

THE SENATE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE



SENATE JOURNAL

SECOND SPECIAL SESSION – 2026

SJ 24-25

1st Day

Friday, April 24, 2026

In compliance with the Open Government Act, Senate President, Karl R. King-Nabors, issued a session call on April 21, 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. Thank you for all for being here today. I hereby call this 1st Day, Second Special Senate Session to order. Today is April 24, 2026, Friday. The time is 11:14 a.m. here at the Senate Chamber [of the] Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building in Capitol Hill. It is my honor to be here today, presiding over today's session and I also like to welcome everybody watching on Channel 23, the Senate's YouTube page, and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature Facebook page. Before we begin with today's agenda, I kindly ask that we all rise for a moment of silent prayer.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

And with that, I kindly ask the Clerk to please call the roll.

ROLL CALL
(Attendance)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	<i>Presente</i> (Present)
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Present
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Este guiha</i> (Present)
Senator Francisco Q. Cruz	Here
Senator Jude U. Hofschneider	<i>Gaige</i> (Here)
Senator Karl R. King-Nabors (President)	Here
Senator Corina L. Magofna	Present

Senator Donald M. Manglona	Present
Senator Paul A. Manglona	Present

CLERK: Mr. President, all nine (9) members [are] present.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With all nine members present, we have the requisite number to proceed with today's Special Senate Session. Please let the record reflect that Senator Babauta is attending virtually here. Before moving on to our Public Comment, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and introduce the LB staff assisting us with this Senate Session here today. We have our Legal Counsel Mr. Joe Bermudes, our Senate Clerk Mrs. Dolores Bermudes, our IT Manager Mr. Jonathan Diaz, our Sergeant-At-Arms Mr. Benjamin Terlaje, our Senior Legislative Assistant Mrs. Jolyn Duenas-Tagabuel, and our Senate Journal Clerk Mrs. Valerie Aguon. And with that, we will move on to Public Comments, or, I'm sorry. I 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 withdraw House Bill No. 24-96 from the Committee on Fiscal Affairs.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion to withdraw a communication from Fiscal Affairs and has been seconded. Discussion? Ready? Clerk call the roll.

ROLL CALL

(Withdraw of H.B. 24-96 from Fiscal Affairs Committee)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent - Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
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, eight (8) members voting "yes".

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With eight members voting “yes”, the motion offered by the Floor Leader is here by adopted. [Recognized] Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I move to suspend pertinent rules to accept Senate Communication No. 24-217.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion offered by the Floor Leader to accept Senate Communications No. 24-217 and has been seconded. Under discussions. Ready? Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL

(Accept Senate Communication No. 24-217)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent - Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
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, eight (8) members voting “yes”.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With eight members voting “yes”, the motion offered by the Floor Leader is hereby adopted. [Recognized] Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you, Mr. President. Lastly, I move to suspend pertinent rules to amend the agenda to include House Bill No. 24-96 on today's Bill Calendar.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There's been a for motion offered by the Floor Leader to place House Bill No. 24-96 on today's agenda for action and has been seconded. Under discussion. Ready? Clerk please [the roll.]

ROLL CALL

(Place H.B. 24-96 on Bill Calendar for action)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent - Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
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 eight members voting “yes”, House Bill No. 24-96 is hereby placed on today's agenda. Now we'll go on to our Public Comment. This is a portion of our agenda where we allow the public to provide any comments they would like on any of the agenda items before us today. Please keep your comments to about five minutes and state your name and the entity that you represent, or if you're speaking on behalf of yourself. Public Comments are now open.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Rep. Vincent “Kobre” R. Aldan: Good morning Mr. President and to this honorable August body. I would like to I, I have two public comments that I would like to provide and they do seriously affect the CNMI, as we currently stand. One of them is under communications from the Senate part four, Senate Communication No. 24-215. Mr. President, members of the Senate, I rise this morning on an urgent matter of public interest involving ratepayer protection, regulatory continuity at the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, and the integrity of the CNMI Renewable Energy RFP/Solar Procurement - including any proposed 25-year obligations that could bind the people of this Commonwealth. And that's to include all of us. Let me be clear at the outset, I am not here to influence the merits of any contested case or pending docket. I'm here to demand transparency, clean process, and public accountability because ratepayers are already under extreme pressure from utility costs, and the public deserves confidence that oversight is not being weakened at the wrong time. First, the public record reflects that Chairman James Sirok was re-nominated to continue serving as a PUC/CPUC Commissioner and then that re-nomination was

