leila Haveia Fleming Clark Staffler. Representing Election District 6 the Island of Tinian and Aguiguan Representative-Elect Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas and Representing Election District 7 the Island of Rota Representative-Elect Donald Manalang Manglona. To facilitate the organizational meeting, I call on Representative-Elect Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez who is representing Election District 3 and today's Floor-Leader Pro-Tem; and I call on Sergeant-at-Arms Towai to escort Representative-Elect Blas Jonathan Tenorio Attao who is also representing Election District 3 and today's Speaker Pro-Tem to the dais. Please be seated at this time. I once again welcome you to the House of Representatives chamber. I also want to take this time to recognize our distinguished guests Honorable Alexandro Castro, Chief Justice of the CNMI Supreme Court, Honorable John Manglona, CNMI Supreme Court Justice, Honorable Perry Inos, CNMI Supreme Court Justice, Honorable Teresa Kim-Tenorio, CNMI Superior Court Judge, Honorable Edwin Aldan, Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan, Honorable David Apatang, Mayor of Saipan, Honorable Vicente Santos, Mayor of the Northern Islands, Honorable Steven King, Tinian Municipal Council Vice-chairman, Honorable Joseph Santos, Council-elect for the Tinian Municipal Council and Reverend Father Michael Linden. Please stand. I call upon the Department of Public Safety for the posting of the Colors and Mr. Gus Kaipat to the podium to lead us in the singing of the United States National Anthem and the CNMI Anthem.

(National and Commonwealth Anthems were sung)

Master of Ceremony Perry John P. Tenorio: Please remain standing as I call upon Reverend Father Michael Linden for the Invocation.

(Reverend Father Michael Linden gave the Invocation)

Master of Ceremony Perry John P. Tenorio: I now ask our members and guest to please be seated. It is with great honor and privilege that I call on Speaker Pro Tem, Representative-Elect Blas Jonathan Tenorio Attao, to officially call this House of Representatives’ Organizational meeting of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to order.

CALL TO ORDER

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Day, First Regular Session on the Eleventh day of January the year Two Thousand and Twenty-One at 10:20 a.m. in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Representative-Elect Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao, Speaker Pro Tem presided.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Mr. Tenorio. As such, I also welcome all distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen and to Reverend Father Michael Linden of the Society of Jesuits thank you very much for your prayers and to the Honorable Chief Justice Alexandro Castro welcome to the House of Representatives and to our viewing public on Facebook and on Channel 23, welcome to your chamber. *Hafa adai* and *tirow*, I now call this Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, House of Representatives Organizational Session to order. I will now recognize the Clerk for the roll call.

CALL OF THE ROLL BY ELECTION PRECINCTS

The Clerk called the roll in numerical order by election precincts:

Election District 1

Representative-Elect Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Present
Representative-Elect Celina Roberto Babauta	Present
Representative-Elect Angel Aldan Demapan	Present
Representative-Elect Joseph Arriola Flores	Present
Representative-Elect Joseph Leepan Tenorio Guerrero	Present
Representative-Elect Edwin Kenneth Propst	Present

Election District 2

Representative-Elect Christina Marie Elise Sablan	Present
Representative-Elect John Paul Palacios Sablan	Present

Election District 3

Representative-Elect Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Present
Representative-Elect Ivan Alafonso Blanco	Present
Representative-Elect Vicente Castro Camacho	Present
Representative-Elect Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Present
Representative-Elect Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Present
Representative-Elect Ralph Naraja Yumul	Present

Election District 4

Representative-Elect Sheila Therese Jack Babauta	Present
Representative-Elect Joel Castro Camacho	Present

Election District 5

Representative-Elect Richard Tudela Lizama	Present
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Representative-Elect Leila Haveia Fleming Clark Staffler Present

Election District 6

Representative-Elect Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas Present

Election District 7

Representative-Elect Donald Manalang Manglona Present

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, all 20 Representatives-Elect are present.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. Let the record reflect that all Representatives-Elect are present and a quorum is hereby constituted.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: We now go on to our next Order of Business and that is the swearing-in of Representatives-Elect. My fellow Representatives-Elect, I ask each one of you to rise for our swearing-in as members of this House of Representatives and I ask the Honorable Alexandro C. Castro, Chief Justice of the CNMI Supreme Court to administer the Oath of Office.

Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro: Please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

The following was repeated by all the Representatives-Elect:

“I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, and that I will faithfully discharge my duties as Representatives of the 22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to the best of my ability, so help me God.”

Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro: Congratulations everybody.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Chief Justice. You may be seated, members. Thank you again, Chief Justice for swearing-in of the members of the Twenty-Second House of Representatives. The next Order of Business in the Introduction and Adoption of the Interim Rules. I will now recognize Floor Leader Pro Tem Villagomez.

INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF THE HOUSE RULES

Floor Leader Pro Tem Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honored to introduce **House Resolution Number 22-1, “A House Resolution to adopt the Rules for the House of Representatives and to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to review the rules; and for other purposes.”** So move, Mr. Speaker.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Floor Leader Pro Tem. The motion is for the adoption and it has been seconded. Discussion on the motion?

Several members voiced “ready.”

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt House Resolution 22-1 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: House Resolution 22-1 is hereby adopted. We now move to the next Order of Business, the Election of Speaker. I recognize Representative Leepan Guerrero.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with privilege and honor to nominate the Honorable Representative Angel Demapan to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. So move, Mr. Speaker.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Leepan. There’s a motion for the nomination of Representative Angel Demapan for Speaker and has been seconded. Any other nominations? Representative Yangetmai please.

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai: Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. It is with great privilege that I nominate the Honorable Edmund Sablan Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. I so move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Yangetmai. Another nomination for the Office of the Speaker is Representative Edmund Villagomez and it has been seconded. Are there any other nominations? None. May I please get a motion to close nominations? Representative John Paul Sablan please.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. I now move that we close nominations. So move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: A motion to close nomination has been presented by Representative JP Sablan and has been seconded. Discussion on that motion?

Several members voiced “ready.”

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you again, members. I now call the Clerk to call the roll for the Office of the Speaker.

The Clerk called the roll on the nominations of Representative Angel A. Demapan and Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker as follows:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Demapan
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	Demapan
Representative Celina R. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	Demapan
Representative Joel C. Camacho	Demapan
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	Villagomez
Representative Angel A. Demapan	Demapan
Representative Joseph A. Flores	Demapan
Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero	Demapan
Representative Richard T. Lizama	Villagomez
Representative Donald M. Manglona	Villagomez
Representative Edwin K. Propst	Villagomez
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	Villagomez
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	Demapan
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	Demapan
Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler	Villagomez
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	Villagomez
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	Villagomez
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	Demapan

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Speaker Pro Tem, 10 members voted for Demapan, 10 members voted Villagomez.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With 10 members voting for Representative Demapan and 10 members voting for Representative Villagomez and in accordance with Rule 1, Section (b) that a majority of the members and in all cases not less than 11 votes cast in his or her favor, the motion to elect the Office of the Speaker is not carried. I will now call for a 10 minutes recess and we’ll get back to the chamber in 10 minutes. Short recess.

