



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION, 2023

## LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

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**1<sup>st</sup> Day, First Regular Session**

**Monday, January 9, 2023**

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*Master of Ceremony Luis John DLG. Castro:* The inaugural ceremony will start once again after the following housekeeping reminders are met. We'd like to ask everybody in attendance to please take a moment to place your phones and other electronic devices on silent mode or turn them off for the duration of the ceremony. For those of you watching on channel 23, we'd like to note that the broadcast will switch from the House ceremony to the Senate ceremony at approximately 11:00 AM for the organizational meeting. If you want to continue watching the House ceremony, it is also being broadcasted live via Facebook and YouTube. Please visit our Facebook page at Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature and our YouTube page at House Northern Marianas Commonwealth legislature to continue viewing this ceremony. Once again, that is Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature for our Facebook page and House Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature on our YouTube page for continued viewing. *Hafa adai, tirow* and good morning, welcome to the inaugural ceremony and swearing-in and organizational meeting for the House of Representatives of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Before we introduce the members-elect, I ask Sergeant-at-Arms Towai and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Aguon to escort to the dais the Honorable Perry B. Inos, Associate Justice of the Commonwealth Supreme Court. At this time, we'd like to ask for everybody in attendance to please rise. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to present to you the Representatives-elect of the House of Representatives for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. From Election District 1 Representative-elect Roy Christopher Aldan Ada, Representative-elect Vincent "Kobre" Seman Aldan, Representative-elect Roman Cepeda Benavente, Representative-elect Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho, Representative-elect Joseph Arriola Flores, and Representative-elect Edwin Kenneth Propst. From Election District 2 Representative-elect Manny Gregory Tenorio Castro. From Election District 3 Representative-elect Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao, Representative-elect Vicente Castro Camacho, Representative-elect Marissa Renee Flores, Representative-elect Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez, and Representative-elect Denita Kaipat Yangetmai. From Election District 4 Representative-elect Joel Castro Camacho and Representative-elect Malcolm Jason Omar. From Election District 5 Representative-elect Angelo Atalig Camacho and Representative-elect Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona. From Election District 6 representing the island of Tinian and Aguiguan, Representative-elect Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas and from Election District 7 representing the island of Rota, Representative-elect Julie Marie Atalig Ogo. To facilitate the organizational meeting, I call on Representative-elect Ralph Naraja Yumul representing Election District 3 and today's Floor Leader Pro Tem. Last, but not least, I call on Sergeant-at-Arms Towai to escort Representative-elect John Paul Palacios Sablan representing Election District 2 and today's Speaker Pro Tem to the dais. You may be seated at this time. As we did in the beginning, we once again welcome you to this chamber for the inaugural session of the House of Representatives of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. I also want take this time to recognize our distinguished guests, earlier we recognize the Honorable Perry Inos, Associate Justice of the CNMI Supreme Court, I'd like to also recognize the Honorable Aubrey Hocog, Mayor of Rota, the Honorable Edwin Aldan, Mayor of the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan, and the Honorable Ramon B. Camacho, Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan. I'd

like to also recognize our municipal officials our members of the Rota Municipal Council, the Honorable Jim Atalig, the Honorable Jonovan Lizama and the Honorable Frederick Manglona, Jr. From the Tinian Municipal Council, the Honorable Estevan Cabrera, the Honorable Ana Marie San Nicolas, and the Honorable Joseph Evangelista Santos. From the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council, the Honorable Marian Tudela, the Honorable Antonia Tudela and the Honorable Carmen Pangelinan. We'd like to also give a special welcome *para i manhinirâpbli na miembron i Mina'trentai Siette Na Liheslaturan Guåhan* the Honorable Amanda Shelton, Legislative Secretary, the Honorable Darrel Christopher Barnett, and the Honorable Roy B. Quinata. We also like to recognize the presence of the members of the 18<sup>th</sup> CNMI Youth Congress, the Honorable YuriHana Deleon Guerrero Sasamoto, Speaker, the Honorable Zenn Tomokane, Floor Leader, and the Honorable Tamisha Lia D. Sablan, member at large. To all of you, we thank you so much for joining our members-elect for this special occasion. I'd like to call upon, at this time for all of you to please rise for the posting and presentation of the colors to be rendered by the Department of Public Safety. We also ask you to join Mr. Gus Kaipat in the singing of our National and Commonwealth Anthems.

*(National and Commonwealth Anthems were sung)*

*Master of Ceremony Luis John DLG. Castro:* To the color guards of the Department of Public Safety, thank you very much and to Mr. Kaipat, thank you for joining us in leading us in honoring country and commonwealth. Please remain standing as the Reverend Father Jesse Tudela Reyes of San Vicente Parish, Diocese of Chalan Kanoa delivers this morning's invocation.

*(Reverend Father Jesse T. Reyes gave the Invocation)*

*Master of Ceremony Luis John DLG. Castro:* *Si Yu'us ma'ase, Pale'.* At this point in time, you may now take your seats. Before we proceed on with the rest of our proceedings, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize a couple of distinguished guests here with us, in body and in spirit. I'd like to recognize the Honorable Edward E. Manibusan, Attorney General of the Commonwealth and last, but certainly not least we'd like to also recognize the Honorable Valentino Taisacan, Jr., Mayor of the Northern Islands. Thank you very much for your presence here this morning. And now at this point in time, it is with great honor and privilege that we call on Speaker Pro Tem, the distinguished gentleman from Precinct 2, Representative-elect John Paul Palacios Sablan to officially call this organizational meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, House of Representatives to order. Mr. Speaker.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

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

*The Honorable Representative-Elect John Paul Palacios Sablan, Speaker Pro Tempore presided.*

**Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan:** Thank you, Master Ceremony LJ Castro. And as such, I also want to welcome all our distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, to Reverend Father Jesse Reyes, thank you very much for your prayers and to the Honorable Justice Perry B. Inos, welcome to your House of Representative. To the general public here, present in this gallery and the whole and also to our viewing public that are watching via livestream welcome and good morning. I now call this 23<sup>rd</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, House of

Representative Organizational Session to order. At this time, I recognize the Clerk to call the roll.

### **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 Vincent Raymond Seman Aldan	Present
Representative-Elect Roman Cepeda Benavente	Present
Representative-Elect Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Present
Representative-Elect Joseph Arriola Flores	Present
Representative-Elect Edwin Kenneth Propst	Present

#### **Election District 2**

Representative-Elect Manny Gregory Tenorio Castro	Present
Representative-Elect John Paul Palacios Sablan	Present

#### **Election District 3**

Representative-Elect Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Present
Representative-Elect Vicente Castro Camacho	Present
Representative-Elect Marissa Renee Flores	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 Joel Castro Camacho	Present
Representative-Elect Malcolm Jason Omar	Present

#### **Election District 5**

Representative-Elect Angelo Atalig Camacho	Present
Representative-Elect Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Present

#### **Election District 6**

Representative-Elect Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Present
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#### **Election District 7**

Representative-Elect Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Present
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House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, all 20 members-elect are present.

