



# Senate Journal

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2013

SJ 18-05

First Special

Friday

February 22, 2013

In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President Ralph Dlg. Torres issued a notice on February 20, 2013 announcing that the Senate of the Eighteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature will convene this open and public session. The notice, the official session call, and the session agenda were filed in the Office of the Senate Clerk; released to the media; and posted at the Entrance Halls of the Office of the Governor, House of Representatives, and the Senate, and on the Commonwealth Legislature's website at [www.cnmileg.gov.mp](http://www.cnmileg.gov.mp).

The Senate of the Eighteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Special, First Regular Session, on February 22, 2013, at 2:00 p.m., in the Senate Chamber, Capitol Hill Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Pete P. Reyes, President Pro-tem of the Senate, presided.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** Thank you members of the gallery. We appreciate your patience. We are ready to begin. Before I call the session to order, I would like to first recognize the presence of the Honorable Governor Eloy S. Inos, our own Lt. Governor Jude Hofschneider, and the Honorable Congressman Greg Kili Sablan and at this time, I would like to ask if they can join me up here on the podium, up here in the panel. Please Sergeant-At-Arms and if Congressman Sablan is out there please - thank you. Once again we are ready to begin the session and I wish to inform the public that I am only temporary up here. I am not the real President, I am just acting. The real President will come up at a later time. At this time, I would like to call this First Special Session to order. I ask everyone to please rise for a moment of silent prayer. I ask Senator Taimanao to please say the prayer.

A moment of prayer was observed.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** Clerk, please roll call.

The Clerk called the roll and seven (7) members were present and one (1) was absent.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** Thank you. With seven (7) members present, we have a quorum to conduct business and at this time, I would like to recognize the Floor Leader, Floor Leader Hocog.

**Floor Leader Victor B. Hocog:** If no objection from the members, I would like to move the order of business and go to item P of today's order of business to entertain the Miscellaneous

Communication No. 18-10. This is in regards to Senate President Jude Hofschneider's resignation in the Senate of the Eighteenth Commonwealth Legislature. I so move Mr. President pro-tem.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** Without any objections from the members, the motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor of the motion say "aye".

Several members voiced, "aye".

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** All opposed say, "nay".

The motion was carried by voice vote.

The Chair recognizes Floor Leader Victor B. Hocog.

**Floor Leader Victor B. Hocog:** Mr. President Pro-tem, I also have a motion and I move to declare a vacancy in the Senate pursuant to Article 2, of Section 9 of the Commonwealth Constitution. That is my motion.

**Senator Ray N. Yumul:** Point of clarification.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** Point of clarification, I recognize Senator Yumul.

**Senator Ray N. Yumul:** Is it Section 7 of Article 3?

**Floor Leader Victor B. Hocog:** Section 9.

**Senator Ray N. Yumul:** Section 9. We are okay.

**Floor Leader Victor B. Hocog:** I did say Section 9, Senator Yumul.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** Thank you and this is to address the letter from the Former President. Is that correct Floor Leader?

**Floor Leader Victor B. Hocog:** Correct.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** The motion has been made to accept the letter from the former President of the Senate resigning from his post in the Senate. Is there any discussion? Ready? All those in favor of the motion say "aye".

Several members voiced, "aye".

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** All opposed say, "nay".

The motion was carried by voice vote.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** The Senate hereby accepts the resignation letter from the former President, now the Lt. Governor and a vacancy is available in the Senate and so the Governor and the

Lt. Governor are here and therefore will act pursuant to the Constitution within I believe, 30 days? Within 30 days. Without any objections from the members, we move back again into the Order of Business and at this time with the seven members being present, we have the necessary quorum to conduct our business and the first Order of Business today is the election of officers. I now open the floor for the nomination of the President of the Senate for the Eighteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature and I recognize Senator Cruz.

**Senator Francisco Q. Cruz:** Thank you, Mr. Pro-tem President. It's an honor and a privilege to nominate Senator Ralph Dlg. Torres from the Third Senatorial District to be our next President of the Senate of the Eighteenth Legislature.

Seconded by several members.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any other nominees?

The Chair recognizes Senator Ray N. Yumul.

**Senator Ray N. Yumul:** Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to move to close nomination and vote by acclamation on the nomination.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** The motion has been moved and seconded. All those in favor of the motion to close nomination say "aye".

Several members voiced, "aye".

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** All opposed say, "nay".

The motion was carried by voice vote.

**President Pro-tem Pete P. Reyes:** I congratulate the new President of the Senate, Senator Ralph Torres. Please come up and take your post.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Thank you everyone and welcome. I would like to thank my colleagues for your vote of confidence and we will have some comments later under miscellaneous before we adjourn. The next order of business would be the election of Vice President. To open up, Senator Pete Reyes.