The House recessed at 10:30 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 10:49 a.m.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: We are back into our inaugural session. With the understanding of the members, during recess that we will move on under Order of Business down to Communications and we’ll take the statements of members. We’ll go to recess and allow the MC to take care of the rest of the ceremony and have our benediction. So, with that being said; Clerk, under communications.

COMMUNICATIONS

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem there’s none received.

STATEMENTS OF MEMBERS

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With no communications. We’re down to Statements of members and I understand that the program says that the statement of the Speaker on behalf of the members, but unfortunately, we have no speaker at this time so we will allow the members to present their statement. If you have a written statement and would just like to present it to the Clerk and it will be added to the journal for the inaugural session that’s okay also. So, let’s start with our right side downward with Representative Celina Babauta.

Representative Celina R. Babauta’s Statement

Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro-Tem, Father Michael Linden, Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, Chief Justice Alexandro Castro and members of the CNMI Judiciary. Mayor David Apatang, Mayor Edwin Aldan, Mayor Vicente Santos, fellow representatives and honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen; democracy is a shared enterprise its fate depends on all of us, its citizens. Our votes, our declaration of our values and I’m deeply honored by the community of precinct 1 for bestowing their trust in me to represent their collective voices undeniably my success is their success too. I understand that the actions I may take as a contributing member of the 22nd House of Representatives represent a symbol of public authority and trust and I resolve to uphold my duties with the same tenacity I had during the campaign trail. Today, we have been given a sacred trust to work for our communities and our families. We will respect the wisdom of those who came before us and protect the future of those to follow. We will discharge this trust through our legislative policy guided by three principles: doing what is just, doing our best and doing what is right. Our Commonwealth is drifting towards the reef with no rescue in sight. The challenge to restore trust in our government is daunting, but we must demand these principles not as partisan goals but as moral mandates. The time has come to tuck away our democrat and republican guidons and uncase our United States and our Commonwealth flags and raise it to full staff because our people want, expect and deserve a Commonwealth government that they can trust. Being a democrat or republican is irrelevant to the task at hand. We will get through the challenges of 2021 one step at a time, one foot in front of the other, but our challenges are not over. In extraordinary times only courageous leaders who are willing to walk into the fire at the risk of getting scorched will put our islands and its citizens priorities before any political party. I am more than ready to do that. *I mu na subetbia-hu mas i fiét na hinengge-hu na guaha Yu’us ya guiya hu pipet yo’ mo’na gi kayon ni ha ayek para guahu.* Infidelity and gratitude. *Dánkolo na si Yu’us ma’ase* and to my husband Franklin and our children for their love, support and prayers on this journey. They have been my battle buddies through everything. *Sen mas si Yu’us ma’ase, ghillisow yan salamat po.*

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Celina Babauta. Congratulations again. Representative Flores please.

Representative Joseph A. Flores: Thank you Pro Tem Speaker. I prepared a speech and I’ll just maybe turn it in to the Clerk, but I would like to say a little word just to my precinct from precinct 1. I would like to say *dánkolo na agradesimiento gi ma kontinua ma na’i yo’ gi konfiansa gi botu niha ta’lo pa’go na sakkan ti ma na malayu ta’lo i flores gi precinct 1 na ma na fan flores pues malago yo’ na bai na’i siha dánkolo na agradesimiento ta’lo gi este na sakkan.* Thank you. Welcome new colleagues to the 22nd Legislature.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Flores and congratulations again. Representative Propst please.

Representative Edwin K. Propst’s Statement

Thank you, Speaker and colleagues. *Buenas dias, so raal lim, maganda umaga po*, to all our dear guest, distinguished guests here, everyone in the building, everyone out there watching and listening, to all our wonderful friends and family thank you so much for your love and support. To my dear esteemed colleagues in this august body, today marks the first day of this journey that we take together. As the twenty of us set out to do the work of the people, I want you to know there are three things you can expect from me: love, respect and kindness – regardless of your political affiliation and differences that we may have in opinions – my door, like these big ears are always open to you. How come you laughed about my big ears? They are big. We are coming in as public servants in this 22nd Legislature at a time when our people need us the most; probably the most difficult time in Commonwealth history and I know all the twenty of us will work together and rise to the challenge. If there is ever a time when we really need to work hard together this is the time our people are depending on all twenty of us. So, let us do the work of the people. Let us work together and remember to put the needs of our people first each and every time we craft and pass legislation, volunteer our time and our precincts and the community. Please know that if you ever need a helping hand you can call, I’m always here for you. To my dearest precinct 1 family, on behalf of my wife Daisy, our children, our family, I want to thank you from our hearts for this opportunity to serve again. I walked away from public service after three terms disgusted, disenchanted by the ugliest side of politics I have ever witnessed in my entire life, the incendiary cruel attacks on social media by troglodytes and others who were out there not just to hurt me, but to hurt my family. As I have learned through the most darkest times of my life in the most difficult times, I have a resilient and loving wife behind me who often stands in front of me and loving children and just as important we have a loving a supportive precinct and community who brought me back – who believed in me in the work I did, but not just by myself but with my team, with my esteemed colleagues – I can assure you, each and every one of you in this room that work will continue as does my commitment to helping you and your families, we thank you for your love, support and prayers. To my Chief of Staff Vince Camacho and Community Coordinator Sal Limes, we are eager to work for the people again. We love you all, we thank you, we work for you. To my dearest fellow candidates in precinct 1 and in other precincts who ran, but fell a little short; please know that this seat that I’m in right now is shared with you. Your ideas, your passion, your vision continues and you will always have a seat at this table. To my dearest family, I start with you my wife Daisy Sablan Kayama Pangelinan Manglona-Propst thank you for being my greatest supporter, my best friend, my greatest and most loving soulmate, my CEO and CFO who gives me *chenchule’* when I ask, although it’s very reduced – in the darkest of our days, you always manage to see the light despite my many flaws, you have always seen the best in me and I continue to be the best for you my loving and amazing wife. To our children, Kiana, Devin, Kaden, Logan you have given your mom and me the greatest joy in this world – a few headaches, but most definitely the greatest joy and we love you so much and we’re so proud of you. To my mom and dad, Ivan and Juanita Propst, my mother-in-law Vivian Cruz, my fathers Jack Cruz and Justin Manglona thank you for teaching me what unconditional love is all about that forgiveness is an essential part of love and that family goes well beyond bloodline. Family stands for and starts with father and mother I love you. To all our family and friends who continue to love us and support us, thank you and we

love you all. We ask that you pray for each and everyone of us in this esteemed legislature. I am ready to work with each and every one of you. I am here for you and I love you all. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Propst and congratulations again. Rep. John Paul Sablan please.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the interest of time, I will be submitting to the Clerk a written form of my speech. I do want to go on record this morning and congratulate each and one of you members of this august body of this 22nd Commonwealth Legislature. I also want to take this opportunity to thank my wife, my kids, my siblings who are here with me this morning and most especially to my dear people of election precinct 2 for giving me the honor again, for believing in me, giving me the trust and confidence that was bestowed in this previous election. With that, I yield back to you Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative John Paul Sablan. Congratulations again. Representative Vicente Camacho please.

