



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Benigno R. Fitial
Governor

Eloy S. Inos
Lt. Governor

October 15, 2010

Honorable Paul A. Manglona
Senate President, The Senate
Seventeenth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Honorable Froilan C. Tenorio
Speaker, House of Representatives
Seventeenth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law H.B. 17-87, HS1, SS1, entitled, "To repeal and re-enact the CNMI Youth Congress Act; and for other purposes", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Seventeenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes **Public Law No. 17-22**. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Benigno R. Fitial".

BENIGNO R. FITIAL

cc: Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Press Secretary, Commonwealth Election Commission, Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan, Mayor of Saipan, Mayor of Rota, Special Assistant for Youth Affairs, Northern Marianas College, All Public High School & Private, Commonwealth's Law Revision Commission, Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review



House of Representatives

SEVENTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 500586
SAIPAN, MP 96950

October 15, 2010

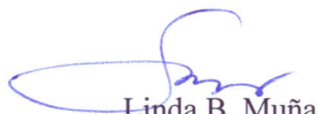
PUBLIC LAW NO. 17-22

The Honorable Benigno R. Fitial
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern
Mariana Islands
Capitol Hill
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Fitial:

I have the honor of transmitting herewith for your action **H. B. 17-87, HS1, SS1**, entitled: "To Repeal and re-enact the CNMI Youth Congress Act; and for other purposes.", which was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Seventeenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

Sincerely yours,



Linda B. Muña
House Clerk

Attachment



*Seventeenth Legislature
of the
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Third Day, Fourth Special Session

June 25, 2010

Representative Stanley T. McGinnis-Torres, of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself*) in an open and public meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment, introduced the following Bill:

PUBLIC LAW NO. 17-22

H. B. 17-87

**AN ACT
TO REPEAL AND RE-ENACT THE CNMI YOUTH CONGRESS
ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

The Bill was referred to the House Committee on Health and Welfare; was withdrawn from committee and placed on the House Bill Calendar on September 13, 2010

THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
with amendments in the form of H. B. 17-87, HS1 and transmitted to the
THE SENATE.

The Bill was not referred to a Senate Committee.

THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE SENATE ON FIRST AND FINAL READING, ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2010;
with amendments in the form of H. B. 17-87, HS1, SS1.

**H. B. 17-87, HS1, SS1 WAS RETURNED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
SEPTEMBER 24, 2010.**

The House of Representatives accepted the Senate amendments and passed H. B. 17-87, HS1, SS1 during its 12th Day, Second Regular Session on October 15, 2010.

A blue ink signature of Linda B. Muña is written over a horizontal line.

Linda B. Muña, House Clerk



*Seventeenth Legislature
of the
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

12th Day, Second Regular Session

October 15, 2010

PUBLIC LAW NO. 17-22
H. B. 17-87, HSI, SS1

AN ACT

**TO REPEAL AND RE-ENACT THE CNMI YOUTH CONGRESS ACT;
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**Be it enacted by the Seventeenth Northern Marianas
Commonwealth Legislature:**

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be referred to the “CNMI Youth
2 Congress Reform Act of 2010.”

3 **Section 2. Findings.** The Commonwealth Legislature finds that Public
4 Law 8-27, as amended, established the CNMI Youth Congress under the
5 administrative supervision of the Legislative Bureau of the Northern Marianas
6 Commonwealth Legislature to provide a system which allows the youth to
7 prepare to meet the challenges of the future and to make recommendations to the
8 policy makers on youth programs. Currently, members of the Youth Congress,
9 consist of youth representing private and public high schools, Northern Marianas
10 College, and precinct election districts throughout the Commonwealth.

1 Voter turnout, however, has been on the decline for precinct election districts for
2 the last three elections years. The voter turnout of registered voters for precinct
3 election districts during the 2006; 2007; 2008; and 2009 Youth Congress elections
4 are 25%; 13%; 13%; and 84%, respectively. With respect to the Northern
5 Marianas College, only two of three seats given to the Northern Marianas College
6 were filled in the 2007 Youth Congress elections. Although there was a slight
7 increase in voter turnout during the 2008 Youth Congress election, interest in the
8 program is poor as evident in the decline of registered voters within the last three
9 years. Additionally, the increase in precinct voter turnout for election year 2009
10 was due to a vast majority of school students who chose to register as precinct
11 voters to support their fellow student seeking office as a precinct senator. The
12 number of registered voters for the Northern Marianas College varied from 100
13 registered voters in 2006 to 30 in 2007, 46 in 2008 and 105 in 2009. Moreover,
14 members elected to represent the Northern Marianas College were elected by only
15 7; 3; 25; and 67 votes in 2006; 2007; 2008; and 2009, respectively. As a result,
16 the Commonwealth Legislature finds it necessary to amend the existing statutes to
17 reapportion Youth Congress membership throughout the private and public high
18 schools of the CNMI and to remove the positions allotted to election precinct
19 districts and the Northern Marianas College.

