



# House Journal

5<sup>th</sup> Day

Eleventh Special Session

Wednesday, January 9, 2008

The House of Representatives of the Fifteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Fifth Day, Eleventh Special Session on Wednesday, January 9, 2008, at 9:43 a.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 silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll and all sixteen members were present. Representative Martin B. Ada and Representative Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero were absent. Two members were absent.

Speaker Babauta: Representative Ada is excuse again because of a death in family. As for our honorable Floor Leader, Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero is also excused for today's last session of this house.

Speaker Babauta: If no objection, I would like to appoint Representative Lizama to be our Floor Leader pro tem.

There was no objection from the floor.

Speaker Babauta: So ordered. Once again, I asked the indulgence of the members to consider allowing the clerk to continue working on the journals and authorize other members to make any adjustments if it need be. I humbly request your cooperation and support to our House Clerk. And that would include our Sine Die session today.

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, are we adopting all the Journals this session?

Speaker Babauta: Correct. All the pending journals subject of course to allowing members on making changes.

Floor Leader Lizama: Mr. Speaker why don't we just go ahead and make a motion to adopt all pending journals.

The Chair recognized Representative Taman.

Representative Taman: Are we still allowed after Monday Inauguration to come in and review the journals for changes?

Speaker Babauta: That is the understanding that we will agree to this morning session. Floor Leader motion for those journals?

### **ADOPTION OF JOURNALS**

6<sup>th</sup> Day, 7<sup>th</sup> Day, 8<sup>th</sup> Day Fourth Regular Session, 2007  
 1<sup>st</sup> Day, Ninth Special Session, 2007  
 1<sup>st</sup> Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> Day, 3<sup>rd</sup> Day, 4<sup>th</sup> Day Tenth Special Session, 2007  
 1<sup>st</sup> Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> Day, 3<sup>rd</sup> Day, 4<sup>th</sup> Day Eleventh Special Session, 2008

Floor Leader Lizama: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Without objection, I would like to make a motion to adopt all pending House Journals including today's Journals.

Speaker Babauta: Motion has been seconded, and I recognize Representative Taman.

Representative Taman: He said he would like to make a motion. Is he making the motion or is he planning on making the motion?

Floor Leader Lizama: I move, Mr. Speaker.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is clarified and has been seconded. Discussion on that motion?

Floor Leader Lizama moved for the adoption of the Sixth Day, Seventh Day, and Eighth Day, Fourth Regular Session; First Day, Ninth Special Session; First Day, Second Day, Third Day and Fourth Day, Tenth Special Session 2007, and First Day, Second Day, Third Day, and Fourth Day, Eleventh Special Session 2008 Journals, was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried. Again, I would allow the Clerk to work with each and every member who wishes to make changes on those Journals. Thank you.

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

None

### **INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

H. R. No. 15-223: A House Resolution to authorize the Office of the House Legal Counsel to bring an injunction against the NMI Retirement Fund and its Board of Trustees to prevent the NMI Retirement Fund and its Board of Trustees from implementing BR08-001, the Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund to suspend processing of members' benefits.

Offered by: Rep. Oscar M. Babauta and sixteen others

Speaker Babauta: Before we continue on, I would like to inform the house members that I spoke to the Attorney General briefly a few minutes ago. He would be looking at the Speaker's letter as

requested by the house members today, and hopefully he will reply today or tomorrow. He did not specifically indicate that our intentions are desirable; however, I note from our conversation that the board of trustees should not render such decision. Meaning, I am sure that he would be with the House – taking action in a positive manner.

Representative J. Deleon Guerrero: Mr. Speaker, if there is no objection from the members, may I ask the resolution be introduced as a committee of a whole?

Several members voiced no objection

Speaker Babauta: So ordered. Thank you.

### MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

GOV. COMM. 15-444: (1/3/08) Certification of vacant positions at the Department of Public Health.

GOV. COMM. 15-445: (1/4/08) Declaration of a State of Emergency on CUC's inability to provide critical power generation services to the CNMI. (Executive Order 2008-01)

GOV. COMM. 15-446: (1/7/08) Report on the Exercise of the Constitution and Statutory Authority to Declare a State of Disaster Emergency for the CNMI with respect to the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) and its inability to provide power. (Please see Speaker's Office for additional documents)

GOV. COMM. 15-447: (1/3/08) Informing the House that he signed into law S. L. B. NO. 15-6. [*Rota Local Law 15-8*]

GOV. COMM. 15-448: (1/3/08) Informing the House that he signed S. B. NO. 15-100, HS1, HD2 (Criminalize taking of rays and the feeding of sharks). [**Became Public Law 15-124**]

Speaker Babauta: On GOV. COMM. 15-446, because the attachment to the office of the Speaker and the Senate President is humongous – I think it is about five inches thick of documentation; I have placed that binder with the House Clerk, Mrs. Evelyn Fleming. So I am requesting any of the members whoever wants to avail themselves with the copies, the official report is with the House Clerk.

Representative M. Tenorio: Mr. Speaker *sina ha gi fino* Chamorro?

Speaker Babauta: *Hunggan konsigi.*

Representative M. Tenorio: *Kulan buenti potput na report mana'i hao no?*

Speaker Babauta: I would say approximately five inches thick.

Representative M. Tenorio: *Okay kulan intimidation esta eyu nai. I constitution, ti enao na klasen detail report para u justify I emergency si nai. Ya duda yu kao guaha tiempo-ta para ta taitai eyu.*

*Ti baba para'un give them back their own medicine. Na'i I Legal Counsel ya eyi checho uma add on todudu I defekton-na eyu na report. Pi'ot hami, Taya balin mami, I am sorry to say this lao hami ni out-going nai gave me no chance to do that. Lao concern esti and this is a serious problem. Sa it is going to happen again. Ya hu tungu ha and I will bet you taya ni uno na kongresu ya hu fatu ya hu taitai eyi five inches na report. Because number one, they don't have time that and number two kumu sina mohom summary nai. Lao my suggestion is you assign one Legal Counsel to look at the report and look at it whether it is consistent with constitution requirement. Ya ginen eyu nai un respond tatte ya'un atan sa this is pure intimidation para guahu. Thank you.*

Speaker Babauta: Thank you for that suggestion Representative Tenorio. Any other suggestions? Minority Leader.

Representative Palacios: Well, Mr. Speaker, a real concern to this type of issue. This is not just present administration. It goes back to the previous administration. I have had the opportunity to have some documentation provided to me by Senator Pangelinan. She had put in chronological order issue of CUC State of Emergency, dating back to the previous administration and the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Ironically, the Lt. Governor who was the PUTC Chairman at the time had vehemently and strongly insisted on the Babauta Administration to give a full detail report. This is not an issue that is new nor is it unique to the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. It has gone beyond and back to the previous administration and the previous Legislature. What the most disturbing issue is that, I know the Attorney General probably had reviewed this letter, and on page 2 (referring to GOV. COMM 15-446) the third paragraph in bold, it says, whenever the Governor uses authority in pursuit the NMI Constitution article three section ten the Governor shall as soon as practicable is under scored. YOU KNOW THAT IS NON-SENSE!! Mr. Speaker you and I know, and we all know that we could stretch that until kingdom come into infinity. And say well it was not practicable in two years we will give to you in five years. What is practicable? But you know individuals will not resort to using the real narrow confine of languages. When you have an emergency, it is with urgency that you do that. So therefore, once you address that orb - put together a plan to address the emergency then it is practicable that you let all other branches of this government be aware of what we are all facing and what we are planning to do. Perhaps in the incoming 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, should take a look at this issue and see if we can tighten this up. If you look at the same page, in securing the delivery of fuel in December 2007, the \$2.5 million dollars was charged out of the business units. That means every account in the government whether you are in the legislative branch or judicial branch, they charge you. It seems that what we have done here is - declare the state of emergency just to secure the \$2.5 million dollars. That is basically advancing your account, my account, the judiciaries account, and everybody's account. What I am seeing is perhaps the government again, and this includes the legislative branch, the government is not paying for its utilities bill - that what we have to do is move forward. And that is how we secure \$2.5 million dollars. So that is very disturbing. We have issues in the courts where previous Secretary of Finance went to court and had a TRO placed to - CUC from collecting from the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch and that should not happen. People do not want to continue to subsidize government usage of CUC, and that is why we end up paying the additional rates, even if it is a penny to the private sector or the residential consumers because are government does not remit the payment owed to CUC. So this in a way is quite revealing itself that we have to issue a state of emergency to pay for the governments usage on the payment of its utility bill. I agree with Representative Tenorio that, for those of us that will be returning, even if it is voluminous we should try all efforts and even engage some of our legislative staff to help us review this issue. I know that the Chairman over there would probably be part of the new PUTC Committee. We need to engage our self because CUC is an issue that has an urgency that the community wants to address. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you. Again I urge the incoming members to assist the review, not only on CUC issues, but we all know that the Senate had table the Fiscal Year 2008 budget. In other words, I encourage the incoming leaders of this house, to immediately engage dialog and review with expediency. As the minority leader puts it, it is voluminous, but I think we ask our Legal Counsel to review those transmittal of those documents and maybe digest it in a way that we can figure out what is those plan actually entails. Any other comments? I recognize Representative Taman

Representative Taman: I wonder what is going to happen if the Legislature ever reviews that voluminous document. Is it going to make any difference?

Speaker Babauta: Well, I am pretty sure a recommendation is going to come up from a Special Committee that will be formed or the regular committee of PUTC. I am sure the recommendation will be reported to the full House, Representative Taman.

Representative Taman: The reasons I asked Mr. Speaker, is that I remembered when I attended one of the hearings, when Representative Torres submitted a lawsuit against the Governor. I remembered Judge Govendo recommended to the members present that day that perhaps the Legislature should go back and look at that executive authority issuing state of emergency. He stated the word calamity should be well defined and prescribed what type of situation that would fall under the word calamity. He recommended that we look at it carefully because it is very broad that the Executive Branch can legally do what ever he requires under that calamity. So maybe, as a result of the review of that report, maybe that should come into consideration, other wise it would mean nothing at all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Vice-Speaker Quitugua: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the incoming new Speaker may refer that report to the Chairman of PUTC, and have the committee review the report. I agree also with the Minority Leader, that it is about time that we revisit part this statue so that we can tighten up Emergency Declaration Authority so that such authority will not be abuse, and probably the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee can take a look or amend the law that before any extension of another emergency, that a complete report or plan be submitted to the Legislature. Mr. Speaker I was just glancing through GOV. COMM. 15-446, and we pass the budget on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, if I am not mistaken, and this letter was dated on January 7, 2008. And according to this communication, the 2008 budget is still pending in the House, which in fact we already passed it on Saturday, January 5, 2008. It may be minor, but it makes us look bad that even as of January 7 we still haven't pass the budget in the House yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you. Let us move down to item number 6.

### **SENATE COMMUNICATIONS**

SEN. COMM. 15-318: (1/8/08) Returning H. B. NO. 15-205, HS1 (Fireworks Control Act) which was passed by the Senate without amendment on January 7, 2008. [Will go to Governor]

SEN. COMM. 15-319: (1/8/08) Informing the House that the Senate accepted the House amendments to S. B. NO. 15-102, HS1, HD2 (18% Retirement Contribution) on January 7, 2008.

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Lizama: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I moved to accept SEN. COMM 15-318 and SEN. COMM 15-319.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Babauta: There is a motion on the floor. Let me call for a short recess.

The house recessed at -

RECESS

The house reconvened at –

Speaker Babauta: We are back to our plenary session. We have a motion to accept those Senate Communications as it appears on today's Order of Business. Discussion on the motion. Ready?

Several members voiced, "ready."

Discussion on the motion?

There being no further discussion, the motion to accept SEN. COMM. NO. 15-318 and SEN. COMM. NO. 15-319 was carried by voiced vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried. I recognize Representative Torres.

### HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

HSE. COMM. NO. 15-57: From Rep. Torres to the Governor regarding the veto of H. B. NO. 15-291, the Notaries Public Act.

Representative Torres: Mr. Speaker I think all the members have copies of my letter to the Governor?

Speaker Babauta: Correct.

Representative Torres: And it is marked as HSE. COMM. NO.15-57. In the interest of time, I would consider it by unanimous consent as read and should be included in the Journal.

Speaker Babauta: It should be.

Representative Torres: Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Representative Torres.

### COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

None

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES**

None

**OTHER COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**RESOLUTION CALENDAR**

The House recessed at 11:35 a.m.

**RECESS**

The House reconvened at 11:37 a.m.

Floor Leader Lizama: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I moved to suspend pertinent rule for the placement and adoption of H. R. NO.15-223.

Speaker Babauta: The motion has been seconded for the suspension of pertinent rule so that we may place and adopt H. R. NO.15-223 on today's Resolution Calendar.

There being no discussion, the suspension motion was carried by voice vote.

Floor Leader Lizama: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move for the adoption motion on H. R. NO. 15-223.

The motion was seconded.