Representative Vicente C. Camacho’s Statement

Thank you. Good morning fellow members of Congress, distinguished guests, families, friends and remote viewers of today’s event. I am honored to be sitting in front of you. As we begin a new year with a new congress, we face a number of challenges chief among them the COVID-19 virus pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the Administration for the quarantine measures that have been instrumental in keeping the virus out of our community. While these measures may have presented difficult for some, I believe that most will agree that we do find ourselves better off than most people in the world. On this problem at least for now we should consider ourselves fortunate. This is a historic day for the democratic party in the CNMI. It has been well over three-decades since the democratic party had a real voice in our government. The results of this last election makes it clear that the people do want change. They want a government that works for all the people without regards of party loyalty. They want a government free of corruption. They want to have a voice in their government. My hope for the 22nd Legislature is that the House, the Senate and the Administration will join forces to keep our community free of the virus pandemic and maintain this spirit of cooperation in all of our deliberations. Let us put our political differences aside and work together for the best interest of the people. Let us join forces and plan for economic recovery – this is also a difficult challenge. We must start with the management of our scarce resources and move forward from there. We must consider the role of private businesses and help them with their economic recovery plan. It is the private businesses that produce the bulk of the CNMI’s revenue. Let us join forces and ensure that this year all eligible community members can avail themselves of federal assistance. We have people who are suffering because of job losses and have no other means of surviving this economic crisis. We need to review our service processes and implement procedures to ensure that all eligible applicants are properly revealed provided for to the extent possible this is our obligation to them. Let us join forces and find workable solution to get our children back in school. Our schools remain a remanent of Super Typhoon Yutu. This should have already been high on our priority list. The longer we wait the more buildings will deteriorate and the more expensive they will be to repair. Let us join forces and find workable solutions to get our government moving in the right direction and prevent further corruption. It is our obligation to

improve the operations and functions of services to our Commonwealth to protect our constitutional rights, our covenant and our laws. Enforcing our laws and providing equal representation is the people's rights and our government's obligation. Let us join forces and let the CNMI the world's best tourist destination. The entire island should be kept clean, our villages, the downtown areas and the tourist sites and we should promote the uniqueness of our multi-cultural community. Finally, let us join forces and find a workable solution to bring back integrity of our people, our culture and our traditions. We have a unique and diverse community. Cultural representation and traditions should be explored and introduced as one of our strategies in promoting the CNMI. To my wife, my children and grandchildren, friends, to my committee and especially to the constituents, I love you and thank you, *ghillisow, salamat po, kam sa ham ni da, si Yu'us ma'ase* and may God bless us.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Vicente Camacho and congratulations again. Representative Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul's Statement

Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. *Hafa adai, tirow*, good morning Honorable Justice Alex Castro, colleagues and distinguished guest. Please allow me first to start by thanking my family for their support and encouragement throughout my life. They have continued to instill in me the values and principles that have guided me in many of my decisions and to continue to guide me in the decisions and the challenges that await me. I want to thank my wife Joy and my son Railee who is in the office, who has stood by my side. Thank you for the love and support. To my constituents of precinct three thank you again for giving me the chance and allowing me to serve you once again, I am forever grateful to you. To my campaign chairman Mr. Delbert Pua, my staff treasurer Ashely Benavente and my campaign advisor former Senator Ray Yumul thank you for making my campaign a little less difficult. And to all that I am unable to mention but are no less important, thank you. This morning, I once again, I formally accept this honor of serving the voters of Precinct Three and all the people of the CNMI. In performing my duties of my office, I will always look to you the people for strength, encouragement, and support. I will not forget that I am a citizen just like you and that the economic challenges you endure are also mine as well to endure. The challenges we face today are difficult but they are not impossible to overcome if we all work together. I will ensure that we work within our means and focus with a limited resources on improving the quality of life, our health care and our education system. These are very difficult times once again in our Commonwealth and so I promise to serve you the people to the best of my ability, with humility, respect and honor. Thank you, *si Yu'us ma'ase, ghillisow* and *maraming salamat po*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Rep. Yumul and congratulations again. Rep. Joel Camacho please.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. In the interest of time, I would also like to submit my statement in to the Clerk, but I just want to briefly thank the great people of precinct four for their vote of confidence in me. My office will continue to work hard for each and every one of you. On behalf of my fiancé Monica Manibusan, my two children Isaac and Isaiah, my parents; thank you all for your support, your love and your belief in me – continue to work for our community. I love you all and congratulations to each and every one of

you. I look forward to this 22nd Legislature and work together for the betterment of our people. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Rep. Camacho and congratulations again.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: Apologies, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank my hardworking staff for their dedication these past two years. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you again, Representative Joel Camacho and congratulations to you again. Representative Leila Staffler please.

Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler’s Statement

*Hafa adai, buenas dias, lessor mwaimwai, mogatin, ali, sawat di donchaaao, ohaiyo gozaimasu, guten morgen, menseng mwauh, zao shang hao, magandang umaga, jo-un achim and good morning. Good morning Marianas! It is a great morning in this Marianas and the nerves are pouring out of me, but that’s kind of normal for me! I would like to thank God first for His guidance and grace and for your grace. For those who know me know that passion leaks from my eyes, but do not mistake that for weakness it’s passion through and through. It also marks the gravity and seriousness I take participating in this body’s responsibility to all the people that live here. I owe a debt of gratitude to my family, thanks mom, for their patience, for their grace and enthusiasm to pursue opportunities to serve my community. Thank you. I thank my democratic colleagues, the democratic party and all of the committees who put so much effort, sweat, time and among other things to support the efforts to get into this election. I am so grateful to the help of all of the precinct 5 committee members, the poll workers, their families all for their time and their effort to support Congressman Lizama and I together, especially those 21 days that was really long! I must say my favorite part of this election was going out and meeting all of the voters, from precinct 1 to precinct 7. I thank you all for giving me your time and your interest in the happenings of our Commonwealth. You took the time to share your concerns, your ideas and your hopes with me and with my colleagues. I thank all of the body, the members and my colleagues here for your support throughout this exciting new period of my life and I appreciate all that you’ve shared with me in preparation for today. The nerves are going. I must especially thank the voters of precinct 5; my students-past and present, their families, my colleagues in education and the greater precinct 5 community who have come to know me as “Ms. Staffler” or even just simply “Staffler”, I thank you all for your vote of confidence and for giving me this opportunity to serve you in another capacity. I ran because I believe that public office is a public trust. People who know me and have worked with me will tell you that I have always tried to live by the following principles: “Do the most good” and to “Leave this place better than you found it.” With this body, I know that we will work together to improve the fiscal responsibility, performance, and efficiency of our government. Personally, I pledge to lead by those principles to “Do the most good” and to “Leave our islands better than I found them because *mit beses yan mas, hu saluda hao, gatbo na islas* Marianas. Thank you.*

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Staffler and congratulations again. Representative Donald Manglona please.

