

THE SENATE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE



SENATE JOURNAL

THIRD REGULAR SESSION – 2026

SJ 24-23

4th Day

Thursday, February 26, 2026

In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President, Karl R. King-Nabors, issued a session call on February 17, 2026 that the Senate of the Twenty-Fourth 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.net

The Honorable President of the Senate, Karl R. King-Nabors presided.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Good morning everyone, I hereby call this 4th Day, Third Regular Senate Session to order. Today is September 26, 2026. The time is 10:31 a.m. here at the Rota Mayor's Conference Room {Hall}. It is my honor to welcome everybody here this morning for this session and this session is being viewed on cable television Channel 23, the Senate YouTube's page, [and] the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature Facebook page. And before we begin, I kindly ask that we all rise for a moment of silent prayer.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

Clerk, kindly call the roll.

ROLL CALL
(Attendance)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Presente
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Present
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent - Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Here
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	Gaige (Here)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Here
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Present
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Present
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Here

CLERK: Mr. President, eight (8) members are present and one (1) [is] absent.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With eight members present, we have the requisite number to proceed with today's session. Please let the record reflect that Senator Castro is hereby excused from today's session. Before we proceed on to Public Comments, I'd like to recognize the Floor Leader for the proper motions.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to suspend pertinent rules to amend the agenda to include House Communication No. 24-128 and Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-82.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's been a motion offered by the Floor Leader to suspend pertinent rules. And... do I hear a second?

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: And has been seconded. Discussions by the members. Ready?

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Ready.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Clerk please call the roll.

ROLL CALL

(Insert House Comm. 24-128 & Misc. Comm. 24-82 to Agenda)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent - Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members present voting “yes”.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all eight members voting “yes”, the communications that were offered by the Floor Leader are hereby added to today's agenda and are available for Public Comments. Moving on, we'll move on to Item B on our agenda, Public Comment. This is a portion of our agenda where we allow the public to offer any comments pertaining to today's agenda. Please say your name and the entity that you're representing and if you could keep the comments to about five minutes. Public Comments is now opened.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

David R. Maratita: *Hafa adai yan buenas dias*, Mr. President and Honorable members of the 24th Senate Body. I am David R. Maratita, Director of the Alcohol, Beverage and Tobacco Control under the Department of Commerce. I'm privileged and honored to appear before you today on this Senate 4th Day, Third Regular Session on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, to deliver three items listed on today's agenda for the record. Number one, support for the Judiciary nominees. Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho, Presiding Judge for the Superior Court; the department fully supports this nomination. Presiding Judge Robert Camacho Naraja, Associate Justice Supreme Court; [The] Department fully supports this nomination. Mr. Joey Patrick Nicholas, Esq. Associate Judge Superior Court; the Department fully supports this nomination. The Department supports the Honorable Governor David M. Apatang and the Honorable Lieutenant Governor Dennis James Mendiola, judiciary nominations listed on today's agenda and also ask the Senate to evaluate each nominee on the merits of the submitted materials. We also support the re-nomination of Ms. Dina A. Tenorio, NMTI Board of Trustees for Saipan; The Department fully supports her confirmation. Mr. Oscar Patrick Quitugua re-nominated for the Public Utilities Commission for the First Senatorial District; the Department also fully supports his confirmation. Item number three, we request to enter and refer House Bill No. 24-30, SD1 listed on today's agenda, on the Final Readings formal request to be recorded. Mr. President, I respectfully request that the Department of Commerce, ABTC Divisions FY 2026 Personnel and Operations Appropriation package for House Bill No. 24-30, Senate Draft 1, previously submitted in on February 13, 2026, to be entered into the Rota session record and referred to the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee for review and action. The key facts to this resubmission of the appropriations package is we have a total request of \$221,100 for Personnel and Operations. Which for Personnel, we're requesting \$87,150. While the Operations we are requesting for \$133,950 out of this House Bill. The personnel transfer includes Inspector 1, Executive Secretary and Cannabis Compliance Outreach, allocated at 87.5% with respect to the current austerity measures that we have. On Operational Highlights, this request highlights the need of the vehicles, travel and training. Most especially for the cross training of the Cannabis staff over to the ABTC division and vice versa, ABTC staff over to the Cannabis Regulatory Functions. I also highlight in this resubmission the net savings of approximately \$325,000. That is a combination of the salary from the Managing Director in addition to the 5 Cannabis Commissioners who were recently, what do you call it, “abolished” from the Executive Order 2025-005. I'm available to answer questions to appear before the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee when requested and thank you Mr. President and honorable members for considering this resubmission. And I would also like to ask for the record, from the Senate clerk's confirmation of some email submission that I did made earlier with respect to this resubmission and for the record. Okay. Thank you, Clerk, for confirming the receipt of the

resubmission. Also, I don't have this on my testimonial submission, Mr. President please allow me about a minute again because...

