

TWENTY-FIRST NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE



THE SENATE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION – 2019

SJ 21-03

First Day

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President, Victor B. Hocog, issued a session call on April 5, 2019 that the Senate of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature will convene this open and public session. The notice, the official session call, and the session agenda was filed in the Office of the Senate Clerk; released to the media; and posted at the Entrance Halls of the Office of the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives, posted on the Commonwealth Legislature’s website at www.cnmileg.gov.mp.

The Senate of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Day, First Special Session, on April 10, 2019, at 1:40 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Victor B. Hocog, President of the Senate, presided.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll, all nine members are “present.”

President Hocog: With nine members attending today’s session, we do constitute a quorum to conduct the Order of Business for today. Now, I would like to go to Item B for Public Comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

President Hocog: Is there any one from the public that would like to make any public comments before we proceed further? If none, Clerk, let the record show that there is no Public Comments for today. Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, if there are no objections from the members to first act on Item M, Reports of Standing Committee on the nominations of the four department heads then we can come back and follow the Order of Business, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There is no objection to move to Item M on our Order of Business for today, with that, we will move now to Item M. And before we make any discussion, I would like for the Sergeant-At-Arms to please escort the four nominees to the front. Thank you. You may continue, Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-02 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Ms. Victoria I. Benavente to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Labor, so move.

President Hocog: Any second?

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: The motion is to approve Standing Committee Report No. 21-02, now let me recognize the Chairman of EAGI, Senator Frank Cruz, you may proceed.

Senator Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, your subcommittee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present Standing Committee Report No. 21-02. Your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor begs leave to report as follows: Pursuant to Article III, Section 14 of the Commonwealth Constitution, Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Governor Arnold I. Palacios on February 18, 2019 to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor. The appointment of Ms. Benavente was forwarded according to 1 CMC §2902 for the advice and consent of the Senate. After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente's executive appointment to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the executive appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente's overall credentials to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor (DOL). Based on the legislative record, your Committee noted that Ms. Benavente's executive appointment to continue serving as the DOL Secretary required the submission of a detailed progress report on Ms. Benavente's accomplishments as the DOL Secretary with the inclusion of the goals and plans for the department if confirmed to continue serving as the DOL Secretary for review, in which the appointee has complied with this request. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided during the public hearings to the Committee, eight (8) written and seventeen (17) oral testimonies in support of the appointee and one (1) written testimony in opposition of the appointee were presented to the Committee. Your Committee further finds that based on the detailed progress report submitted and taking into account all written and oral testimonies presented, in addition to the responses received by the appointee, that Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente stands ready to address the concerns raised during the hearings and to adhere to the departments goals outlined in the report for the benefit of the Commonwealth. Additionally, your Committee finds that the appointment packet of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente forwarded to the Committee is complete with copies of the executive appointment letter, resume, statement of Financial interest police clearance, and drug test receipt and

result. After much deliberation and based on the overall assessment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente's overall credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente possesses the qualification and leadership skills necessary to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Labor. Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente was appointed by the Executive Branch on February 18, 2019, to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor. Ms. Benavente's appointment packet was forwarded to the Senate on February 19, 2019. On March 14, 2019 the executive appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente was referred to your Committee for consideration. In accordance to the Committee's newly adopted requirement of executive appointments to serve as the head of a department public hearings to receive testimonies on the appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente to continue serving as the DOL Secretary were conducted on each senatorial district on March 21, 2019, in Rota Courthouse, Sinapalo, Rota. On March 28, 2019, Tinian Courthouse, San Jose, Tinian. On April 4, 2019, Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, here in Saipan. Pursuant to Rule 7, Section 3 of the Official Rules of the Senate, Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente was administered under oath in each public hearing. The administration of oath has been filed accordingly with your Committee. Again, during the hearings, seventeen (17) oral testimonies were stated in support of the appointee. No oral testimony opposing the appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente was received during the hearings. A total of eight (8) written testimonies in support of the appointee were submitted to your committee and one (1) written testimony opposing the appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente was received by your committee. The Committee has taken into account all written and oral testimonies presented to the Committee in consideration of the executive appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor. Accordingly, copies of all written testimonies have been attached to this report. All required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the executive appointment of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor meets all the necessary requirements pursuant to Article III, Section 14 of the Commonwealth Constitution and 1 CMC §2902. Therefore, your Committee consents to the confirmation of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente's executive appointment to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Labor for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, I ask the full members of this body to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-02. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Any discussion? Floor Leader recognized.

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, notwithstanding the content of Standing Committee Report No. 21-02, the committee agrees to include other issues and concerns and recommendations raised during the public hearing in the same report at a later date. Thank you.

President Hocog: Is that a motion, Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: Yes.

President Hocog: There is a motion offered by the Floor Leader, notwithstanding the other committee reports that have been requested to the appointees during the public hearing that it will be part of the committee report that we are just about to adopt this afternoon, any discussion? Those in favor of the offered motion on the floor say, “Aye.” Those oppose say, “Nay.”

All members voiced, “Aye.”

