

**TWENTIETH COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS YOUTH CONGRESS**

5th REGULAR Session, 2025 Y.C. Comm. Res. No. 20- **03**

A YOUTH CONGRESS COMMEMORATIVE RESOLUTION

Honoring the life, legacy, and distinguished
public service of the late Honorable Diego
Tenorio Benavente and to extend the Twentieth
CNMI Youth Congress' deepest condolences and
gratitude to his family.

1 **WHEREAS**, the Youth Congress, as the official youth-led legislative body
2 of the Commonwealth, joins the people of the Northern Mariana Islands and the
3 Micronesian region in mourning the passing of the Honorable Diego Tenorio
4 Benavente, who passed away peacefully on November 20, 2025, on the island of
5 Saipan; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente was born on
7 April 21, 1959, on the island of Saipan to the late Roman Manahane Benavente and
8 the late Dolores Pangelinan Tenorio Benavente; and

9 **WHEREAS**, as a proud student and graduate of Mount Carmel School, the
10 late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente developed the values of faith, service, and
11 community that shaped his lifelong dedication to the people of the Commonwealth;
12 and

1 **WHEREAS**, the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente devoted his life
2 to public service, beginning with his election to the Seventh Northern Marianas
3 Commonwealth Legislature in 1990, representing Saipan Election District II, and
4 continuing through the Twelfth Legislature; and

5 **WHEREAS**, during his first six terms in the House of Representatives, the
6 late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente served with distinction in several
7 leadership roles, including as Vice Speaker of the House in the 8th Legislature and
8 as Speaker of the House in the 9th, 10th, and 11th Legislatures, becoming the first
9 person to serve in that capacity for three consecutive terms; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in his time as House Speaker, the late Honorable Diego
11 Tenorio Benavente oversaw the passage of landmark legislative measures that
12 strengthened the Commonwealth's economy, infrastructure, and educational
13 system; and

14 **WHEREAS**, from 2002 – 2006, the late Honorable Diego Tenorio
15 Benavente served as the sixth Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of the
16 Northern Mariana Islands, demonstrating unwavering dedication to the betterment
17 of the CNMI during his time in the Executive Branch; and

18 **WHEREAS**, after serving as Lieutenant Governor, in 2008 the late
19 Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente returned to public service as an elected
20 member of the House of Representatives representing Election District 1 in the 16th
21 and 17th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislatures, serving on key

1 committees and earning the trust of his colleagues, who selected him as Minority
2 Leader in his final term; and

3 **WHEREAS**, throughout his more than nineteen years in elected office, the
4 late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente exemplified integrity, humility, and
5 devotion to public service, earning enduring respect from the people of the CNMI;
6 and

7 **WHEREAS**, the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente’s contributions
8 extend beyond the Legislature, serving as Honorary Consul of the Federated States
9 of Micronesia to the CNMI beginning in 2018, and playing a central role in the
10 establishment and governance of the Pacific Islands Development Bank (PIDB) and
11 the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL), where he advanced regional
12 cooperation, good governance, and economic growth; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente was a visionary
14 champion for environmental stewardship, authoring the Commonwealth’s
15 landmark shark-protection legislation, which garnered regional and international
16 recognition and contributed significantly to marine conservation efforts in the
17 Pacific; and

18 **WHEREAS**, outside public office, the late Honorable Diego Tenorio
19 Benavente was a decorated athlete and community figure—a nine-time consecutive
20 All-Star baseball catcher, a skilled golfer, and an award-winning fisherman who
21 twice earned the title of Champion of the annual Saipan International Fishing
22 Tournament; and

1 **WHEREAS**, in every role he served—public leader, athlete, fisherman,
2 husband, father, grandfather, and friend—the late Honorable Diego Tenorio
3 Benavente embodied the values of humility, service, and leadership that define the
4 spirit of the Commonwealth and Micronesia; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the late Honorable Diego T. Benavente was also a passionate
6 advocate for the youth of the CNMI, consistently encouraging young people to
7 reach their full potential and reminding them that the future of the Commonwealth
8 rests on their confidence, leadership, and dedication; and

9 **WHEREAS**, his legacy of service, mentorship, and community-building
10 will continue to inspire future generations of leaders, including the members of this
11 august body; and

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Twentieth
13 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Youth Congress, that the Youth
14 Congress hereby honors and commemorates the life and distinguished service of
15 the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente for his extraordinary contributions to
16 the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and

17 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Youth Congress extends its
18 deepest condolences, prayers, and gratitude to his wife J. Victoria Iriarte Benavente,
19 his children: Jacob, Diana, James, Dolores and Danielle Rane, while also
20 expressing gratitude for sharing the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente with
21 the people of the Marianas, recognizing the profound impact of his leadership,
22 example, and lifelong dedication to the people of the Commonwealth; and

1 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Sponsor of this Resolution or the
2 designee of the Speaker of the Youth Congress shall present a certified original
3 copy of this Youth Congress Commemorative Resolution to Mrs. J. Victoria Iriarte
4 Benavente, widow of the late Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente; and

5 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Speaker of the Youth Congress
6 shall certify, and the Youth Congress Legislative Secretary shall attest to the
7 adoption of this commemorative resolution and thereafter shall transmit a certified
8 copy to the Honorable Edmund S. Villagomez, Speaker of the House of
9 Representatives (24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature) and
10 President of the Association of Pacific Islands Legislatures; the Honorable Karl R.
11 King-Nabors, President of the Senate (24th Northern Marianas Commonwealth
12 Legislature); the Honorable David M. Apatang, Governor of the Commonwealth of
13 the Northern Mariana Islands; and the Honorable Kimberlyn King-Hinds, CNMI
14 Delegate to the House of Representatives (119th United States Congress).

Date: 11/25/2025
(PRE-FILED)

Introduced by: 
Sen. Vinnie Juan Q. Sablan