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Please proceed.

David R. Maratita: As we all know; the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request is around the corner. And I would like to also re-assert the commitment of the Secretary of Commerce with respect to the full support from the Central Department and to also attest that, in front of the Rota Senate Delegation, that the Secretary is still committed in supporting whatever the Department of Commerce Rota, needs in terms of operational request. So, I'm here also here in Rota working on enhancing the operational matters for the Rota Department of Commerce and also in behalf of the ABTC Division here in Rota. So, I'm here trying to hatch two chicks in one egg, to just remain committed to that support for our veterans here in Rota, brothers and sisters. And I would like also to request, because the ABTC Division here in Rota still have only one enforcement staff, and for the FY27 budget, I would like also to reach out to the Fiscal Affairs Committee to consider providing one more FTE for the ABTC Division. So, the current enforcement officer will have a pair with respect to, going out on the community, with outreach efforts and also enforcement. So, our protocol is to make sure that we have two officers always out on the field so they can have some kind of a backup and also to substantiate whatever irregularities that we face out there in the community. And for that also, we will reach out to the House Ways & Means Committee to request for such support also. And hopefully that, for FY 27, the Rota Department of Commerce ABTC Division will finally have one more FTE for the ABTC Division. And with that, I, thank you so much for your time today and *si yu'us ma'ase*.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Director Maratita. And just to confirm, we are in receipt of the email for that was delivered to, that was sent to the Clerk.

David R. Maratita: Okay. Thank you, much president, Mr. President for the confirmation.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Yes, sir. Yeah. Public Comment is still open.

Felis Atalig: Good morning, Mr. President, honorable members of the Senate. My name is Felis Atalig and I'll be here under House Bill No. 24-15. Dear Honorable Senators, we respectfully ask for your full support in passing House Bill No. 24-15 as stated in Standing Committee Report No. 24-67. This bill is very important to us and to many public employees across the Commonwealth. It supports fair collective bargaining and gives workers a clear and organized process to discuss benefits and working conditions with their employer. It helps make sure that employees have a voice and are treated with fair, with fairness and respect. Our members work hard every day to serve our community. They show up, do their jobs with dedication and support the people of the Commonwealth. In return, we ask for a fair process where their concerns can be heard and discussed properly. This bill creates that process. In passing House Bill No. 24-15, it will improve communication between employees and management, create clear rules for communication, it will help solve issues in a fair and respectful way, it'll build trust and teamwork in the workplace, support stability for employees and their families. When workers feel respected and heard, they're more motivated and committed to do their work. This leads to better services for our community

and a stronger government workforce. We believe this bill is a positive step forward. It is not only about employee rights, it is about fairness, balance, and building a stronger working relationship between employees and the government. We respectfully urge the Senate to vote in favor of House Bill No. 24-15. Your support will show that you stand with hardworking public employees and value, fair and open communication. Thank you for your time and leadership and service to the people of the Commonwealth. We truly appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, sir. And what was your name again?

Felis Atalig: Felis Atalig

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you.

Felis Atalig: Thank you sir.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Public Comment is still open. If there are none, I'll go ahead and close Public Comments. Before we proceed any further, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce the Legislative Bureau staff assisting us here today. We have our IT Manager Jonathan Diaz, our Sergeant-At-Arms Mr. Jonathan DeLeon Guerrero, our Senior Legislative Assistant Mrs. Jolyn Duenas-Tagabuel, our Legislative Assistant Mr. Devin Macaranas, our Legal Counsel Mr. Joe Bermudes, our Senate Clerk is Mrs. Dolores Bermudes and our Senate Journal Clerk Mrs. Valerie Aguon. And with that we will proceed on to the Reading and Adoption of the Journal and I recognize a Floor Leader.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At the time I moved to adopt Senate Journal No. 24-21, 2nd Day, Third Regular Session dated February 4, 2026.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's been a motion made for the adoption of Senate Journal No. 24-21 and has been seconded. Discussion. Ready? All in favor say "aye".