President Hocog: Motion carries. Clerk, can you call the roll on the voting of the appointee?

CLERK called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Yes
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all nine members voting “yes.”

President Hocog: With all nine members voting “yes” with the confirmation of Ms. Julia Victoria I. Benavente for the Secretary of the Department of Labor is hereby confirmed by the full Senate. Congratulations, Ms. Benavente. [APPLAUSE] Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-04 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: Those in favor of the motion say, “Aye.” Those oppose say, “Nay.”

All members voiced, “Aye.”

President Hocog: Motion carries. Chairman Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. Again, your subcommittee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present Standing Committee Report No. 21-04. Mr. President, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources begs leave to report as follows: Pursuant to Article III,

Section i4 of the Commonwealth Constitution, Mr. Anthony T. Benavente was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Governor Arnold I. Palacios on February 18, 2019 to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. The appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente was forwarded according to 1 CMC §2652 for the advice and consent of the Senate. After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente's executive appointment to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action, pertaining to the executive appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente to continue. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente's overall credentials to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Based on the legislative record, your Committee noted that Mr. Benavente's executive appointment to continue serving as the DLNR Secretary required the submission of a detailed progress report on Mr. Benavente's accomplishments as the DLNR Secretary with the inclusion of the goals and plans for the department if confirmed to continue serving as the DLNR Secretary for review, in which the appointee has complied with this request. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided during the public hearings to the Committee, seven (7) written and twenty-three (23) oral testimonies in support of the appointee and no written or oral testimony in opposition of the appointee were presented to the Committee. Your Committee further finds that based on the detailed progress report submitted and taking into account all written and oral testimonies presented, in addition to the responses received by the appointee, that Mr. Anthony T. Benavente stands ready to address the concerns raised during the hearings and to adhere to the department's goals outlined in the report for the benefit of the Commonwealth. Additionally, your Committee finds that the appointment packet of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente forwarded to the Committee is complete with copies of the executive appointment letter, resume, statement of financial interest, police clearance, and drug test receipt and result. After much deliberation and based on the overall assessment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente's overall credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Mr. Anthony T. Benavente possesses the qualification and leadership skills necessary to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. However, Mr. Anthony T. Benavente was appointed by the Executive Branch on February 18, 2019, to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Mr. Benavente's appointment packet was forwarded to the Senate on March 5, 2019. On March 5, 2019 the executive appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente was referred to your Committee for consideration. In accordance to the Committee's newly adopted requirement of executive appointments to serve as the head of a department, public hearings to receive testimonies on the appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente to continue serving as the DLNR Secretary were conducted on each senatorial district on March 22, 2019 Mayor's Conference Room, Songsong, Rota. On March 29, 2019 Tinian Courthouse, San Jose, Tinian. And on April 5, 2019 Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. Pursuant to Rule 7, Section 3 of the Official Rules of the Senate, Mr. Anthony T. Benavente was administered under oath in each public hearing, the administration of oath has been filed accordingly with your Committee. During the hearings, twenty-three (23) oral testimonies were stated in support of the appointee. No oral testimony opposing the appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente was received during the hearings. A total of seven (7) written testimonies in support of the appointee were submitted to your Committee. No written testimony opposing the appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente

was received by your Committee. The Committee has taken into account all written and oral testimonies presented to the Committee in consideration of the executive appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Accordingly, copies of all written testimonies have been attached to this report. All required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the executive appointment of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources meets all the necessary requirements pursuant to Article III, Section 14 of the Commonwealth Constitution and 1 CMC §2652. Therefore, your Committee consents to the confirmation of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente's executive appointment to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, I ask the full body of the Senate to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-04. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Discussion on Standing Committee Report No. 21-04? Recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Again, Mr. President, if no objection, and a motion is offered to amend Standing Committee Report No. 20-04 and include other issues, concerns and recommendations raised during the public hearing, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: Discussion on the motion? Ready? Those in favor of the motion to follow the notwithstanding provisions on Standing Committee Report No. 21-04 say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. I recognized Senator Santos.

Senator Santos: Further discussion, if I may?

President Hocog: I thought – okay.

Senator Santos: And this is in reference to the committee report, I understand we have already disposed of the motion that was earlier brought by Senator Quitugua, so under further discussion, if I may?

Senator Hocog: Okay.

Senator Santos: Thank you. First, I would like to commend the honorable Governor and Lieutenant Governor for their re-appointment and the acceptance of the Acting Secretary of Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Acting Secretary Benavente, what commendable achievement that I

understand you make during your first term was when Tweeksberry Beach Park was invaded by the Rhinoceros beetle last year, your immediate action and close collaboration with the administration, United States Fish and Wildlife, our DLNR, our local Fish and Wildlife, another affected agencies made possible to contain and eradicate the invades species. If that was not done, it would have had a devastating economic and environmental impact on our island. And again, that I cannot over emphasize how grateful we are to you and your staff from the DLNR here on Saipan. Your untiring and unconditional support also to our Rota DLNR, its operations and staff, provided vehicles, trainings, so our staff was like commendable. For instance, as the Secretary of DLNR, you facilitated the participation of our local Fish and Wildlife to participate on our first Rota DPS Cycle Academy and these local Fish and Wildlife staff have successfully graduated last year. And again for that, we commend you. Your periodic fiscal presence also to our local department on island is greatly appreciated. On behalf of the people of Rota and its leaders, we extend gratitude to you. On Rota we always hear, also in gatherings expressions like, “*get real - hago real - maski real*” Acting Secretary Benavente today I say, “*hago real.*” Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Senator Santos. Being real, I want to have this session, let us get real with the confirmation. Any additional discussion? Ready for the question? Clerk, please roll call.