**Senator Pete P. Reyes:** Thank you Mr. President, and at this time I would like to take this honor to recognize and nominate a good friend of mine, Senator Victor Hocog to be the Vice President of the Senate. Thank you.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** The motion has been seconded. There is a motion on the nomination of Senator Hocog for Vice President and the motion has been seconded. Is there any other nomination?

The Chair recognizes Senator Ray N. Yumul.

**Senator Ray N. Yumul:** Thank you, Mr. President and this time, I would like to move and close nomination on the nomination for Vice President and move for voting by acclamation. I so move.

Seconded by several members.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** The motion has been seconded. Congratulations Mr. - do we still need to vote? Sorry, this is my first time so I ask everybody's patience. All those in favor for Senator Hocog to be the Vice President, say "aye".

Several members voiced, "aye".

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** All opposed say, "nay".

The motion was carried by voice vote.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Congratulations, Senator Hocog, Vice President of the Senate. Our next order of business will be the election of Floor Leader. Senator Frank Cruz.

**Senator Francisco Q. Cruz:** Thank you, Mr. President. I nominate Senator Yumul from the Third Senatorial District for Floor Leader.

Seconded by Vice President Victor B. Hocog.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** The motion has been seconded. Is there any other motion for nomination?

The Chair recognizes Senator Pete P. Reyes.

**Senator Pete P. Reyes:** Thank you Mr. President. I move to approve the nomination by acclamation.

Seconded by Vice President Victor B. Hocog.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** The motion has been seconded. All those in favor say "yes".

Several members voiced, "yes".

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** All opposed say, "nay".

The motion was carried by voice vote.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** I'm sorry. Congratulations Floor Leader. I guess by acclamation again, Senator Reyes.

**Senator Pete P. Reyes:** Mr. President, I believe it's just an oversight but if there are no objections from the members, I would like to include on item 4, for the election of the Legislative Secretary.

**Vice President Victor B. Hocog:** No objection.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Okay, no objection.

The Chair recognizes Senator Pete P. Reyes.

**Senator Pete P. Reyes:** At this time, I also would like to nominate Senator Taimanao to the Legislative Secretary position.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** The motion has been seconded. Is there any other motion?

The Chair recognizes Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul.

**Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul:** Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to move to close nomination for Legislative Secretary and to vote for acclamation. Thank you.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** It has been seconded. Congratulations Senator Taimanao. Short recess.

**The Senate recessed at 2:10 p.m.**

**And**

**The Senate reconvened at 2:12 p.m.**

***[Inaudible due to faulty recording]***

**Vice President Victor B. Hocog:** *[inaudible] lehislatura bai fan ma chocho yan i nuebu na gobietnu ta, maga'lahita ges onorabli Señót Eloy Songao Inos yan I iyo-ta Lt. Governor as Jude Untalan Hofschneider. Ya mismo tiempo lakkue sumen magof yu para bai ekstende parehu na mensahi na bai ekstende lakkue i tiempoku i opbligasi3n para ta fa ayuda mona ya ta fan hita lakkue man ma chocho yan i delegaduta ni representanteta guatu gi status sunidos sa honorabbli kongresu Gregorio Kili Sablan. Para hamyo todus nai man gaige guenao man e'ekuongkok ni pupbliku ginen hami todus en ekstende d3nkolo na saludu lakkue gi parehu ni impintun miyu gi kada guahu gi okasion gi nuebu na dereksion offisalist man guaha interest miyu para en fan matto para ta fan hita ya para testiguyi i nuebu na direksion este na leyeslatura ginen hami todus en ekstende unu na saludu yan apprisiasion agradesimiento para hamyo todus. Buenas Dias yan Si Yu'us Ma'ase.*

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** *Si Yu'us Ma'ase* Vice President. I would like now to call anyone. Senator Taimanao, would you like to say a few words?

**Senator Jovita M. Taimanao:** Thank you, President Torres and I would like to welcome our Governor, Governor Inos, Lt Governor Hofschneider and our U.S. Delegate Kili Sablan for joining us this afternoon on this momentous occasion to witness the new officers of the Eighteenth Legislature to the families who are here, welcome and to the general public, welcome and thank you for coming to

witness this occasion. First of all, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate my colleague here my right hand, Senator Reyes for including one of the officer which I don't know whether it was an oversight or intended that it's not on the agenda but I do thank you for recognizing this and to all of you members for once again electing me to be the Legislative Secretary. Again, this Legislative Secretary is not something new for me. I had occupied this position in the Seventeenth Legislature as well as now in the beginning of the Eighteenth and the reorganization officers again. I understood that it is an acceleration but it seems to me that I am still stuck with it. I am going to do my very best and I will pledge that I am going to work together with the members of the Eighteenth Legislature and the new President, President Torres in fulfilling and moving forward in the CNMI for the challenges that lies ahead of us. Yes, Floor Leader had mention, thank you for mentioning all the challenges that we are focusing and concentrating which are again the Retirement, the CUC, the Health and not only those even PSS and every issue here in the CNMI. Again, we are cognizant that we will be doing our very best to not overcome but at least to try our very best to address this issues. Again, I would like to thank the general public for coming over and for those that are not here listening to our reorganizational session this afternoon. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase* and thank you from everyone.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Thank you very much Senate Secretary. Just for clarification the reason why there was no Section D on the Senate Secretary was not an oversight it was intended because it's not reorganization on your title. It stays as is so that is why it was not included. Is there any other member that would like to make a comment before we move forward?

The Chair recognizes Senator Francisco Q. Cruz.

**Senator Francisco Q. Cruz:** Thank you Mr. President. I guess my comment is to congratulate the new officers that have been elected today. All I am going to ask with the officers and the members of the Senate is whatever differences we had in the past, let us be united and work together as a team. With that, I think we can overcome all, maybe not a hundred percent, but I believe if we are united in the Senate we can overcome some of our pressing issues that we are encountering here in the Commonwealth. With that, I ask again the full member of the Senate that we don't have time to have hatred in our hearts amongst us members. I think we should make use of our two years or one year and ten months so that we can deliver the best services that we can to the people of the Commonwealth. With that, I thank you Mr. President.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Thank you Senator Cruz. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*. Is there any other member before we move forward? With that, it will be my great honor and privilege to call our Honorable Governor Eloy S. Inos and to make a few remarks on today's order.

**Governor Eloy S. Inos:** *Thank you Mr. President. I'll be brief. Let me first congratulate all the members who are present here today but most especially to you Mr. President for taking the lead in meeting the Eighteenth Senate in this term. I would like to congratulate our new Vice President, Senator Hocog, Vice President Hocog for also accepting the responsibility. Floor Leader Yumul, as well, thank you for trying to put together a team that would respond to the needs of the people and certainly the only lady senator in the Senate, Senator Jovie whose accepted the position of Legislative Secretary and congratulations to you all but congratulations as well to all the other members who may not be occupying any particular leadership position but as members of this body and your willingness to work and serve the public is appreciated. It has been thirty five years since*

*this Commonwealth entered into a new political status and we have gone through many constitutional test. There during the recent past we can close to what unprecedented unconstitutional crisis but we have survived all those. So we have reached the level of maturity, political maturity that I think that we show and display to the general public and the world as well as in this region that we can handle our business of running the people bunnies, the government. What I would like to say is the honeymoon is over. We've got so much to do in a very short period of time. Essentially we are going to be working on overdrive and so I am going to be asking each and every one of you to work for the benefit of the people. Lt Governor Hofschneider and I are ready. We are prepared. We are in our third day in office and we are moving fast. We are trying to get settled down and address the many issue but like I have said we have so many issue to work on and address in a very short period of time. We are going to be asking for your cooperation. Please rest assured that you will get ours, we want to maintain the full transparency. We should continue our dialogue. If we can meet and consult each other every day, let us do that but we've got a lot of things that are looming over us, the Retirement Fund, the utilities situation, the hospital situation, and many social services. Not to mention the fact that we might be affected by sequestration decisions in the U.S. We are receiving a substantial amount of federal funds. We are challenge by these issues so I ask for your support as well. If we speak with one voice I am sure that our Delegate in Washington D.C. can represent us well before members of congress and before the federal government. Once again congratulations to the new officers but then again like I said the honeymoon is just about over. It's about time we roll our sleeves and let's get to work. Thank you very much.*

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Thank you very much Governor. To my right also our former President of the Senate who is now our Lt. Governor, please say a few words.

**Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofschneider:** Thank you Mr. President, good afternoon everyone and I want to congratulate again the officers of the reorganization of the Eighteenth Senate and it's kind of an eerie feeling looking at a different perspective and as what the Governor was saying the honeymoon is over but Mr. Governor I am still half way taking off my hat as a legislator and putting on the hat as the Lt. Governor but I will get there and I pledge also my full support in steering the CNMI in the right direction and back on track with the minor setback that we had experience in the past. I will be remised also if I don't mention the efforts from both Houses but I would like to go ahead and recognize the leadership of the House in the likes of Speaker Guerrero and the House members. I extend my hand to you and Senate President Torres, I extend my hand to you to work together and like what the Floor Leader Yumul was saying we are going to hit the floor running. That is exactly it so sir, although I am no longer in the legislature but you will be seeing me often here. The Governor had specifically tasked me to be the point man for legislative conduit here to the Administration. So with that, good afternoon everyone and it's a beautiful day. Si Yu'us Ma'ase President. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul.

**Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul:** Thank you. At this time if there is no objection from the members, I would like to move down to item G....

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Floor Leader, I would like to...

**Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul:** Item no. G so we can entertain any communications from the Washington Delegate, I so move.

**READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL**

NONE

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

NONE

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY**

NONE

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS**

NONE

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE**

NONE

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** The motion has not been seconded.

Seconded by several members.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Motion has been seconded. Moving to line item G, Messages from the Washington Delegate, Honorable Gregorio Kili Sablan.

**Washington Delegate Gregorio Kili Sablan:** *Si Yu'us Ma'ase Mr. President. Good afternoon everyone. I am so proud today also when I walked into the chamber to see the dean of the Senate, Senator Pete Reyes presiding over an organizational session. Mr. President, congratulations; Vice President Hocog, congratulations; Senator Yumul, Floor Leader, congratulations; Legislative Secretary Taimanao, congratulations and to all of you. This is truly*



*my first attendance at a Senate organizational meeting because I have always been bias towards the House. It was actually the Senate President in the last organization meeting who actually told me that I did walk across the aisle to join you guys on January 14. I was at the House but having said that, just like I have extended to Governor Inos and to Lt. Governor Hofschneider I also extend the same offer of cooperation and support Mr. President and all of you to your congressional office and I say your congressional office you in all sincerity because the office I work in belongs to all of you is open and we are here to help in anyway where we can. Mr. President you not just know where I work I think you're the only member of the legislature who actually even knows where I live. Thank you very much sir for inviting me today and congratulations everyone. Thank you very much and we will work together.*

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Thank you Congressman Kilili. Moving on to our order of business.

The Chair recognizes Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul.

**Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul:** Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, if there is no additional communications from anyone, I would like to move down to item no. R, announcements real quickly. If there is any announcements at this time.

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE WASHINGTON DELEGATE

NONE

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

## PRE-FILED BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

NONE

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

NONE

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**NONE**

**REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES**

**NONE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**NONE**

**RESOLUTION CALENDAR**

**NONE**

**PETITIONS, MEMORIALS AND MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

**NONE**

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

**NONE**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul:** Mr. President, at this time, since there is no announcement and we are done with miscellaneous business and no objection from the members, I move to adjournment subject to the call.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** Before we adjourn, I would like to say a couple of things if no objection. First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues. It has been a very short period since our Eighteenth Legislature commends and now our Lt. Governor Jude is no longer with us although he is here today. We are facing a lot of challenges as we worked on in the past. I thank you for your confidence, and your continued support. The Governor in the past couple of days perhaps months, as people in the CNMI has gone through a lot of emotional roller coaster and Wednesday was a sad day of the CNMI but we need to move forward to address the issues that we have before us. As the President of the Senate, Lt. Governor Jude, our hard working Congressman Kilili, myself and if a may say my team in the Senate is ready to work hard early morning and late at night to address the issues. While you are awake we are going to be awake. While you guys are sleeping we are still going to be awake. With all sincerity I would like to thank everyone here today. My wife, thank you, thank you for everything and thank you for my children. My brothers, thank you, thank you for being there and your spouse's as well. Trust me I know, your spouse's we need them. Mom, mom Tudela, thank you for having your beautiful daughter, my wife. Dad, thank you *lokkue yan i Tudela na familia, Si Yu'us Ma'ase ni todou i ayudan miyu piot giya guahu yan i asaguahu yan tododus hit guini*. I would lie to also just acknowledge my mom who is in Boise, who is not here with us. My sister Judy, princess, my brother Troy, Lucio and of course as you guys know my last statement *gi* Senate inauguration my dad has always been a special part of me and will always be part of me. With that, I would like to close and again Governor, I vouch again the assistance of the Senate. Lt. Governor and for the people again of the CNMI, we are going to work hard to address the issues with the Speaker of the House and give us a little more patience so that we can gather together and unite our approach and I believe that we are going to see some good results come out soon. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul.

**Floor Leader Ray N. Yumul:** Thank you, Mr. President. Once again my motion is to adjourn subject to your call. I so move.

## ADJOURNMENT

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** There is a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by Senator Francisco Q. Cruz.

**President Ralph Dlg. Torres:** The motion has been seconded. This session is now adjourned.

**The Senate adjourned at 3:00 p.m. subject to the call of the Chair.**

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Geraldine T. Cruz  
Senate Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF SENATE LOCAL BILLS

LEG. NO.	TITLE
	NONE

**The Senate may consider, debate, and/or act upon any item contained in this Order of Business at the time and place described herein.**