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Madame Clerk. Let the record reflect that all Representatives-elect are present and a quorum is hereby constituted.

### **SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS**

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: We now proceed further down to our next Order of Business, the swearing-in of Representatives-elect and I ask each one of you to rise as the Honorable Justice Perry B. Inos of the CNMI Supreme Court administers the Oath of Office.

*Associate Justice Perry B. Inos*: Good morning. 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 and laws 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, the applicable provisions of the Constitution, laws and treaties of the United States of America and that I will faithfully discharge my duties as a Representative of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to the best of my ability, so help me God.”

*Associate Justice Perry B. Inos:* Congratulations representatives. Before you, you would have the Oath of Office, please sign them now.

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: Members, you may be seated. Thank you once again, Honorable Justice Perry B. Inos for administering the oath. At this time, we move further down on our Order of Business and that is the adoption of the Interim Rules. And at this time, I recognize Floor Leader Pro Tem Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul.

## **INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF THE HOUSE RULES**

Floor Leader Pro Tem Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. I am honored to introduce **House Resolution No. 23-1**, entitled “*A House Resolution to adopt Rules for Procedural Motion and on Nominations Organization Sessions and to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to review the rules; and for other purposes.*” I move for its adoption.

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: There is a motion offered by Floor Leader Pro Tem for the adoption of the Interim Rules and it has been seconded. Discussion?

*Several members voiced “ready.”*

*There was no discussion; the motion to adopt House Resolution 23-1 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: And the adoption of the interim rules that would govern this proceeding is hereby adopted. We now move to the next Order of Business, the Election of Speaker, and at this time, do I hear any nomination? I recognize Representative Blas Jonathan Attao.

## **ELECTION OF SPEAKER**

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. Before I make the nomination, I would like to share a little history about this individual that will be leading the 23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representatives. This person when first elected was the youngest member of that legislature, and during that term, this individual served with a former governor, former lieutenant governor, former senate president, and former house speakers. Furthermore, this individual has faced three impeachment proceedings, a government shutdown, government furloughs, and the first to ever sign-off on contempt charges against a CNMI official. If there is an individual that

faced the challenges of the CNMI in its 46-year history, I would like to say that this person is the one that has been tested in all the years served in this body. At this time, it is with great honor and privilege that I nominate my colleague from Election Precinct 3, Representative Edmund Sablan Villagomez for the Office of the Speaker. Thank you, Speaker Pro Tem. Thank you, Representative Attao. Do I hear a second?

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: A nomination has been placed on the floor by Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Attao for Representative Edmund S. Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker and it has been seconded. Are there any other nomination? Recognize Representative Roman C. Benavente.

Representative Roman C. Benavente: Mr. Speaker, I move for acclamation.

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: There is a motion offered by Representative Roman Benavente for acclamation and it has been seconded. Discussion?

*Several members voiced “ready.”*

*There was no discussion and the motion to nominate Representative Edmund S. Villagomez to the Office of the Speaker was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

Speaker Pro Tem John Paul P. Sablan: Congratulations, Representative Edmund Villagomez, Speaker of the House. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort Speaker-elect to the dais.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: My fellow colleagues, it is with great privilege and honor that you have bestowed onto me your confidence and trust by electing me to serve as your speaker. Thank you. Now let us move on to the election of the Vice Speaker. Do I hear a nomination? Recognize Representative Malcolm J. Omar.

Representative Malcolm J. Omar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time it's my privilege and honor to nominate my colleague and counterpart from Precinct 4, Representative Joel Castro Camacho to the Office of Vice Speaker for the 23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representatives.

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you. Nomination has been placed for the Office of the Vice Speaker for Representative Joel C. Camacho and it has been seconded. Any other nomination? I recognize Representative Angelo Camacho.

Representative Angelo A. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move for acclamation.

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Angelo Camacho. A motion has been made to move for acclamation and has been seconded. Any discussion?

*Several members voiced “ready.”*

*There was no discussion and the motion to nominate Representative Joel C. Camacho to the Office of the Vice Speaker was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Congratulations, Representative Joel Camacho. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort Representative Joel Camacho to his seat. We now move forward to the election of Floor Leader. Do I hear a nomination? Recognize Representative Ralph Yumul.

### **ELECTION OF THE FLOOR LEADER**

Floor Leader Pro Tem Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And now I am honored and privileged to nominate my childhood friend, classmate, my *kuya*, Edwin K. Propst to the Office of Floor Leader for the 23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representatives.

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: A motion has been made for the nomination of Representative Edwin K. Propst to the Office of Floor Leader and it has been seconded. Do I hear any other nomination?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Ready, I recognize Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho.

Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move for acclamation for my former boss.

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Diego Vincent Camacho. A motion has been made for acclamation and it has been seconded. We ready?

*Several members voiced “ready.”*

*There was no discussion and the motion to nominate Representative Edwin K. Propst to the Office of the Floor Leader was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

### **NOTIFICATION TO THE GOVERNOR**

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Congratulations Representative Edwin K. Propst. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort Representative Propst to his seat. Thank you, colleagues. We now move down to the Notification to the Governor and to the Senate. I would like to appoint Representative Marissa R. Flores and Julie A. Ogo to inform the Senate and Representative Angelo A. Camacho and Malcolm J. Omar to inform the Governor. And lastly, I would like to appoint Representative Vincent S. Aldan and Representative Manny T. Castro to inform the NMI Judiciary that the 23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representatives is duly organized and ready to conduct business. Before we move forward, colleagues, for Representative Vincent S. Aldan and Representative Manny T. Castro informing the NMI Judiciary and Representative Angelo Camacho and

Representative Malcolm Omar informing the Governor; I'd like to request that colleagues you do this at a later time after the inauguration, seeing as they have the same schedule as we do. And also, so the Chief Justice's schedule is also tied up at this time. As for Representative Marissa Flores and Representative Julie Ogo, as soon as we are informed that the Senate has elected their officers we will take a quick recess so that you can inform the Senate that we are duly organized. Thank you, colleagues. We now move down to communications. I want to recognize the Clerk. Clerk, do we have any communications?

