



House Journal

THIRD SPECIAL SESSION, 2007

Adopted:
June 22, 2007

First Day

May 2, 2007

The House of Representatives of the Fifteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its First Day, Third Special Session on Wednesday, May 2, 2007, at 1:26 p.m. in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Oscar M. Babauta, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll and Seventeen members were present. Representative Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero was excused.

Speaker Babauta: Without objection, I would like to appoint Chairman Lizama to be the Acting Floor Leader pro tem.

There was no objection.

Speaker Babauta: That being said, Floor Leader, motion to resolve into the Committee of the Whole so that we may receive our guest this afternoon, Mr. Gregorio Sablan from the Election Commission.

Acting Floor Leader Lizama moved to resolve into the Committee of the Whole for the presentation of a resolution, was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried.

The House went into Committee of the Whole at 1:28 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The House returned to plenary session at 2:04 p.m.

Speaker Babauta: We are back to our plenary session.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

None

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

H. B. NO. 15-257: A Bill for an Act to amend 6 CMC § 2208 by adding a new subsection (g), and for other purposes.

Offered by: Rep. Justo S. Quitugua

Vice Speaker Quitugua: This bill is actually a reintroduction of H. B. NO. 15-204 under the GOV. COMM. NO. 15-232, and this new bill incorporate the recommendation from the Governor's Office under the said Governor's Communication. Merely, this Communication is recommending that the Senate amendment be stricken out, and be placed with almost the same language that the original bill has from the House. So with the indulgence of the member, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just ask and place this on today's Calendar for further deliberation.

There was no objection.

H. B. NO. 15-258: A Bill for an Act to amend 1 CMC § 7407, and for other purposes.

Offered by: Rep. Justo S. Quitugua

H. B. NO. 15-259: A Bill for an Act to appropriate \$54,000.00 from the Second Senatorial District Solid Waste Management Fund; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Rep. Edwin P. Aldan

H. L. B. NO. 15-60: A Local Bill for an Act for the Third Senatorial District to reappropriate \$50,000.0 from Saipan Local Law 15-12, Section 2(f); and for other purposes.

Offered by: Rep. Justo S. Quitutua

H. L. B. NO. 15-61: A Local Appropriation Bill for an Act for the Second Senatorial District to appropriate \$54,000.00 from the local license fees collected for pachinko slot machines and poker machines in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Rep. Edwin P. Aldan

Rep. Palacios: Point of information, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: State your point, Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you. I agree with this legislation. However, I would like to ask the legal counsel if there is a problem with introducing this as a House Bill?

Speaker Babauta: You mean, Local Bill 15-60?

Rep. Palacios: Yes.

Speaker Babauta: Counsel, please respond to the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: My question is, is there a problem with making this as a House Local Bill?

Speaker Babauta: Given the nature and the context as the Minority Leader alluded to removing \$50,000.00 from a local appropriated funds...can the CNMI wide appropriation bill absorb that local law.

Legal Counsel Antonette R. Villgomez: *My understanding with the Bill is that, \$50,000.00 from Saipan Local Law 15-12 is to be appropriated to fund Legislative Initiative amendments to the Constitution as required by 14-57. I am not sure about 14-57...I am not sure about the question.*

Rep. Palacios: The question is, is it proper or in order if a regular House Bill reappropriates money out of an existing Local Law? Can we do that?

Legal Counsel Antonette R. Villgomez: *Yes. Public Law can supercede a Local Law, but not the other way around. So a public law can change a local law.*

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero: But can it reappropriate funds appropriated by a local law?

Speaker Babauta: Well, there is precedence already that is said.

Rep. Palacios: I believe there has be precedence.

Legal Counsel Antonette R. Villgomez: *I believe this is a Local Bill.*

Rep. Palacios: This is a local bill.

Legal Counsel Antonette R. Villgomez: *Trying to appropriate money from a local law?*

Rep. Palacios: Right. My question is, instead of making this a local bill, can we make it a regular house bill, therefore, appropriating from a local law appropriation?

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero: Why?

Legal Counsel Antonette R. Villgomez: *I would have to look into that. I cannot tell you right now.*

Rep. Palacios: I am just asking that question, and apparently, there are more confusion, but my thought was because of the requirement of having this local legislation appearing three times. I mean, we could deal with this today and pass...