rescinded or withdrawn from further proceedings. Chairman Sirok's public posture has consistently emphasized ratepayer protection, transparency, and regulatory oversight. So, my first question is direct. Mr. President, what is the official, documented reason for rescinding or withdrawing Chairman Sirok's nomination to continue serving as a Commissioner? If the reason is procedural, say so and identify what must be cured. If the reason is legal, identify the specific basis. If it is related to performance, state the documented findings because when a nomination is pulled without explanation, especially during active ratepayer impacting issues, it creates the appearance that oversight is being compromised. Second, we are facing continuing pressure and volatility around the Fuel Adjustment Charge and related billing impacts. The CPUC cannot protect the public if quorum is unstable or if continuity is disrupted. So, I ask what is the plan and timeline to maintain or restore full CPUC quorum and operational capacity, so the Commission can act promptly on ratepayer-impacting matters, especially FAC oversight and other ongoing investigation and oversight issues. Third, the Renewable Energy RFP is not a minor procurement. It is a long-term commitment that can shift risk and cost onto ratepayers for a generation. Any flaw, especially conflicts, can trigger bid protests, litigation, delay, and potential higher costs that the public will ultimately pay, which is what's going on right now. Therefore, I ask, has the complete procurement record been preserved and produced for independent oversight – board minutes and resolutions, roll-call votes, evaluator score sheets, conflict-of-interest disclosures, and written recusals? Because if any board member participated in a procurement decision where a spouse or immediate family member had a financial interest connected to a bidder, that raises at minimum, an appearance of impropriety that must be answered with documents - not rumors, not politics, not silence. Mr. President. Public confidence is already strained when oversight appears weakened. At the same time, a major long-term procurement is moving forward. People will assume the worst. We should not let that happen. So today I respectfully request three things, be placed on the record and acted upon. One, a written documented explanation of the recession or withdrawal of Chairman Sirok's nomination. Two, a clear quorum and continuity plan with timelines. And three, a joint public hearing by Senate EAGI and Senate PUTC, focus on CPUC quorum impacts and Renewable Energy RFP procurement integrity, without discussing the merits of any specific pending cases. Ratepayers are not a blank check. The people of the CNMI cannot be locked into a 25-year obligation under a process that is anything less than transparent, ethically clean and legally defensible. I would also like to make this other comment.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Mr. Representative Aldan, just to let you know, you're at your five-minute mark, so I'll give you two minutes.

Rep. Vincent “Kobre” R. Aldan: Okay, thank you. I'll just read this real quick. The Commonwealth failed to build water resiliency even though the law already existed. After Super Typhoon Sinlaku the CNMI faced a system-wide water emergency, serious enough that the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation issued a precautionary boil water notice for all three islands on April 16, 2026. CUC also had to stand up emergency water filling station while parts of the system were only gradually being restored. That is not resilience. That is an emergency survival after system failure. What makes this worse is that the Commonwealth did not face this crisis with no tools available. The law has already, or the law was already on the books. In 1995, the Legislature enacted Public Law 9-42, the water catchment tank loan revolving fund program Act of 1995, which repealed and reenacted Article 6 of Title 4, Division 8, that law authorized a hundred million dollars from the Commonwealth Development Authority, now CDA, funds to be

used exclusively for loans to qualified individuals to purchase and install residential water catchment tanks and booster pumps. The law was not symbolic. It was a direct policy decision to help household build distributed water self-reliance. The Legislature in 1995 understood the problem clearly. The findings of Public Law 9-42 recognized that many residents either lack reliable public water service or suffered from low pressure interruptions and other service failure. The purpose of the law was obvious. If the centralized system fails or does not adequately serve the people, households must have another way to secure water. This is why the question today is not whether the CNMI could have predicted a major water emergency. The real question is this, why did the Commonwealth failed to build distributed water resiliency when it already had law authorizing it? If this program had been meaningfully funded, continuously operated and expanded...