Representative Donald M. Manglona's Statement

Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. Good morning distinguished guests, honorable colleagues, the viewing public and the people of Rota. I want to take this time to thank the following: to my parents Charles and Lorna Manglona words cannot express how grateful and blessed I am for your sacrifices and support during my journey, knowing that you are always by my side has made me strong and steady. To my siblings Mark, Craig, Oliver, Charlene and your families knowing that I can always count on you for guiding and helping me along the way is a comfort to me. Thank you so much. To my Chairman Paterno Hocog and committee members *Hale'Luta*, my staff Lester and Chelsea and those who have volunteered and contributed to our campaign efforts – my success is your success and I would not be here without your untiring help, support and commitment. My family and friends, people of Rota you are my backbone and my lifeline. Although, many of you aren't able to be here today, you are all one of the many reasons I am able to do what the people elected me to do. For those of you who are here witnessing this moment, I am humbled by your presence and confidence. You all inspire me to continue serving our people. Coming in as a freshman lawmaker two years ago, I was sure the journey would not be easy with the typhoon recovery and the COVID-19 pandemic occurring not too long after, I had to fast-track the learning process and rely on my experiences as an educator and small business owner and all my mentors to work with my legislative colleagues and stakeholders to provide immediate and viable solutions to the challenges that emerged during my first term. Although, these events seem daunting, they allowed me to grow and learn quickly. I continue to reflect on all the valuable experiences I've gained to better serve our Commonwealth and most especially the people of Rota. My first two years has been so memorable to say the least and it is because of you my dear people of precinct 7, Rota; entrusting me to continue the good fight and hard work it take to provide solutions to our commonwealths difficulty as well as thinking ahead for the future generations is a task I will not and have not taken lightly. I share your pain, I hear you, I see you and I feel you. I pledge to all of you that I will continue to work and do all that is within my power to lessen our struggles. Thank you again for this honor, I am forever grateful. Colleagues, congratulations again to each of you. The road ahead is uncertain, but I am confident that working with each of you, we will overcome the challenges and work collaboratively to ensure that the decisions we make are for the best interest of our people. I am deeply honored to work along side you for the best interest of our people and for the great Commonwealth. Thank you, *si Yu'us ma'ase, maraming salamat po*, and may God bless this great Commonwealth and the United States of America.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Manglona and congratulations again. Floor Leader Pro Tem Villagomez please.

Floor Leader Pro Tem Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. Sorry about earlier. In the interest of time, I myself would like to submit my statement at a later time, but just briefly; I would like to thank the people of the CNMI most especially the people of precinct 3 for once again giving me this honor and opportunity to serve them once again. To my family and to my committee for standing by me all throughout my experience as an elected official. To Joleen, Geno and Jayden also thank you for having my back. To my little princess Emily who's in school right now, thank you. Colleagues, congratulations to all those that stepped out to the plate to run and come up short, thank you for taking that step in serving our people. I look forward to working with all of you. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Floor Leader Pro Tem Villagomez. Congratulations again. Representative San Nicolas please.

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas’ Statement

Speaker Pro Tem, Honorable Chief Justice Castro, Honorable Mayor Aldan, Honorable Mayor Apatang, Honorable Vice Chairman Estevan King, colleagues, friends, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning and *hafa adai*. Welcome and thank you all for joining us in today’s momentous occasion, our inauguration and swearing-in ceremony. And now, please allow me to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest congratulations to all of us, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem and colleagues for earning the confidence of our people to represent them in this august body. We all know that our great Commonwealth is presently facing real and unprecedented challenges in regards to our ailing economy due to circumstances beyond our control (such as the corona virus pandemic), but I sincerely believe in my heart that if we, the members of the House of Representatives, set our political differences aside and put in our hearts, first and foremost the interest of our people starting today and onward, there is nothing that we cannot do to fulfill the public’s agenda for a better Commonwealth for all. With this said, I am more ready to listen, assist, and most especially work to the best of my ability with each and every one of you to accomplish said agenda. It will be hard and frustrating, but I know it is doable. In addition, I hope that we can work together without colleagues in the Senate as well as the Torres/Palacios Administration towards a common goal, a more stable and prosperous Commonwealth. In closing, I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation *yan un dánkolo na si Yu’us ma’ase* to my beloved people of Tinian for their support and vote of confidence this past election and I promise to represent them to the best of my abilities, so help me God. To my wife Carol, our children and entire family, thank you for your believe in me and all the support extended to me. Thank you, good morning *hafa adai* once again. *Si Yu’us ma’ase*.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative San Nicolas and Congratulations again. Representative Lizama please.

Representative Richard T. Lizama’s Statement

Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. Honorable Chief Justice Castro and distinguished guests and my colleagues, first and foremost, I want to begin by giving a special thank to my wonderful wife – thank you, I love you – for all the support and dedication she has given me in this past election. I want to recognize and give thanks to my committee league for their hard work and dedication throughout the election the team performed superbly. Finally, the precinct 5 community thank you for re-electing me to the 22nd Legislature enabling me the opportunity to serve you for the next two years. You all are why I decide to run for office and I will do everything within my power to not let you down. Mr. Speaker Pro Tem and colleagues, let’s not lie to ourselves; we are facing one of the worst time in the CNMI history. There’s no doubt that we’ll be seeing more cuts and furloughs in the future. I humbly ask each one of you to work diligently together to build a resilient and self-sustainable community. We must find ways to reduce spending and find efficient ways to provide for our people. We must work together to find solutions to help our community. Remember the people elected us to be in this office and it’s our duty and responsibility to provide sound solutions and answers to improve our way of living. We must also learn how to listen with the intent to understand and not only to listen with the intent to reply. We must understand each other to work together. My colleagues, let us put our party

differences away and get to work for our community, our people and the CNMI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem and colleagues. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you again, Representative Lizama and congratulations again. Representative Sheila Babauta please.

Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta’s Statement

Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. Good morning, *hafa adai, kaselehlie maingko*. I’d like to begin by thanking our creator, our God for blessing me with this life, this journey that isn’t always easy but it is always fun and full of meaningful lessons and people who bring light and joy into my life. To my supporters and the people of precinct 4, thank you for entrusting me to serve another term in public office to take this seat and represent you and bring you to every space that I enter; every meeting, every public hearing, every session, I bring you with me your thoughts your concerns your dreams – my passion to serve you and the CNMI is truly at the core of my being and I’m grateful and humbled for the opportunity. I’d like to thank my family, my parents Diego and Dolorina Babauta for always having faith in me and motivating me to be my best, thank you for being my super supporters and for allowing me to post things about you on Facebook. My siblings, Carmen, Tracy, Justin and Christine for their love and support. My Godmother and Chairwoman Susan Riva Babauta and her family, Nino John, Nancy and Jessica I love you for your commitment, kindness and enthusiasm through it all thank you for believing in me. My running mate Jenita Castro, her partner Herman, mother *Nang Elang* and family; I love and appreciate you and all the positive energy and attitude, dedication that they brought during the campaign I will always be here for you. To my colleagues, members of the 22nd congratulations. Thank you for making the decision to run, whether it’d be your first time or your sixth, making that decision is never easy. It definitely requires some serious planning, energy and persistence. Choosing to engage in the political arena is courageous and admirable – it’s hard work, but it’s a lot of fun and although we may come from different backgrounds, different parties and even different generations the one value that we have in common is service. The quality of service, the quantity of service and the spirit of service are the three areas that will lead us in the right direction to improve government functions and relationships to promote sustainability, revive our economy, to leave a positive mark, to make this a better place. No one individual has sufficient experience, education, ability or knowledge to accomplish this vision alone. No one person can do it all. It is a collective effort we must work together. The plan we have in mind may change more than once with unforeseen events like we’ve experience many times before, but it is our responsibility to hold the vision. We have been called to serve in a significant way and we each bring value to this chamber. I acknowledge your talents and commitment to our CNMI. I am honored to be a part of the 22nd CNMI House of Representatives and I stand ready to serve with you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. I yield.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Sheila Babauta and congratulations again. Representative Yangetmai.

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai’s Statement

Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem Attao. Thank you colleagues for giving me the extra 20 minutes. *Hafa adai yan manana si Yu’us para todus hit taotao tano guini guiya islas notte Marianas and Tirow, lesor alim me, lesor mwamwaay, ngali ghisch aramasal téél faliw kka affangil Ghuwam*

me metawal Wóól me bwal fal Fúú-se-mwóghút! Let me first begin by expressing my profound gratitude to God, the Almighty Father, for all the blessings that He had bestowed upon me and, I pray will continue. I would also like to extend my deepest and utmost appreciation to my families and all my supporters in precinct 3 and beyond who made it possible for me to serve as their representative in this 22nd CNMI Legislature. For your information, I am the lone Refaluwasch woman in this 22nd Legislature! I can already feel the burden of advocating on behalf of all of my Refaluwasch people which I know will be a daunting effort, therefore; I am humbly asking all of you, my colleagues for your support and assistance. There is no question that I am here to represent the interests of all my precinct 3 constituents, but by default which is not of my making, I know I will be called upon by my people to advocate on their behalf, which is something I feel that I will have to oblige. Indeed, I am very new at this a rookie sort of speaking, but I will do my very best in the next two years to carry out the mandate that I have been entrusted to do. Additionally, I will make a supreme effort to be proactive and to provide an effective representation for everyone in precinct 3. The next two years will be a challenge for me, indeed, and yet I am Hopeful that it will be an opportunity for all of us to do our best to serve our people and our Commonwealth. By the way, I will be remiss if I did not mention that today is a very special and significant day for me, personally, as it also marks the 30th death anniversary of my father, Dr. Benusto Rogolifoi Kaipat. For those of you who never knew him, he was one of the pillars of the CNMI Democratic Party as well as a leader in our Refaluwasch community; and I feel confident that he is looking down on us feeling elated and relieved that the party is back and here to stay. I would like to ask my father, Aghilbwe, along with the other great politicians who have gone before us, to provide us with guidance from the great beyond as we propel forward. May they all rest in peace. Furthermore, I am humbly asking our wise elders and the great politicians who are still with us today, to also provide us with virtuous advice and guidance towards a better Commonwealth for all of us today and for our posterity. Again, I would like to restate my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all my supporters who gave me their trusts and votes of confidence to represent them in this esteemed legislature. And I am very hopeful at the prospect of being a part of an effective legislature, and I look forward to an actualization of our collective achievements. *Ghilisou, Lios Ebwe Faiye ghisch and si Yu'us ma'ase.*

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Yangetmai and congratulations again. Representative Blanco please.

Representative Ivan A. Blanco: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker Pro Tem for the opportunity to share very brief comments. *Hafa adai,* I am happy and ready to join each of you my colleagues to serve our people of our Commonwealth and especially constituents of precinct 3, but in the interest of time and because my look pain Carmen is helping me with my comments of gratitude and commitment. Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, I hereby respectfully request to submit my comments for the record. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Blanco and congratulations again. Representative Tina Sablan please.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan's Statement

Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem and Good morning to all of our colleagues here today, congratulations. Good morning to our distinguished guests and members of the viewing public,

welcome to the House. Today's inauguration of the 22nd House of Representatives marks the beginning of a new and hopefully fruitful chapter in our commonwealth's history. We have among us a diverse assembly of seasoned educators, decorated veterans and military families, business leaders and finance professionals, experienced public servants, passionate community advocates, and more. We have more women elected to this body than at any other time in our history. We have, for the first time in decades, a robust two-party system alive and well that is reflected in the composition of this body. We also have, for the first time, a House that appears to be evenly split. How will we get anything done? I think, at the end of the day, it will come down to each one of us choosing to get things done, choosing to be effective, choosing to work together for the greater good. This could be the most productive and collaborative legislature the Commonwealth has ever seen. Or it could be the most gridlocked. We could seek out creative and bipartisan ways to solve the pressing problems of our day. Or not, and the problems will remain. Colleagues, it's really up to us. It's helpful to always bear in our hearts and minds the reasons we ran for public office in the first place, the reasons we wanted to serve. What are the values that drive us? What do we have in common? Let's start there. If we all want a safe, just, healthy, and beautiful Commonwealth, we can work towards that together. If we all want the rule of law, a diversified economy that improves the lives of all residents, an educational system that produces skilled workers and great citizens, a healthcare system that is affordable and accessible, a government that is fiscally responsible and worthy of the people's trust - we can work towards all of that, together. We may disagree on the details. We may offer different strategies to get to the same goal. But we can share a common vision, and use our differences to challenge each other and refine our ideas. That's the beauty of democracy. The events of the past few weeks in our country, and especially the last few days, have been a sobering reminder of how fragile democracy can be. How crucial it is to have free and fair elections, leaders and citizens who respect election results, and peaceful transitions of power. How essential it is, that leaders and citizens alike be able and willing to move past partisan divides to tackle common problems and build thriving communities. I look forward to working with all of you, colleagues. I am grateful to so many who have helped me along on this journey in public service, too many to name individually in these brief remarks. But I would like to give special thanks to my family, and especially my parents Eugenio and Carmela, our fellow candidates, and committees and supporters, Tokie Mojica who is and has been the backbone of our office, and of course the people of precinct 2 and the Commonwealth. Thank you for your faith and confidence in me. May God bless our Northern Mariana Islands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. I yield.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Tina Sablan and congratulations again. Representative Leepan Guerrero please.

Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero: *Si Yu'us ma'ase, Mr. Speaker. Guaha lakkue iyok-hu speech lao esta todou ma sangan ma lachai, fera di enao esta si Chief Justice kumeke maigo' guenao hulu ya pot no bai na maigo' po'lo ya bai submiti halom iyok-hu speech gi Clerk. Sen mas ni man ga'chong hu i karera-ta mo'na parao disidi hafa na chalan para ta chule enao gue mas impottante. Otro para i asagua-hu, famagu'on-hu, mañelu-hu yan i espesiatmente gi komunitat precinct 1 si Yu'us ma'ase ni botun konfransa. Para i komiti-hu, hamyo mu li'e yo guini yan i komunitat precinct 1 bai cho'gue taimano ha disidi ni hu tutuhon malago. Taya i na fisisiku ni para bai cho'gue i che'cho ni ginaga'gao. Mr. Speaker, si Yu'us ma'ase.*

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase,* Representative Leepan and congratulations *ta'lo.* Representative Angel Demapan please.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Speaker Pro Tem. *Hafa adai*, tirow to all us our dear colleagues of the 22nd House of Representatives, our honored guests, our families and friends in the viewing public. I will be just doing my acknowledgement portion for today and then submitting the full version for the record, Mr. Speaker. I just first and foremost would like to thank God and the people of Precinct 1 for the opportunity to serve them in the people's House for a third term. I also want to thank our supporters from outside the precinct who contributed and assisted in the campaign. To my wife, Tian, our young children, our families and friends for their support and their shared partnership in a life of public service. To my campaign Chairman JJ Atalig and the members of my campaign team for their hard work and support – today we turn a new leaf and I stand ready to work hard to bring results to the people. In the 19th and 20th Legislature, I acknowledge those have gone before me, my life's mentors that time former Representative Juan Demapan, my mother Rosario Aldan, my godmother Lucinda Sablan and my former boss the late Governor Eloy Inos. Today I share this day with them and two of my other close family members who are not here today and that's my mother-in-law Morean Kabua and the first speaker of the House my advisor Oscar Cruz Rasa. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. Speaker for today's liberation. Although, we are at an impasse at this time, I look forward to working together to break the impasse and fulfilling our commitment of service to the people of the Northern Marianas Islands. *Si Yu'us ma'ase, olomwaay*, thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Demapan and congratulations again. Representative Roy Ada please.

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada's Statement

Thank you, Speaker and everybody and everybody in attendance for joining us in this occasion. First, I would like to thank God for all his blessings and gathering us today and to all the people involved in making this event possible with the pandemic and everything else that's going on to the LB staff and other agencies that have contributed to making sure everything is in line. I also want to thank my committee Chairman Patrick Cepeda and Vice Chair Del Lieto, my family my father and my mother, my brother and my sisters, my wife and kids and extended family for the belief and the love and the support throughout this campaign. To the people of precinct 1 and abroad, thank you for believing in me and all the support that you have given to our campaign here to this office. I sit here on your behalf and I want you to know that I am ready to serve and lead the CNMI and it's people and I will do what I am sworn to do and everything else to the best of my ability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Roy Ada. Congratulations again. I apologies. In the interest of time, I will be submitting my official comments to the Clerk, but with that being said; Chief Justice thank you for staying with us, Associate Justice Inos, Judge Theresa Kim-Tenorio thank you for keeping our MC in the building. Former Representative Ada thank you for joining us welcome back to your House. To the members, on behalf of Jeannie, our daughter Breya, our parents and our siblings; we congratulate each and every one of you. We are team CNMI in the House of Representatives. We are not one precinct in this body, we are the people. We represent the people in the CNMI and with that we congratulate each and every one of you. To my committee to re-elect led by our Chairman Sim Lisua and our Secretary Treasurer Andrea Tenorio and to the team, thank you guys for the hard work and dedication you have put into all the campaigns that we have gone through. To the precinct 3 Chairman Mr. Jack Ogumoro and the precinct 3 club, thank you guys

for the determination and the hard work you have put in assisting your candidates in this last election. To Jeannie and my daughter Breya, thank you guys very much for everything, I understand that I run away and come back and take care of you guys at night my colleagues are very well aware when 5:00 hits that I'm gone and I'm heading over to check you guys. That's the most important thing in life because that's who we are as people. So thank you for the work and time you've put in to not just this campaign, but also for the people of the CNMI that you've done. To our parents thank you for your patience and your commitment that you have put into making sure the endeavors that I precede are successful and you're there every step of the way. Thank you, guys. To our siblings that are not with us here today, thank you for all the support. I just want to wish my youngest sister happy birthday. Today is her birthday and she's watching us on Facebook. So, Upe happy birthday. To the people of precinct 3 and the people of the Commonwealth thank you guys for this opportunity that you guys have given us. The biggest honor to each and every one of us that's sitting in this body to represent you – both, those that voted for us and those that did not vote for us – we are the representatives and we should stand by that. We have to work for every single member of our community whether they're guest workers, permanent residents or representatives of the CNMI that's who we are they elected us to do this job and so with that being said for every single member have said in here there is nothing impossible. From an unknown author that Jeannie and I saw a couple of years ago is that "There's no such thing as the word "impossible" for the mere fact that the word "possible" is within it, so together everything is possible." So again, with that being said thank you members, congratulations with you, your team and you families. I guess we pass it on and we move to our recess with no objection from the members. So we move to recess till 2:30?

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: Point of order Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: State your point of order.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: I thought that we are going to do the benediction first?

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Yes. We have to recess so we can open the inauguration back to the ceremony portion to the MC.

Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan: I see. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: So 2:30, 3:00? What's best for the members? Alright, we will be back 2:30 or recess till 2:30. Recognize MC please.

The House stood recess at 11:47 a.m. and will reconvene at 2:30 p.m.