Speaker Babauta: Minority Leader, can we take a short recess, please. Short recess.

The House recessed at 2:10 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 2:17 p.m.

Speaker Babauta: We are back to our plenary session.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Hse. Comm. Res. NO. 15-93: A House Commemorative Resolution to convey the gratitude of the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to the United States Forest Service Region 5 for their assistance in the creation of a Type II “Hotshots” crew consisting of our local firefighters.

Offered by: Rep. Martin B. Ada and seventeen others

Rep. Dela Cruz: Mr. Speaker, I hope I am not out of order, but can I request that we go back to item number 3.

Speaker Babauta: Any objection.

There was no objection.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Rep. Dela Cruz: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file H. B. NO. 15-252. That is the CUC Security Deposit Fairness Act.

Speaker Babauta: Chairman Dela Cruz, do you want to hold that motion until we arrive at the Bill Calendar? That would be the proper subject of disposition.

Rep. Dela Cruz: Okay.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

H. R. NO. 15-112: A House Resolution to congratulate the Honorable Mametto Maratita Ayuyu on the occasion of his retirement from government service and to recognize him for his continued service to the people of Rota as Secretary of the Eleventh Rota Municipal Council and Secretary of the Board of Parole.

Offered by: Crispin M. Ogo and seventeen others

H. J. R. NO. 15-20: A House Joint Resolution urging Governor Benigno R. Fitial to create a task force to perform a study on the feasibility of copra production in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Offered by: Rep. Candido B. Taman and seventeen others

H. J. R. NO. 15-21: A House Joint Resolution requesting the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to explore potential military and civilian markets in Guam and clear bureaucratic impediments for the export sale of local agricultural and fisheries products.

Offered by: Rep. Manuel A. Tenorio and seventeen others

Rep. Palacios: Mr. Speaker, if there are no Resolutions to be introduced, I would like to say a few words.

Speaker Babauta: Would you like to hold...

Rep. Palacios: I know that we are going to ask the Secretary of Finance – just a very brief...

Speaker Babauta: I am afraid that you might lose your thoughts. If no objection, we would grant the Minority Leader a short statement. You may proceed, Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Mr. Speaker, last Friday we heard the Governor's State of the Commonwealth Address as well as the Washington Representative's Report. We were all present except for one very distinguished member, Representative Ada. I knew that you informed me or advised me that he was off-island on a very important trip. Perhaps this has to do with the bond reissuance or refinancing. I certainly would appreciate a report on that particular issue from my good Congressman. To me, it is a very critical issue because we are looking at alleviating the cost of those bonds - refinancing usually decreases the cost of our government on a yearly basis. I would like to see a brief report on that issue. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Before I recognize the Chairman, I would also like to reiterate that not only a brief verbal one today, but the sooner the better dispose...in written form so that the members are apprised. For the benefit of the members, I have authorized our good Chairman to appear on behalf of the Speaker, because of my recent personal loss of my Dad that I ask him to participate. You may proceed, Chairman Ada briefly.

Rep. Ada: Very short, Mr. Speaker. As we speak, the drafted report is in the microwave, and to top that, I made aware the CDA Board and members to be on alert for a presentation on how, because we really need to understand this Bond issue. We always vote on it. Being there and being explain as to how this happen, how we saved \$7 Million is very important, and I will seek an audience with the CDA Board for a presentation. They should really educate us on how this thing went about. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you for the brief comment, and may I continue to engage your office to make sure that you coordinate with Mr. Camacho to come up. Make sure that there is no schedule conflict – and we will have them brief the entire members of the House with respect to the refinancing of the Bond. Tomorrow we will continue our session in the morning. Also, I reminded you members that we have a presentation to be made by MVA at 2 p.m. tomorrow afternoon in this Chamber. So in the morning, we will continue our session, but hopefully next week will be fine.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the...

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Minority Leader, and thank you for taking the thoughts out of me. I was going to ask Chairman Ada under item number 7 to brief the members. With all do respect to

our visitor's this afternoon, I would like to continue moving...Floor Leader, motion to resolve into the Committee of the Whole so that we may invite Finance Secretary Eloy Inos.

Acting Floor Leader Lizama moved to resolve into the Committee of the Whole, was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried.

The House went into Committee of the Whole at 2:28 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The House returned to plenary session at 4:15 p.m.