CLERK called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all nine members voting “yes.”

President Hocog: Thank you, madam Clerk. With all nine members voting “yes” for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-04 for the confirmation of Mr. Anthony T. Benavente to ones again serve the Department of Lands and Natural Resources is hereby confirmed. Congratulations, Mr. Benavente. [APPLAUSE]

Mr. Anthony T. Benavente: *Si Yu’us ma’ase, Ghillisoo* and thank you.

President Hocog: Floor Leader, recognized.

Floor Leader Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-05 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mr. James A. Ada to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There's a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-05 has been seconded. Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Chairman Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Thank you. Senator Hofschneider, do you wish to –

Senator Hofschneider: Under discussion, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Let me retract back before I give the Chairman, is there any discussion for Standing Committee Report No. 21-05?

Senator Hofschneider: Before we adopt, I yield to the Chairman. Thank you.

President Hocog: Vice President Hofschneider yield to your attention Chairman Cruz, so you may have the floor.

Senator Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. Again, Mr. President, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present Standing Committee Report No. 21-05. Your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Mr. James A. Ada to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works begs leave to report as follows: Pursuant to Article III, Section 14 of the Commonwealth Constitution, Mr. James A. Ada was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Governor Arnold I. Palacios on February 18, 2019 to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works. The appointment of Mr. Ada was forwarded according to 1 CMC § 2402 for the advice and consent of the Senate. After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. James A. Ada's executive appointment to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action, pertaining to the executive appointment of Mr. James A. Ada to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. James A. Ada's overall credentials to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works (DPW). Based on the legislative record, your Committee noted that Mr. Ada's executive appointment to continue serving as the DPW Secretary required the submission of a detailed progress report on Mr. Ada's accomplishments as the DPW Secretary with the inclusion of the goals and plans for the department if confirmed to continue serving as the DPW Secretary for review, in which the appointee has complied with this request. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided during the public hearings to the Committee, seven (7) written and twenty-two (22) oral testimonies in support of the appointee and one (1) oral testimony in opposition of the appointee were presented to the Committee. Your Committee further finds that based

on the detailed progress report submitted and taking into account all written and oral testimonies presented, in addition to the responses received by the appointee, that Mr. James A. Ada stands ready to address the concerns raised during the hearings and to adhere to the department's goals outlined in the report for the benefit of the Commonwealth. Additionally, your Committee finds that the appointment packet of Mr. James A. Ada forwarded to the Committee is complete with copies of the executive appointment letter, resume, statement of financial interest, police clearance, and drug test result. After much deliberation and based on the overall assessment of Mr. James A. Ada's overall credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Mr. James A. Ada possesses the qualification and leadership skills necessary to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works. However, Mr. James A. Ada was appointed by the Executive Branch on February 18, 2019, to continue serving as the Secretary of Department of Public Works. Mr. Ada's appointment packet was forwarded to the Senate on February 19, 2019. On February 21, 2019 the executive appointment of Mr. James A. Ada was referred to your Committee for consideration. In accordance to the Committee's newly adopted requirement of executive appointments to serve as the head of a department, public hearings to receive testimonies on the appointment of Mr. James A. Ada to continue serving as the DPW Secretary were conducted on each senatorial district on March 22, 2019 Mayor's Conference Room, Songsong, Rota. On March 29, 2019 Tinian Courthouse, San Jose, Tinian. And on April 5, 2019 Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. Pursuant to Rule 7, Section 3 of the Official Rules of the Senate, Mr. James A. Ada was administered under oath in each public hearing. The administration of oath has been filed accordingly with your Committee. During the hearings, twenty-two (22) oral testimonies were stated in support of the appointee and one (1) one testimony opposing the appointment of Mr. James A. Ada was received during the hearings. A total of seven (7) written testimonies in support of the appointee were submitted to your Committee. No written testimony opposing the appointment of Mr. James A. Ada was received by your Committee. The Committee has taken into account all written and oral testimonies presented to the Committee in consideration of the executive appointment of Mr. James A. Ada to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works. Accordingly, copies of all written testimonies have been attached to this report. All required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the executive appointment of Mr. James A. Ada to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works meets all the necessary requirements pursuant to Article III, Section 14 of the Commonwealth Constitution and 1 CMC § 2402. Therefore, your Committee consents to the confirmation of Mr. James A. Ada's executive appointment to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, I ask the full member of this body to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-05. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Discussion on Standing Committee Report No. 21-05, Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, again, other issues, concerns and recommendations raised during the public hearing will be included in Standing Committee Report No. 21-05 so move.