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Representative Aldan, your time. So please wrap it up.

Rep. Vincent “Kobre” R. Aldan: I'm sorry.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: You can feel free to submit any letter you would like to my office. Thank you.

Rep. Vincent “Kobre” R. Aldan: Alright.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Public Comment is still open.

Jean Paul B. Reyes: Good morning, *hafa adai yan tirow*, Honorable Senate President Karl King-Nabors and Honorable Senate members of the 24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. For the record, my name is Jean Paul B. Reyes, Special Assistant for the Administration under the Office of the Governor. On behalf of the Honorable Governor David M. Apatang and the Honorable Lieutenant Governor Dennis James C. Mendiola, I thank you for conducting this Senate session and the opportunity to appear before you today. Mr. Senate President, I am honored to extend the administration's appreciation and express our gratitude once more to the Honorable Senate Members that are present here today and to your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee chaired by the Honorable Senator Francisco Q. Cruz, for the time and effort you've all put into evaluating and examining the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's past and present nominees. This morning, you'll be entertaining Senate Standing Committee Report No. 24-75, the nomination of the Honorable Roberto C. Naraja to serve as the Associate Justice for the Supreme Court of the Northern Mariana Islands; Senate Standing Committee Report No. 24-76, the nomination of the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho to serve as Presiding Judge for the Superior Court of the Northern Mariana Islands; and Senate Standing Committee Report No. 24-77, the nomination of Mr. Joey Patrick San Nicolas, Esquire to serve as Associate Judge for the Superior Court of the Northern Mariana Islands. Your relentless time and effort on entertaining our nominees is an essential step forward as the administration finalizes the vacancies in the Judicial Branch. Once again, Honorable Senate President King-Nabors and Honorable Members of this esteem Senate Body, Governor David M. Apatang and Lieutenant Governor Dennis James C. Mendiola extends their sincere appreciation for your generous and

favorable consideration on behalf of our nominees here today. Thank you, *si yu'us ma'ase yan ghilisow*.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you for your comments. If you don't mind, [please] provide the Sergeant-At-Arms with a copy of your testimony. With that Public Comments is still open. There being none, we'll go ahead and close Public Comments and move on to the next item of our agenda, Reading and Approval of the Journal. There are none.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL:

NONE

Messages from the Governor. Recognize the Clerk.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR:

Clerk: Mr. President, we only have one, Governor Communication No. 24- 255.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussion by the members? None? Moving on to Item E, nothing under the Communications from the Judiciary.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY:

NONE

Item F, Communications from Heads of Executive Departments. Recognize the Clerk.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS:

Clerk: We have No. 24-26, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussion by the members. Ready? Going on, we'll move on to Communications from the House.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE HOUSE:

Clerk: We have three Mr. President, 24-144 to 146.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Comments from the members? If there are no objections, I'd like to go ahead and move to the Standing Committee Reports so we can dispose of the appointees for today. No objections? So, we'll go ahead and move to Item M of our agenda Standing Committee Reports, and I'll recognize [the] Floor Leader.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. Before we address any of the Standing Committee Report, for the public's information, the Senate will address the three Judicial confirmations in the following order. First, the Senate will consider the confirmation of the Honorable Roberto Camacho Naraja to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court, created by the resignation of the Honorable Justice Perry Inos. And if confirmed, Judge Naraja's elevation will create a vacancy in the position of Presiding Judge. At that time, the Senate will then consider the confirmation of the Honorable Joseph Norita Camacho to fill that role. And if Judge Camacho is confirmed, this will in turn create a vacancy for an Associate Judge position. The Senate would then subsequently consider the confirmation of Joey Patrick San Nicolas to fill that seat. And at this time Mr. President, I move to adopt Standing Committee Report No. 24-75 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the Executive Appointment of the Honorable Roberto Camacho Naraja, Presiding Judge of the Commonwealth Superior Court to serve as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Floor Leader. There has been a motion offered by the Floor Leader for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-75 and has been seconded. Under discussion, I'd like to recognize the Chairman of EAGI, Senator Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you Mr. President. Mr. President your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations has three Standing Committee Report[s] to report this body. And the first Standing Committee Report is no. 24-75 and this is the Executive Appointment of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja, to serve as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Mr. President, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja to serve as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands begs leave to report as follows. After review and consideration of the testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja's appointment to serve as Associate Justice for the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the appointment of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja, to serve as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Your

Committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the Executive Appointment of the Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja's overall credentials to serve as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. And in summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are 10 written testimonies in support of the Appointee, 19 oral testimonies in support of the Appointee, of which 12 hard copies of the testimonies stated were submitted on the date of the respective hearings and no written or oral testimonies in opposition of the Appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the Appointee that are included in this report. Therefore, based on the overall assessment of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja's credentials, experiences, testimonies, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja to serve as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Public hearings were conducted on all three senatorial districts to give the general public the opportunity to participate. And on March 19, 2026 in [the] Rota Mayor's Conference Hall, Office of the Mayor of Municipality of Rota, Tatachog Rota and on March 26, 2026 at [the] Tinian Courthouse, San Jose Tinian, on April 1, 2026 in the Senate Chamber [of the] Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill Saipan. And during the hearing[s], certain recommendation, issues and concerns were raised for the Appointee to address and look into if confirmed as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. And in conclusion, all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim 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 Executive Appointment of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja to serve as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is in accordance with 1 CMC §3302. Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Honorable Presiding Judge Roberto Camacho Naraja to serve as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, I ask this body of the Senate to kindly support Standing Committee Report No. 24-75. Thank you and I yield back, Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Members, still open for discussion. Good? Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL
(SCR No. 24-75)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

Senator Celina R. Babauta	Absent - Excused
Senator Ronnie M. Calvo	Yes
Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro	<i>Hunggan</i> (Yes)
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 eight members voting “yes”, Standing Committee Report No. 24-75 is hereby adopted by this body, officially confirming Presiding Judge Honorable Roberto Camacho Naraja to serve as the Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Congratulations.

Associate Justice Roberto C. Naraja: Thank you, Mr. President. *Buenas yan* good morning. I am really honored to appear here today before this distinguished body, the Senate of the 24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Together with my wife, Francis, and our family who are with us, we extend our deepest and serious appreciation for your vote of confidence. Your action today confirms me to an exceptionally important and essential public position as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Northern Mariana Islands. I am profoundly grateful and truly honored for the vote of confidence you have placed in me. To the President of the Senate, the Honorable Karl R. King-Nabors, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To the Vice President of the Senate, the Honorable Corina L. Magofna, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To the Floor Leader, the Honorable Donald M. Manglona, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To the Chairman of EAGI, the Honorable Francisco Q. Cruz, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To the Senators from Rota, the Honorable Ronnie M. Calvo, *si yu'us ma'ase*, the Honorable Paul A. Manglona, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To the Senator from Tinian, the Honorable Jude U. Hofschneider, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To the Senators from Saipan, the Honorable Celina R. Babauta, *si yu'us ma'ase*, the Honorable Manny Gregorio T. Castro, *si yu'us ma'ase*. At this time, I would also like to extend my sincerest and deepest appreciation to our Governor, the Honorable David M. Apatang and Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Dennis C. Mendiola for placing their trust and confidence in my capacity to serve as Associate Justice of our Supreme Court. Governor Apatang and Lieutenant Governor Mendiola, *un dānkolo na si yu'us ma'ase*. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Special Assistant of the Administration under the Office of the Governor, Jean Paul B. Reyes for presenting me before the Senate Standing Committee on Executive Appointment and Government Investigations at all three public hearings on the islands of Rota, Tinian and Saipan. I am truly honored and really profound, pretty proud to have been nominated and confirm as the next Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. I look forward to serving in this role, and to working closely with Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and Associate Justice John A. Manglona. Our community deserve nothing less than effective, fair, and principle public service. As an Appellate court, our duty is to faithfully execute our constitutional responsibilities. Collectively, we are committed to ensuring that the Supreme Court operates at all times with dignity, independence, and integrity. When individuals come before the court seeking resolution of their dispute, they must be assured the justice system they stand before and the court that presides over them with will administered the law fairly impartially and with integrity. I would also like to extend my profound appreciation to my family. I am deeply grateful to my family for standing by me and supporting me through every stage of my career. It has often been said that behind every successful man is a woman who nurtures, supports and strengthens him. In my life it is not just a saying, that person is my wife. To my loving wife, Francis, thank you for your unwavering support, your encouragement, your patience and most especially, your love. You have been my foundation, my