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: At this time, Mr. Speaker, there is none.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. We'll now move down to statements by members as we await the Senate's communication as well. I would like to open up the floor for statements by the members. If you would like to just give a brief statement and submit a written statement at a later time, please do so and submit it to the Office of the Clerk. Otherwise, you are free to give your full statement at today's inaugural ceremony. So, now I'd like to open the floor for statements by the members and I would like to start from left to right. Is there any objection?

*Several members voiced "no objection."*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: No objection. Okay. Floor is open for statement by members and I recognize Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan.

## **STATEMENT OF MEMBERS**

### **Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to give thanks first to God Almighty for allowing me to walk this world and be trying to be a better citizen for our community. I'd like to thank my children, Katelin, Michael and Elbert, my mom, my dad, my brothers and sisters, my family and friends, my colleagues that have helped me through this and to the people at large. I asked for you to give me a chance and you did. Rest assured I will do everything that I can. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Vincent S. Aldan. We now proceed to Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho.

### **Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Hafa adai, tirow, buenas dias* colleagues, distinguished guests, families and friends who are here today. It is a great honor, but more so a privilege to serve alongside you all in this honorable chamber. I would like thank the people of precinct 1 for their support and their vote of confidence that they have entrusted in me to be one of their representatives in the 23<sup>rd</sup> CNMI Legislature. A more sincere appreciation to my parents, to my mom Josephine and my dad Diego, our families, friends, supporters, and my committee to elect led by my Chairwoman Janice Muna, and to my loving wife Priscilla, thank you for your love and your patience throughout this journey, and I promise to be home by 5:00 p.m. every day. In all



seriousness, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, we have tremendous work ahead of us, but I am confident that we can work harmoniously with our Senate counterparts and with the new Administration to ensure fair opportunities for all in the delivery of public services. I remain hopeful that we may overcome the challenges and uncertainties that we are about to face. Once again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Si Yu'us ma'ase, ghillisow* and congratulations to you all.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Diego Vincent Camacho. We now move down to Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul.

**Representative Ralph N. Yumul's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife Joy, my dad who is here in the chamber with us, my mom who is also here in the building, my son Riley who is also in the building, for their support throughout this election. It was very tough. It was very expensive, but you know, anyways and also to the people of precinct 3, thank you for putting me in office for again, thank you. I will officially submit an official statement and submit to the Clerk at a later time.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Yumul. We now move down to Representative BJ Attao.

**Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be formally submitting to the Clerk an official statement, but just for today, this morning, Speaker Villagomez, Vice Speaker Joel Camacho, Floor Leader Propst, congratulations in your election to lead the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature. To the colleagues, on behalf of Jeannie, our daughter Brea, my sister Lupe that's sitting with us this morning, my parents, my siblings, their families, the committee to re-elect, our friends and our family; we extend our congratulations to each and every one of you, your families, and your respective committees. The people have spoken, we are team CNMI here in the House of Representatives. We represent every single individual, those that voted for us and those that did not vote for us, and most especially the voiceless ones that can't vote during the election process. We represent every single one of them. To the people of precinct 3, I'd like to thank you guys for this opportunity, continue serving you in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature. You have given me the opportunity to serve you in the fifth term this time. To the committee to re-elect, our Chairman Simion Lisua, our Secretary/Treasurer Andrea Tenorio, and our Logistics Chair Jeremy Koshiro; thank you guys for leading the charge in this election and over the last couple elections that we've been through. This is going to be a challenging legislature. Let's be honest with ourselves. The greatest thing in life is when we have a lot of funding, we're able to provide for everybody, but as we've seen, a lot of that was used up improperly for all the wrong reasons and it's going to be our people that's going to suffer and it's our job as members of this body to find ways to mitigate the sufferings that we will be facing down the road. That's why our people voted for every single one of us that will be sitting in this office. With that being said, congratulations again to each and every one of you, your families, your respective committees, on behalf of myself, Jeannie and our daughter Brea, our families, our committee to re-elect and our friends. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. Speaker and congratulations again in your leadership.



Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Attao. We now move down to Representative Marissa R. Flores.

**Representative Marissa R. Flores' Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if I can top Congressman Attao's speech, but I think he has shared the sentiment and has echoed the feelings of our people of the Commonwealth, but I owe it to the constituents of precinct 3 to say a brief message. Before I do that, I'd like to thank God for allowing me to be here. I'd like to thank my parents, unfortunately my father's not here to witness this, and I said I wasn't going to cry, so I'm not going to cry. My mom, my kids, my siblings. I know, right? I wasn't supposed to cry. Thank you for supporting me through this process. To my team and to all my supporters in precinct 3, who have donated their time, their resources, their advice, their wisdom, thank you so much. I stand here before the people of the commonwealth, most especially the people of precinct 3, empowered by the men and the women who have guided me, who have given me the courage to take this journey on. I vow to work in collaboration with the 23<sup>rd</sup> legislators, to actively advocate for the people of our commonwealth. This is going to be a hard journey, but we're ready to work together for the betterment for all. Thank you so much. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Flores. We now move down to Representative Denita K. Yangetmai.

**Representative Denita K. Yangetmai's Statement**

Thank you, Speaker. *Lesor mwamwaii* everyone, welcome. First of all, I would like to thank our Father for bringing us all together this morning and to my family who's been very supportive of what I'm doing, especially my husband back here, who's agreed to be my driver for these days and for everyone in precinct 3, thank you. And yes, we will do whatever we can to help you precinct 3 constituents and everyone else in the CNMI we'll do our best. And I have a lot more to say, but I will put it in a long letter and send it in later. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Yangetmai. Now move down to Representative Malcolm J. Omar.

**Representative Malcolm J. Omar's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Tirow, hafa adai*, and good morning distinguished guests, everyone present today, family and friends, my family and friends here in the building, I'd like to recognize, especially my mom behind me and my auntie Osing, thank you for being here today. Ladies and gentlemen, first and foremost, all glory to God for this momentous occasion. May he continue to guide us in the right direction toward a brighter and greater commonwealth. I do wish to recognize, like I said, my family and friends and supporters, my committee to elect everyone who played a part in my election and helped me to be here today for the endless love and support. I owe great debt to my mother, Rosa, Rosa Omar Castro. Mom, always loving me, always supporting me in anything I do. My beloved father Eddie Jones Castro is gone before us today, he's not able to be here and my grandma, they were and remain constant sources of my strength, comfort, and refuge throughout this uncertain journey, life. I approach today's installation as one of your representatives in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature with a sense of both honor and

