



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION, 2023

## LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

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4<sup>th</sup> Day, First Regular Session

Thursday, March 9, 2023

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*The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Fourth Day, First Regular Session on Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 10:08 a.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.*

*The Honorable Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez, Speaker of the House, presided.*

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### ROLL CALL

*The Clerk called the roll and nineteen members were present; Representative Roman C. Benavente was absent and excused.*

*The Chair called for a short recess.*

*The House recessed at 10:10 a.m.*

### RECESS

*The House reconvened at 10:18 a.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you everyone. We'll now rise back to session. Before we went on recess, we were on Roll Call. So, now we'll move down to item II, Public Comments. The floor is now open to receive comments, please state your name, the entity you represent or speak on behalf of and you'll be given three-minutes. We can allow for more flex time, if there's no one more to do public comments. And if you have written comments and would like to submit it, please submit it to the Sergeant-at-Arms, who would then give it to our Clerk for the record. Floor is open.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following individual made comments:

Mr. Herman Guerrero

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Mr. Guerrero. And I understand how that can happen being in the Board of Education for as long as you have. All right, before we move forward with public comments, we have some important communications that we need to add to the agenda. So, just that we are in order, I'm going to recognize the Floor Leader to suspend certain rules so the communications and other documents that did not meet the 72-hours can be added to today's agenda. So, Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to suspend Rule III, Section 6.*

### **RULE III. SESSIONS AND MEETINGS.**

#### **Section 6. Notice of Sessions.**

Not less than 72 hours prior to convening a Regular or Special Session, the Speaker or a majority of the members of the House, shall file a written public notice of the date, time, and place of a session with the Clerk and post the same at the executive branch administration building and the Legislature's web site. When possible, notices under this section shall be given to at least one newspaper of general circulation. Notices shall contain an agenda of items to be considered at the session. Final disposition shall not be taken on any other matter at such session. Once filed as part of this notice, and agenda may only be changed by adding items thereto by the recorded vote of the majority of the members of the House.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the Chair recognized the Clerk for a roll call vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion to suspend Rule III, Section 6 with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	yes
Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Angelo A. Camacho	yes
Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	yes
Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Marissa R. Flores	yes
Representative Thomas John D.C. Manglona	yes
Representative Julie Marie A. Ogo	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	yes
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted "yes."

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting "yes," the motion hereby carries. Thank you, colleagues. Floor is still open for public comments.

The following individuals made comments:

Mr. Anthony Torres, Acting Commissioner for the Department of Corrections  
Mr. Jonathan R. Glass, Jr., Chief Solicitor of the CNMI on behalf of the Attorney General's Office

*The Chair directed the members to item III, Adoption of Journals and recognized the Clerk.*

### **ADOPTION OF JOURNALS**

*The Clerk announced the following House Journal:*

*Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 3, 2023*

*Third Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 15, 2023*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following House Journal:*

*Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 3, 2023*

*Third Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 15, 2023*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt the Second Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 3, 2023 and the Third Day, First Regular Session Journal – February 15, 2023 were carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair directed the members to item IV, Introduction of Bills.*

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

#### ***House Bills:***

*The following bills were officially introduced by the author of each bill and referred to its appropriate committee by the Chair.*

#### **H. B. NO. 23-18**

To reduce the CNMI's growing litter problem and to conserve resources by accepting beverage containers for refund value and providing penalties.

**REP. MANNY G. T. CASTRO** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul)

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES)**

**H. B. NO. 23-19**

To provide a tax credit for taxpayers who make donations of cash or food supplies to a qualified local food pantry, homeless shelter, or soup kitchen.

**REP. MANNY G. T. CASTRO** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Vicente C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Julie M.A. Ogo, Edwin K. Propst, John Paul P. Sablan, and Edmund S. Villagomez)

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)**

**H. B. NO. 23-20**

To amend the quorum and removal of members provisions for the State Board of Education; and for other purposes.

**REP. MANNY G. T. CASTRO** of Saipan, Precinct 2 and **REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for themselves*, Representatives Vincent R.S. Aldan, Roman C. Benavente, Malcom J. Omar, and Edmund S. Villagomez)

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON)**

Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro: I'd also like to request that we request for First and Final Reading regarding this bill, given the nature and sensitivity of the issue at hand.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: All right. Thank you. And thank you with no objection. I'd like to recognize the Floor Leader for the proper motion to place House Bill 23-20 on calendar for action today. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 so they may place House Bill 23-20 on the Bill Calendar.*

**RULE IX. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS****Section 8. Referral of Bills and Resolutions**

(a) Bills and resolutions shall be read by title upon introduction and (except as provided in subsection (b), the Speaker shall refer such measures to an appropriate committee or to more than one committee, jointly or sequentially. The Clerk shall endorse such reference on the measure before duplication and shall enter such reference upon the Journal. In the case of error of reference, correction may be made by the House, with debate, immediately after the reading and approval of the Journal, by unanimous consent, or upon motion of either committee claiming jurisdiction or the committee to which the measure has been erroneously referred.

(b) The Speaker may place a resolution directly on the Resolution Calendar, rather than refer it to a committee, subject to appeal to the House.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.*

*The following bills were introduced by the author of each bill and referred to its appropriate committee by the Chair.*

**H. B. NO. 23-21**

To amend the compensation of the CNMI Cannabis Commission members.

**REP. DIEGO V. F. CAMACHO** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Manny G. T. Castro, Marissa R. Flores, Julie M.A. Ogo, Malcom J. Omar, and Edwin K. Propst) **(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON CANNABIS AND WAYS AND MEANS)**

**H. B. NO. 23-22**

To establish an investigative division of the Office of Attorney General, codify investigative subpoena power and improve the investigation of cases involving public corruption.

**REP. MARISSA R. FLORES** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself*, Representatives Julie M.A. Ogo, Edmund S. Villagomez and Denita Kaipat Yangetmai) **(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)**

**H. B. NO. 23-23**

To establish a CNMI Drug Overdose Policy; to authorize and mandate first responders to possess opioid overdose reversal medication; to authorize standing orders for opioid overdose reversal medication; to provide limited immunity for dispensing opioid overdose reversal medication; and for other purposes.

**REP. MALCOM J. OMAR** of Saipan, Precinct 4 (*for himself*, Representative Julie M.A. Ogo) **(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)**

**H. B. NO. 23-24**

To provide an affirmative defense against drug possession charges in the case of an overdose.

**REP. MALCOM J. OMAR** of Saipan, Precinct 4 (*for himself*) **(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)**

**H. B. NO. 23-25**

To amend certain provisions of the CNMI Good Samaritan Act [7 CMC § 2801 *et seq.*]; and for other purposes.

**REP. MALCOM J. OMAR** of Saipan, Precinct 4 (*for himself*) **(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE)**

**H. B. NO. 23-26**

To amend 4 CMC 1402 (g)(1) to allocate 10 percent of the excise tax to the Solid Waste Management Revolving Fund.

**REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Manny G. T. Castro, Marissa R. Flores, Julie M.A. Ogo, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul) **(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)**

**[ADDED] H. B. NO. 23-27**

To ensure that the expenditure authority designated in the Annual Appropriation Act retains exclusive control over all funds appropriated to it.

**REP. JOSEPH A. FLORES** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*) **(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS AND JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)**

**[ADDED] H. B. NO. 23-28**

To clarify the process for appropriation of administrative expenses of the Department of Public Lands and timely transfer of funds to Marianas Public Land Trust.

**REP. ANGELO A. CAMACHO** of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Manny G. T. Castro, Malcom J. Omar, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Denita Kaipat Yangetmai)

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WAYS AND MEANS)**

**[ADDED] H. B. NO. 23-29**

To establish a reward for recovery of public funds and a mechanism for the payment of rewards for disclosures leading to the recovery of public funds; and for other purposes.

**REP. EDWIN K. PROPST** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*)  
**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS)**

*The Chair directed the members to House Local Bills.*

***House Local Bills:***

*The following bills were officially introduced by the author of each bill and referred respectively by the Chair.*

**H. L. B. NO. 23-5**

To amend the Rota Dog Control Act under Title 10, Division 1, Chapter 1, Article 2, of the Commonwealth Code.

**REP. JULIE M. A. OGO** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*) on March 9, 2023.

**H. L. B. NO. 23-6**

To re-appropriate Eleven Thousand Two Hundred Forty-Six Dollars (\$11,246.00) allotted under Tinian Local Law 18-09; Fourteen Thousand One Hundred Fifty-Nine Dollars (\$14,159.00) allotted under Tinian Local Law 19-13; Thirty Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty-Two Dollars (\$30,882.00) from Tinian Local Law 19-15; One Hundred Ninety-One Dollars (\$191.00) from Tinian Local Law 20-9; Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) from Tinian Local Law 20-17; and One Thousand Forty Dollars (\$1,040.00) from Tinian Local Law 20-17; and for other purposes.

**REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS** of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*)  
**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)**

Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas: Mr. Speaker. I want to request if this one could be transmitted directly to the delegation? This one has funding already in the Tinian Municipal Treasury. This one has been introduced and passed and, and it's not, the money is there already. Instead of referring it to the Ways and Means, so to be a quick action to the people of Tinian. Mr. Speaker, please I ask that you know, you just direct this – refer this to the delegation. That's all I request, Mr. Speaker and I yield back. Thank you so much.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative San Nicolas. We have other appropriation bills coming up, so this will go through the Ways and Means and I have pressed

the Chairman and the committee and I also will be calling sessions, even if it's just for one local bill just to make sure it's expedited. No. Okay. Recognize Representative Julie Ogo.

*The following bills were introduced by the author of each bill and referred respectively by the Chair.*

**[ADDED] H. L. B. NO. 23-7**

To appropriate \$65,000 of the Rota Poker License Fees Account (specifically under BU 3302) and for other purposes.

**REP. JULIE M. A. OGO** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*)

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)**

**[ADDED] H. L. B. NO. 23-8**

To appropriate \$1,000,000.00 of the dividends collected by the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) from the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC); and for other purposes.

**REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R.S. Aldan, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Vicente C. Camacho, Manny G. T. Castro, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DLC. Manglona, Malcom J. Omar, Edwin K. Propst, John Paul P. Sablan, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)**

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Again. Just to reiterate for the record any local bills involving appropriations is automatically referred to the Committee on Ways and Means in the House. Thank you, colleagues.

***House Legislative Initiatives: None***

*The Chair directed the members to item V, Introduction of Resolutions and recognized Representative Denita K. Yangetmai.*

**INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

***House Resolutions:***

*Representative Denita K. Yangetmai officially introduced the following resolution:*

**H. RES. NO. 23-5**

To congratulate and honor all the women in the Commonwealth as we celebrate their contributions and achievements during the month of March 2023 proclaimed as CNMI Women’s Month and March 8th as International Women’s Day.

**REP. DENITA KAIPAT YANGETMAI** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R.S. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Vicente C. Camacho, Manny G. T. Castro, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcom J. Omar, Edwin K. Propst, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

**(MOVED TO RESOLUTION CALENDAR)**

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you. So, without any objection by the author, is it okay, because you said it's by all the women. I didn't know Rep. Vincent Aldan and Rep. Angelo Camacho and Rep. Diego – so with no objection, can we introduce this as a Committee of the Whole.

*Several members voiced “no objection.”*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Representative Yangetmai. I like that when I asked her if there's no objection, a man answered “no objection.” Typical *lai*, typical. No, I'm just kidding. All right, thank you for that. House Resolution 23-5 will be placed on today's Resolution Calendar for action. We now move down to Commemorative Resolution and I recognize Representative Roy Ada.

***House Joint Resolutions: None***

***House Commemorative Resolutions:***

*Representative Roy C. A. Ada officially introduced the following resolution:*

**C. RES. NO. 23-1**

To honor and commend the late Honorable Jacinta Matagolai Kaipat for her relentless dedication and selfless contributions to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and to extend our heartfelt condolences to her bereaved family on her untimely passing.

**REP. ROY C. A. ADA** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Vincent R.S. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Vicente C. Camacho, Manny G. T. Castro, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DLC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcom J. Omar, Edwin K. Propst, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Roy Ada. House Commemorative Resolution 23-1 will be placed on today's calendar for action.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Mr. Speaker, any more resolutions?

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Yes. Recognized.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Mr. Speaker, if there's no objection from the author can we introduce this formally? I understand that it's only needed 11 to pass, but just for the House Journal and record that it'd be introduced formally as a Committee as a Whole so that it would be on record.

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada: No objection.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you. With no objection by the author and colleagues, Commemorative Resolution 23-1 is hereby introduced as a whole by the committee.

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



***House Concurrent Resolutions: None***

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

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

*The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:*

**[ADDED]** GOV. COMM. 23-14: (3/8/2023) Submitting revisions to the Appropriations and Budget Authority Act for FY 2023.

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)**

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: I'm going to refer Governor's Communication 23-14 to the Committee on Ways and Means. This communication, of course as you all know, my office distributed a copy to everyone yesterday. It's about the revised budget and I urge the Committee on Ways and Means to expedite the process in getting the budget revised, budget bill and concurrent resolution ready as soon as possible. Thank you, members.

*There was no discussion; the Chair directed the members to item VII, Senate Communications and recognized the Clerk.*

**SENATE COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Clerk announced the following Senate Communications:*

SEN. COMM. 23-3: (2/14/2023) Transmitting for House action S. J. R. NO. 23-02, entitled, "Requesting Governor Arnold I. Palacios to task the Division of Revenue and Taxation to collect all Business Gross Revenue Tax owed the Commonwealth government.", which was adopted by the Senate on February 14, 2023. **[For action]**

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS)**

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to accept Senate Communications 23-3 so it becomes property of the House.*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to accept Senate Communications 23-3 so it becomes property of the House was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.*

*The Chair referred the following Senate Communications accordingly:*

- *Senate Communication 23- (S.J.R. 23-2) referred to the Committee on Ways and Means*

*The Chair directed the members to item XI, Miscellaneous Communications and recognized the Clerk.*

## **HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS**

None

## **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

None

## **COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES**

None

## **MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communications:*

MISC. COMM. 23-13: (3/1/2023) From the Marianas Public Land Trust (MPLT) re: *MPLT Interim Administrative Report*. [*For info*]

**(REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEES ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WAYS AND MEANS)**

[**ADDED**] MISC. COMM. 23-14: (2/27/2023) CNMI Youth Congress elections for the 19th CNMI Youth Congress to be conducted on March 6, 2023 at the respective public and private schools. [*For info*]

[**ADDED**] MISC. COMM. 23-15: (2/27/2023) Certification of the 19th CNMI Youth Congress election results to be conducted on March 6, 2023. [*For info*]

*The Chair referred Miscellaneous Communication 23-13 to the Committees on Natural Resources and Ways and Means.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: And I would also like to congratulate our youth that you know, stepped up to take the opportunity to run and serve in the Youth Congress and to those that also won their respective elections. So, congratulations to our young leaders. Thank you, colleagues.

*There was no discussion; the Chair directed the members to item XII, Reports of Standing Committees and recognized the Clerk.*

## **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

*The Clerk announced that there are 5 Standing Committee Reports ready for adoption.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following Standing Committee Report:*

**S. C. R. NO. 23-1:** Reporting on H. B. No. 23-11, entitled: “To amend Title 1, Division 8 of the Commonwealth Code by establishing a Veterans’ Preference employment provision for the CNMI Government; and for other purposes.” *Your House Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 23-11 in its current form.*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt Standing Committee Report 23-1 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following Standing Committee Report:*

**S. C. R. NO. 23-2:** Reporting on JUD. BR. COMM. 23-1: Proposed NMI Rules of Guardianship Procedure. [Submitted 1/24/2023; **Deadline: 3/25/2023**] *Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House approve the “Proposed NMI Rules of Guardianship Procedure”.*

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Just for clarification when we adopt this committee report it passes. This deals with the proposed NMI Rules of Guardianship from the judicial branch. And so, with that, I recognize the Clerk to please call the roll.

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of Standing Committee Report 23-2 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	yes
Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Angelo A. Camacho	yes
Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	yes
Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Marissa R. Flores	yes
Representative Thomas John D.C. Manglona	yes
Representative Julie Marie A. Ogo	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	yes
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” Standing Committee Report 23-2 is hereby approved. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following Standing Committee Report:*

**S. C. R. NO. 23-3:** Reporting on H. B. No. 23-13, entitled: “To amend the Crimes and Criminal Procedure Code definitions of dangerous weapon and serious bodily injury.” *Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 23-13 in its current form.*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt Standing Committee Report 23-3 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following Standing Committee Report:*

**S. C. R. NO. 23-4:** Reporting on H. B. No. 23-14 entitled: “To amend the punishment for the crime of vandalism to include the option of confinement.” *Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 23-14, HSI.*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt Standing Committee Report 23-4 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following Standing Committee Report:*

**S. C. R. NO. 23-5:** Reporting on H. B. No. 23-17 entitled: “To provide clarity relative to the crime of promoting prison contraband, or otherwise known as the Contraband Reform Act of 2023; and for other purposes.” *Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 23-17, HSI.*

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt Standing Committee Report 23-5 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair directed the members to item XV, Resolution Calendar and recognized the Floor Leader.*

## REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

## RESOLUTION CALENDAR

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following resolution:*

### **H. RES. NO. 23-5**

To congratulate and honor all the women in the Commonwealth as we celebrate their contributions and achievements during the month of March 2023 proclaimed as CNMI Women’s Month and March 8th as International Women’s Day.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to adopt House Resolution 23-5 as carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to adopt the following resolution:*

### **C. RES. NO. 23-1**

To honor and commend the late Honorable Jacinta Matagolai Kaipat for her relentless dedication and selfless contributions to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and to extend our heartfelt condolences to her bereaved family on her untimely passing.

*The motion was seconded.*

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

*The Chair directed the members to item XVI, Bill Calendar and recognized the Floor Leader.*

## BILL CALENDAR

*The Floor Leader made a motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10.*

### **RULE VII. COMMITTEES GENERALLY**

#### **Section 9. Committee Reports; Other documents**

(a) Standing or Special Committees shall submit a written report to the Speaker within 60 days from the date the matter was referred to the committee, unless a shorter or longer

time is ordered by the Speaker pursuant to a decision by the House Leadership. Subcommittees shall submit reports on matters referred to them as prescribed by the Standing Committee Chair. Standing, special and conference committees shall submit their reports in writing and provide an electronic copy to the Clerk who shall number the reports consecutively in the order received, cause such reports to be reviewed for legal sufficiency, reproduced, and furnished each member of the House at least twenty-four hours prior to the session at which it is to be considered. A committee report shall state findings of facts and conclusions based thereon together with a specific recommendation as to the manner in which the bill, resolution, or other matter referred to the committee should be disposed of by the House. A report recommending a bill or resolution for passage shall clearly state the purpose of the bill. A report on a bill or resolution shall show clearly any proposed amendments and the Clerk shall place such a bill or resolution on the appropriate calendar.

(b) A report shall be considered adopted by a committee when the Chairperson and a majority of the members of the committee have signed the report concurring therein. A member or members not concurring in the report of the majority may so indicate by submitting a minority report which shall be attached to the committee report or by signing with "I do not concur".

(c) When a committee recommends that a bill or resolution be formally filed (indefinitely postponed), the recommendation is reported to the House floor as a committee report to be confirmed by majority vote. Adoption of the committee report by the members has the effect of officially filing the bill.

(d) When, by majority vote, the House adopts a committee report recommending favorable action on a bill or resolution, the bill or resolution as reported by the committee shall be placed on the appropriate calendar for House floor action.

(e) All documents, testimonies, or other evidence submitted to any standing or special committee or subcommittee in connection with any matter referred to the committee or subcommittee shall be the property of the House. The Chair of any committee or subcommittee shall deliver all such documents, testimonies, or other evidence to the House Clerk upon expiration of the term of the House. Such documents, testimonies or other evidence may be attached to committee reports as supporting documents.

## **RULE IX. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS**

### **Section 9. First Reading of Bills and Resolutions**

(a) When a bill or resolution is read in the House the first time, the Clerk shall report the bill by title, unless a majority orders it read in full, or by such subdivisions as the motion to read may indicate. The House shall then proceed to debate the measure, and amendments shall be in order. At the conclusion of a debate the House shall vote on passing the measure on First Reading after affording an opportunity for one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Measure passes with amendments, the Clerk shall engross such amendments and cause the measure, or any page thereof, to be reprinted as provided in Sections 4 and 6 of this Rule.

(b) The First Reading of a bill without amendment shall be the only and final reading, and upon its passage, the Clerk shall dispose of it pursuant to Section 14 of this Rule.

(c) If a bill passes First Reading with amendment, the Clerk shall place it on the Bill Calendar for Second Reading the next legislative day.

(d) First Reading of a resolution shall be the only and final reading, and upon its passage, the Clerk shall dispose of it pursuant to Section 14 of this Rule.

### **Section 10. Second Reading of Bills**

(a) When a bill is read in the House a second time, it shall be considered in the same manner as for First Reading, except that no further amendments shall be in order.

(b) Second Reading of a bill shall be the final reading, and upon its passage, which shall be by Call of the Roll, the Clerk shall dispose of it pursuant to Section 14 of this Rule.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following legislation:*

**H. B. NO. 23-20**

To amend the quorum and removal of members provisions for the State Board of Education; and for other purposes.

*The motion was seconded.*

*Under discussion; the Chair recognized Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro.*

Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro: Sorry, colleagues. I know you guys were ready to pass this, but I just wanted to reassure our constituents that this bill – there's nothing political about this bill. Given, you know, my background over six-years of education in leadership management and work behavior, as well as over a decade of work experience from the frontline to management in education, we're separating all ties here and we're looking at the issue at hand and this bill is purely to provide equity. When I look at PSS now, it's a lot different from – because I'm a product of PSS – most of you are a product of PSS. It's a big ship with a small rudder and this bill is going to allow us to give that rudder some flexibility to steer wherever it needs to be, given the financial issues, given all the things that need to happen expeditiously. So, we're just making it equitable across the board. That's all I have Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Manny Castro. I recognize Representative Marissa Flores.

Representative Marissa R. Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too am in full support of this bill. I echo Representative Castro when he says that this is about equity, but I would also like to say on behalf of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature that we do believe in the motto of the Public School System, which is “Students First” and because of that, this is the action of this bill. We support students first and everything else, I believe is secondary, but right now, today, what we are doing is to ensure that there is equity and the slogan and the motto that PSS abides by and the mission, which is “Students First” is adhered to. Thank you so much.

*There was no further discussion; the Chair recognized the Clerk for a roll call vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of House Bill 23-20 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	yes
Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Angelo A. Camacho	yes
Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho	yes

Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	yes
Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Marissa R. Flores	yes
Representative Thomas John D.C. Manglona	yes
Representative Julie Marie A. Ogo	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	yes
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill 23-20 hereby passes the House. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following legislation:*

**H. B. No. 23-11**

To amend Title 1, Division 8 of the Commonwealth Code by establishing a Veterans’ Preference employment provision for the CNMI Government; and for other purposes.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion; the Chair recognized the Clerk for a roll call vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of House Bill 23-11 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	yes
Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Angelo A. Camacho	yes
Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	yes
Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Marissa R. Flores	yes
Representative Thomas John D.C. Manglona	yes
Representative Julie Marie A. Ogo	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	yes
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”



Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill 23-11 hereby passes the House. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following legislation:*

**H. B. No. 23-13**

To amend the Crimes and Criminal Procedure Code definitions of dangerous weapon and serious bodily injury.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion; the Chair recognized the Clerk for a roll call vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of House Bill 23-13 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	yes
Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Angelo A. Camacho	yes
Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	yes
Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Marissa R. Flores	yes
Representative Thomas John D.C. Manglona	yes
Representative Julie Marie A. Ogo	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	yes
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill 23-13 hereby passes the House. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following legislation:*

**H. B. No. 23-14, HS1**

To amend the punishment for the crime of vandalism to include the option of confinement.

*The motion was seconded.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Recognize Representative Marissa Flores. I apologize for that.

Representative Marissa R. Flores: That's okay. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Just for some clarification, you do have this document in front of you that offers a floor amendment on House Bill 23-14. The amendment should reflect on page 2, line 6, and the insertion of “knowingly” after “persons” so it shall read as follows, “A) It shall be unlawful for any person and or persons knowingly to vandalize any public or private property.” And the reason to that is we did get some comment from the Public Defender's Office and one of his comments was when we said “persons” it really did not clearly define an individual who may be suffering from any mental state disorder. So, we did put in that clause, put in “knowingly” so that there is some sort of measurement. So, that is why I'm asking that this body please include the amendment and pass the amendment under page 2, line 6, with the insertion of “knowingly” after “persons.” Thank you. So move.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion and the floor amendment offered by Representative Marissa R. Flores was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*There was no further discussion; the Chair recognized the Clerk for a roll call vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of House Bill 23-14, House Substitute 1, House Draft 1 on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	yes
Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Angelo A. Camacho	yes
Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	yes
Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Marissa R. Flores	yes
Representative Thomas John D.C. Manglona	yes
Representative Julie Marie A. Ogo	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	yes
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill 23-14, House Substitute 1, House Draft 1 hereby passes the House. Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader made a motion to pass the following legislation:*

**H. B. No. 23-17, HS1**

To provide clarity relative to the crime of promoting prison contraband, or otherwise known as the Contraband Reform Act of 2023; and for other purposes.

*The motion was seconded.*

*There was no discussion; the Chair recognized the Clerk for a roll call vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of House Bill 23-17, House Substitute on First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	yes
Representative Vincent Raymond S. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	absent ( <i>excused</i> )
Representative Angelo A. Camacho	yes
Representative Diego Vincent F. Camacho	yes
Representative Joel C. Camacho	yes
Representative Vicente C. Camacho	yes
Representative Manny Gregory T. Castro	yes
Representative Joseph A. Flores	yes
Representative Marissa R. Flores	yes
Representative Thomas John D.C. Manglona	yes
Representative Julie Marie A. Ogo	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas	yes
Representative Denita K. Yangetmai	yes
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	yes
Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	yes

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill 23-17, House Substitute 1 hereby passes the House. Thank you, colleagues and that will be all under Bill Calendar. Before we move forward, I just want to call for a quick recess. Quick recess.

*The House recessed at 11:21 a.m.*

**RECESS**

*The House reconvened at 11:24 a.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: We’ll rise back to session. Before we went on recess, we just wrapped up with the Bill Calendar. So, now we’ll move down to item XVII, Miscellaneous Business. Floor is open for Miscellaneous Business or rather discussions under Miscellaneous Business. Recognize our Representative Attao.

### **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you Mr. Speaker. And as we received the Governor's Communication on our fiscal situation right now in the CNMI. There's the working group with the with the Administration on the financials. We will continue our working group

for the next couple weeks that will also address the 2024 budget, but with the 2023 budget in hand right now, we will be working through our Chairman of Ways and Means Rep. Yumul and our fiscal analyst, so we can get that product out the soonest for the members review and also, I believe we're finalizing the concurrent resolution, which is only going to change the ceiling and the bottom line number for our consideration, but as we all know that the ARPA was responsible for 20% of the salaries of the employees of the government. Those are definitely cut off and 100% of our operations was paid for by ARPA. Those are cut off, so we need to get down and really do a lot of the legwork. I understand that the information that was sent over by the Administration is looking at a 72-hour work schedule for each of our employees now. We will work with that and we will figure out ways to be able to collect other funding sources as per the communication from the Administration. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield and I will give more updates in the coming days. Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Attao. Floor is still open for miscellaneous. Ready. Okay, thank you. We may now move down to item XVIII, Announcements. Recognize Representative Yangetmai.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Denita K. Yangetmai: I just want to announce about the APIL Board of Directors meeting. It'll be in Kosrae and it'll be on April 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup>, actually 3 to the 7<sup>th</sup>, and it will be paid for. The accommodations will be paid for and I will represent the House and we are still waiting the Senate confirmation for a Senate member. Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Yangetmai. I thought you were going to offer to pay for another member, but floor is still open. Recognize Representative Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in line with Rep. BJ Attao the Committee on Ways and Means will be issuing – will convene actually on Monday, March 13 to address governor's communication and all local bills introduced today just for the members of Ways and Means. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Yumul. Recognize Representative Attao. All right, thank you for that.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Be at 1:00 p.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Okay. Recognize Representative Angelo Camacho.

Representative Angelo A. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to advise the general public if they're just watching live Precinct 5 is planning on starting up a function, something similar to the Thursday night market – street market. So, we're anticipating probably by May or June. So, I would like to advise the people if they're interested to, it's going to be specifically for food. If you're interested to please, you know, go ahead and start prepping maybe apply for a business license or even a food handlers permit. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Angelo Camacho. Anymore under announcement? Okay. I will be calling for a session on Monday at two o'clock. Just to let you all know so that we can get the revised budget process going with the concurrent resolutions. And of course, if any other communications or bills or committee reports, make it by you know, meet the 72-hours, of course we will entertain those. So, that's my announcement. Anymore? Ready?

*Several members voiced “ready.”*

Speaker Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez: Ready. Okay. And now I'll move down to adjournment and I recognize the Floor Leader.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Floor Leader Edwin K. Propst: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Subject to the call of the Speaker. I move for adjournment.

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

*The House adjourned at 11:29 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Venetia S. Rosario  
House Journal Clerk

### **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:**

H. L. B. No. 23-4: To amend 10 CMC §14106 to amend the Rota Resident Identification Card fee; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*) on February 3, 2023.

*Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session on February 15, 2023:*

H. Res. No. 23-4: To honorably commend and pay just tribute to the life and legacy of the late Honorable Edward DLG Pangelinan for his relentless dedication and countless contributions in the formation and continued existence of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Introduced by Representatives Marissa R. Flores, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Manny G. T. Castro, Joseph A. Flores, Thomas J. DLC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcom J. Omar, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul (for themselves, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R.S. Aldan, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Vicente C. Camacho, Edwin K. Propst, and Patrick H. San Nicolas) on February 15, 2023; subsequently placed on the Resolution Calendar.

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*House information on deadlines for override: None*