



HOUSE JOURNAL

THIRD REGULAR SESSION, 2026

2nd Day, Third Regular Session

Monday, February 9, 2026

The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Second Day, Third Regular Session on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 10:06 a.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands.

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

A moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll for attendance with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Present
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Present
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Present
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Present
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Present
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Present
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Present
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Present
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Present
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Present
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Present
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Present
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Present
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Present
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Present
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Present
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Present
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Present

¹ Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, we have 18 members present and 2 members absent.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villgomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 18 members present, a quorum is duly established. Let the record reflect that Representatives Joseph Flores and Julie Ogo are excused from today's session. We now proceed to Item No. 2, Public Comments. The podium is opened to receive any comments. Please state your name and the entity you represent, you have five minutes. If you have any prepared statements, please submit them to the Sergeant-at-Arms for forwarding to the Clerk's office.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There being no public comments presented, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 3, Adoption of Journals, and recognized the Clerk.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

The Clerk announced the following House Journals:

Ninth Day, Second Regular Session Journal of November 25, 2025

Tenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal of December 5, 2025

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved to adopt Ninth Day, Second Regular Session Journal of November 25, 2025 and, Tenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal of December 5, 2025. The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt Ninth Day, Second Regular Session Journal of November 25, 2025 and, Tenth Day, Second Regular Session Journal of December 5, 2025 was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.

The Chair proceeded to Item No. 4, Introduction of Bills, and recognized Representative Patrick H. San Nicolas, under House Bills.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

House Bills:

Represent Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means:

H. B. NO. 24-89: To appropriate \$300,000.00 of the dividends collected by the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) from the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) to fund infrastructure projects in the Second Senatorial District. **Prefiled by: REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS** of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*)

Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and, Ways and Means:

H. B. NO. 24-90: To mandate the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation to change the power, water, and wastewater rates for the Commonwealth Ports Authority to the commercial utility rate; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. ELIAS J. M. RANGAMAR** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*)

Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas formally introduced the following bill on behalf of Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo, which was then referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means:

H. B. NO. 24-91: To appropriate \$300,000.00 of the dividends collected by the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) from the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) to fund infrastructure projects in the First Senatorial District. **Prefiled by: REP. JULIE M. A. OGO** of Rota, Precinct 7 (*for herself*)

Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committees on Ways and Means and, Natural Resources:

H. B. NO. 24-92: To appropriate \$63,000.00 from Schedule A of Public Law 24-20 that was vetoed for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS** of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*)

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr. formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committee on Commerce:

H. B. NO. 24-93: To amend 4CMC § 5611 to allow for the issuance of two-year business licenses and to require the Department of Commerce and the Department of Finance to jointly promulgate implementing rules and regulations. **Prefiled by: REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO JR.** of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul)

Representative Marissa Renee Flores formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations:

H. B. NO. 24-94: To amend the punishment for the crime of vandalism to include the option of confinement. **Prefiled by: REP. MARISSA R. FLORES** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself*)

Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means:

H. B. NO. 24-95: To enhance economic opportunities for small businesses and local farmers by establishing new gross revenue tax exemptions, clarifying export treatment, simplifying tax administration in the CNMI; providing for phased implementation to ensure administrative feasibility and fiscal stability; and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. THOMAS J. DLC. MANGLONA** of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*)

There being no further introduction of House Bills, the Chair proceeded to House Local Bills and recognized Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho.

House Local Bills:

Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho formally introduced the following bill:

H. L. B. NO. 24-46: To re-appropriate the fund balance of \$50,000.00 under Saipan Local Law 22-16 (Project Code 2001E); and for other purposes. **Prefiled by: REP. ANGELO A. CAMACHO** and **REP. THOMAS J. DLC. MANGLONA** of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for themselves*)

The Chair recognized Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente.

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding House Bill No. 24-95. I went through the review of this bill and there are some concerns.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Benavente. House Local Bill No. 24-46 will be, again, going to the proper delegation. And at that level, that is where they can do the work and make the proper clarification.

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. To the author, with due respect, the bill is the same. The funding source for all of this is House Local Bill No. 22-16, which is, if I recall, all this bill distributed – I am sorry, I just need to mention this to keep everybody abreast. Thank you.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Further work can be done on the delegation level. Thank you, Representative Benavente.

There being no further discussion on the floor and no items under House Legislative Initiatives and Item No. 5, Introduction of Resolutions, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 6, Messages from the Governor, and recognized the Clerk.