humility. Words cannot suffice the amount of gratitude I'd like to express to each and every one of you, the residents of precinct 4, and the people of our great commonwealth for entrusting me with such an enormous responsibility. I want to assure everyone, the people of the commonwealth, that I will be their bipartisan voice in this legislature and will work tirelessly to guarantee that their concerns are heard and addressed so that we all can achieve our shared goals. My dear constituents, I begin this speech by emphasizing that the path ahead filled with hopes, dreams, and endless possibilities of what could be of our commonwealth is truly determined by where we came from. May we not forget that these hopes and dreams are not foreign, but rather going back generations when our ancestors dreamed and achieve of what some may consider impossible today. We are the sons and daughters of master navigators, who voyage across oceans, dependent on merely stars and skies for directions to our new home. We are furthermore, sons and daughters of intricate farmers and fishermen, dependent merely on the bountiful resources provided to us by our motherland. And in the spirit of togetherness and trust, these two groups of people and cultures formed a connection and harmonious bond to peacefully coexist in raising their children and families that we continue to see till this day in our commonwealth. We owe it to them, our children and generations thereafter, to continue this notion of trust and togetherness, thereby leaving them a respectable and sustainable foundation to build upon their future and dreams, because right now, contrary to what many may believe, this is not a historical turning point because of the installation of a new Administration, rather, this is merely a point in history. What we do hereafter with the numerous opportunities to be presented is what will constitute our turning point. My colleagues and constituents, we have many opportunities ahead of us for economic and social development. These include nurturing a sustainable economy that will produce equal employment opportunities for our people, so that all shall prosper, thereby allowing families to access basic necessities and mitigating and/or diminishing homelessness. Encouraging, supporting and diversifying small and large business industries, recognizing the importance of the private sector in improving our economy. Collaborating with business, labor, community groups, civil servants to protect the public's interests and eradicate nuance of special interests. Strengthening our public education system to provide quality education in aims to empower our children are most valuable and best hope for the future. Achieving affordable healthcare for all our people. Protecting our *man'amko* and providing them with resources that will help them comfortably engage with the rest of society, with independence, dignity, love, and support. Respecting, preserving and protecting our islands and its abundance and resources for our future generations. Engaging in self-sufficient practices by investing in our natural resources to reduce dependency and expensive imported energy and skyrocketing bills. And in terms of agriculture, diversification of local crops and support of our local farmers. Defending and preserving our indigenous language, culture, practice, and traditions by integrating them into modern day values and ways, but most importantly, providing a true, honest, and transparent government for the people who entrusted us to be their voice. However, these cannot be achieved by one man, not by me, the Governor, our government, or any of us, you, my colleagues, but this will only be possible by all of us collectively, together. In the past several years, we've endured a series of events unprecedented in our history. We have proven to be a community of compassion, resilience, strength, and unity. This is reflected through our successful recovery efforts, following devastating effects of natural calamities and of course, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic in which we as a community cooperated with mandated regulations, prioritizing the safety of our children and families. We all endured. We all suffered, but we all moved forward and rebuild. This was a community effort, not by one man, but all of us together. With that said, I am immensely proud to serve alongside you members, my colleagues, for I am certain that if we rebuild amongst each other and work together as a unified community, we've proven to be, we

can accomplish great things and make a big difference for our commonwealth. My constituents, my intention in seeking office to serve you and our entire commonwealth and my mission onward is not only guided by the footsteps of our ancestors, but also mirrored by the very intentions, values, principles set forth by our founding fathers when they created a unanimous agreement with the United States, whereby the American ideals of democracy, equality, and popular sovereignty be established and enacted here in the Marianas, which we all humbly enjoy today. This intention was best expressed in a public statement during the signing of our covenant by Ambassador Haydn William, he said in a quote, “Commonwealth, as defined by the dictionary, means an agreement of the people for the common good. It also means a government in which authority is vested with the people. The common of concept is thus wholly consistent of the ideas of an American democracy. The sovereignty, rest not with the state, but with the people that governments derive their power from the people from the consent of the governed.” May this serve as a reminder on the struggles of our past generations and the measures they took to secure a political status, thus inviting a variety of opportunities for indigenous people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. It's now our job to engage the people to participate in this grand experience in self-governance achieved by us for by our forefathers. It is crucial that you recognize your importance in our society and the impact you are able to contribute in the progress toward the hopeful future. As much as I am deeply honored to assume this position you've entrusted me with, the true authoritative power lies within you, the people. Therefore, I implore you to find your voice and utilize it not only to choose your elected officials, but to shape the issues that will greatly affect our lives and the lives of the generations thereafter. Let us now look forward to working together in hopes of achieving a promise of an economically strong, socially just, free and democratic home for all who reside in our great commonwealth. *Dánkolo na si Yu'us ma'ase, ghillisow*, thank you, may God bless us all and God bless our commonwealth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Omar. We now proceed to Representative Thomas John “TJ” Dela Cruz Manglona.

### **Representative Thomas John DLC. Manglona's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I want to thank the good Lord above for giving me this blessing to be able to sit on this seat and serve our great people of the commonwealth. I want to thank my daughter, Tamia Mendiola Manglona who is my greatest blessing, and I would also like to acknowledge her grandfather, the late Melchor J. Mendiola, Jr. who served as the CNMI LB Director to his untimely passing in 2015. I also want to acknowledge the late Governor Eloy S. Inos, the late Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona and the late Francisco S. Dela Cruz, honorable public leaders and members of my family that also gave me the inspiration to serve our community. I also want to thank my parents, Fire Chief Thomas M. Manglona, Jr. and Lynette T. Dela Cruz, as well as my siblings, Ellio and Andra Manglona for all their love and support for me, throughout my life and throughout this campaign. I also want to acknowledge my late grandfathers Thomas M. Manglona, Sr. and Juan Santos Dela Cruz, as well as my grandmothers Laura I. Manglona and Andresina T. Dela Cruz, who are here with us in the chamber today. Thank you for all your love and support and your wisdom and guidance. I also want to acknowledge my family, all my family members and friends that are here and abroad, both physically and spiritually, who came to join us today on this momentous occasion. And lastly, but not least, I want to thank my entire committee led by Chairman Gilbert Ada and Chairman Benjamin Paul Manglona, the CNMI GOP party led by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and

Senator Vinny F. Sablan as well as the great people of precinct 5 for having their faith and trust in me to lead our community forward. And now I will begin my short speech. *Hafa adai, tirow and mabuhay*. Thank you all for joining us today. It is my greatest honor and privilege to represent the great people of precinct 5, the young leaders of my generation, the nineties generation, and everyone that calls the Marianas home as a member of the 23<sup>rd</sup> CNMI Legislature. It is my mission as we set sail into to this new age of our island's future, to continue to inspire the hearts and minds of our younger generation, to continue to protect our unique culture and sacred lands, and to continue to work together with all our elected leaders to help enhance the overall quality of life for everyone in the commonwealth. And finally, I would like to congratulate all our elected leaders to all of you, my colleagues in the 23<sup>rd</sup> CNMI Legislature and most especially to our Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lieutenant Governor David M. Apatang. *Si Yu'us ma'ase, ghillisow, salamat po*, thank you all.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Thomas John Manglona. We now proceed with Representative Julie A. Ogo.