Speaker Babauta: Floor Leader, motion to rise up to session, and a subsidiary motion to recess until tomorrow morning.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for subsidiary motion to rise back to our plenary session.

The subsidiary motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried. Before I recognize the motion to recess, I recognize Representative Torres.

Rep. Torres: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I request that we go to House Communication.

There was no objection.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR - SUSPENDED

Gov. COMM. 15-229: (4/23/07) Informing the House that he signed into law H. B. NO. 15-108, HD1 (To amend 1 CMC § 7402(a)(2) with regards to reprogramming funds). [Became **Public Law 15-54**]

Gov. COMM. 15-230: (4/24/07) Informing the House that he *disapproved* H. B. NO. 15-162, HD1, SD2 (Family Sick Leave). [Deadline: 6/24/07]

Gov. COMM. 15-231: (4/24/07) Informing the House that he signed into law H. B. NO. 15-200, HS1, HD1, SD1 (To amend PL 15-36, re copper wire). [Became **Public Law 15-55**].

Gov. COMM. 15-232: (4/24/07) Informing the House that he *disapproved* H. B. NO. 15-204, HD2, SD2 (To amend 6 CMC § 2208 by adding a new subsection (g), to allow Immigration officers to carry firearms). [Deadline: 6/24/07]

Gov. COMM. 15-233: (4/24/07) Informing the House that he signed into law H. B. NO. 15-235 (To clarify appropriation of \$200k for the Dept. of Finance). [Became **Public Law 15-56**]

Gov. COMM. 15-234: (4/24/07) Informing the House that he *disapproved* H. B. NO. 15-207, SD1 (re Garment User Fee). [Deadline: 6/24/07]

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS - SUSPENDED

SEN. COMM. 15-184: (4/26/07) Returning H. J. R. NO. 15-18, HD1 (re Nuclear Power Generation Feasibility Study), which was adopted by the Senate without amendment on April 25, 2007. [For info]

SEN. COMM. 15-185: (4/26/07) Returning H. J. R. NO. 15-19 (Regarding Pozzolan Mining), which was adopted by the Senate without amendment on April 25, 2007. [For info]

SEN. COMM. 15-186: (4/26/07) Informing the House that the Senate overrode the Governor's veto of H. B. NO. 15-186, HS1 (regarding Annual Leave) on April 25, 2007. [For info]

SEN. COMM. 15-187: (4/26/07) Returning H. B. NO. 15-242, HD5, (Reduce budget of certain public corporation and agencies for PSS and NMC) which was passed by the Senate without amendment on April 25, 2007. [For info – Before the Governor]

SEN. COMM. 15-188: (4/26/07) Returning H. B. NO. 15-255, HD3, (Grant the Governor emergency reprogramming authority) which was passed by the Senate without amendment on April 25, 2007. [For info – Before the Governor]

SEN. COMM. 15-189: (4/26/07) Transmitting for House action S. J. R. NO. 15-17, entitled, "A Senate Joint Resolution urgently requesting the United States House of Representatives to confer a non-voting Delegate status to the CNMI," which was adopted by the Senate on April 25, 2007. [*For action*]

SEN. COMM. 15-190: (4/30/07) Returning H. B. NO. 15-241, (To reappropriate funds for a Mobile Health Clinic and the Diabetes Prevention Control Program), which was passed by the Senate with amendments on April 25, 2007, in the form of **H. B. NO. 15-241, SD1**. [*For action on Senate amendments*]

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair recognized Representative Torres.

Rep. Torres: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fellow colleagues, this is about the NMC College which recently hired a new President – former Guam Senator Carmen Fernandez. It is entitled, "Is her questionable past no problem for NMC?" There has been concern directed to my office about the questionable activities of former Guam Senator Carmen Fernandez, who was recently selected as the new president of the Northern Marianas College. Former Senator Fernandez, who was not seeking re-election in 2004, was a subject of a Guam Kuam television expose about her transferring nearly