House Legislative Initiatives:

None

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS:

House Resolutions:

None

House Joint Resolutions:

None

House Commemorative Resolutions:

None

House Concurrent Resolutions:

None

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:

GOV.COMM. 24-102: (1/13/2026) Transmitting the Governor's request for legislative consideration of H.B. 24-58 (BGRT exemptions for securities transactions), H.B. 24-62 (Uniform Electronic Transactions Act), and H.B. 24-32 (taxation and regulation of short-term rentals), citing urgent economic and fiscal conditions. [For Info]

GOV. COMM. 24-103: (1/14/2026) Reporting the availability of \$960,235.74 in Tobacco Settlement Funds for appropriation pursuant to 1 CMC § 7604, with recommendation for allocation to the Marianas Visitors Authority for tourism recovery efforts, including Department of Finance fund certification. [For Info]

GOV. COMM. 24-104: (1/21/2026) Informing the House that he signed into law S. L. B. No. 24-03, D1, (To amend 10 CMC §2521(g) to provide for the suspension of Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission members' compensation; and for other purposes). Became Tinian Local Law No. 24-09. [For Info]

GOV. COMM. 24-105: (1/21/2026) Informing the House that he vetoed S. B. NO. 24-04, entitled, (To advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI.). [Deadline: 3/22/2026]

GOV. COMM. 24-106: (1/22/2026) Informing the House of his renomination of Mr. Oscar Patrick Quitugua to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) representing the First Senatorial District. [Deadline: 4/22/2026]

GOV. COMM. 24-107: (1/22/2026) Informing the House of his renomination of Mr. James S. Sirok to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) representing the Third Senatorial District. [Deadline: 4/22/2026]

GOV. COMM. 24-108: (1/26/2026) Transmittal of Mr. James S. Sirok's résumé, police clearance, statement of financial interest, and drug test results. [Deadline: 4/22/2026]

GOV. COMM. 24-109: (1/27/2026) Informing the House that he signed into law H. L. B. No. 24-35 (To appropriate \$16,925 of the Rota Poker License Fee Account under BU 3302; and for other purposes.). Became Rota Local Law No. 24-06. [For Info]

GOV. COMM. 24-110: (1/27/2026) Informing the House that he signed into law H. L. B. No. 24-39, D1 (To appropriate Fifty-four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000.00) from revenues collected from poker fees in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes.). Became Tinian Local Law No. 24-10. [For Info]

GOV.COMM. 24-111: (1/30/2026) Transmitting the Administration's request for final consideration and passage of H.B. 24-32, proposing the establishment of a transient accommodation tax and the regulation of short-term rentals in the Commonwealth. [For Info]

GOV.COMM. 24-112: (1/30/2026) Transmitting the Administration's request for final consideration and passage of H.B. 24-62, the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, including proposed amendments relating to digital signatures on lease agreements and rulemaking authority. [For Info]

The Chair opened the floor for discussion and there was none.

Pursuant to the actions taken,

1. *Governor's Communication No. 24-105, referencing, (1/21/2026) Informing the House that he vetoed S. B. NO. 24-04, entitled, (To advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian language education in the CNMI.). [Deadline: 3/22/2026]" , was referred to the House Committee on Education;*

2. *Governor's Communication No. 24-106, referencing, "(1/22/2026) Informing the House of his renomination of Mr. Oscar Patrick Quitugua to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) representing the First Senatorial District. [Deadline: 4/22/2026]", was referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations and, Transportation and Infrastructure;*
3. *Governor's Communication No. 24-107, referencing, "(1/22/2026) Informing the House of his renomination of Mr. James S. Sirok to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) representing the Third Senatorial District. [Deadline: 4/22/2026]", was referred to the House Committees on Judicial and Governmental Operations and, Transportations and Infrastructure;*
4. *Governor's Communication No. 24-108, referencing, "(1/26/2026) Transmittal of Mr. James S. Sirok's résumé, police clearance, statement of financial interest, and drug test results. [Deadline: 4/22/2026]", was referred to the House Committees on Judicial and Governmental Operations and, Transportation and Infrastructure.*

The Chair proceeded to Item No. 7, Senate Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following Senate Communications:

SEN. COMM. 24-71: (1/16/2026) Informing the House that the Senate confirmed Mr. James Ushio Miyahara Mendiola, Jr. to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) representing the Second Senatorial District during its 1st Day, Third Regular Session on January 16, 2026. [For info]