### **Representative Julie A. Ogo's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Buenas dias* and good morning everyone present and to all the viewers that are watching today, this momentous occasion. In salutations to all present, especially my colleagues and dignitaries previously mentioned, welcome and thank you. Furthermore, before I begin, I would like to give thanks to the Lord above also for the blessing, like what Rep. TJ say. To my parents that are here to witness this occasion, my parents are right behind me, Mr. Patrick and Sinforosa Ogo that flew in from Rota. To my children Christian and his wife Kip Manzanares, to my son who is now based in Iwakuni, Japan – US Marine Julian Manglona, to my son in Arkansas serving in the US Air Force Ian Manglona, Tristan and Ethan Manglona that are currently present. To my committee Chairman Anthony Barcinas and to all the members and my family, to my reared siblings and to the late mayor – to my late reared parents Mayor Prudencio and Bernadita Manglona thank you. And I would like to continue with my speech now. There is no greater responsibility as being given the confidence of our constituents to be their representative in their government, created by and for themselves through the very fundamental values that we as citizens hold to be our paramount guidance and detail in the covenant and our constitutions. As we take our solemn oath of today to hold – I'm sorry, I'm nervous – as we take our solemn oath today to hold and defend our laws, I simultaneously vow to consistently seek the guidance of our Lord Jesus for wisdom, patience, strength, and courage to execute my legal and moral duties befitting of someone entrusted with the responsibility to lead our people to achieve greater good for a country, state, municipalities, and communities. To the people of Rota, I will do my best to represent your interests while deliberating on legislative actions of the state, ensuring that none will be detrimental to our community's progress towards economic and general wellbeing of our island. To the people of the CNMI, I beg your patience and understanding when we, as a legislative body come across issues that may conflict with my direct constituents interests on Rota as they will be my primary concern while attempting to resolve conflicts by amicably pursuing the most equitable solutions for all of us. To my colleagues with more experience, I solicit your assistance in helping me grow through the maze of challenges ahead of us. Lastly, but definitely and never the least, I want to extend my congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected to the Honorable Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lieutenant Governor David M. Apatang. I look forward to working with you both. Again,

thank you to all and may bless us with the tools we need to plow a path towards peace and prosperity. Thank you, *si Yu'us ma'ase*.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Representative Julie A. Ogo. We now proceed with Floor Leader Representative Edwin Propst.

### **Representative Edwin K. Propst's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, colleagues. I heard somebody's stomach growl in the background, so that means it's almost lunchtime. So, I have prepared a speech, but I will submit it to you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. At this time, if you could give me a couple of minutes just to show some great gratitude to the wonderful people who allowed me to sit in this seat. First and foremost, as we all are in saying, we thank the Lord Almighty for all our blessings and our faith and spirit in the Lord, and trusting in the Lord. I thank the tremendous kindness and work that our committee has put in, but this is not possible. This seat is not possible without, of course, the people of precinct 1, who I so proudly serve with my colleagues here and I'm forever grateful to the good people of precinct 1, who have bestowed their faith and confidence in me to continue to work for the people. This is public service and I'm going to give it everything I have just as I always do. I'm also here because I have a very wonderful family and I need to turn to my left and recognize my beautiful wife Daisy Manglona-Propst. It's not "hyphen" that's part of her name, but she actually put a hyphen in there. I love you so much, and I thank you. My mom, Vivian Pangelinan Cruz, thank you so much for all you do for me and you make the best *lantiyas* and thank you for making me your *kiridu*, I love you so much mom, just know that. I thank my children, our children Kiana, Devin, Kaden and Logan our wonderful kids who are always there and understanding when I come home late and understanding the duty of a public servant and it's a challenging job because it doesn't pay much and there's a lot of stress and I'm excited for our new colleagues to experience this, it's a lot of sacrifice, but we do it. I want to say that my office remains open, as it always has. I've taken a big hit in my office because I lost my chief of staff and it's been very difficult. It's going to be very hard to replace somebody as wonderful as him, but I'm very proud to call on my colleague now Mr. Congressman Chairman Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho, I want to thank you for all the years you've put in as my chief of staff and a huge heart. Just know that I'm always forever grateful to you, my brother and colleague. And to Mr. Speaker, Vice Speaker and my colleagues, my *kuya*, and everyone, we're going to have a great year. Why? Because with politics aside, we're done with it. We're ready to do the work of the people. I love you all. I thank you all. I'm grateful to be here. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Floor Leader Edwin Propst. We now proceed with Representative Patrick San Nicolas.

### **Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas' Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to congratulate you for taking the helm again and my *kuñáo* taking the secondhand as a Vice Speaker, and my good friend here and my classmate taking on the Floor Leader, congratulations to you and all the elected, newly elected and re-elected representatives. Congratulations. *Buenas dias* and good morning to everybody. Mr. Speaker and colleagues and honored guests, families, friends that are present here today and those who are joining us via livestream. As we begin a new chapter in the commonwealth history, my family and I are deeply humbled by the privilege to serve a second term proudly

representing the people of Tinian in this 23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representatives. We are much grateful for the love of our supporters, families, and friends, and all my campaign committee. I especially want to thank to my wife, children, my family, for their patience and support in service to our community and the entire commonwealth. Looking ahead to the coming days and the next two years, I once again stand ready to work in an effort with you guys, new colleagues, to further advance the livelihoods of the people of Tinian and the entire commonwealth as I have done in the previous legislature, I will work hard to continue my record of advocating for critical appropriation for the island of Tinian. I am also pleased that all the members of the Tinian and the Aguiguan Legislative Delegation are returning to office in this term and this will allow us to continue the progress and the work we have undertaken in the previous legislature. Along with collaborating with Mayor Aldan and the Tinian Municipal Council, I am hopeful that more good things for Tinian are come. We're all aware that uncertain times lie ahead of us. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, federal funding of assistance relative to the pandemic are coming to an end. Our tourism industry has not yet returned to its fullest potential, which in turn means to our economic recovery requires our utmost attention and efforts. Talks of revenue generating measures, sometimes tend sound clenched, but my dear colleagues and the people of the commonwealth now more than ever, we must exert every effort to find solutions that are sensible and achievable. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I am hopeful that collectively this body will shift its focus to the issues that directly impact our economic strategies and the standard of living to our people. We cannot afford any more lost time because our people deserve nothing less than representation and leadership aim at restoring economic posture and ensuring that our islands are in the safest places to live, work, and to visit. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, thank you very much, *maraming salamat po* and God bless the Commonwealth.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Representative San Nicolas. We now proceed with Representative Angelo Camacho.

