

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To establish a Police Reserve Unit within the Department of Public Safety.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

- 1       **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that in the past decade,  
2 there has been a change in community dynamics, as the demand for public services  
3 becomes greater than available support and resources; this becomes a challenge for many  
4 first responders, as their mission is the protection of life, property and the preservation of  
5 peace and order. Over the years, there have been several high-profile cases and incidents.  
6 The following headlines provide a summary of some of those events:  
7       “5 dead in Saipan shooting (2009)”  
8       “Relatives believe two girls abducted (2011)”  
9       “CNMI report: Female tourist dragged by car in a brazen robbery on Saipan  
10       (2011)”  
11       “Missing person case now a homicide (2012),”  
12       “Crisostomo sentenced to life in prison (2014)”  
13       “Saipan farmer found dead; case classified as a homicide (2016)”  
14       “Extreme Category 5 typhoon, the worst U.S. storm since 1935, leaves Northern  
15 Mariana Islands devastated (2018)”  
16       “Police still investigating Saipan restaurant murders (2019)”  
17       “Man swept out to sea in Saipan, HSC-25, and Department of Public Safety  
18       conducting a search (2020)”  
19       In times of natural disasters or state of emergency, first responders are often left  
20 working around the clock, away from their families, and with limited relief. In support of  
21 first responder growth and well-being the Legislature finds the need to establish the

1 Department of Public Safety Police Reserve Unit.

2 This Act will help increase first responder capacity and well-being by expanding  
3 programs and services and widening available assistance at the scene of an emergency,  
4 such as an accident, fire or natural disaster.

5 **Section 2. Amendment.** Subject to codification by the CNMI Law Revision  
6 Commission, Title 1, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 10, Article 1 of the Commonwealth Code  
7 is hereby amended to add a new subsection to read as follows:

8 **“§ 101. Police Reserve Unit Authorized.**

9 (a) Police Reserve Unit Authorized. The Commonwealth authorizes the  
10 Department of Public Safety (DPS) to create and maintain a police reserve unit. This unit  
11 will be authorized to have as many reserve officers as patrolmen. It will be staffed by  
12 citizen volunteers who will assist DPS in the protection of life, and property and the  
13 preservation of peace and order.

14 (b) Chain of Command. The DPS Commissioner is in charge of and responsible to  
15 the Governor for the conduct of the reserve unit. Reserve officers will be appointed from  
16 the list of applicants who have completed the Police Academy and all other requirements  
17 consistent with applicable laws and regulations promulgated under Section 3. The reserve  
18 officer rank will be subordinate to reserve supervisory ranks that may be created and also  
19 to all paid (FTE) officers.

20 (c) Arrest Authority. Reserve officers will have full arrest authority while on duty  
21 and only while on duty during the duration of the activation period.

22 (d) On Duty. A reserve officer will be on duty when the unit as a whole has been  
23 activated, or when he or she has been specifically assigned to a task or duty by the DPS  
24 Commissioner, or Deputy Commissioner. Reserve officers cannot place themselves on  
25 duty.

26 (e) Dismissal. Reserve officers may be dismissed from their reserve status by the  
27 DPS Commissioner for violating any rule or regulation. The reserve captain or supervising  
28 officer may suspend a reserve officer from duty status pending review by the DPS  
29 Commissioner of allegations of misconduct.

(f) Equipment Issue. DPS shall provide necessary uniforms and the standard equipment, including a handgun, issued to DPS officers. The handgun shall be issued only during the activation of the reserve unit or any reserve officer called to duty. The handgun shall be returned and stored by the DPS when the activation period ends.

(g) Employee Benefits. During the activation period, the employer shall provide medical insurance coverage and life insurance coverage for death on the line of duty.

(h) Hiring Priority. Reserve officers shall be prioritized, based on seniority, for any DPS full-time officer positions.

**Section 3. Regulations.** The DPS Commissioner shall promulgate necessary regulations consistent with this Act.”

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

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

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

Date: 1/27/25

Introduced By: 

Senator Manny Gregory T. Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

  
Senate Legal Counsel