President Hocog: Any second?

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There's a recommendation offered to also include the additional documents with respect to Standing Committee Report No. 21-05 and this is to affirm the commitment and the action plan the committee have asked the appointee to ensure that we are in compliance with all the testimony that you have provided before the committee for your action plan in the next four years of your tenure. Some more discussions?

Chairman Cruz: Thank you. Just for clarification on the Floor Leader's motion, with the inclusion of the members that have raised questions and concerns during the public hearing that is absent in this report, and I believe that is the motion that you place to be included in that committee report?

President Hocog: Recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Quitugua: Yes, Chairman Cruz. There are issues, concerns and recommendations that the members raised which it's very pertinent and essential to be in the committee report.

President Hocog: So that is the motion that you are offering Floor Leader.

Senator Cruz: Thank you, Floor Leader and Mr. President.

President Hocog: We are still under discussion, Senator Vinnie Sablan.

Senator Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for further clarification, Floor Leader, so the recommendations and statements of the members during the public hearing will be included in the committee report, via journals, the recordings that will be transcribed into a written form?

Floor Leader Quitugua: Yes, it is going to be added on into this report so that the confirmed nominee and including the Governor and the public will have ideas of what the committee members recommended for the nominee to look into or do during the next four years.

Senator Sablan: Thank you, so clarified, Mr. President. I yield.

President Hocog: Any other member? Ready? Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Clerk?

CLERK called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja

Yes

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Yes
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all nine members voting “yes.”

President Hocog: Thank you, madam Clerk. With all nine members voting “yes” for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-05 with relative to confirming the appointee, Mr. James A. Ada to serve again as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works is hereby confirmed by all nine members. Congratulations, Mr. Ada, again. [APPLAUSE] On our last Standing Committee Report, recognized Floor Leader JQ.

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-03 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero to serve as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: Discussion on the motion? Senator Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Mr. President, this is very thick report, anyone wants to go first before I -- although, I’ll make it short. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, again, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations is ready to present Standing Committee Report No. 21-03. Your committee on Executive Appointments and Government referred Investigations to which was the appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety leave to report as follows: Pursuant to Article III, Section 14 of the Commonwealth Constitution, Mr. Robert A. Guerrero was appointed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lieutenant Governor Arnold I. Palacios on February 18, 2019 to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. The appointment of Mr. Guerrero was forwarded according to 1 CMC § 2502 for the advice and consent of the Senate. After review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero’s executive appointment to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action, pertaining to the executive appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. Your Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero’s overall credentials to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Based on the legislative record, your Committee noted that Mr. Guerrero’s executive appointment to continue serving as the DPS Commissioner required the submission of a

detailed progress report on Mr. Guerrero's accomplishments as the DPS Commissioner with the inclusion of the goals and plans for the department if confirmed to continue serving as the DPS Commissioner for review, in which the appointee has complied with this request. In summation of all written and oral testimonies provided during the public hearings to the Committee, fifty-three (53) written and thirty-one (31) oral testimonies in support of the appointee; and one (1) written and three (3) oral testimonies in opposition of the appointee were presented to the Committee. For purposes of transparency, the Committee is in receipt of anonymous written comments opposing the appointment of Mr. Guerrero. However, the Committee cannot take investigative action based on anonymity to validate the concerns brought forth to the attention of the Committee. Your Committee further finds that based on the detailed progress report submitted and taking into account all written and oral testimonies presented, in addition to the responses received by the appointee, that Mr. Robert A. Guerrero stands ready to address the concerns raised during the hearings and to adhere to the department's goals outlined in the report for the benefit of the Commonwealth. Additionally, your Committee finds that the appointment packet of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero forwarded to the Committee is complete with copies of the executive appointment letter, resume, statement of financial interest, police clearance, and drug test result. After much deliberation and based on the overall assessment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero's overall credentials, experiences, testimonies, goals for the department, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee is convinced that Mr. Robert A. Guerrero possesses the qualification and leadership skills necessary to serve as a Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. However, Mr. Robert A. Guerrero was appointed by the Executive Branch on February 18, 2019 to continue serving as the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety. Mr. Guerrero's appointment packet was forwarded to the Senate on February 19, 2019. On February 25, 2019 the executive appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero was referred to your Committee for consideration. In accordance to the Committee's newly adopted requirement of executive appointments to serve as the head of a department, public hearings to receive testimonies on the appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero to continue serving as the DPS Commissioner were conducted on each senatorial district on March 21, 2019 Rota Courthouse, Sinapalo, Rota. On March 28, 2019 Tinian Courthouse, San Jose, Tinian. On April 4, 2019 Senate Chamber of the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. Pursuant to Rule 7, Section 3 of the Official Rules of the Senate, Mr. Robert A. Guerrero was administered under oath in each public hearing. The administration of oath has been filed accordingly with your Committee. During the hearings, thirty-one (31) oral testimonies were stated in support of the appointee and three (3) oral testimonies opposing the appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero was received. A total of fifty-two (52) written testimonies in support of the appointee were submitted to your Committee and one (1) written testimony opposing the appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero was received by your Committee. The Committee has taken into account all written and oral testimonies presented to the Committee in consideration of the executive appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. Accordingly, copies of all written testimonies have been attached to this report. All required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Official Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. Based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that the executive appointment of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety meets all the necessary requirements pursuant to Article III, Section 14 of the Commonwealth Constitution and 1 CMC § 2502. Therefore, your Committee consents to the confirmation of Mr. Robert A. Guerrero's executive appointment to continue serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety

for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, I ask the full body of this Senate to support Standing Committee Report No. 21-03. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Discussion now on Standing Committee Report No. 21-03. Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. President. So that actions be taken by the nominee relative to Standing Committee Report No. 21-03, on issues, concerns recommendations raised during the public hearing that are not included in the reference report shall be included, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There's a motion and it has been seconded, those in favor say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motions carries. Discussion? Ready? Madam Clerk, can you call the roll?

CLERK called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all nine members voting "yes."

President Hocog: Thank you, madam Clerk. With all nine members voting "yes" on Standing Committee Report No. 21-03, the appointment of Mr. Robert Guerrero to serve as the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety is hereby confirmed by the full Senate. Congratulations, Commissioner. [APPLAUSE] At this time, I would like to call for a short recess. And before the Senate reconvene back for other legislative business, at this time, if I may ask the nominees to first come up and have their photo taken with the members of the Senate. Thank you. We hereby stand in recess.

The Senate recessed at 2:30 p.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 3:15 p.m.

President Hocog: We are back to our plenary session. Prior to recess we are under Item M of the agenda, I would like the Floor Leader to again make a motion to go back to the Order of Business.

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion to return to Item C of our Order of Business, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: Those in favor of the motion to go back to Item C of our Order of Business for today's session say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Item C, Reading and Approval of the Journal. Floor Leader?

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of Senate Journal 21-01, 1st Day, Organizational Session (01/14/19) and Senate Journal 21-02, 2nd Day, First Regular Session (02/07/19), so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There's a motion on the floor and it has been seconded for the approval of Senate Journal 21-01, 1st Day, Organizational Session and 2nd Day, First Regular Session, discussion? Ready? Those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Senate Journals 21-01 and 21-02 are hereby approved. Clerk?

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Clerk voiced Governors Communications Nos. 21-04 to 21-42.

President Hocog: Any discussion from the said communications 21-04, 21-05? If none -- Recognized.

Senator Hofschneider: My apology, on Governor's Message No. 21-42, I wanted to inform the members that the Governor's Office has submitted a budget package in the form of an electronic and

simply to save cost on paper. However, instructed the staff to work with the LB to copy a paper copy so that both hard copy and e-copy is in the possession of the members, I just wanted to inform on this.

President Hocog: What communication from the Governor?

Senator Hofschneider: Governor's Message No. 21-42. We are on the Governor's Message, right? I apologize, Mr. President, *guiya enao i otimu*.

President Hocog: Yes. I got it. Clerk, make sure that you provide that? Okay, thank you.

Senator Hofschneider: Thank you.

President Hocog: Clerk, next communication?

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY

The Clerk voiced Judiciary Communication No. 21-01: March 01, 2019 – CNMI Judicial Branch submitting FY'2020 Budget.

President Hocog: Discussion? Nothing? Item F.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

The Clerk voiced Department Messages Nos. 21-01 to 21-05.

President Hocog: Any member wants to make any comments from any of the communications from 21-01 to 21-05? None. We move to Item G, Communications from the House.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE

The Clerk voiced House Communications Nos. 21-01 to 21-06.

President Hocog: Recognized, Senator Santos.

Senator Santos: Thank you, Mr. President. This is in reference to House Communication No. 21-06, this is a resolution commemorating CNMI Women's Month and mark as International Women's Day. The significance of March 8, is a day to honor and commemorate the inspiring role of women around the world. It also honors the power and struggles of women who have broken road block or barriers and reached successes in every aspect of life. Today for example, women across the world are actually involved in politics, education, sports, trades and entrepreneurs and have left legacies in this field. And so with this, I would like to congratulate all the women around the globe and women of the CNMI for their remarkable contributions and services to our society. And with that, if there's

no objection, if the Floor Leader can move for the Senate to adopt this House Joint Resolution by today. Thank you.

Floor Leader Quitugua: Mr. President, if I may?

President Hocog: Recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Quitugua: The said affirmation resolution is already on the Calendar for adoption on today's agenda.

President Hocog: That satisfied the request of Senator Santos. Any other members on the House Communications? If none, we move to Item H, Clerk?

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SENATE

The Clerk voiced Senate Communications Nos. 21-02 to 21-11.

President Hocog: Any comments? There being no comments, I would like to move to Item I.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE WASHINGTON DELEGATE

The Clerk voiced Washington Delegate Communication No. 21-01: Feb. 11, 2019 – Named as Vice Chair for Insular Affairs in the House Natural Resources Committee.