\$12,000.00 of lapsed funds at the end of her term to another Senator, who would get elected and then later hire her with the transferred money. When contacted by Kuam News about this questionable transfer of money for her apparent personal gain, Fernandez failed to respond to Kuam. She has even refused to interview with our own KSPN cable news. Former Senator Fernandez had also complained about the lack of media coverage for her activities in 2004, so she spends nearly \$6,000.00 of taxpayers' money on a self-serving pamphlet to distribute to the public. These types of activities are the product of a scheming, self-serving politician, who does not have the best interest of the people at heart. Furthermore, I find it very disturbing that NMC's Board of Regents accepted these activities as business as usual, and blindly went ahead to select her as the next president of our local Community College. And why does the board hire expensive outside investigators when they can google anyone's background for free? Is this an unfortunate trend being established at NMC, to select presidents, like ex-NMC President Ken Wright, who are well versed in the art of monetary hanky-panky? Maybe that was the major drawback of Dr. Cecilia Lizama Salvatore, who was unfortunately not selected by NMC. Dr. Lizama-Salvatore is a home-grown success story from Saipan, who is a straight talking administrator and would hold the interest of the NMC students above the Board of Regents and their political gamesmanship. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, and I assume that the Board of Regents are well aware of those so-called allegations, and hopefully – I wish to engage the Vice Speaker and the Chairman of HEW to find out more information as to what has transpired before we officially move any actions with respect to our NMC. I recognize Representative Joseph Deleon Guerrero.

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker...**[microphone off]**

Speaker Babauta: Tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m.

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero:...**[microphone off]**

Speaker Babauta: Who?

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero:...**[microphone off]**

Speaker Babauta: Really?

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero: 11:00 a.m.

Speaker Babauta: Really, at 11:00 a.m.? Okay at the pleasure of the Precinct III...

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero:...**[microphone off]**

Speaker Babauta: Pardon me? I was planning actually – my deep apology. I forgot there is a funeral tomorrow.

Rep. Ogo: We can come in the afternoon.

Speaker Babauta: I am sorry. I do not think the Bureau has sufficient funds to cover the employees.

Rep. Ogo: Mr. Speaker, we can come in 2 hours in the morning, and 2 hours in the afternoon.

Speaker Babauta: What time is the funeral?

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero: 11:00 a.m.

Speaker Babauta: We have the MVA also at 2:00 p.m. You guys want to start at 8:00 a.m.?

Rep. Tenorio: 8 a.m.?

Speaker Babauta: Yes, because next week, we have a Joint Session on Wednesday at 9:00 a.m., and we have hopefully the final conclusion on the Labor Reform. Chairman Waki, do you have any...?

Rep. Waki: Yes. Also, just to let you know, some members here might have invitation, but I got an invitation from the Zoning Board. They are having a two day conference in reference to the Garapan Beach Road workshop, and the zoning for Garapan and Beach Road.

Speaker Babauta: When is that?

Rep. Waki: It is on Tuesday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and then on Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and since the law was passed for the infrastructure development plan, it is incumbent upon me to be there to work with them on the zoning so that way we can work on the infrastructure...

Speaker Babauta: And Chairwoman Kaipat, you are on Monday, right?

Rep. Kaipat: Right. I understand that the Chairman of SNILD appointed Representative Waki and I both to that zoning.

Speaker Babauta: Well, one can go and the other can stay. Is it on the same day?

Rep. Kaipat: It is the same day with...

Speaker Babauta: JGO?

Rep. Kaipat: No, JGO is on Monday, and we are going to go as far as we can with that. Ideally, I would like to wrap everything on Monday, but I am keeping it open if we do not finish.

Speaker Babauta: Well, Representative Waki can attend the Zoning on Tuesday, if you do not finish up by Monday. I do not see any reason why one member cannot appear on behalf of the rest of the Delegation. Okay. It looks like we have a tight schedule. So we will recess subject to the call? Chairman Dela Cruz, recognized.

Rep. Dela Cruz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I received an invitation from CUC, and I am not sure if the other members received theirs, but this is on the ground-breaking of the Kannat Tabla 1 Million Gallon Water Reservoir. That would be 3:00 p.m. tomorrow. I understand that MVA would be here tomorrow at 2:00 p.m., but I think that is a big ground-breaking.

The Chair recognized Chairman Aldan.

Rep. Aldan: Mr. Speaker, I really need to find out the schedules of the Committee especially on Tuesday. If no one is coming on this day, I need to have the Natural Resources together on Tuesday.