Members present voiced "aye".

All opposed say "nay", Senate Journal No. 24-21 is hereby adopted. My apologies, I wanted to recognize our Fiscal Analyst here with us today, Mr. Dave Demapan. Moving on to Messages from the Governor. I would recognize the Clerk.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR:

Clerk: Mr. President, we have 12 on our agenda, 24-223 {Error: should state 24-222} to 233.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussion for any members? Recognize Senator Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: *Si yu'us ma'ase* Mr. President. My comments are in relation to Governor's Message No. 24-222, nominating Mr. Oscar Patrick Quitugua to serve as a member of the {Error: PUTC} PUC representing Rota, the First Senatorial District. *Magof yu para bai hu rehistra i supottasion-hu para si Siñot Oscar Patrick Quitugua. Este na siñot yan saina esta ginen mañetbe gi este na pusision gi man matpos siha na tiempo ya hu apela i konfiansa-ku para hu kontinua mañetbe gi este na komision sa hu anakko'na haguatdia siempre i publiku ya na'nabalansa gi disision niha para i Commonwealth Utilities Corporation lokkue'. Enao ha' Siñot President. Si yu'us ma'ase.*

President Karl R. King-Nabors: *Si yu'us ma'ase* Senator Babauta. Any other members? Recognized Senator Manglona.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Thank you to Senator Corina, *ai*, Celina *nai ha rekognisa si* Mr. Oscar Quitugua *sa malagu yu nai bai hu na tungo' i publiku na este na commission i Public Utility Commission ti maguaiya este na commission sa bula cho'cho', bula teknikât, nai debidi umadiskuti nei para umaprotehi i interes i publiku gi bandan utilities yan nu magof hu sa ha aksepta talu si* Mr. Oscar Quitugua. *Yan magahet ti miembru yu gi EAGI, gaige esta gi kannai i Chairman yan i EAGI nei mana'guaha public hearing guini, pues ha nu dânkolo na sakrifisiu lokkue' este para si* Mr. Quitugua *para kontinua representa i taotao-mami Luta gi Public Utility Commission. Mr. President, ti bai hu na anakko' ha, nu unu para bai hu sangan ta'lo sa para man gaige hit guini gi ofisinin mayot nai, guaha nu appropriation para man na'i i Mayors siha nai. Ti lache yu' \$375,000 i mayorn Rota, i mayorn Tinian yan guaha lokkue' appropriation para mayorn Saipan ya guiya eyi i House nu ma reject sa puedi man malago dienti para na guaha Conference Committee para infotmasion i taotao-ta. Hu tungo'-ha na tisiña mamaisen yu guini question, lao bai hu faisen ha hafa ni Chairman ya komu siña anunsia ngai'an para na'i conference committee nai eyu ya kosa ki planeha mo'na. Enao ha', Thank you.*

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Manglona. Any other members? None? Okay. We'll move on to the next item. There's nothing under [Item] E, Communications from the Judiciary.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY:

NONE

Nothing from [Item] F, Communications from the Heads of Executive Departments.

HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT:

NONE

We'll go ahead and go to [Item] G, Communications from the House and I'll recognize the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE:

Clerk: Mr. President, we have 4 on our agenda, 24-125 to 128.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Okay. Discussion by the members? Recognize [the] Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I would like to refer to House Communication No. 24-128 which is a, basically the House's action on the override of the of Public Law No. 24-20, also known as the Budget Bill for Fiscal Year 2026. They have listed 14 sections that they've overridden, and so at this time Mr. President and colleagues, I move to override the same provisions that the House have had override, which are §203(d), Page 18, Lines 5-15; §602(a)-(b), Page 23, Lines 15-22, and Page 24, Lines 1-5; §603(a), Page 24, Lines 7-11; §612, Page 28, Lines 7-9; §703(d), Page 31, Lines 10-13; §704(j), Page 35, Lines 1-4; §705(d), Page 40, Lines 12-15; §705(f), Page 41, Lines 1-9; §705.1, Page 41, Lines 14-22, and Page 42, Lines 1-8; §709(e), Page 48, Lines 17-19; §711(a), Page 50, Lines 20-21, and Page 51, Lines 3-5; §712, Page 51, Lines 17-22, and Page 52, Lines 1-16; §713, Page 52, Lines 18-22, and Page 53, Lines 1-5; and §802(b), Page 55, Lines 1-12.