President Hocog: Any comments from the Washington Delegate Communication? Ready? Unfinished Business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

PRE-FILED BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

- 1. Senate Bill No. 21-15:** To repeal Section 4 of PL 11-87 so that immediate implementation of a "local preference to bidders" process be in effect; and for other purposes. [SEN. PAUL A. MANGLONA - 02/12/19]
- 2. Senate Bill No. 21-16:** To authorize the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety to work with private business owners to install video surveillance cameras directed toward the public right-of-way in support of the CNMI's reporting system; and for other purposes. [SEN. PAUL A. MANGLONA-02/12/19]
- 3. Senate Bill No. 21-17:** To establish a definition for "Adult Vocational Education" by amending 1 CMC §1302; and for other purposes. [SEN. JUSTO S. QUITUGUA- 02/13/19]

4. **Senate Bill No. 21-18:** To present to the voters in the Commonwealth in the next general election the question: "Shall there be a constitutional convention to propose amendments to the Constitution?" [SEN. SIXTO K. IGISOMAR - 02/20/19]
5. **Senate Bill No. 21-19:** To amend 2 CMC § 40203 to provide for a grace period to terminate a landlord tenant residential or apartment rental contract due to a typhoon or a sale or lease of the property by the owner. [SEN. SIXTO K. IGISOMAR - 02/20/19]
6. **Senate Bill No. 21-20:** To amend I CMC §§ 6201 and 6205(b)(1) to provide the eligibility of the Northern Islands' descendants to vote in the Northern Islands elections; and for other purposes. [SEN. SIXTO K. IGISOMAR- 02/20/19]
7. **Senate Bill No. 21-21:** To repeal I CMC § 2282 and Public Law 15-5 codified at 3 CMC §§ 1351-58; and for other purposes. (NMTI) [SEN. JUSTO S. QUITUGUA- 02/22/19]
8. **Senate Bill No. 21-22:** To establish an Irrigation District in each Senatorial District for the use of water strictly for irrigation and agricultural purposes and not for residential uses; and for other purposes. [SEN. PAUL A. MANGLONA- 02/27/19]
9. **Senate Bill No. 21-23:** To replace the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation with two independent autonomous public corporations to separately manage and control the power service and water service systems, and to create only one elected consolidated Commonwealth Utilities Board for the two public corporations; and for other purposes. [SEN. PAUL A. MANGLONA- 02/27/19]
10. **Senate Bill No. 21-24:** To amend 2 CMC § 5631 to allow surround nets (chenchulun umesugon) in the Third Senatorial District during Bigeye Scads (Atulai) seasonal run. [SEN. VINNIE F. SABLAN- 03106/19]
11. **Senate Bill No. 21-25:** To authorize the use of the East Harbor Facility on Rota as an alternate port of entry for small cargo vessels; and for other purposes. [SEN. PAUL A. MANGLONA- 02/27119]
12. **Senate Bill No. 21-26:** To establish the Commonwealth Uniformed Parentage Act; and for other purposes. [SEN. VINNIE F. SABLAN -03/15/19]
13. **Senate Bill No. 21-27:** To increase the number of sick leave hours available to eligible employees from the sick leave bank; to authorize medical escorts or caregivers of patients eligible to apply for sick leave hours from the sick leave bank; and for other purposes. [SEN. JUDE U. HOFSCHEIDER- 03/15/19]
14. **Senate Bill No. 21-28:** To amend 3 CMC § 2824, to establish a claims and clinical data warehouse at CHCC and to improve accountability for how health insurance premiums are

spent by requiring health insurance insurers and health care providers to submit reports on claims and clinical data to the insurance commissioner; and for other purposes.

[SEN. SIXTO K. IGISOMAR-03/18/19]

15. Senate Local Bill No. 21-02: To establish the Medical Subsistence Allowance Program for the First Senatorial District; and for other purposes. **[SEN. TERESITA A. SANTOS - 03/26/19]**

16. Senate Bill No. 21-29: To amend 3 CMC § 133 l(b) by removing the offset provision of the Northern Marianas College annual budget funded by the Legislature.

[SEN. JUSTO S. QUITUGUA- 03/27/19]

INTRODUCTIONS OF BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Floor Leader Quitugua: Mr. President?

President Hocog: Floor Leader, recognized.

Floor Leader Quitugua: We have fifteen pre-filed Senate Bills and one Senate Local Bill, and you may recognize the individual authors to officially introduce their bills. Thank you.

President Hocog: Senator Paul Mangloña, recognized.

Senator Manglona: I would like to officially introduce Senate Bill Nos. 21-15, 21-16, 21-22, 21-23 and 21-25 listed in the pre-filed bills. But also today, another pre-filed bill but it is not listed here, Senate Bill No. 21-30, "To authorize less than a quorum to act for the PUC up to 90 days; and for other purposes," I so introduced. Thank you.

President Hocog: Thank you, Senator Mangloña. Any other member? Senator Sixto Igisomar?

Senator Igisomar: Thank you, Mr. President. Similarly, just to itemized Senate Bill Nos. 21-18, 21-19, 21-20 and 21-28 which are listed introduced by myself and welcome anybody who would like to join in. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you. Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. President. Officially introducing pre-filed Senate Bill Nos. 21-17, 21-21, and 21-29. Thank you.