Speaker Babauta: I would like to reiterate the issue at hand that it is only fitting that the Joint Committee of the House and Senate with respect to the call for a Joint Session approving the Tinian Lease and the extension of the Grace Christian Academy here...I think a short Committee meeting could be conducted on Monday with respect to those issues. You only need a quorum of three members. I am sure that the other members are understandable, but you can probably exercise that at a later time in the afternoon. I continue to impress upon each and every Chairperson's of this Standing Committees to please try to comply as much as possible with our House Rules, and supply the entire members with the Committee Reports, the attachment, the appendix, or whatever that is required at least 24 hours prior to the session. That is the only thing I ask.

Rep. Aldan: Mr. Speaker, we do have our packages, and it should be disseminated to the members tomorrow.

Speaker Babauta: If those are the final copies, disseminate them immediately so that the members can address them during this week, and that when we come in Wednesday morning, we can deliberate a little bit, and expedite it the sooner the better.

Rep. Aldan: Of course, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: I recommend that you work with Chairwoman Kaipat on Monday, if she could probably expedite some discussions on her part, and have some time available for you in the afternoon. Please work with your counterpart in the Senate. I recognize Representative Torres.

Rep. Torres: May I suggest that we meet on Friday?

Speaker Babauta: Friday is Austerity Holiday. I do not wish to engage the Bureau Staff. I will talk to the management of the Bureau, but I doubt – because they are also feeling the pinch. I recognize Chairwoman Kaipat.

Rep. Kaipat: I just wanted to mention that I did send out an announcement to the all the JGO members by email and also to those who are interested in joining us on Monday to wrap up discussions on the Labor Reform Bill. I really want to get this done. Again, this is open to anyone who is interested in sitting down with us and contributing to this bill. The way that this is going to happen is that we are going to have our wrap up discussions on some of the issues that we need to tackle, and then once we get a clean draft, there will be a summary that would be attached to it, and there will be a public hearing to be set up. This will be disseminated out to the Rota and Tinian, and then what I would like to do is to give the members time to review it, and I requested a Joint Meeting with the Senate. That is the road map for that. The other thing is, coming up this Saturday, May 5th, I just want to thank all the members for their contributions and support for the Beautify CNMI, and as you all probably know, the EPA recognized us and awarded us with an award. There were 160 nominations, and we were one of 39 who won the EPA award, and one of two that won in the

Pacific. The DEQ is having their environmental expo at the Sabalu Market on May 5th, and as I understand, we have been invited there to have them present us with the EPA award. It will be 11:00 a.m., and I would like to extend to you all Congratulations, and an invitation to be there and witness the event, and be a part of it.

Speaker Babauta: Congratulations for your extra effort. Can you find out whether DEQ continues to practice the so-called village inspection, and if so, what are the schedule of those inspections, and what are the programs that are available from that office to constantly clean or rather make sure that our villages are clean?

Rep. Kaipat: I will follow up that for you.

The Chair recognized Chairman Ogo.

Rep. Ogo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that everyone received their amended budget request for FY 2007, and since we are all busy next week with other committees, a memo is forthcoming to request all members to participate in the meetings starting May 14th to the 17th. Thank you. Please clear your schedule.

The Chair recognized the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: As a member of this Committee, I am very concern, and I think we should tackle this...may suggest, Mr. Chairman that we tackle this as soon as possible. If you look at the cover letter from the Governor, I was waiting for the Chairman to take action. In the last sentence, he says, everyday that we delay, we will lead to an accelerated exhaustion of budget authority and may lead to exercising emergency powers. Mr. Speaker, and members,...

Speaker Babauta: Is my memo attached to that letter?

Rep. Palacios: No, sir.

Speaker Babauta: It should be coming out in a few minutes.