Senator Corina L. Magofna: Second.

This motion was seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion offered by the Floor Leader to go ahead and proceed with the override that the House had acted on their session yesterday. And the sections enumerated and has been seconded, under discussion. Recognized Senator Babauta.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: *Si yu'us ma'ase* Mr. President, I would like to make a comment, actually comments pertaining to certain sections of the action that we are about to take. With respect to §203(d) Reporting revenue of over \$200,000. The Governor argues that this reporting requirement duplicates provisions of the Planning and Budgeting Act, and my sentiments on that is redundancy in transparency is not a flaw, it is actually a safeguard for the people we represent. And requiring the Secretary of Finance to report revenues in excess of \$200,000 actually strengthens the legislative oversight to provide the checks and balances with the other two branches. Since the 22nd Legislature, I have supported legislation which tried to enact the very same provision that was inserted in the FY26 Budget, which was vetoed by the Governor, when we received over half a billion dollars when Governor Ralph Torres was in office, but it always failed to pass the Senate then. My sentiments today do not deviate from that period when we had over half a billion dollars in federal relief funds and I think this is an appropriate action to take. This legislation insures that when revenues exceed projections, this body, the Legislature, which represents the people, are informed in real time of this excess funds. This override that we are

about to partake in is not a duplication, it is the Legislature exercising its authority, constitutional authority. Bear with me colleagues, please. With respect to §602, prohibiting new or vacant positions, the Governor claims that this violates separation of powers, it does not. The power to appropriate includes the power to limit. This is not an interference with the Executive Administration, it is responsible budgeting. With respect to §603 Salary Cap at the original FY26 budget levels, the Governor objects because it freezes appointed officials' salaries and requires legislative approval for adjustments. My dear colleagues and our people that we represent, we are in an austerity environment. When the Executive Branch imposes reduced hours and suspense legislative accounts unilaterally, there was no concern raised about the separation of powers. There was no hesitation from the Executive Branch about retroactive financial consequences to our office or to this branch, the Legislature. So, my take on that is if, physical constraints justify unilateral reductions to the Legislature, then certainly fiscal constraints certainly justify salary discipline within the Executive. Salary caps during fiscal crisis are not punitive, they are prudent. §609 Closing Vacant Positions, again, I must iterate, we are in on austerity period. The executive argues that this retroactively reverses salary increase and impairs contracts. I want to be clear that a vacant position is not a contract. Once vacant, the Legislature retains its authority whether to continue funding that position or not. That is within our authority. And again, when legislative funds were retroactively suspended, our accounts were retroactively deducted back to October of last year, the beginning of this fiscal year. There was no parallel concern expressed about impairment or employee trust. Since the retroactive application of the reduction of our office allotments, I have had to reduce my staff's salaries at least 14% in order for my office to continue to provide constituent services. And it is certainly more than what the Executive Branch austerity has imposed of 12%. We cannot accept a standard that applies austerity to one branch and not an immunity to the other. §703 Judicial Work Schedule Flexibility, this provision simply allows the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court to adjust operations consistent with available funds. The Judiciary does not overspend, to my knowledge, the Legislature does not overspend. It can't, because the Department of Finance controls are finances. It is the Executive Branch that continues to expand hiring while imposing reduced hours and claiming fiscal emergency. If proportional cuts are mandated and required to every branch, then flexibility must also be allowed. So, colleagues, I urge you this override is not about confrontation, it is about balancing the powers of the government. The Constitution enables three co-equal branches, and I want to emphasize that. Not one dominant branch and two subordinate ones. We are exercising our lawful authority under Article II of the Constitution to appropriate, to condition expenditures and to oversee public funds. Checks and balances are not optional in times of prosperity. However, they are essential in times of fiscal strain. *Si yu'us ma'ase* Mr. President and I yield my time.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Senator Babauta. I now recognize [the] Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. Just in addition to the arguments made by Senator Babauta, I just want to highlight two provisions that are part of this override action and that is §612 Hazardous Pay. This has been an ongoing discussion with the men and women at the Department of Public Works Solid Waste Division that are really owed this hazardous pay dating back three, even maybe up to five years and while we did include it in the budget, the Governor had vetoed this portion saying that there are no funds available. However Solid Waste always gets a portion of some of the imports that we see. And so, all we're asking is