motivation and my constant source of strength. To my loving children, my constant source of joy, Nikita, Reggie, Matilde and Chad, Robert Junior and Megan, Thomasa and Keisha, and my eight loving grandchildren, thank you very much for your constant encouragement and support. To my loving mother, Tomasa, for your tireless love, guidance, lessons and encouragement, *un dānkolo na si yu'us ma'ase*. And to my sister Frances, husband Jesse and family, my sister, Christy husband Jerry and family, for your constant support, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To my brother-in-law Jack, wife Esther and family, my sister-in-law Gloria, husband John and family for always being there to lead the charts or quietly offer support, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To my in-laws Joseph and family, Margaret Dean and family, Larry and family, Marissa and family, Lorenza and family, Maggie, Mark, and family, *si yu'us ma'ase*. To the dedicated staff of the Commonwealth Judiciary, thank you very much and *un dānkolo na si yu'us ma'ase*. To all my relatives, friends and supporters who are here with us today, and those who are far away thank you. To the people of the Commonwealth who have quietly and steadfastly supported me, it is an honor to continue serving you, and I remain committed to upholding the responsibilities of my role with integrity, fairness, and dedication in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Sinlaku, our hearts are heavy. So many in our community are facing deep uncertainty and hardship. I extend my heartfelt thoughts and prayers to all who have been affected. May God bless our islands and our people. Thank you very much and *si yu'us ma'ase para todos hamyu*. Thank you.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, your Honor. Before we proceed any further, if I can just kindly ask for a short recess, thank you.

The Senate recessed at 11:46 a.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 11:59 a.m.

We now rise back from our short recess and we are on Standing Committees, Reports from Standing Committees, and I would like to recognize once more, Floor Leader Manglona.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Thank you Mr. President. We have Standing Committee Report No. 24-76 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the Executive Appointment of the Honorable Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho, to serve as the Presiding Judge of the Commonwealth Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. 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 the Floor Leader for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-76 and has been seconded, under discussion. I'd now like to recognize the Chairman of EAGI, Senator Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you Mr. President. This is the second Standing Committee Report from your Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Standing Committee that is ready to present to this Senate body. And this is Standing Committee Report No. 24-76, the Executive Appointment of the Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho to serve as a Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Mr. President, your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which was referred the appointment of the Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho, to serve as Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands begs leave to report as follows. And after review and consideration of testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho's appointment to serve as Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate, it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the appointment of the Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho, to serve as Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Your committee has examined all pertinent documents relating to the executive appointment of Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho's overall credentials to serve as Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. And in summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are 32 written testimonies in support of the Appointee, 38 oral testimonies in support of the Appointee; of which 20 hard copies of the testimonies stated were submitted on the date of the respective hearings. No oral testimonies in opposition of the Appointee, and one written testimony in opposition of the Appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the Appointee that are included in this report. And therefore, based on the overall assessment of Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho's credential, experiences, testimonies, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho to serve as Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The public hearings were conducted on all three senatorial districts to allow the general public to participate. On March 19, 2026 in the Rota Mayor's Conference Hall, Office of the Mayor of the municipality of Rota, Tatachog Rota; on March 26, 2026 at the Tinian Courthouse, San Jose Tinian; on April 1, 2026 in the Senate Chamber [of the] Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill Saipan. And during the hearing's certain recommendations, issues and concerns were raised for the Appointee to address and look into if confirmed as Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. And in conclusion, all required documents in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. And base on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that [the] Executive Appointment of Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho to serve as a Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is in accordance with 1 CMC §3204. Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Honorable Associate Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho to serve as Presiding Judge of the

Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, I ask the full body of the Senate to support Standing Committee Report No. 24-76. Thank you and I yield back Mr. President.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. Members, the floor is still open for discussion. Ready.? Before we proceed, if I could allow the opportunity for your Honorable to provide brief comments.

Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho: Good afternoon, Senate President. It's already 12:05 p.m. and I'll keep it brief. I wasn't planning to make a long speech, but I think now Associate Justice Naraja how can tie me in a place where I have to at least say something. Thank you, very much former Presiding Judge, and now Associate Justice. If you don't mind, Senate President and Senators I'll make a brief one, maybe I'll do it in reverse order. First and foremost, I want to thank my wife. Obviously, I wouldn't be here in this position for many years. She's been very supportive, right? I don't want to borrow the line about "a strong woman behind you pushing that", but I'm going to borrow anyways because I owe her that much. So, thank you to my wife, especially for our son, who's very near and dear to my heart. He's my number one best friend if I can say that. And if I was going to list all the names of all the family members it better just take out the rotor roster and just list them down. But I don't want to miss any names. So, if I can do a general thank you from my mom's side, Marcella Lieto Camacho. On that side of the branch of the family. I thank all of those family. They've been basically with me since I was born. So, I want to extend enormous appreciation for their support. I think some of them are here, they're represented. On my father's side and the family in that side, Vicente Tudela Camacho, I also want to thank all the family members. I hesitate to mention names because we will be here till tomorrow and I know everybody's very busy rebuilding from the Typhoon. Now, on my wife's side, on the father's side is David Peter, some of the family members are also here. Thank you to those family members, my in-laws and on my wife's mother's side, Delgadina Alepuyo. As you can tell, many of them are here. Also, thank you very much for all the support. Not just for here in this position and the Judicial Officer, but in my other life as a politician and also as an attorney. They've been very supportive in that, all of them have. I don't want to shorten this, but I would like to thank the Chairman of the Committee and all the members of the Committee, having all those public hearings in Rota, Tinian and here in Saipan. They ask very probing question and rightly so. You should screen out any candidate to see if they're qualified. And even though they asked probing question, I really appreciate that I was never cut off or, pushed to just finish my question. They gave me as much time to explain whatever it is that I was explaining my answers to. Very much appreciate to the Chairman and all the Committee members. To the full body of the Senate, [I] very much appreciate; without you this would not happen. And let me at least extend the enormous thank you to Governor Apatang and the Lieutenant Governor Dennis Mendiola, also for the nomination and confidence. I don't want to be remiss, but I should thank the people that were at the Judiciary for better part of almost 15 years now that have been helping me, supporting me. The staff at the judiciary is really an extension of the judge, right? I cannot do my job without them. No, they do the hard work that many of the staff here. We will not be able to do our work unless in particular, I should name Ms. Delia Salas Magofna has been basically my Judicial Assistant for 15 years. She is very much a big part of what goes on behind the curtain, so to speak, of keeping our chamber running. And if I miss anybody's name, it wasn't by intention. It's a small favor to ask Senate President and Senators, I also like to thank God. My mother was very devoted Catholic,

and she always said, “you should pray right? 'cause God doesn't always answer your prayers, but he always listens when you ask it.” So, thank you very much for an opportunity thanking God, all the family members, our friends, our classmates, and other members of the bar who've shown support. Thank you very much, Senator and to everyone. Thank you very much.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Judge Camacho. I do have some brief remarks. Obviously, you've had a long and stellar career and to all of the appointees today, please allow me to take this opportunity to first thank all of you for accepting this opportunity and this new challenge. I just received a message from our Delegate who also wanted me to extend, a very warm congratulations to all of you and looks forward to all of your success in the Judiciary in the upcoming future. And with that, I'll go ahead and ask the Clerk [to] please call the roll.

ROLL CALL
(SCR No. 24-76)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

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

Clerk: Mr. President, seven (7) members voting “yes”, two (2) [are] absent.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With seven members voting “yes”, Standing Committee Report No. 24-76 is hereby adopted officially confirming Mr. I'm sorry, Honorable Judge Joseph James Norita Camacho to serve as the Presiding Judge of the Commonwealth Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Congratulations. Short recess.

The Senate recessed at 12:12 p.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 12:20 p.m.

We now rise back. Back to agenda Item M, Reports of Standing Committees and I would like to recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Donald M. Manglona: Mr. President, Thank you. We have Standing Committee Report No. 24-77 from the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations reporting on the Executive Appointment of Mr. Joey Patrick San Nicolas, Esquire to serve as an Associate Judge of the Commonwealth Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. 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 offered by the Floor Leader for the adoption of Standing Committee Report No. 24-77 and has been seconded. Under discussion, I'd like to recognize [the] Chairman of EAGI, Senator Cruz.