20 **Section 3. Repealer and Re-enactment.** 1 CMC, Division 1, Chapter 6
21 is hereby repealed and re-enacted to read as follows:

22 **“CHAPTER 6.**

1 **Northern Mariana Islands Youth Congress.**

2 **1601. Establishment.** There is hereby established a
3 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Youth Congress under
4 the administrative supervision of the Legislative Bureau of the Northern
5 Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

6 **1602. Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

7 (a) Executive director means the executive director of the
8 Commonwealth Election Commission.

9 (b) Bureau means the Legislative Bureau of the Northern
10 Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

11 (c) Meetings means all meetings and sessions of the youth
12 congress.

13 (d) Youth means a person between the ages of 14 and 18
14 years.

15 (e) Youth Congress means the Northern Mariana Islands
16 Youth Congress.

17 (f) Enrolled student means any person who is enrolled in
18 his/her respective school as a full-time student.

19 **1603. Functions.** The youth congress shall act as a legislative
20 body with the power to make its own rules, establish committees, hold
21 hearings, pass resolutions and prepare and pass bills, which will be
22 forwarded to the Governor and the presiding officers of the legislature for

1 disposition. The youth congress represents the youth of the
2 Commonwealth, their desires and aspirations, and shall serve as training
3 for the Commonwealths future leaders. The youth congress shall hold a
4 youth conference within the Commonwealth at least once a year to report
5 and discuss essential matters pertaining to the youth of the
6 Commonwealth.

7 **1604. Composition.** The youth congress shall be composed of
8 members to be known as senators, to be elected from private and public
9 high schools as follows:

10 (1) Each private and public high school, with a student
11 population of 20 or more that wishes to participate, shall have one
12 senator.

13 **1605. Eligibility of Senators and Voters.**

14 (a) A United States citizen residing in the CNMI between
15 the age of fourteen (14) and eighteen (18) shall be eligible to vote
16 for a candidate for senator provided that such person is duly
17 registered to vote in his or her respective school and has not been
18 convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude unless he
19 or she has received pardon restoring his or her civil rights.

20 (b) A candidate for senator of the youth congress must be a
21 freshman, sophomore, or junior of his or her respective school, be

1 a United States citizen residing in the CNMI, and be registered to
2 vote in that respective school.

3 (c) All voters must be an enrolled student in their respective
4 school in which they are registering to vote.

5 **1606. Term.**

6 (a) The term of each member shall be two years.

7 (b) Any member who graduates from high school may
8 continue to serve the balance of his or her term. Any member who
9 drops out of high school shall automatically forfeit the balance of
10 his or her term.

11 (c) Any member who is outside of the Commonwealth for a
12 total of 90 days shall forfeit the balance of his or her term.

13 **1607. Elections.**

14 (a) The general election for the youth congress shall be held
15 on the first Monday in March, and every two years thereafter. The
16 elections for school senators shall be conducted by the school
17 principals at the schools the eligible voters attend, and at which the
18 voters are officially enrolled. Each voter shall be entitled to vote
19 for the number of candidates authorized for his or her school
20 election as provided in 1 CMC § 1604. A voter shall only vote
21 once.

1 (b) It shall be the responsibility of the school principal or
2 the Legislative Bureau as appropriate to provide forms for
3 petitions, ballots and tally sheets, the necessary ballot boxes and
4 personnel to supervise the election, count and tally the ballots. The
5 Commonwealth Election Commission shall cooperate and make
6 available to the greatest extent practicable, the resources of the
7 Commonwealth Election Commission to support the tasks and
8 activities of the youth congress elections at no cost.

9 (c) Results of the election shall be verified by the respective
10 school principals, then forwarded to the Floor Leader of the House
11 of Representatives, for certification within three days after the
12 election. The certified results shall be forwarded to the Governor,
13 Commissioner of Education, the respective school principals, and
14 the presiding officers of the legislature.

15 (d) Any disputes resulting from the election shall be
16 resolved by the chairman of the House Standing Committee on
17 Judiciary and Governmental Operations or its successor.

18 **1608. Petitions.** Candidates for election shall be nonpartisan and
19 all candidates must obtain at least 15 signatures by petition in their schools
20 from individuals qualified to vote under 1 CMC 1605.