SEN. COMM. 24-72: (1/16/2026) Informing the House of the Senate's disapproval of the Governor's Executive Order No. 2025-005 (Cannabis Regulatory Authority Transfer) during its First Day, Third Regular Session on January 16, 2026. [For Info]

SEN. COMM. 24-73: (1/23/2026) Transmitting a certified copy of Senate Resolution No. 24-11, entitled, "To honor the distinguished service of Chief Warrant Officer Four Rosannie Castro McGee upon her retirement from the United States Army, and to commend her exemplary leadership, unwavering, and outstanding contributions to the defense of our nation." [For Info]

SEN. COMM. 24-74: (2/5/2026) Returning H. B. No. 24-13, HD1, entitled, "To amend the fee structure for the Office of the Registrar of Corporations under the Department of Commerce and to remove daily penalty fees.", which was passed by the Senate without amendments on February 4, 2026. [For Info-Will go to Governor]

SEN. COMM. 24-75: (2/5/2026) Returning H. B. No. 24-26, entitled, “To amend the crime of child abuse.”, which was passed by the Senate without amendments on February 4, 2026. [For Info-Will go to Governor]

SEN. COMM. 24-76: (2/5/2026) Returning H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, entitled, “To enact 4 CMC § 1208 and 4 CMC § 1313 to establish a Legal Services and Access to Justice Tax Credit.”, which was passed by the Senate with amendments on February 4, 2026, in the form of H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, SD2. [For action on Senate amendments]

SEN. COMM. 24-77: (2/5/2026) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 24-04, entitled, “To establish a Fire Reserve Corps to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF) in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support; and for other purposes.”, which was passed by the Senate on February 4, 2026. [For action]

SEN. COMM. 24-78: (2/5/2026) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 24-38, entitled, “To rename the DPS Boating Safety Building to the “Jose Camacho Sablan Boating Safety Station” in recognition of his contributions and dedication to ensuring the safety of the public in the surrounding waters of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”, which was passed by the Senate on February 4, 2026. [For action]

SEN. COMM. 24-79: (2/5/2026) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 24-41, SD1, entitled, “To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”, which was passed by the Senate on February 4, 2026. [For action]

The Floor Leader moved to accept Senate Communications No. 24-71 through 24-79. The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to accept Senate Communications No. 24-71 through 24-79 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

Pursuant to the actions taken,

- 1. Senate Communications No. 24-76, referencing, “(2/5/2026) Returning H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, entitled, “To enact 4 CMC § 1208 and 4 CMC § 1313 to establish a Legal Services and Access to Justice Tax Credit.”, which was passed by the Senate with amendments on February 4, 2026, in the form of H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, SD2. [For action on Senate amendments]”, was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means; and*
- 2. Senate Communications No. 24-77, referencing, “(2/5/2026) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 24-04, entitled, “To establish a Fire Reserve Corps to assist the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) and the*

Commonwealth Ports Authority-Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (CPA-ARFF) in fire prevention and suppression, rescue operations, basic and advanced life support; and for other purposes. ”, which was passed by the Senate on February 4, 2026. [For action]”, was referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations.

The Chair called for recess.

The House recessed at 10:20 a.m.

Recess

The House reconvened at 10:22 a.m.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we were under Senate Communication No. 24-77. I would like to go back to Senate Communication No. 24-76. During recess, I consulted with the Floor Leader and I withdraw my action of referring Senate Communication No. 24-76 to the House Committee on Ways and Means. Before I place it on calendar, I recognize the Floor Leader to give a little background on the actions made by the Senate Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for considering and opening the discussion to place this particular Senate communication on the calendar. As we know, Micronesia Legal Services would be impacted by this request or this legislation to include them in the ETC. Many, many years ago, including in the last legislature, they had come up and asked for SNILD support so that they can continue providing services for their clients. Given this amendment, it would have no fiscal impact, except that we would now allow individuals to claim a tax write-off or ETC credit to Micronesia Legal Services. Reminder, members: Micronesia Legal Services is a nonprofit legal aid service in existence. Their clients are all civil cases, noncriminal cases—that includes probate and adoption—and we all know that attorneys are expensive. So this would actually give everybody here, including corporations, the opportunity to now claim a tax credit and give it to Micronesia Legal Services. With that said, I ask that the House members please vote for its passage when we put it on the calendar. Thank you so much.

The Chair opened the floor for further discussion and there was none.

Pursuant to the actions taken,

1. *Senate Communications No. 24-76, referencing, “(2/5/2026) Returning H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, entitled, “To enact 4 CMC § 1208 and 4 CMC § 1313 to establish a Legal Services and Access to Justice Tax Credit. ”, which was passed by the Senate with amendments on February 4, 2026, in the form of H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, SD2. [For action on Senate amendments]”, was placed on the Resolution Calendar;*
2. *Senate Communication No. 24-78, referencing, “(2/5/2026) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 24-38, entitled, “To rename the DPS Boating Safety*

Building to the “Jose Camacho Sablan Boating Safety Station” in recognition of his contributions and dedication to ensuring the safety of the public in the surrounding waters of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”, which was passed by the Senate on February 4, 2026. [For action]”, was referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations; and

3. *Senate Communications No. 24-79, referencing, “(2/5/2026) Transmitting for House action S. B. NO. 24-41, SD1, entitled, “To establish a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”, which was passed by the Senate on February 4, 2026. [For action]”, was referred to the House Committees on Judicial and Governmental Operations and, Health and Welfare.*

The Chair proceeded to Item No. 8, House Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk announced the following House Communications:

HSE. COMM. 24-80: (1/16/2026) From Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal business beginning January 20, 2026, and requesting to be excused from all official meetings and sessions during this period. Additionally, he authorizes Representatives Ralph N. Yumul or John Paul P. Sablan to formally introduce his bills on his behalf. [For Info]

HSE. COMM. 24-81: (1/13/2026) From Representative John Paul P. Sablan informing the Speaker that he will be out of the Commonwealth on personal matters from January 21 through January 29, 2026, and respectfully requests to be excused from any legislative sessions, committee meetings, or official functions during his absence. He further designates SNILD Floor Leader, Representative Joel C. Camacho, to serve as Acting Chair of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation (SNILD) for the duration of his absence. [For Info]

HSE. COMM. 24-82: (1/20/2026) Transmitting a memorandum from the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure regarding a request to the Governor for continuity in Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission membership to support regulatory stability and ratepayer protection. [For Info]

There being no discussion on the floor and no items under Item No. 9, Communications from the Judicial Branch, and Item No. 10, Communications from Departments & Agencies, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 11, Miscellaneous Communications, and recognized the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS*The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communications:*

MISC. COMM. 24-87: (1/6/2026) Transmitting the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation's updated financial report on the Health Network Program pursuant to PL 22-33, identifying expenditures, cumulative deficits, and a projected funding shortfall, and requesting legislative consideration of the program's sustainability. [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-88: (received 1/14/2026) Transmitting the Office of the Public Auditor's Status of Audits Flash Report, summarizing audit compliance, reporting timelines, and potential consequences for the CNMI government and its autonomous agencies. [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-89: Transmitting a certified copy of Youth Congress Resolution No. 20-02, entitled, "Formally requesting to Governor David M. Apatang and the Northern Marianas College President, Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero along with the Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services (NMC-CREES) to include the Youth Congress to the CNMI Green Growth Initiative as a Public Private Partner". [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-90: Transmitting a certified copy of Youth Congress Resolution No. 20-03, entitled, "Honoring and commending Mrs. Jacqueline Ayuyu Quitugua for her distinguished career in education, and congratulating her upon her retirement after over forty (40) years of dedicated service to the schoolchildren of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands". [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-91: Transmitting a certified copy of Youth Congress Commemorative Resolution No. 20-01, entitled, "Recognizing Mrs. Beth Ann Nuñez for her 23 years of service, commitment, and ministry to Grace Christian Academy". [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-92: Transmitting a certified copy of Youth Congress Commemorative Resolution No. 20-02, entitled, "To honor the life, legacy, and public service of the late Honorable Arnold Indalecio Palacios, 10th Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and to extend the deepest condolences of the CNMI Youth Congress to his family and loved ones". [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-93: Transmitting a certified copy of Youth Congress Commemorative Resolution No. 20-03, entitled, "Honoring the life, legacy, and

distinguished public service of the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente and to extend the Twentieth CNMI Youth Congress' deepest condolences and gratitude to his family". [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-94: (1/23/2026) Transmitting a notification from the Office of the Public Auditor regarding the initiation of an audit of the Citizen-Centric Report Program to assess compliance with 1 CMC § 2311 for fiscal year 2025. [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-95: (1/22/2026) Transmitting Report No. 26-01 from the Office of the Public Auditor on CNMI agencies' implementation of audit and inspection recommendations as of December 31, 2025. [For Info]

MISC. COMM. 24-96: Transmitting the Marianas Visitors Authority's audited financial statements and supplementary information for fiscal years ending September 30, 2023 and 2022, from Burger, Comer & Associates. [For Info]

The Chair opened the floor for discussion and there was none.