Senator Francisco Q. Cruz: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President this is the last report under the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations and this is Standing Committee Report No. 24-77. This is the Executive Appointment of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas, the serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, Mr. President your Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations to which would refer the appointment of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas to serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands begs leave to report as follows. And after review and consideration of [the] testimonies provided, your Committee recommends the confirmation of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas to serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Pursuant to Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate it is the duty and purpose of your Committee to report to the Senate for legislative action pertaining to the appointment of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas to serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Your Committee has examined [all] pertinent documents relating to the appointment of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas' overall credentials to serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. And in summation of all written and oral testimonies provided to the Committee, there are 16 written testimonies in support of [the] Appointee, 34 oral testimonies in support of the Appointee; of which 17 hard copies of the testimonies stated were submitted on the date of the respective hearings and no written or oral testimonies in opposition of the Appointee. Additionally, your Committee stated several recommendations, issues, and concerns to the Appointee that are included in this report. Therefore, based on the overall assessment of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas' credentials, experiences, testimonies, and other relevant issues considered, your Committee respectfully recommends the confirmation of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas to serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The public hearings were conducted on all three senatorial districts to allow the general public to participate. And on March 19, 2026 in Rota Mayor's Conference Hall, Office of the Mayor of the Municipality of Rota, Tatchog Rota; on March 26, 2026 at Tinian Courthouse San Jose, Tinian; on April 1, 2026 here at the Senate Chamber [of the] Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, Capitol Hill. And during the hearing certain recommendations, issues and concerns were raised for attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas to address and look into if confirm as

Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. And in conclusion, all required documents are in conformance with Rule 8, Section 5 of the Interim Rules of the Senate have been submitted to your Committee for review and consideration. And based on the submission of pertinent documents and testimonies, your Committee concludes that Executive Appointment of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas to serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is in accordance with 1 CMC §3302. Therefore, your Committee consents the confirmation of Attorney Joey Patrick San Nicolas to serve as Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Again, I humbly ask this body to kindly support Standing Committee Report No. 24-77. Thank you, Mr. President, I yield back.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Thank you Chairman Cruz. Floor is still open on discussion and if there being none I'll go ahead and kindly, if there are no objections, I'd like to allow Mr. San Nicolas, Esquire to provide his brief remarks.

Associate Judge San Nicolas: *Si yu'us ma'ase* Mr. President. *Sedi yu ya bai hu didide' na fino Chamorro. Kulan nervous yu, mas yu comfortable kao siña un sedi yu. Komo man gaige Tinian nei, ginen na klâsen inetnon eyi man na'etnon grupu, espesiatmente kada na sakkan pat kuattro na sakkan, kao sen komprendi hafa na lokku. Ya hagu mas uttimu na spikadot nei tenki man kolu mas uttimu na spikadot. Tai gui guahu mas uttimu guine na spikadot ya bai hu halok i hafa para bai hu sangan, esta man sangan, pues ti nisisario esta hafa para bai hu sangan, para bai hu sangan. Lao sininbatgo dânkolo na onru esti, ginen guahu yan i asagua-hu i mas... i mas kariñosa, i asagua-hu. Thank you very much. Ya hu bai hu sangan didide'para hamyo, ni kada unu, na membru esti na kuetspot esti i Senate anai apunta yu i unarable as David Mundo Apatang afaisen yu i Chief Justice, kao siña bai hu na'i dânkolo un respetu, kada unu giya hamyo na Senadot. Kumeke ilek-ña kao siña bai hu bisita, bai hu fan dakot, bai hu fan gagao opottunidât. Ya banidosu yu para bai hu sangan na kada unu na membrun esti na Senate, ha baba potta-niha, ha baba pottan miyu, para hami na tres. Yan gi nai'an bai hu maleffan ennao. Si yu'us ma'ase. Gi mismo tiempo ya hu para bai hu rekognisa i Chairman EAGI. Ni asedi yan ginen i leadership gi Senate esti lokkue na sedi tododus i taotao Marianas gi kada manisipalidad Marianas, opottunidât para fan matto, gi esti un ekungok i para i tres na ma apunta para i Judiciary ya anna'i opottunidât kada isla ni para fan yoti halom, mensâhi testimonio sinenti, pa'go cha'chagi esti. Taya ni un li'e, taya ni unsedi esti gi lala'ao. Para bai hu bisita kada isla, ya para bai hu hungok/ekungok hafa i sininten-niha. Ya un nana'i hao Chairman, un dongkulu na si yu'us ma'ase, Vice Chairman yan todû i membru EAGI. Espesiamente hagu Mr. President ferre un na'i hami ni man ma'apunta, un na'i i publikun Marianas opottunidât para fan na'i hafa gi sininten-niha para esti i tres ni man ma'apunta. Pues talo un dongkulu na si yu'us ma'ase Mr. President yan para tododus hamyo na membrun esti na Senate. Sen mas sedi yu bai hu taitai pa'go i yoku statement. Mr. President and Honorable members of the Senate, good afternoon. I am deeply honored and humbled by the Senate's, hopefully confirmation, and I thank each of you for your trust, your careful consideration, and your services to the people of the Commonwealth. I extend my sincere appreciation to Governor David Apatang and Lieutenant Governor Dennis Mendiola for this nomination and for the confidence in me. We gather at a time when our islands are recovering from the impacts of Typhoon Sinlaku. When it has tested our communities, it has also reminded us of the enduring strength and resiliency of the people of the Marianas. Time and again, we have come together to overcome adversity, and we will do so again. To my family, friends, and colleagues throughout*