Rep. Palacios: I fully understand the complexity of issue and the controversy that we as elected members have to deal with these agencies who do not want to be cut. Read the papers. Last week, the Department of Commerce says they cannot be cut anymore. Our own Judiciary Branch...tomorrow we have an audience with MVA, and I am pretty sure that they are going to tell us, we must deal with our tourism or we are not going to have anything to deal with next year. Who else do we have tomorrow? Mr. Chairman, I urge you to drop everything. I wrote a letter to the Speaker about the issue of the 2008 Budget, but really, I was very cautious in the way I wrote that letter because I do not want to – in actuality, the Governor is also diplomatic also in a way he crafted this letter. Although they are basically in violation of the Planning and Budgeting Act by the non-submittal of the budget, we are actually almost not just in violation, but we are in violation of our own obligations. We dealt with the Public School System in a crisis mode last week. That was not one of the best times to be in here. Again, if you read the paper, DPS is in a not so – actually the Commissioner is very saddle as to what she is trying to do, but she is actually telling us that we need to deal with the issue...**[End of Tape 2, Side A]**

Rep. Palacios:...[**Beginning of Tape 2, Side B**]...fire station. Mr. Chairman, I apologize in anyway to offend you, I would like to see that we work on this. I recommend that we do that. I am just trying to convey my concern over to you. Actually, I was reading the Governor's Message in the last sentence...

Speaker Babauta: Well, I think all of us know that we also have a legislative crisis in our hands. We have the land lease pending, and we have other important legislations, the Article XI, Article XII, the Labor Reform, and we also have the legislative measure that we need to address with respect to the administration's request that would further help not necessarily cap or choke the financial drainage of this government. We also have the FY 2007 request for the adjustment and so as the impending 2008. So let us work this amongst ourselves primarily with the Standing Committee Chairs, and I share the Minority Leader's concern in addressing this shortfall amended FY 2007 budget. We need to address this immediately. The letter that was written by the Governor is no doubt a reality. Everyday that we delay, we continue to suffer as far as financial services to the community. Mr. Chairman, I plea with you – if you can start tomorrow with your committee members, we all know that all the members wanted to participate, but I am sure that other members can help out in formulating an amended budget for FY 2007. This is a call for all of us to come and help this government. Let us put bipartisan philosophy, and work together for the betterment of our Commonwealth people. This is the only way we can rescue our people so that we can continue to provide essential services that they so dire need. I trust – and again as the Washington Representative rightfully puts it, now is the time for all the members of the House to come to the aid of their Speaker. That is the phrase from your Speaker.

Rep. Ogo: Mr. Speaker, if I may.

Speaker Babauta: Go ahead.

Rep. Ogo: I just want to make this simple. I understand the Minority Leader's request, but after listening to all the members' schedule, it seems like everybody is tight. However, I will consider allowing other members of the House to participate because at times, sometimes, the Minority Leader asks as to where are the rest of the majority of the group during the meeting, and I understand their schedule. So the reason why I say May 14th is because that would guarantee everybody's presence. I realize that everyone is busy next week, and if anyone wants to come in tomorrow, I am ready to work on Austerity Friday, and we do not need the Bureau that day. I do not mind coming in, but are the members ready to come in on Austerity?

Speaker Babauta: I guess the statement made by the Minority Leader is, we do not have to wait until May 14th to make a final decision. We can start formulating some thoughts within the members. Whatever the final outcome would be on the amended budget would be formulated by the entire Committee, and be sanctioned by the entire House. What the Minority Leader was trying to say is, we do not have to wait for May 14th to start looking at it. We can actually start deliberating as the Governor so eloquently expressed in his letter to us. That is the basic recommendation that the Minority Leader requested from the Chairman.

Rep. Ogo: Just to share further, Mr. Speaker, I encourage the other members of the House to participate on this. It does not have to be just the members...

Speaker Babauta: Of course.

Rep. Ogo: So at 9:00 a.m., Mr. Speaker on Monday.

Speaker Babauta: Why do you have to wait until Monday? Can you start...

Rep. Ogo: There is a funeral tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Well, you can kick it out in between. It is up to you, but we only urge you to consider expediting the earliest possible time other than May 14th.

Rep. Ogo: I will talk with the members.

Speaker Babauta: Okay. We will recess subject to the call of the Chair. Floor Leader.

Acting Floor Leader Lizama: So moved, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: The House stands recess subject to the call of the Chair.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES - SUSPENDED

S. C. R. No. 15-57: Reporting on H. L. I. No. 15-3 entitled, "To amend Article XV, Section 1(c) and (e) of the Constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands." *Your Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare recommends passage of the bill in the form of H. L. I. No. 15-3, HD1.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

None

BILL CALENDAR

None

MISCELLANEOUS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

The House adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicky T. Guerrero, Journal Clerk
House of Representatives

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

SECOND APPEARANCE
None

THIRD APPEARANCE:
None