that they set aside funds to pay out these individuals and whatever's left could be used for operations. Additionally, §709(e), which is the Health Network Program; For years, the Health Network Program monies that we've appropriate to that program only covers airfare for inner island medical needs. But what the Legislature is asking and directing is that some of these funds be used to cover for lodging and transportation as well as stipend. The same type of assistance that are provided to patients leaving the CNMI, is the same that we're asking for patients that are being referred to Saipan, especially those that are on Rota and Tinian. We know that our Mayors on Rota and Tinian have been bearing this cost of housing our patients. We use our resources to transport them, whereas those patients that are referred outside the CNMI, they get much more services that are covered by the Health Network Program. And so, all we're asking is that we treat our inner island patients the same way, and that overriding this portion of the veto will hopefully allow that. Oh, and lastly the Public Lands veto, §711(a), just as we've seen in the past public lands has supported the Division of Parks and Recs in maintaining our public sites. We're asking the same for Rota and Tinian as well, so that DPL can maintain that memorandum of agreement between [the] Division of Parks and Recs and DPL to ensure that our sites are kept clean, deter vandalism, and also support the recovery efforts that we've seen from MVA as well as all the participating agencies. And so, with that members, I ask for your support in addition to the arguments brought by Senator Babauta and I yield at this time, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Appreciate that for you. Any other comments from the members? Ready? Okay. Clerk, can you please call the roll?

ROLL CALL

(Override Provisions on House Bill No. 24-80, HS1 - P.L. 24-20)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent – Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting “yes”.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all members voting “yes”, all of the enumerated sections of the budget are hereby accepted by the Senate. Moving on to Communications from the Senate. Recognize the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SENATE:

Clerk: Mr. President, we have 9 on our agenda, 24-195 to 203.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Members have any discussion? Okay, moving on to [...]

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: I recognize Senator Manglona.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Before you move forward, I know that we can count the votes, but it's good to note that 2/3 votes were garnered in the override vote. Just so we make that clear that's the minimum requirement. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Yes. Thank you for that Senator Paul. Moving on to Item I, Communications from the CNMI Delegate, there are none.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CNMI DELEGATE:
NONE**

[Item J] Unfinished Business, I recognize the Clerk.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Short recess.

The Senate recessed at 11:05 a.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 11:07 a.m.

[We now rise] back and under Unfinished Business. I would like to recognize the Clerk.

Clerk: On letter J, Mr. President, we have number one, Governor's Message No. 24-10, 210 I'm sorry. To veto Senate Bill No. 24-04, "To advance indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian Language Education in the CNMI."

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Okay.

Clerk: And number two is Governor's Message No. 24-196 in regards to Public Law 24-20.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Clerk. Under discussion, I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to override the Governor's veto of Senate Bill No. 24-04, "To advance Indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian Language Education in the CNMI."

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion was seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Again, there has been a motion made by the Floor Leader for the override on Senate Bill No. 24-04, "To advance Indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian Language Education in the CNMI." and has been seconded, under discussion. Ready?

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Ready.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Okay. Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL (Senate Bill No. 24-04)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent – Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting "yes".

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all members voting "yes", we have the requisite number to override the veto of Senate Bill No. 24-04. As it relates to Governor's Communication two, which is regarding the budget that was addressed in our communications from the House, as the override has to start at the House. And as Senator Manglona alluded to, we did garner the requisite 2/3 votes of the Senate to go ahead and override the sections that were enumerated by the Floor

Leader. Moving on [Item] K, Pre-filed Bills, Initiatives, Local Bills and Resolutions, there are none.

PRE-FILED BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS:

NONE

Under [Item] L, Introduction of Bills, Initiatives, Local Bills and Resolutions. Anybody has something that didn't meet the calendar? Recognize the Floor Leader.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS, INITIATIVES, LOCAL BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. I formally introduced a Senate Legislative Initiative, "To amend Article XI, Section 6 of the CNMI Constitution to authorize the use of up to twenty-five (25%) of public land lease revenues for land compensation."