#### **Representative Angelo A. Camacho's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the record, I'll be submitting a written statement. However, I would just like to take this time to thank my wife, my children. Thank you for all your support and your understanding throughout this whole campaign. To my parents, sitting in the back, Anthony, Frances aka sponsors. To my in-laws, thank you guys so much, to my committee to elect, again, thank you guys for all your love and support. You know, I know they spent so much time away from their family and it's always hard for every campaign. To the people of precinct 5, thank you guys, you know, for giving me the opportunity to serve you in this 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature. I promise, I'll do my best. And to my colleagues, congratulations to everybody. I am looking forward to working with each and every one of you. Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Angelo Camacho. And I just noticed that for this term there's probably four, so I have to say the first name and last name. I cannot just say Representative Camacho. All right. We'll proceed with Representative John Paul Sablan.

#### **Representative John Paul P. Sablan's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Hafa adai* and *tirow* and good morning to you all. Congratulations to you all my colleagues for a well-run campaign and a success in your election into office. Our

people have spoken and it is time that we roll off our sleeves and work harmoniously in unity for the common good of our people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. I want give a special thanks to my wife Juanette, who is behind me, our children Philip John, Gwendolynn Nicole, and Halia Lana, my siblings and their families for all their support in my endeavor in public office. To my late parents for their love and support and most especially for raising me to be the person I am today. To my dear people of election precinct 2, *un dánkolo na si Yu'us ma'ase, yan ghillisow* for all the support and extraordinary love that you have given me and your confidence to have served you for the past five terms, and now the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature. I am forever grateful. To my committee members and team, the hardworking Chairman Diego M. Sablan *un dánkolo na si Yu'us ma'ase* for all your love and support. Now, I say to you, all my colleagues, let the work begin today. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative John Paul Sablan. We now proceed with Representative Vicente C. Camacho.

### **Representative Vicente C. Camacho's Statement**

Thank you, Speaker. Good morning colleagues and the viewing public. As we usher in the year 2023, self-governance has been on my mind. So, what is self-governance? Self-governance is related to the concept of autonomy. It is the ability of an individual, a state, or a country to govern itself. Self-governing states are free from oversight by higher government, including external influences. In other words, the political authority of a state comes from its citizens. These states are democratic and republican. So, let us ask ourself this question, how are we as a state protecting our economy? The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have been self-governing for 44-years to date. Let me share with you a short overview of some of the dark clouds that will forever be embedded in our young history. Beginning with 1983, the onset of the garment industry, the federal takeover of the CNMI's immigration, the loss of the CNMI's government retirement system, the impeachment of Governor Fitial, the onset on the loss of the plate casino industry, and most recently, the impeachment of Governor Torres by the legislature's House of Representatives, the mismanagement and misuse of federal funds to the BOOST Program, government partial shutdowns and furloughs, and most the effects and devastations of global COVID-19 pandemic. So, how well have we as a self-governing state governed ourselves? As we move forward into the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, the people have high expectations. The people also understand that the Torres Administration left behind a broke and broken government. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Legislature took the lead in combating corruption. So, how and where do we begin our recovery? It is due time that we as a legislative body to look into our enforcement agencies that implement enforcement laws upon all revenue generating businesses. This body needs to re-look and reassess the agreement and conditions of all revenue generating businesses within the CNMI. Also, this body needs to look into the skyrocketing out of control prices on commodities. We need to legislate or find other long-term solutions to protect consumers from price gouging. Moving forward, let us hope that the new leadership in our government changes the course of how we run our government. In the past two years, the people have seen, have heard, have spoken, and participated in determining the outcome of this past 2022 election. The people are ready for the change. The people are ready to be a participating member of their government. The people are ready to challenge mismanagement within their government. The people are especially ready to challenge and combat corruption within and at all levels of government, including the private sector. To the people of our great commonwealth continue to speak out and include yourselves in the recovery and growth of our government and our



economy in pursuit of a prosperous, self-governing state of the CNMI. This is your government and it's your constitutional right to ensure for a safe, stable, and a clean and protected environment. To the private sector, we have not forgotten about you. You are an integral part of our economic growth. To the people of the CNMI, if ever you are questioned for voicing your discontent with your government, remember these three basic constitutional rights, the freedom of choice, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press. Remember that freedom is not free, and we choose the course of our destiny as a self-serving, self-governing state. God bless us all. Happy new and thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Vicente Camacho. We now proceed with Representative Manny Tenorio Castro.

### **Representative Manny T. Castro's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. Before I thank the people that are here, I'd like to thank the people that are no longer with us. First, I'd like to thank my grandma Rosa Engracia Mundo Castro, known as *nan* Chai. I also like to thank my grandfather Manuel Agulto Tenorio Brown, sister Remedio Palacios Castro, who was the sister of my grandfather *tun* Goru. These individuals are very instrumental in my upbringing and also they were the foundation of my values in terms of public service. I'd like to thank the voters of 1975 who took a leap of faith and were passionate about our political status and wanted a better livelihood for everyone back then. I feel that sentiment with the voters today. A lot of people asked me to run previously, but this was the right time. This is a time where we're going to need people that actually care. It's not about the money. I mean, a lot of us had to give up a lot to be here. Not just us, but those that voted for us. To all the sisters up at *Maturana* as a product of Sister Remedio Preschool Education, that's one of the first education systems that I've been to and they were also very involved in who I am today. To my auntie Diane and my Tenorio family who are watching on livestream in the Pacific Northwest thank you for taking me in when I left Saipan in the eighth grade to further my education. The national anthem it was really written well. For those of you that left the CNMI, my hope is that we will create the CNMI that our founding fathers designed and I hope that you all will return and give back to our community. To our voters in precinct 2, *si Yu'us ma'ase, ghillisow* just remember, even though we're the smallest precinct, almost everything happened in precinct 2. We are the birthplace of the commonwealth and it's time we, we help our precinct. So, thank you all colleagues. Thank you for your time and despite all the challenges ahead, I am really thankful I'm here to serve with you for our people. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*. Oh, one last thing, for the people that are living and here today. Thank you to my parents. My dad, Rodrigo Mundo Castro, he always said, he's like "*Mannet, i edukación ti bali an gen taya respetu.*" a very humble guy, hard worker and also my stepmom, Fang Pan Castro, who was there, our Chairman Diego Sablan and then also my Tenorio family and my kids especially because, I had to give up a lot for this campaign. So, thanks kids Mackenzie and Micah for being patient. My current spouse, Kelsey Lizama, and also the rest of the family there in our office and the viewing public. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Manny Castro Tenorio, sorry, Tenorio Castro. We now proceed with Representative Joseph Flores.

