

A BILL FOR AN ACT

TO AUTHORIZE THE CNMI SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE TO GRANT EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO PART TIME APPLICANTS WHO ARE TEACHER AIDES AT THE CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE SEVENTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the "CNMI Public School
2 System Teacher Aide Financial Support Act of 2011."

3 **Section 2. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that the CNMI Public
4 School System (PSS) employs over one hundred teacher aides who are instrumental in
5 the education of the students of the CNMI. Many of these teacher aides are full time
6 employees working towards obtaining a bachelor's degree at an accredited educational
7 institution. Most of the teacher aides also have families and other obligations at home.

8 The Legislature further finds that because they are full time employees with
9 families at home, many teacher aides cannot afford to take more than one class per
10 semester or summer which makes them ineligible for financial assistance from the CNMI
11 Scholarship Office. This makes it extremely difficult for many teacher aides to achieve
12 their dream of obtaining a bachelor's degree so they can be elevated to full time teachers
13 in the classroom.

14 The Legislature finds that it is imperative to assist these teacher aides in obtaining
15 their bachelor's degree because the PSS continues to lack qualified teachers to educate
16 the students of the CNMI. There continues to be a high turnover rate of teachers each
17 school year and recruitment of teachers is very tedious and cumbersome. Investing in the
18 teacher aides of the PSS will yield a return three times the dollar amount expended to
19 assist the teacher aides in their educational endeavor. Accordingly, the purpose of this

1 legislation is to authorize the CNMI Scholarship office to grant educational assistance to
2 the teacher aides of the CNMI Public School System who are part time students
3 regardless if they are enrolled only in one class per college term.

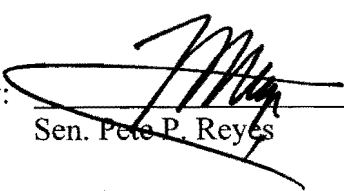
4 **Section 3. CNMI Scholarship Office.** Notwithstanding any law or regulation
5 to the contrary, the CNMI Scholarship Office shall grant educational assistance to teacher
6 aides at the CNMI Public School System who are at least part time students at an
7 accredited educational institution regardless if they are enrolled only in one class or three
8 credits per college term. For purposes of this Act, part time shall mean 1-11 credits or at
9 least one class. Awards for part time teacher aides shall be prorated. Teacher aides shall
10 not be subject to the duration of award limitations of the educational assistance program.

11 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any
12 such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of
13 competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to
14 persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected
15 thereby.

16 **Section 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
17 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under
18 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.
19 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or
20 pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating,
21 or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in
22 existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

23 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
24 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

Date: 4/29/0

Introduced By: 
Sen. Pete P. Reyes