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Floor leader. And if there are no objections from the members, I apologize, we do have one bill that was pre-filed, so two, so if I could go ahead and go back to Letter K and the agenda.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Yeah, no objections.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Okay. I recognize the Vice President.

Senator Corina L. Magofna: Thank you, Mr. President and colleagues. I am officially introducing Senate Bill No. 24-58, co-sponsored by Senators Manny Castro and Senator Paul Manglona, "To require the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation to conduct quarterly reconciliations of all estimated billings per customer account; to require submission of reconciliation reports to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission; to mandate timely customer account adjustments for over-billings and under-billings; to authorize penalties for non-compliance; and for other purposes." I also welcome other Senate members to co-sponsors should you choose to. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Vice President. Okay. Any other members? Recognize Senator Manglona.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Mr. President, I'd like to introduce, an unnumbered bill, "To authorize the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation to plan, develop, construct, and manage dense housing developments for homestead recipients in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; [and for other purposes.]" Hereby introducing that with Senator Corina and other members [are] welcome to please join in sponsoring this legislation. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Paul. Any other members? None. Now we'll move on to Item M, Reports of Standing Committees. Recognize the Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. We have Standing Committee Report No. 24-69 from the Committee on Fiscal Affairs recommending the passage of House Bill No. 24-23 in its original form.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion made by the Floor Leader for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-69 and has been seconded. Under discussion.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Ready.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Ready? All in favor for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-69 say "aye".

Members present voiced "aye".

All opposed? Standing Committee Report No. 24-69 is hereby adopted. [Recognize] Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Next we have Standing Committee Report No. 24-70 from the Committee on Fiscal Affairs recommending the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-25 in the form of Senate Draft 1. I move for its adoption.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion made by our Floor Leader for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-70 and has been seconded. Under discussion.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Ready.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: All in favor for the adoption, say "aye".

Members present voiced "aye".

All opposed? Standing Committee Report No. 24-70 is hereby adopted. Recognized Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Lastly, Mr. President, we have Standing Committee Report No. 24-71 from the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, recommending the passage of House Bill No. 24-49 in its original form, I move for adoption.

Senator Corina L. Magofna: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's a motion... Short Recess.

The Senate recessed at 11:14 a.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 11:14 a.m.

The Floor Leader has made a motion for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-71 and has been seconded. Under discussion. None? All in favor for the adoption, say "aye".

Members present voiced "aye".

All opposed, say "nay". Standing Committee Report No. 24-71 is hereby adopted. We'll go ahead and hold off on item 4 on the Standing Committee Reports to be addressed in the next session. Moving on to [Item] N, Reports of Special Committee and Conference Committee reports. There are none.

**REPORTS OF SPECIAL/CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:
NONE**

Resolution calendar that's still on hold.

**RESOLUTION CALENDAR:
ON HOLD**

And onto the Bill Calendar. I'd now like to recognize the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. We have Senate Bill No. 24-25 SD1, “To amend 4 CMC §10306(a)(4) to allow the board of directors to authorize the executive director to review and grant loan or loan guarantee applications exceeding \$25,000 per applicant; and for other purposes.” I move for its passage.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion made by the Floor Leader for the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-25, SD1 and has been seconded. Under discussions.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Pres.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Recognize Senator Hofschneider.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Yeah, thank you Pres. Members, thank you for entertaining this legislation and I also wish to express appreciation for the members for considering, I mean, moving on this bill. I have reached out to several members of our small business communities in Saipan, Tinian and also of course in Rota. And they have expressed, although they're not able to be here to testify on [their] behalf to support, they express support of this piece of legislation. I would be remiss if I don't recognize the partnership and the coordination of the agency itself. As indicative of their recent comments supporting to increase it up to \$100,000, referencing the Senate Draft 1 copy of the bill. And so that we can, hopefully this is another option for us to, give opportunities to our small business community to avail this microloan that is being administered by CEDA. I also want to say it on record, *noh* Mr. President, I've said it in the past, that when we support the... Everywhere, everyone talks about small businesses being the backbone of any community, any economy... So, I think we're putting that to work today by supporting this legislation and that in good times and in bad, the small businesses in the CNMI are here with us. This is a component of that commitment from, at least from the body here and from the Legislature, from the Senate. So respectfully ask for the support of the members. Thank you. I yield back.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Hofschneider. Any other members? Ready? Clerk.