Pursuant to the actions,

- 1- *Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-87, referencing, "(1/6/2026) Transmitting the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation's updated financial report on the Health Network Program pursuant to PL 22-33, identifying expenditures, cumulative deficits, and a projected funding shortfall, and requesting legislative consideration of the program's sustainability. [For Info]", was referred to the House Committees on Health and Welfare and, Ways and Means;*
- 2- *Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-88, referencing, "(received 1/14/2026) Transmitting the Office of the Public Auditor's Status of Audits Flash Report, summarizing audit compliance, reporting timelines, and potential consequences for the CNMI government and its autonomous agencies. [For Info]", was referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations;*
- 3- *Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-94, referencing, "(1/23/2026) Transmitting a notification from the Office of the Public Auditor regarding the initiation of an audit of the Citizen-Centric Report Program to assess compliance with 1 CMC § 2311 for fiscal year 2025. [For Info]", was referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations;*
- 4- *Miscellaneous Communications No. 24-95, referencing, "(1/22/2026) Transmitting Report No. 26-01 from the Office of the Public Auditor on CNMI agencies' implementation of audit and inspection recommendations as of December 31, 2025. [For Info]", was referred to the House Committee on Judicial and Governmental Operations;*

- 5- *Miscellaneous Communications No. 24-96, referencing, “Transmitting the Marianas Visitors Authority’s audited financial statements and supplementary information for fiscal years ending September 30, 2023 and 2022, from Burger, Comer & Associates. [For Info]”, was referred to the House Committees on Ways and Means and, Tourism.*

The Chair proceeded to Item No. 12, Reports of Standing Committees, and recognize the Clerk.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

The Clerk announced the following Reports of Standing Committees:

S. C. R. NO. 24-43: Reporting on JUD. BR. COMM. 24-8, regarding a proposed amendment to the NMI Rules of Attorney Discipline and Procedure to enact new Rule 5(d), establishing a Confidentiality Rule to supplement the Lawyer Assistance Program in the CNMI. Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends approval.

S. C. R. NO. 24-44: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-62, entitled, “To enact a Uniform Electronic Transactions Act to enable a more robust digital economy in the Commonwealth.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-62 in its current form.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-43:

S. C. R. NO. 24-43: Reporting on JUD. BR. COMM. 24-8, regarding a proposed amendment to the NMI Rules of Attorney Discipline and Procedure to enact new Rule 5(d), establishing a Confidentiality Rule to supplement the Lawyer Assistance Program in the CNMI. Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends approval.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-43 with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes

Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

¹ Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 18 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 18 members voting “yes,” Standing Committee Report No. 24-43 is hereby adopted. Therefore, in accordance with House action, the proposed Judicial Branch rules are adopted. I now recognize the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-44:

S. C. R. NO. 24-44: Reporting on H. B. No. 24-62, entitled, “To enact a Uniform Electronic Transactions Act to enable a more robust digital economy in the Commonwealth.” Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass H. B. No. 24-62 in its current form.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt Standard Committee Report No. 24-44 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

There being no items under Item No. 13, Reports of Special and Conference Committees, and Item No. 14, Unfinished Business, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 15, Resolution Calendar, and recognized the Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

The Floor Leader moved to adopt the following item:

H. RES. NO. 24-24: Requesting and directing that the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) undergo a comprehensive, independent, third-party audit by qualified utility expert auditors, including financial, operational "desk," asset, compliance, and related examinations; requiring Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) coordination, formal CPUC docketing and public process for audit review; requiring public reporting, a corrective action plan, a ratepayer impact matrix, a public-facing audit implementation dashboard, and an immediate 90-day control-fix priority list.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt House Resolution No. 24-24 was carried by voice vote. There was no "nay" vote.