RECESS

Master of Ceremony Perry John P. Tenorio: Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem Attao. At this moment, I'd like everybody to please stand. At this time, I ask Reverend Father Michael Linden to deliver the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

(Reverend Father Michael Linden gave the Benediction)

Master of Ceremony Perry John P. Tenorio: Please be seated. Before I close, we extend our appreciation to Chief Justice Castro, Father Linden, Mr. Gus Kaipat and the DPS Color Guards for their active participation in today's ceremony. We also appreciate the attendance of our distinguished guests; as well as the family and friends of our members. We especially want to thank those that joined us via the live broadcast and appreciate your understanding of the strict limitation of in-person participation. I also want to remind the members to please remain in the House chamber for the group photo. That said, honored guest, ladies and gentlemen, this concludes today's ceremony. On behalf of the House of Representatives and the Legislative Bureau, *si Yu'us ma'ase, ghillisow* and thank you for joining today's activities.

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature reconvened at 2:44 p.m.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Good afternoon members. We are now back and prior to the recess we entertained communications and statements by the members. Before we proceed back with our Order of Business to the election of officers, I just want to notify the members that the Senate had set up already, they're ready to conduct business, they've transmitted communication during our recess. So the Clerk's got the information so they're duly organized and ready to conduct business and I ask them to be patient and we will be getting to them in the very near future. So with that being said, we now return to the election of the Office of the Speaker. I recognize Representative Leepan.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion to nominate Rep. Angel Demapan for the speakership, so move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Rep. Leepan. Motion has been placed for the nomination of Representative Angel Demapan for the Office of the Speaker and has been seconded. Any other nominations? Rep. Yangetmai please.

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai: Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. It is with great privilege that I nominate Representative Edmund Sablan Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representative the 22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. I so move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you. Another nominee for the Office of the Speaker, Representative Edmund Sablan Villagomez and has been seconded. There are two nominations on the floor for the Office of the Speaker. I'm sorry. May I please get a motion to close nominations. Rep. Lizama please.

Representative Richard T. Lizama: Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. I move to close nomination.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you. A motion has been placed to close nominations for the office of the Speaker and it has been seconded, discussion on the motion?

Several members voiced “ready.”

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination to the Office of the Speaker was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Back to the main motion. I recognize the Clerk please.

The Clerk called the roll on the nominations of Representative Angel A. Demapan and Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker as follows:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Demapan
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	Demapan
Representative Celina R. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	Demapan
Representative Joel C. Camacho	Demapan
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	Villagomez
Representative Angel A. Demapan	Demapan
Representative Joseph A. Flores	Demapan
Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero	Demapan
Representative Richard T. Lizama	Villagomez
Representative Donald M. Manglona	Villagomez
Representative Edwin K. Propst	Villagomez
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	Villagomez
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	Demapan
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	Demapan
Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler	Villagomez
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	Villagomez
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	Villagomez
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	Demapan

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, 10 members voted for Representative Angel Demapan and 10 members voted for Representative Edmund Villagomez.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With 10 members voting for Representative Demapan and 10 members voting for Representative Villagomez, we’re back to an impasse and again in accordance with Rule I, Section (b) that a majority of the members and in all cases not less than 11 votes cast in his or her favor, the motion to elect the Office of the Speaker is not carried. I now ask for another recess. Thirty-minutes recess good with everybody? Thank you, members we recess for thirty-minutes.

The House recessed at 2:49 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:51 p.m.

As per video recording, the Speaker had reconvened session when the recording was stopped. The nomination portion for both members were not recorded. The next video recording begins with the following:

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: With the two nominees of Representative Edmund Demapan – Edmund Villagomez, my apologies my good colleague from precinct 3 and Rep. Angel Demapan. So the members are aware with the understanding that the same two nominees for the Office of the Speaker will be nominated. So, with that being said, I recognize the Clerk for the roll for the Office of the Speaker.

The Clerk called the roll on the nominations of Representative Angel A. Demapan and Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker as follows:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Demapan
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	Demapan
Representative Celina R. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	Demapan
Representative Joel C. Camacho	Demapan
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	Villagomez
Representative Angel A. Demapan	Demapan
Representative Joseph A. Flores	Demapan
Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero	Demapan
Representative Richard T. Lizama	Villagomez
Representative Donald M. Manglona	Villagomez
Representative Edwin K. Propst	Villagomez
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	Villagomez
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	Demapan
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	Demapan
Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler	Villagomez
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	Villagomez
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	Villagomez
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	Demapan

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, 10 members voted for Representative Angel Demapan and 10 members voted Representative Edmund Villagomez.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With 10 members voting for Representative Demapan and 10 members voting for Representative Villagomez. We’re at an impasse again and in accordance with Rule I, Section (b) that a majority of the members and in all cases not less than 11 votes cast in his or her favor, the motion to elect the Office of the Speaker is not carried. I will now call for a recess.

The House stood recess at 4:55 p.m. and will reconvene on Tuesday, January 12, 2021.

RECESS

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature reconvened its First Day, First Regular Session on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 2:25 p.m.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: So we’re back into – good afternoon, day two of our inauguration and we left off with the stalemate on the election of our speakership. May I ask the members, I know we’re back from the time that we said and we apologize from the general public that we’re starting twenty-five minutes after two o’clock. We’re asking to go to another recess and be back at 3:45. Okay.

The House recessed at 2:26 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 3:50 p.m.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Good afternoon colleagues. To our general public and members in the gallery we apologize for the continued recess, but hopefully we have come to a consensus and we can move on with the formulation of the House of Representatives. During our – for our previous recesses we ended up with a stalemate on the Office of the Speaker. So with that being said, I open the floor for nominations for the Office of the Speaker.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Privilege Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: State your privilege Representative Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. To my colleagues and the viewing public, yesterday the 22nd House of Representatives went through a very grueling process to elect the Speaker for the House of Representatives. In the interest of moving forward, in the interest of beginning the work for our people, I believe that our people and our colleagues deserve other options to consider today. And so at this time, Mr. Speaker and colleagues I’m announcing my withdrawal from the race for Speaker to allow other options to be considered so we can break the impasse from yesterday and begin the service to our people. Thank you very much.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Demapan. Representative John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since we are here on the election for speakership, I now then nominate Ivan Blanco for the Speakership election.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Sablan. Rep. Blanco has been nominated for the Office of the Speaker and it has been seconded. Any other nomination? Rep. Yangetmai please.

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai: Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. It is with great privilege that I nominate Representative Edmund Sablan Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. I so move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Representative Yangetmai. A nomination for Representative Edmund Villagomez for the Office of the Speaker. Any other nominations? Representative Lizama please.

Representative Richard T. Lizama: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to close the nomination.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion has been placed by Representative Lizama to close nomination has been seconded, discussion on that motion?

Several members voiced “ready.”

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Clerk, please call the roll. Sorry, I got excited there.

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination to the Office of the Speaker was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Back to the main motion and I recognize the Clerk for the roll call.