ROLL CALL

(Senate Bill No. 24-25, SD1)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent – Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting “yes”.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all members voting “yes”, Senate Bill No. 24-25 hereby passes the Senate in the form of SD1. [Recognize] Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Mr. President, we have Senate Bill No. 24-40, “To amend 9 CMC §3114 by requiring the Department of Public Safety's Rules and Regulations regarding Commercial vehicles be consistent with those of the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; and for other purposes.” I move for its passage.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion made by our Floor Leader for the passage of Senate Bill No. 24-40 and has been seconded discussion by any of the members. Ready? Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL

(Senate Bill No. 24-40)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent – Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting “yes”.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all members voting “yes”, Senate Bill No. 24-40 hereby passes the Senate. I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Mr. President, we have House Bill No. 24-23 {Error: should state 24-23}, “To amend 9 CMC, §2116 to update the definitions of “veteran” and “disabled veteran” and to allow a valid Veteran ID Card to be used as proof of veteran status when applying for a veteran's license plate.” I move for its passage.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion made by the Floor Leader for the passage of House Bill No. 24-23 and has been seconded. Any discussion by the members. Ready? Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL (House Bill No. 24-23)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent – Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting “yes”.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all members voting “yes”, House Bill No. 24-23 hereby passes the Senate. Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. Sorry. If we can just go back House Bill No. 24-15. I just want to inform the public, I know we did get comments from our people here in Rota. We've also received comments from our people in Tinian when we had our session there the last time. But I do want to assure you that this bill will be placed on our calendar for next session to allow for the members to absorb the additional recommendations that were provided to the Committee as these are substantial amendments that we would need for the members to consider in accepting or rejecting the amendments to add on to the original bill. And

so, with that, I asked for the patience of our agencies as we further investigate and consider additional proposals to the bill. And with that we moved on to House Bill No. 24-30, SD1.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: I think we're going to hold that.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: At the request of the Director. We will hold that off as we consider the proposal that was submitted by Director Maratita for the Committee's review and hopefully we can address this at our next session. We move down to House Bill No. 24-33, "To statutorily define the scope of the Commonwealth's annual General Revenues within the meaning of Article XV, Section 1(e) of the NMI Constitution." I move for its passage.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: The Floor Leader has offered a motion for the passage of House Bill No. 24-33, and has been seconded. Floor is open for discussion to the members.

Senator Ronnie M. Calvo: Ready.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Ready? Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL (House Bill No. 24-33)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	Absent – Excused
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Yes
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Yes
Senator Donald M. Manglona	Yes
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Yes
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Yes

CLERK: Mr. President, all eight (8) members voting "yes".

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all members voting “yes”, House Bill No. 24-33 hereby passes the Senate. And for the last bill I would just kindly ask that we leave this on calendar. This is House Bill No. 24-49, regarding the Next/Gen 911, I did make a formal agreement with the Directors of DPS to have a sit down with them as they had some concerns that they wanted to clarify. We have spoken and met with DFEMS, we do plan on moving forward with this, but just to allow the opportunity to hear out the Department of Public Safety. So, I kindly ask the indulgence of the members if we can just leave this on Calendar. Okay. Moving on, [Item] Q Petitions, Memorials, [and] Miscellaneous Communications. [Recognize the] Clerk.

PETITIONS, MEMORIALS AND MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS:

Clerk: We have 2 Mr. President, Miscellaneous [Communication No.] 24-81 and 82.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussion from the members? None? Recognized Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Sorry. Thank you, Mr. President. This is in regards to Miscellaneous Communication No. 24-81. This is additional comments to the bill that we're holding off onto our next session, which is House Bill No. 24-15, from Mr. Edward DeLeon Guerrero in regards to some of the concerns, but also what are some of the advantages of having this bill signed in the law. And so, if members can also review that comment to help guide their decision at our next session. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Floor Leader. On Announcements [Item] R, recognize Senator Hofschneider.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Pres announcement [is] forthcoming, March 3rd, 1:30 p.m. I reached out to Chairman JP Sablan with regards to the one particular legislation that was mentioned earlier by Senator Manglona, the \$1 million. So, we are having the Conference Committee convene and official notifications forthcoming. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you for that Senator Hofschneider. Any other members? Recognize Senator Paul.