the Commonwealth, thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement. I am especially grateful to my family who sacrifices and guidance have shaped my life. *Yahu bai hu rekognisa i familia-ku, i familian Tililok, San Nicolas, i familian Peperu, Sablan, familia-ku Diaz, yan todudu i familia-ku, ni sumapotta yu, gi tod kakuet na manera nai mamaisen yu ayudu yan u na'i yu i ayudun miyu. Ni nai'an bai hu maleffa ennao.* I accept this responsibility with humility and a firm commitment to uphold the Rule of Law, to apply the law faithfully and impartially, and to serve without fear or favor. Together as one Commonwealth, we will meet the challenges before us and move forward with strength and unity. Thank you, Mr. President and Members, and God bless the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. *Si yu'us ma'ase.*

President Karl R. King-Nabors: *Si yu'us ma'ase*, Council San Nicolas for those words. I just would like to say a brief, provide some brief remarks. This is a unique and special day for us as well from the Second Senatorial District. You've broken a lot of ground in your time and it's been an honor to watch the maturation and your dedication to public service and your willingness to come back and to do it in this capacity. You've never shied away with your time being the council for the Tinian Mayor, also your time as Mayor; your time as AG. It's been an honor and a privilege and I wish for you only the best moving forward. Thank you. With that Clerk, please call the roll.

ROLL CALL (SCR No. 24-77)

CLERK called the roll with the following results:

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

Clerk: Mr. President, seven (7) members voting “yes”, two (2) [are] absent.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: With seven members voting “yes”, Standing Committee Report No. 24-77 is hereby adopted, officially confirming Mr. Joey P. San Nicolas, Esquire to serve as an Associate Judge of the Commonwealth Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Congratulations. Short recess please.

The Senate recessed at 12:33 p.m.

RECESS

The Senate reconvened at 1:12 p.m.

We now rise back to Session. We are on Item Q, Petitions, Memorials, and Miscellaneous Communications. [Recognized] Clerk.

PETITIONS, MEMORIALS, AND MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS:

Clerk: Mr. President, we have 4 on our Agenda 24-91 to 94.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Discussion by the members. Ready? Under our Announcements. Floor is open.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None? Okay. Moving on to Adjournment, I recognize the 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.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: Do hear a second?

Senator Jude U. Hofschneider: Second.

This motion has been seconded.

President Karl R. King-Nabors: There has been a motion to adjourn Today's sessions, subject to the call of the Chair and has been seconded. Discussions, ready? All in favor say "aye".

Members present voiced "aye".

All opposed? This Senate Session is adjourned subject to the call at 1:13 p.m. *Si yu'us ma'ase.*

The Senate session adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Valerie S. Aguon
Senate Journal Clerk