The Clerk called the roll on the nominations of Representative Ivan A. Blanco and Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker as follows:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Blanco
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	Blanco
Representative Celina R. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta	Villagomez
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	Blanco
Representative Joel C. Camacho	Blanco
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	Villagomez
Representative Angel A. Demapan	Blanco
Representative Joseph A. Flores	Blanco
Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero	Blanco
Representative Richard T. Lizama	Villagomez
Representative Donald M. Manglona	Villagomez
Representative Edwin K. Propst	Villagomez
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	Villagomez
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	Blanco
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	Blanco
Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler	Villagomez
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	Villagomez
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	Villagomez
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	Villagomez

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, 9 members voted for Representative Ivan Blanco and 11 members voted for Representative Edmund Villagomez.

Speaker Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Clerk. With 11 members voting for Representative Villagomez – congratulations Representative Villagomez, you’re the Speaker for the 22nd Legislature. I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort Representative Villagomez up to the dais.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Members, colleagues, thank you for your vote of confidence and I look forward to working together with all of you to move the CNMI forward. Now we will proceed to the next order of business and that’s the election of the Vice Speaker. I open the floor for nominations, I recognize Rep. Joel Camacho.

ELECTION OF VICE SPEAKER

Representative Joel C. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to officially nominate Representative Blas Jonathan Attao to serve as the Vice Speaker for the 22nd House of Representative.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: A nomination for Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Attao to the Office of Vice Speaker, do I hear any other nominations? Recognize Representative Donald Manglona.

Representative Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At thing time, I move to close nomination.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: A motion has been made to close nomination and has been seconded. Ready for the vote.

Several members voiced “ready.”

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination for the Office of Vice Speaker was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: For the record folks that’s just to close the nomination. Quick recess, real quick.

The House recessed at 4:00 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:00 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: We rise back to recess. I apologize about that this is new to me. Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the nominations for Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao to the Office of the Vice Speake as follows:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Attao
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	Attao
Representative Celina R. Babauta	Attao
Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta	Attao
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	Attao
Representative Joel C. Camacho	Attao
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	Attao
Representative Angel A. Demapan	Attao
Representative Joseph A. Flores	Attao
Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero	Attao
Representative Richard T. Lizama	Attao
Representative Donald M. Manglona	Attao
Representative Edwin K. Propst	Attao
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	Attao
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	Attao
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	Attao
Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler	Attao
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	Attao
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	Attao
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	Attao

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 20 members voted for Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: With the vote of 20 members for Attao – Representative Attao congratulations on your election to the Vice Speaker’s office. We now move on to the election of the Floor Leader and I open the floor for nominations. Recognize Joe Flores.

ELECTION OF THE FLOOR LEADER

Representative Joseph A. Flores: I nominate Representative Angel Demapan.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: A nomination has been made for Representative Angel Demapan. Are there any other nominations? Recognize Representative Sheila Babauta.

Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honored to nominate Representative Ralph Yumul to the Office of the Floor Leader for the 22nd House of Representatives. So move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: A nomination – quick recess, real quick.

The House recessed at 4:03 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:03 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: We're back from recess. Earlier there was a nomination for Representative Angel Demapan. Was there a second? Okay, thank you. I just wanted for that clarification. A nomination has been made for Representative Angel Demapan and Representative Ralph Yumul. Are there any other nominations? Recognize Representative Joel Camacho.

Representative Joel C. Camacho: I move to close nomination.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination to the Office of the Floor Leader was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the nominations of Representative Angel A. Demapan and Representative Ralph N. Yumul to the Office of the Floor Leader as follows:

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Demapan
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao	Demapan
Representative Celina R. Babauta	Yumul
Representative Sheila Therese J. Babauta	Yumul
Representative Ivan A. Blanco	Demapan
Representative Joel C. Camacho	Demapan
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	Yumul
Representative Angel A. Demapan	Demapan
Representative Joseph A. Flores	Demapan
Representative Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero	Demapan
Representative Richard T. Lizama	Yumul
Representative Donald M. Manglona	Yumul
Representative Edwin K. Propst	Yumul
Representative Christina Marie E. Sablan	Yumul
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	Demapan
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	Demapan
Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler	Yumul
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	Yumul
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	Yumul
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	Yumul

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, 9 members voted for Representative Angel Demapan and 11 members voted for Representative Ralph Yumul.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Congratulations Representative Yumul on your election to the Vice Speakership – I mean Floor Leader. I'm sorry I apologize. Now we will take a short recess to notify the Governor's office and the Senate of our organization. Quick recess.

The House recessed at 4:10 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:36 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: We're back from recess. When we left off, I appointed Representative Leila Staffler and Representative Ed Propst to inform the Senate that we are duly organized and I also appointed Rep. Richard Lizama and Representative Vicente to inform the Governor that we are duly organized and I'd like to recognize Representative Ed Propst. Has that communication been relayed?

NOTIFICATION TO THE SENATE

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Yes it has Speaker and if you wouldn't mind I would like to yield to Congresswoman Leila Staffler to inform you and our colleagues. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Leila Staffler.

Representative Leila Haveia F. C. Staffler: Thank you, Speaker Villagomez and thank you Representative Propst. Mr. Speaker and members, Representative Ed Propst and I notified the Senate that the House is duly organized and ready to conduct business. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Staffler. Can I ask Representative Ben Camacho to please update the members on that communication?

Representative Vicente C. Camacho: Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer that to Representative Lizama. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Lizama.

NOTIFICATION TO THE GOVERNOR

Representative Richard T. Lizama: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and members, Representative Vicente Camacho and I have notified the Governor that the 22nd House of Representative is duly organized and ready to conduct business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Lizama. We now move down to the next item of the agenda and that is communications. Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced that there are no communications received.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. We now move down to announcements. The Speaker would like to announce the Chairmanship or Chairwomanship of the committees and they are as follows: for the Committee on Ways and Means - Representative Donald Manglona will be the Chairperson, the Committee on Natural Resources - Representative Sheila Babauta, the Committee on Health and Welfare - Representative Christina Sablan, the Committee on Education - Representative Leila Staffler, the Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations - Representative Celina Babauta, the Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs - Representative Vicente Camacho, the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications - Representative Richard Lizama, and for the Committee on Commerce and Tourism and Cannabis will be Representative Yangetmai and the Committee on Gaming will be Representative Edwin Propst. The next announcement would be the Ad Hoc Committee on Rules and I appoint Representative Christina Sablan, Representative Sheila Babauta and Floor Leader Ralph Yumul. Are we clear members? Okay. I now recognize and now move down to the next item of the agenda and that is adjournment and I recognize the Floor Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now move to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair. So move.

The motion was seconded.

There was no discussion and the motion to adjourn was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The House adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

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: NONE

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY: NONE