Senator Paul A. Manglona: Mr. President, I just want to announce that the Committee on Health, Welfare [&] Programs will be issuing a Committee meeting hopefully by today or latest tomorrow for a Committee meeting on March 4th of next week. And the issues to be discussed will be the Health Network Program, Medicaid Funding and Nursing Home Project, to be presented by Dr. Chelsea Cabrera, will be making a presentation. Along with the legislation referred to the Committee, please reserve March 4th - 9:00 in the morning. Mr. President, it's an announcement

for our people here in Rota. I just want to say thank you to Senator Corina and the REDP Committee for the hearing with DPL about a week ago. And one of the discussions that we had there was Rota Resort. The follow up as far as the golf course here on Rota and per the Secretary of DPL, I understand that the successful bidder in the RFP, IH Corporation. They were given a letter of intent and somehow allowed to progress into signing a lease agreement, but the Secretary has seen the need to withdraw that letter of intent. And so that's the situation with the Rota Resort. But he did mention that he is reaching out to other bidders and to ask if they're interested. Hopefully the leaders can get together and meet once again with the Secretary of DPL and let's see what we can do to reopen the golf course. I'm getting worried because now a lot of fruit bats are making that their homes and we might not be able to easily reopen the golf course. So, something that we... not to mention, the need for our local people here to be employed, [and have] employment unities and as well as our fishermen and farmers to sell their produce and products to whoever the new owner of Rota Resort. So, I just want to mention that and I hope that the leaders can get together and work whoever the investor is and let's get that reopened, because we need to create some strong economy here on the island of Rota, as well as the other public land on Saipan. Which I believe the Chair has questioned DPL with Marianas Resort, Marianas Beach Hotel, Kanoa Resort and the other public land properties that we wish to see immediately, some kind of reopening or economic activity. We need all the help we can to bring back the government revenue. *Mampos nu ebaba' makkat yan manmadedisi taotao-ta ni esti i austerity measures siha ya nesisita-ta sigi ha nu chomonnek mo'na nu taimanu i siha yo'ta resources para public land siha nai fan man u'sa, fan ma'baba, lao fan ma hire taotao. Enao ha',* Thank you. Thank you very much *para todos hamyo na finatun-miyu magi gi tano-māmi Luta.*

President Karl R. King-Nabors: *Si yu'us ma'ase* Senator Manglona. Any other members for announcements?

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Pres? I'm sorry I forgot to mention earlier when I had the floor. I do want to, first I want to thank those individuals that have showed up for Senate Bill No. 24-01, the Limited Term Pension Plan legislation. I requested the Committee if we can do another go around visit, and for the most part, to allow an informational meeting with, especially the employees that are interested and may be covered with this proposal and be appreciative if they can be allowed some time during their working hours to come and dialogue with the members of the Committee. I feel as the sponsor of that legislation, is a very critical piece of legislation that can help, provide an alternative of a Pension Program for those that have withdrawn their contribution of the former Defined Benefit Program. And also, this exchange with the government employees only helps us improve the trajectory of the legislation. I want to thank the Chairman of the Delegation of Rota, Senator Donald Manglona. And of course, Mayor Aubrey Hocog for their accommodation here, then we'll be announcing further as to when is that meeting, and I'm hoping that we can do it very soon. *Si yu'us ma'ase* Mr. President. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Senator Hofschneider. Any other members? I myself have a couple of announcements. I have tentatively set a schedule to meet with CUC sometime on the second week of March. As the dates are confirmed, I will notify all the members who would like to attend and ask any questions. There are a lot of bills that we have in the queue that relate to that particular department agency. I want to ensure that we allow for open dialogue and time for everybody to provide any concerns, asked any questions and get a full understanding

of their situation. Also, secondly the next session will tentatively be on March 17th at Saipan yeah, at Saipan Senate Chamber. With that, we'll go on to adjournment. I recognize a Floor Leader.

ADJOURNMENT:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to adjourn today's session, subject to the call of the Chair.

Senator Celina R. Babauta: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's been a motion by the Floor Leader for the adjournment, subject to the call of the Chair and has been seconded. All in favor say aye.

Members present voiced "aye".

All opposed? This Senate session is hereby adjourned at 11:32 a.m. *Si yu'us ma'ase.*

The Senate session adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Valerie S. Aguon
Senate Journal Clerk