President Hocog: Thank you, Floor Leader. Vice President?

Senator Hofschneider: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, President Hocog. Officially introducing Senate Bill No. 21-27. Thank you.

President Hocog: Thank you. Any other? Senator Vinnie Sablan?

Senator Sablan: Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to officially introduce Senate Bill No. 21-24 and Senate Bill No. 21-26. Thank you.

President Hocog: Thank you. Any other? If none, we have already completed Item M, we move to Item N.

Floor Leader Quitugua: Mr. President, if we can go back to Item M and adopt Standing Committee Report No. 21-01.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

President Hocog: Sorry, I didn't get to see that. Are you going to make a motion on Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 21-01 from the Committee on Fiscal Affairs reporting on Senate Bill No. 21-02, "To amend 3 CMC § 2177(a) to include the CHCC Diabetes Care and Control Center as a program recipient of the Tobacco Control Fund; and for other purpose," so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There is a motion to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 21-01 to include CHCC diabetic care and control center as a program recipient too from the tobacco control fund. Senator Igisomar?

Senator Igisomar: Thank you, Mr. President. If no objection from anybody, I just like to make a quick comment on this bill, I know that it's being calendared, but I'll just make the comment now so I don't have to make during the bill. I just wanted to state that it was brought to my attention by the diabetic coalition their concern on this senate bill. However, I wanted to add that after consulting with the Chairman, the author, and in reviewing the bill and seeing that there is a big support from CHCC and DPH on the movement of this coalition that I would have to agree with the author and just favor the passage of this bill. I thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Senator Igisomar. Any other member would like to comment? Ready? Those in favor of the motion to adopt the Standing Committee Report No. 21-01 say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Resolution Calendar, Floor Leader.

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

Floor Leader Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, a motion for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-1, HD1, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There is a motion and it's been seconded for House Joint Resolution No. 21-1, HD1, discussion? I think this resolution is set under Resolution Calendar, right? Ok. So, that is the only resolution, Floor Leader, what about resolution 21-02?

Floor Leader Quitugua: First, Mr. President, the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-1, HD1, and then I will make a motion for the other resolution.

President Hocog: Those in favor of the motion for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-1, HD1 say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. President. A motion for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-2, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There's a motion again for the adoption of House Joint Resolution No. 21-2, discussion? Those in favor of the motion to adopt House Joint Resolution No. 21-2 say, "Aye." Those oppose say, "Nay."

All members voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Item P, Bill Calendar, Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR

Floor Leader Quitugua: Mr. President, a motion for the passage of Senate Bill No. 21- 02, SD1, so move.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There is a motion on the floor for the passage of Senate Bill No. 21 -02, SD1, has been moved and seconded, any discussion? Ready? Clerk, roll call please.

CLERK called the roll:

Senator Francisco M. Borja	Yes
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Sixto K. Igisomar	Aweer (Yes)
Senator Paul A. Mangloña	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Justo S. Quitugua	Hunggan (Yes)
Senator Vinnie F. Sablan	Yes
Senator Teresita A. Santos	Yes
President Victor B. Hocog	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all nine members voting “yes.”

President Hocog: With nine members voting “yes” on Senate Bill No. 21-02, SD1, hereby passes the Senate on First and Final Reading. We are now on Item Q, Clerk.

PETITIONS, MEMORIALS AND MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk voiced Miscellaneous Communications Nos. 21-03 to 21-26.

President Hocog: Any member would like to make comments on items Q, Petitions, Memorials and Miscellaneous Communications? Recognized, Senator Mangloña.

Senator Mangloña: *Si Yu’us ma’ase*, Mr. President. I guess this is the most appropriate to discuss this although it's not in the Miscellaneous Communication, I was hoping that Governor’s vetoed would appear in this or Governor's Communication, but I ask the indulgence of the members to make a short comment. And maybe this is a comment to recommend the Chairman of Fiscal Affairs Committee, if our fiscal analyst can work with the committee to work with the Department of Finance so that they can give us an accurate report on financial status of the casino license fee that are earmarked for Rota, Tinian and Saipan? Because I have a copy for example, Department of Finance letter dated March 18, to Representative Ivan Blanco, Chairman House Committee on Ways and Means, and in this letter dated March 18, 2 days before the Acting Governor vetoed all local appropriation, it is very clear that Rota and Tinian should have \$10 million from this appropriation. Third Senatorial District \$55 million, and in the attachment of the break down it is actually showing that Rota still has \$1.435 to appropriate. Tinian, I believe is a little bit over by \$1,900 and the Third Senatorial District has exceeded their \$55 million availability by \$6.358 million this is according to the finance report. And the veto message from the Governor is saying that the First Senatorial District, actually there is no money, no \$1.4. So, this is something that will affect us all also because the numbers there are showing some have over exceeded the allotment. And so I just respectfully ask you, if maybe our financial analyst can work with Finance. Personally, I took the effort to see the Public Auditor on Monday because in the past, they have been very helpful in helping us coordinate with Department of Finance on the numbers. I just think they should be cross checking their numbers and they have agreed to look at the figures, but I guess that is just a formal request so that we can cross check the numbers. But I think it will help the committee to get back to finance and get an accurate report so that we actually don't waste the time of the members. Because we actually receive from the Secretary of Finance the

numbers, and so we went into a session, we pass the legislation and then it was vetoed because the numbers according to Finance, when the bill got to the Governor are not the same. So it is wasting everyone's time. I just want to point that out. Also, just as a concern, I just want to mention to the Committee on Fiscal Affairs also that it is alarming, the report that the House Ways and Means received from the Secretary of Finance on March 18. One of the question that the House ask the Secretary of Finance is the issue of the alternative payment after the audit is completed on the government total revenue that's alternative payment for the settlement fund for fiscal year 2017 CNMI Government Audit Report. The House members were concerned whether there is an additional payment in this fiscal year for this alternative payment and that can we pay it? And the response from Finance is that, for this fiscal year 2017 assessment on the alternative payment that there is an obligation of more than \$17,000,000 and the additional payment is necessary and will need additional funding as current resources are insufficient to cover this cost to the government. So basically, what they are telling the House committee is that, we need to come up with \$17,000,000 on top of the \$12,000,000 shortfall that they have already asked us to adjust or the three branches. I am just concerned that this is for 2017 what about 2018? We don't know how much that will translate again. And so respectfully, I ask the Chairman to please, if they can come up with a report to us as to how much can we avail of that annual community chest fund of \$20,000,000? We have to look at that because I want to say that this project had a liquidated damage of \$100,000 a day and they deleted that provision in lieu of advance and continues payment of these twenty million dollars. So, this is something that I would like to ask the committee, if they can look into these as possible, looking ahead, should we need to look at significant resources to balance the shortfall for the retirement fund, for the Medicaid payment and matching for others that we anticipate, I ask respectfully if the committee can get a report on this community chest fund. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Senator Paul Mangloña. I believe the Chairman on Fiscal Affairs committee have been making those inquiries. So we are just probably waiting for the Acting Secretary of Finance to compile all the necessary request to the Chair. And if you may add Chairman?

Senator Hofschneider: Mr. President, thank you. I've actually visited the Acting Secretary before he went off-island. I kind a brought up some pending issues that the committee will be bringing before him, so he is very much aware it is just a matter of us now formally meeting. I believe he is in line with the EAGI hearing in which the time we will be formally asking for all those documents. And it is very true, in retrospect, Mr. President, I believe the Legislature also made some payments to the APPA, what Senator Mangloña was saying in the last Legislature, but is it's not a bad idea to look at what's the balance. Because the only reason why that one comes in effect if there's a realization of increase revenue for what is anticipated. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Any other member? Senator Santos?

Senator Santos: Thank you, Mr. President. This is relative to Miscellaneous Communication No. 21-19 I would just like to congratulate Dawno Jade M. Agbayani of Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School for being elected as our Youth Senator for the Seventeenth CNMI Youth Congress. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Senator Santos. Are you the only one congratulating him because I believe you are only aware you were the one only made aware?

Senator Santos: Mr. President, this is on behalf of the people and the leaders of Rota. Thank you.

President Hocog: Thank you, Senator Santos for clarifying. Any other? Any communication that needs to be expound? Senator Sixto Igisomar?

Senator Igisomar: Mr. President, thank you. I just thought I'd share this comment, it is not in any of our communications, it has to do with agencies and departments transmitting letters to us, Legislature. Specifically, we received a communication from one of the agencies and departments and they sent attachments in a CD drive, and I just want to make for our record, Mr. President, that if any of our offices are asking for attachments, I don't know when is the last time, but most of our computers does not have any CD rom, so please have these agencies submit in USB drives. I think CD is almost obsolete so just to make that statement, Mr. President. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*.

President Hocog: Thank you. We will make sure that we have those in the other form not CD but USB. If no other members, we move to Item R.

ANNOUNCEMENT

President Hocog: Floor Leader?

Floor Leader Quitugua: None.

President Hocog: Let me recognized Senator Sixto Igisomar, he's been raising his hand.

Senator Igisomar: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I almost felt to recognize your Committee on EAGI, I really want to thank them for the efforts they did in going through the nominees that were presented by our Governor, and all their tireless efforts and the time taken by them, your committee which your leadership to go down to Tinian and Rota for all these nominees. And I will continue to praised them and thank them for doing an awesome, super awesome job today. *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President.

President Hocog: Thank you, Senator Sixto Igisomar. At least you're behind the committee experiencing the hardship that they are experiencing every time they travel, no car rental sometime no hotel. But at least, thank you for recognizing the hard work of the committee. Any other announcement? If none, we go to Item S.

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Quitugua: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. President. A motion to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair.

The motion has been seconded.

President Hocog: There's a motion for adjournment subject to the call of the Chair, those in favor of the motion say, "Aye." Those opposed say, "Nay."

All member voiced, "Aye."

President Hocog: Motion carries. Our Session is completed for the day. Thank you.

The Senate adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/Frances Joan P. Kaipat
Senate Journal Clerk