21 **1609. Vacancies.** Each vacancy shall be filled by the candidate
22 who received the next highest vote in that school, except that no person

1 filling a vacancy shall hold office longer than the remainder of the term
2 for which his or her predecessor was elected. If there is no candidate to
3 fill a vacancy, the student body of the respective school where the vacancy
4 exists shall appoint an individual qualified to be a senator under 1 CMC
5 1605 to fill the remaining term of his or her predecessor.

6 **1610. Sessions.**

7 (a) Regular sessions of the youth congress shall be held
8 every three months on the third Saturday of the month, exclusive
9 of holidays, for one day, commencing the third Saturday in April.
10 Additional session days, but not more than three days, are
11 permitted each year.

12 (b) For the first organizational meeting until a speaker is
13 elected, the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall preside
14 over the session. In the absence of the Speaker, the President of
15 the Senate shall preside.

16 (c) Sessions shall be held in the legislative chamber of the
17 House of Representatives of the Northern Marianas
18 Commonwealth Legislature.

19 (d) The meetings of the youth congress and its committees
20 shall be open to the public and notice of such meetings shall be
21 given three (3) days prior to the date scheduled.

1 **1611. Organization and Qualification of Members.** The youth
2 congress shall be the judge of the selection and qualification of its
3 members. It shall elect officers, consisting of speaker, vice speaker,
4 legislative secretary and floor leader. It shall establish standing and
5 special committees essential to carry out its functions as set forth in
6 1 CMC 1603. The youth congress shall adopt rules and procedures not
7 inconsistent with this chapter or the rules of the House of Representatives
8 of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

9 **1612. Quorum.** The quorum of the youth congress shall equal
10 one-half of its members plus one. No bill or resolution shall be considered
11 passed unless, a quorum being present, a majority of the members present
12 and voting so indicate by affirmative vote.

13 **1613. Operations.** The Legislative Bureau may provide staff
14 services to the youth congress. The youth congress is authorized to
15 employ on a full-time or part-time basis staff consisting of a secretary and
16 other essential personnel subject to the availability of funds. The youth
17 congress shall first consider utilizing the staff of the Legislative Bureau
18 before hiring necessary personnel.

19 **1614. Expenditure Authority.** The Director of the Legislative
20 Bureau shall be the expenditure authority of the funds appropriated to the
21 Youth Congress in consultation with the Speaker of the Youth Congress.

1 **1615. Expenditure Control.** Except as provided for under 1 CMC
2 1616, under no circumstances shall any funds appropriated to the youth
3 congress be expended for car rentals; hotel room and/or facility rentals;
4 floral and/or all other decorative items; and food catering in connection
5 with youth congress meetings, elections, and inaugurations, except for an
6 amount not to exceed \$1,000.00 of food expenses for the youth congress
7 annual youth conference. Travel expenses shall only be authorized for
8 activities required for the youth congress elections, inaugurations,
9 sessions, and annual youth conferences.

10 **1616. Compensation.** Members of the youth congress shall not
11 be compensated for each regular session meeting they attend. Members
12 from Rota and Tinian shall be provided air transportation and subsistence
13 allowance at the established Commonwealth government rates.

14 **1617. Appointment as Non-Voting Honorary Members of**
15 **Boards and Commissions.** Notwithstanding the requirements of 1 CMC
16 2901 (a), the Speaker of the Youth Congress shall appoint individual
17 members of the Youth Congress to serve as non-voting honorary members
18 of each Commonwealth board and commission except those boards and
19 commissions whose membership is provided for in the Commonwealth
20 Constitution. Membership on a board or commission shall expire when
21 the members Youth Congress term expires. Participation by these
22 members shall be limited to those meetings in which the general public

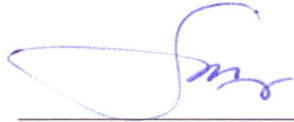
1 has access pursuant to Public Law 8-41, codified as 1 CMC 9901 et seq.,
2 the Open Government Act. Participation by Youth Congress members
3 shall be limited to meetings held on the islands of the Commonwealth in
4 which the members reside. Youth Congress members serving in an
5 honorary position are not authorized to travel in connection with their
6 service on boards and commissions. Youth Congress members serving in
7 an honorary position shall not receive compensation in any form for
8 attendance at meetings of the board nor any other compensation such as
9 subsistence or out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the discharge of their
10 responsibilities.”

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

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

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

Attested to by:



Linda B. Muña, House Clerk

Certified by:



FROILAN C. TENORIO, SPEAKER

APPROVED this *15th* day of *OCTOBER*, 2010



BENIGNO R. FITIAL

Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands