

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To rename the “Guma’ Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice” building to the “Elias Parong Sablan Guma’ Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice” in recognition of his long-standing contribution for the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that Elias Parong Sablan,
2 a visionary and a pioneering leader of the people of Saipan, was born on November 8,
3 1899, to his parents Felix Delos Reyes Sablan and Luisa Malug Parong. He grew up in
4 Saipan where he learned the native languages of Chamorro and Carolinian from his parents.
5 During his youth, Elias Parong Sablan served as a cabin boy aboard the Charles W.
6 Morgan, and American whaling ship out of New Bedford, Massachusetts where he was able
7 to learn to speak English as well as about life in the United States.

8 A year before Elias Parong Sablan was born, Germany purchased the Northern
9 Mariana Islands from Spain. Mr. Sablan attended the German School on Saipan where he
10 persevered to graduate in 1913. Shortly after, the German administration sent Mr. Sablan
11 to Yap to work in communications, and at the age of 15, Elias Parong Sablan was educated
12 in the international Morse code and had added the German and Yapese language to his
13 linguistic skills. After this, Mr. Sablan returned to Saipan in 1916 to assist his family on
14 their farm.

15 The Legislature acknowledges that Japan had seized control of the Northern
16 Mariana Islands from Germany after World War I. During this period, Elias Parong Sablan
17 worked in a sugar mill where he was able to learn how to speak Japanese in addition to his
18 many linguistic skillsets. At this time, Mr. Sablan married Carmen Romolor Mangarero on
19 January 23, 1921, and together they had 13 children.

1 The Legislature recognizes that Elias Parong Sablan was fluent in Chamorro,
2 Carolinian, Spanish, German, Japanese, and English, and that he played a critical role after
3 World War II when he worked diligently as a translator for U.S. forces, helping to reassure
4 and bring out civilians who were still in hiding after the war. Shortly after, Elias Parong
5 Sablan was appointed by administering United States military command in Saipan to serve
6 as the Interim Head Chief, a title that was equivalent to a mayor. Elias Parong Sablan was
7 then elected the Mayor of Saipan in an open election in July 1944, and served three
8 consecutive four-year terms (12 years) until December of 1957. Mr. Sablan ran for a fourth
9 term but unfortunately lost to Mr. Ignacio Benavente by one vote after a re-election was
10 conducted due to a tie between the candidates. In his time as the mayor, Elias Parong Sablan
11 worked with the United States military unit in charge of securing the island of Saipan after
12 it seized control from the Japanese forces. Furthermore, with his proficient English, he was
13 able to persuade the United States Military to remove the fences at Camp Susupe— which
14 is in the village where the Guma’ Hustisia stands today— in order for the local population
15 to return to their pre-war farms and homes, where they would be able to persist in their
16 lives.

17 The Legislature finds that following Mr. Sablan’s defeat to Mr. Benavente, the
18 Commander Naval Forces Marianas (ComNavMar) appointed him as Senior
19 Administrative Advisor for the Naval Administration, a position he held until the Navy
20 transferred the administration of the Northern Mariana Islands to the U.S. Trust Territory
21 of the Pacific Islands in 1962.

22 The Legislature finds that Elias Parong Sablan also served in various public service
23 capacities including being a Judge of the Community Court where he conducted work with
24 fairness and integrity in traffic violation cases brought before him. He also served as the
25 head of the Department of Land Management for the Northern Mariana Islands District.
26 Both positions that have contributed enhancement to the livelihoods of the people in the
27 Marianas.

28 The Legislature recognizes the great responsibility that Elias Parong Sablan
29 assumed in getting the island’s civic life in order to where every member of the community

1 would be able to resume life after World War II. In this responsibility, he traveled to the
2 United States to deliver his report on the status of Saipan and the Mariana Islands at the
3 United Nations, and was a vital role in setting the course for the people of the Marianas as
4 they were placed under the trusteeship of the United States Government.

5 The Legislature finds that after countless years of service to the people of the
6 Marianas, Elias Parong Sablan passed away in 1968 and is remembered as a respected
7 leader, a bridge between cultures and an individual that defended the people of the
8 Marianas. Therefore the purpose of this Act is to honor the countless efforts and sacrifices
9 made by Elias Parong Sablan by renaming the “Guma’ Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House
10 of Justice.” building the “Elias Parong Sablan Guma’ Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of
11 Justice.”

12 **Section 2. Amendment.** 1 CMC §427 is hereby amended to read:

13 **§ 427. Justice Building; Elias Parong Sablan Guma’ Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe,**
14 **House of Justice.**

15 The new Justice Building on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas
16 Islands, shall be henceforth known as the “Elias Parong Sablan Guma’ Hustisia,
17 Iimwal Aweewe, House Of Justice” which means “House of Justice” in Chamorro,
18 Carolinian and English.

19 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
20 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent
21 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
22 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

23 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
24 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under
25 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes.
26 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant
27 to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any
28 way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the
29 date this Act becomes effective.