### **Representative Joseph A. Flores' Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleague and for the distinguished guests who are here and the viewing public. Just like to ask you guys for your confidence to take patience we are almost there to adjourn. So, I going to make my short speech. Okay. First, I would like to thank my fellow constituents of precinct 1, for giving me your vote of confidence and allowing me an opportunity to represent you once again. I know that the past few years have been very challenging and many suffer hardship, but we have all managed to make it true. Let's continue to stay positive and push forward. I also want to thank my committee to re-elect for all the hard work devotion and my family, friends, and my supporters, thank you for your time and effort in a tremendous support for you all have given me. And of course, my wife doesn't like to be mentioned when they make something up, but I'd like to thank my wife, Larissa Flores for standing behind me all the way to the first time me running as a House of Representative and to the present day. Thank you, Larissa. And to my daughter Monique Flores, I have four children, only one is present. It's Monique. She always gets the thing, Monique, make sure you're top of this to help out the mom and myself. Thank you again. I could not have done this without you guys. And again, I look forward to be working with you colleagues in this 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature to seek to resolution and opportunity to the better livelihood of the people of the Commonwealth. And thank you all and all good luck.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Joseph Flores. We now proceed with Representative Roman C. Benavente.

**Representative Roman C. Benavente's Statement**

*Si Yu'us ma'ase* and thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to thank the Lord for blessing me and us members for being in this 23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representative today. I'd just like to say it is an honor to be here, but before I move on, I would like to recognize our distinguished guests Judge Perry Inos and members of the families of all of us that are sitting behind us. I am very proud that we are all together intact. It has been a challenge and a rough road this past election, and thank God that the precinct 1 has made it again. I made it again. So, I'm not new to this House of Congress. I've been here and I know what to do. So, I can say this, I'd just like to ask each and every one of you, all of you guys that are here and even the other side of the aisle Senate and even the Administration, we have to work cohesively to face the challenge that the past misgiving of government operation and the expectations of the people were not met. And I'd just like to, I don't want to throw out dirty laundries, but I'd like to say it this way, let's work cohesively together and assure and build the trust that is vested upon us by the people of the commonwealth. Mr. Speaker, another thing that I'd like to say, I'd like to acknowledge my hardworking wife, she's not able to make it today, Andrea Lacapa Benavente, but I am proud that I have my kids with me, Linoa Benavente, and behind me I have Darrah Benavente also, and Jeremiah Benavente and Ann Rita Benavente. Ann Rita Taitano now. So, with that said, I thank them for all the support and the confidence that they have placed in me as I assume these challenges forward. And thank you all. Thank you everyone. God bless. *Dánkolo na si Yu'us ma'ase*.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Roman Benavente. We now proceed with Representative Roy Ada.

**Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And also, congratulations on taking the helm again and to our newly appointed Vice Representative Joel Camacho and our Floor Leader. Thank you everybody. Also, I'd like to thank our honorable Judge Inos for swearing us in to office and *Pale*' Jesse for leading the prayer today. Thank you for leading the prayer. Welcome everybody, thank you all for joining us. I know this is a very happy moment for all of you guys here and I'm also happy for you and your families. I'd like to also thank my family, my wife and my kids, my parents and also God for blessing me with such a wonderful committee and a chairperson as my chair, my awesome chairperson is here today in the gallery Ms. Doris Drew, such a strong woman. I couldn't of have you at a better time. To my wonderful committee, thank you so much for always believing me and sticking by me throughout this very tough campaign. To the people of precinct 1, I sincerely appreciate you know, your vote of confidence and allowing me to serve you again in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature. Also, would like to thank our outgoing Governor Ralph Torres despite all the allegations that have been brought up against our Governor. I would really like to point out a lot of the things that he has contributed. Also signing legislations that are 22<sup>nd</sup> Legislature had introduced and worked together and led us through the difficult times of Soudelor and Yutu and the Pandemic. And also for a lot of the benefits that we receive throughout his term and the retirees for making sure that they've throughout his Administration had received a hundred percent of their retirement benefit. Other than that, I look forward to working with all of you in this new legislature, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature and again, congratulations to all of you and thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Ada. We now proceed with the Vice Speaker Representative Joel Camacho.

#### **Representative Joel C Camacho's Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in the interest of time, I will also be submitting my speech to the Clerk, but I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues for entrusting me as your next Vice Speaker it's a great honor and thank you all and congratulations. To the people of precinct 4, thank you and God bless you all. I will continue the hard work as if you've seen in the last four-years. I will continue that with my partner now in crime, or my partner in design, Mr. Malcolm Omar. Well, congratulations too partner. To my families, my mom Lillian, my dad Serafin thank you all so much, you've given so much. I know this was a tough campaign for you all. You gave up so much to support me, this third term. Love you so much and thank you. To my fiancé Monica and to my kids, my children, Isaiah and Isaac, thank you Babe, you are my rock and without the support and the love that you have shown me and the love that you have shown our children, I could not have made it this far. So, thank you so much, I love you. To my staff, thank you for your hard work. We have so much work ahead. We'll be working closely with our colleagues. We help each other, each prospective precincts, colleagues, we have so much work ahead of us, but I can assure you that same fire, the same work ethic that I apply in precinct 4, I will reach out to each and every one of you and I look forward to serving with each and every one of you. So, congratulations and God bless the CNMI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Vice Speaker. And now proceed with myself.