The Chair proceeded to Item No. 16, Bill Calendar, and recognized the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR

The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-62:

H. B. No. 24-62: To enact a Uniform Electronic Transactions Act to enable a more robust digital economy in the Commonwealth.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-62, First and Final Reading, with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes

Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

¹ Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 18 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 18 members voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-62 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, 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 moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. 24-24, HD1, SD2:

H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, SD2: To enact 4 CMC § 1208 and 4 CMC § 1313 to establish a Legal Services and Access to Justice Tax Credit.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.

The Clerk called the roll for the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-24, HD1, SD2, First and Final Reading, with the following results:

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes

Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Absent (Excused)
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Absent (Excused)
Representative Malcom Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Yes
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

¹ Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 18 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 18 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-24, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 2, hereby passes the House. Members, there being nothing further under the Bill Calendar, we now proceed to Item No. 17, Miscellaneous Business, and the floor is open.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 18, Announcements, and opened the floor for discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Adjournment and recognized the Floor Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker I hereby move to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair. So move.

The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adjourn was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.

The House adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenalyn T. Santos
House Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

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

SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:

H. L. B. No. 24-42: To amend the Wedding Cake Mountain Wildlife Conservation Area, to authorize the Mayor of Rota to plan, construct, and maintain a pedestrian pathway at Wedding Cake Mountain and access to the Grotto, and to initiate actions necessary to qualify for federal grants, and for other purposes. REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

H. L. B. No. 24-43: To establish a docking and watercraft fee for derby event participants utilizing the West and East Docks on Rota; to include vessels, jet skis, kayaks, and canoes; to exempt bona fide Rota residents and educational activities; to provide penalties for violations; and to allocate collected revenues for conservation and community programs. REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

H. L. B. No. 24-44: To amend Title 10, Division 1, Chapter 12 (Rota Casino Act of 2007) of the Commonwealth Code to: (1) establish a clear separation between the investigative and compliance functions of the Rota Casino Gaming RCGC (RCGC) and the adjudicatory/decision-making functions of the Commissioners; (2) establish an Investigations and Enforcement Division under the Executive Director; (3) authorize the procurement of qualified independent third-party investigative and professional services for criminal and financial due diligence of casino license applicants and related persons; (4) establish a Casino Regulatory Fee and a dedicated regulatory fund/account to provide stable annual funding for regulatory operations, including enforcement and monitoring; (5) strengthen conflicts of interest, disclosure, and recusal requirements for Commissioners; and for other purposes. REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:

Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session on January 16, 2026:

H. B. NO. 24-82: To amend Section 704(k) of Public Law 24-20 to prevent disruption or delay of allotments, payments, or expenditures of the Legislative Branch by adding a transition period of up to 270 days for the implementation of the Legislature's Finance Department; and for other purposes. REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLON of Saipan, Precinct 2 (for himself, Representatives Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Malcolm J. Omar, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Denita Kaipat Yangetmai). Introduced on December 31, 2025.

H. B. NO. 24-83: Requiring Disclosure of 501(c)(3) Status for Government Funding. REP. MARISSA R. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 3 (for herself, Representatives Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, and Roman C. Benavente) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations on January 16, 2026.

H. B. NO. 24-84: To authorize the expenditure of \$2,105,563.00 identified by the Governor as a surplus from Fiscal Year 2025 revenues that shall be appropriated by the Legislature to the Public School System and to the 25% Retirees' Pension Obligation. REP. BLAS JONATHAN "BJ" T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U.

Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: Bill Calendar; passed First and Final Reading without amendments January 16, 2026.

H. B. NO. 24-85: To amend 3 CMC § 1205, relating to the Chamorro and Carolinian Language Policy Commission's authority to assess fees for translation services; to establish a revolving fund; and for other purposes. REP. BLAS JONATHAN "BJ" T. ATTAO of Saipan, Precinct 3 (for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, Elias J.M. Rangamar, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations and to the House Committee on Ways and Means on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. B. NO. 24-86: To amend the Operator's License Fees as codified under 9 CMC § 2202 to establish a 50% discount on all operator's license fees for CNMI government retirees, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and military veterans with disabilities; and for other purposes. REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO JR. of Saipan, Precinct 2 (for himself, Representatives Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Julie M. A. Ogo, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and to the House Committee on Ways and Means on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. B. NO. 24-87: To require an independent valuation of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), restore constitutional and audit oversight, modernize procurement and review procedures, protect ratepayers, and clarify the economic framework for any privatization transaction; and for other purposes. REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (for himself) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE and to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. B. NO. 24-88: To mandate that the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation undergo a comprehensive, independent, third-party utility expert audit; to require a formal Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission audit-review docket and transparent public review process; to require an enforceable corrective action plan, a ratepayer impact matrix, and a public audit implementation dashboard; to impose strict timelines and narrowly limited extensions; to require mandatory decennial audits; to establish compliance reporting and civil penalties for missed deadlines payable to the CNMI Treasury; and for other purposes. REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (for himself) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE and to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations on January 16, 2026.