#### **Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez's Statement**

In the interest of time too, I will be submitting a statement to the Clerk, but first and foremost, I'd like to thank again the people of the commonwealth, most especially the people of precinct 3. Every election term I'm always nervous, but you have always you know, the people have always managed to give me that confidence back every term and I am forever grateful for allowing me and giving me the opportunity and the honor to serve you again for seventh term. I'd like to thank my family and of course, just like everybody else, the family is the rock and my parents, Joseph and Emma Sablan Villagomez, my siblings, my sister Eulalia Villagomez Arriola, I'll make sure to put that on the record. She's been my Chairwoman for the past couple of terms and actually my committee is pretty solid, all women. So yeah, my brother Edwin or Eddie Boy who's in Texas, thank you from for helping from afar. Of course to Jolene and our children, Emalee, I know you've been asking to come to daddy's work and when she got here she was excited, but I've been getting messages that she's feeling bored already, so I'll make that quick. Again, like I said to Jaden, who is my head of logistics and to Gino who's pretty much wrapping up a pharmacy school and the longer I get into this job, I think the more I'm going to get closer to him. Thank you and colleagues, congratulations. I know when we get interviewed, just like myself in the beginning, we want to step up to the challenge and best believe, we have a big challenge ahead, but I think working together, actually not, I think, I know working together, we can overcome this. Yes, we will have differences, but it is in differences that we have that has built our commonwealth, developed our commonwealth, and also helped our commonwealth move forward when we put out those differences, iron them out, compromise and work together, we become successful. So, I wish you all the best this coming 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, and I look forward to working with all, with all of you. Congratulations again. Thank you. I'd like to call for a really quick recess. Recess.

*The House recessed at 11:38 a.m.*

*RECESS*

*The House reconvened at 11:38 a.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: I apologize for that. I just wanted to check up on the status of the Senate inauguration and they haven't elected their officers yet. So, we will go ahead and proceed with announcements.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Under announcement, the Chair would like to announce the members who will be heading the House Standing Committee, which are as follows: Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul will chair the House Committee on Ways and Means. Clap, you should be proud. Don't let that challenges speech scare you. Representative Marissa R. Flores will chair the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations or JGO. Representative Vincent Aldan “Kobre” will chair the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications. Sir, I hope by the end of this term we get a cheaper power rate, okay. Representative Manny Tenorio Castro will chair the House Committee on Education. Representative Angelo A. Camacho will chair the House Committee on Natural Resources. Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho will chair the House Committee on Medicine Cannabis Committee. Representative Malcolm J. Omar will chair the House Committee on Health and Welfare. Representative Julie A. Ogo will chair the Committee on Commerce and

Tourism. Representative Vicente C. Camacho will continue to chair the House Federal and Foreign Affairs Committee. And lastly, Representative Ralph N. Yumul the hard worker, will chair the House Committee on Gaming. All right, colleagues, as mentioned earlier regarding the notification to the Governor, the Chief Justice, and the Senate, I'll ask that we do that after the inauguration and please inform the Office of the Speaker to an official letter of that communication. Thank you. Moving along, I would like to now move down to adjournment, and I'd like to recognize the Floor Leader for the motion to adjourn.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Floor Leader Edwin K. Propst: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to adjourn, subject to the call of the Chair.

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

*The House adjourned at 11:42 a.m.*

*Master of Ceremony Luis John DLG. Castro*: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before we close, we'd like to extend our appreciation once again to all of the particulars who assisted in the organizational session and inaugural ceremonies. To Associate Justice Inos, your Honor, thank you for administering the oath to our members. To Father Reyes, thank you for invoking the blessings on our members today. To Mr. Gus Kaipat and the DPS Color Guard for their participation in today's ceremony. We also appreciate the attendance of distinguished guests as well as family and friends of our members who have been sworn in before you. We especially want to thank those that joined us via livestream via the live broadcast, and appreciate your understanding of the strict limitation of in-person participation. And lastly, we'd like to thank the hardworking staff of the Legislative Bureau and Director Perry J. Tenorio for all the hard work they put into the facilitation of both this ceremony as well as the ceremonies of the upper house. So, for all of your hard work and dedication *un dánkolo na si Yu'us ma'ase* and *ghillisow*. I'd like to ask for you guys to please rise, for those of you who are already stood up, please remain standing as we call upon Father Jesse to deliver the benediction.

## **BENEDICTION**

*(Reverend Father Jesse T. Reyes gave the Benediction)*

*Master of Ceremony Luis John DLG. Castro*: Thank you, Father Jesse. With that, ladies and gentleman, and honorable guests, this concludes today's ceremony. On behalf of the newly sworn-in members of the House of Representatives and the Legislative Bureau *si Yu'us ma'ase, olomwaay*, thank you for joining today's activities. Good morning and good afternoon.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Venetia S. Rosario  
House Journal Clerk

Attachment (Statement of Members):

Representative Vincent Seman Aldan

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas

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**APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS**

**FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY:** 1<sup>st</sup> Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

**SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:** NONE

**THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:** NONE

Thanks to Almighty God, my children, my parents, my siblings, my partner, and all my family and friends, and my committee.

Most of all to the people of Pricinct 1, I kneel before you, to ensure that you all know that I work for you and not the other way around. I am your servant.

I ask you (Pricinct 1) to give me a chance, and you did; now that the campaign is done, enough talking on my part, but execute that which I said I'll do.

Again, thank you all for having confidence in me, for giving me your trust, and for giving me a chance; rest assured that I will not embarrass you my people.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Gillisow, Maraming salamat, and thank you.

Always your humble servant,  
Vincent Seman Aldan 'Kobre'



Inauguration Remarks  
Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas  
23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representatives  
Monday, January 9, 2023

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Buenas Dias and Good Morning!

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues; honored guests, families and friends present here today; and to those joining us via livestream.

As we begin a new chapter in our Commonwealth's history, my family and I are deeply humbled by the privilege to serve a second term proudly representing the people of Tinian in this 23<sup>rd</sup> House of Representatives. We are very much grateful for the love of our supporters, family, friends and campaign committee.

I especially want to thank my wife and children for their patience and support in service to our community.

Looking ahead to the coming days and the next two years, I once again stand ready to get to work in an effort to further advance the livelihoods of the people of Tinian and the entire Commonwealth. As I have done in the previous Legislature, I will work hard to continue my record of advocating for critical appropriations for Tinian.

I am also pleased that all the members of the Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation are returning to office this term. This will allow us to continue the progress and the work we have undertaken in the previous legislature. Along with collaborating with Mayor Edwin Aldan and the Tinian Municipal Council, I am hopeful that more good things for Tinian are to come.

We are all aware that uncertain times lie ahead of us. Federal funding assistance relative to the pandemic are coming to an end. Our tourism industry has not yet returned to its full potential, which in turn means that our economic recovery requires our utmost attention and efforts.

Talks of revenue generating measures sometimes tend to sound cliché, but my dear colleagues and people of the Commonwealth, now more than ever, we must exert every effort to find solutions that are sensible and achievable.

I am hopeful that collectively, this body will shift its focus to the issues that directly impact our economic strategies and the standard of living of our people. We cannot afford any more lost time because our people deserve nothing less than representation and leadership aimed at restoring our economic posture and ensuring that our islands are still the safest places to live, work and visit.

Thank you very much and may God bless the Commonwealth!