H. L. B. NO. 24-38: To appropriate the fund remaining balance of \$48,450.33 under Section 2(t)(4) of Saipan Local Law 20-26 (Project Code 7190M) for the maintenance, repairs and improvements of Commonwealth parks and recreational facilities in Precinct IV; and for other purposes. REP. JOEL C. CAMACHO and REP. MALCOLM J. OMAR of Saipan, Precinct 4 (for themselves) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

H. L. B. NO. 24-39: To appropriate Fifty-four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000.00) from revenues collected from poker fees in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes. REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS of Tinian, Precinct 6 (for himself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

H. L. B. NO. 24-40: To appropriate \$300,000.00 of the dividends collected by the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) from the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) to fund infrastructure projects in the Second Senatorial District. Prefiled by: REP. PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS of Tinian, Precinct 6 (for himself) WITHDRAWN ON JANUARY 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. L. B. NO. 24-41: To re-appropriate Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) allotted under Saipan Local Law 20-26; and for other purposes. REP. DANIEL I. AQUINO JR. of Saipan, Precinct 2 (for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Malcolm J. Omar, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. L. B. No. 24-42: To amend the Wedding Cake Mountain Wildlife Conservation Area, to authorize the Mayor of Rota to plan, construct, and maintain a pedestrian pathway at Wedding Cake Mountain and access to the Grotto, and to initiate actions necessary to qualify for federal grants, and for other purposes. REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. L. B. No. 24-43: To establish a docking and watercraft fee for derby event participants utilizing the West and East Docks on Rota; to include vessels, jet skis, kayaks, and canoes; to exempt bona fide Rota residents and educational activities; to provide penalties for violations; and to allocate collected revenues for conservation and community programs. REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. L. B. No. 24-44: To amend Title 10, Division 1, Chapter 12 (Rota Casino Act of 2007) of the Commonwealth Code to: (1) establish a clear separation between the investigative and compliance functions of the Rota Casino Gaming RCGC (RCGC) and the adjudicatory/decision-making functions of the Commissioners; (2) establish an Investigations and Enforcement Division under the Executive Director; (3) authorize the procurement of qualified independent third-party investigative and professional services for criminal and financial due diligence of casino license applicants and related persons; (4) establish a Casino Regulatory Fee and a dedicated regulatory fund/account to provide stable annual funding for regulatory operations, including enforcement and monitoring; (5) strengthen conflicts of interest, disclosure, and recusal requirements for Commissioners; and for other purposes. REP. JULIE M. A. OGO of Rota, Precinct 7 (for herself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. L. B. No. 24-45: To re-appropriate Two Hundred Fifty-Six Thousand Two Hundred Thirty-Five Dollars (\$256,235.00) from the fund balances allotted under Saipan Local Law 22-01, specifically Business Unit 4963V; and for other purposes. REP. RALPH N. YUMUL of Saipan, Precinct 3 (for himself) Introduced on January 16, 2026.

[ADDED-1/16/2026] H. RES. NO. 24-24: Requesting and directing that the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) undergo a comprehensive, independent, third-party audit by qualified utility expert auditors, including financial, operational "desk," asset, compliance, and related examinations; requiring Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) coordination, formal CPUC docketing and public process for audit review; requiring public reporting, a corrective action plan, a ratepayer impact matrix, a public-facing audit implementation dashboard, and an immediate 90-day control-fix priority list. REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: Resolution Calendar on January 16, 2026, no action taken.

H. J. R. NO. 24-11: Directing the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and all relevant Commonwealth government agencies and public corporations to expedite planning, permitting, and deployment of viable renewable energy, storage, and resilience projects — and to coordinate energy-security and infrastructure-resilience strategies — in light of the accelerated phase-out of federal clean-energy incentives under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul) Introduced on January 16, 2026. Referred to: Resolution Calendar and adopted without amendments on January 16, 2026.