H. R. No. 15-223: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE OFFICE OF THE HOUSE LEGAL COUNSEL TO BRING AN INJUNCTION AGAINST THE NMI RETIREMENT FUND AND ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO PREVENT THE NMI RETIREMENT FUND AND ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES FROM IMPLEMENTING BR08-001, THE RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS RETIREMENT FUND TO SUSPEND PROCESSING OF MEMBERS' BENEFITS.

Speaker Babauta: Is there any discussion? I recognize the Vice-Speaker.

Vice-Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, this is just a recommendation if it is going to make any difference on the Resolution. We enacted a law and this legislation was introduced by Vice-President Reyes on this topic. I think the new statute is prohibiting the Retirement Fund from suspending or not honoring any application of retirement to any qualified members. I believe that statute also cites the Constitutional Rights of these members of the fund. Maybe the Legal Counsel can take a look at that new Public Law, and probably insert it in this Resolution to strengthen the Resolution. I would like to mention again that, that law cites the same section in the Constitution that is cited here. It is now a law that the Retirement Fund should follow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: I would recommend that the Legal Counsel that would engage in this argument in the court recite that particular provision in that specific Public Law in the T.R.O. injunction. So it would further insist the Judge in rendering a decision. I recognize the Minority Leader.

Representative Palacios: That is a very good recommendation because it will strengthen the resolve of the resolution and citation of that so the courts could have clarity as to the legislative intent in contradiction to the Board of Trustees Resolution to suspend all and or recalculate certain pension programs to those individuals that have applied to retire. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you. Any further discussion? I recognize Representative Tenorio.

Representative Tenorio: My concern is when is this going to happen? Are we going to make it on the next session?

Speaker Babauta: I was talking to the Chief House Legal Counsel Mrs. Antonette Villagomez and she said it will probably happen early next week.

Representative Tenorio: I understand the board is meeting on the tenth. I was told by.....

Speaker Babauta: And I would request that all those potential retirees be it members of the House, the Senate, or the general government employees who have pending and have executed their application with the Retirement Fund to participate in that particular hearing. That would take place tomorrow at 10:00a.m. at the Board of Trustees conference room. We were informed by the Administrator that the hearing would probably clarify further on the Board of Trustees decision made earlier. I think it is wise to choose this day to initiate this resolution - the Board of Trustees would eventually know for a fact that the House of Representatives, have officially appoint our Legal Counsel, to clarify with the court whether or not the Board of Trustees have exclusive authority, to suspend those programs as provided for the Constitution and other pertinent statutes in our Code. Let me recognize Representative Stanley Torres.

Representative Torres: Mr. Speaker, just to recommend that we should make it clear *na uma authorize todu dos House Legal Counsel. Munga na uno ha sa kulan dididi' makat esti siempre ya, I mean nothing against Antonette but let's allow Ian to work...*

Speaker Babauta: Right. I will leave that up to our Legal Counsels in the house. As we all know that we only have two counsels, Mrs. Villagomez and Mr. Catlett. Is that clear Counsel?

House Legal Counsel Villagomez: Yes Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Continue, Representative Manuel Tenorio.

Representative Tenorio: I just wanted to mention, you know, we are not pushing this because of our members are retiring. There are a lot of people....

Speaker Babauta: No. No. Let this record...

Representative Tenorio: Actually even maybe without a job shortly if they are not rehired, and if they are up to take their retirement there are no other options. There are some people moving out and they cannot withdraw their retirement funds. So it is actually an impact to a lot of people right now so there is more reasons to move this on as soon as possible. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Let this be clarified to the members that this is as a result of the Board of Trustees Resolution BR08-001 that has suspended this program because the fact that the central government has not remitted the government shares of contribution. This would impact the general public employees and not necessarily for one's benefit, but this is for the entire CNMI Government. I now recognize the Vice-Speaker.

Vice-Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, I really support, and should be on record what Representative Tenorio has said. I met a few government employees yesterday and they really wanted to retire last month, but they were told that they could not because the Board has instructed the Retirement Fund management not to process any retirement application. The Board should realize also that having these people retire will really in a way help the CNMI Government reduce its personnel cost. It is a voluntary reduction in terms of employee numbers and cost of the government. So it is not only the members that want to retire from this House, but there are also other government employees that would like to retire from the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, any further discussion? Ready?

There being no further discussion, H. R. NO. 15-223 was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: H. R. NO. 15-223 is here by adopted by the House. Again, I kindly as the House Clerk, to expedite engrossing of this Resolution and request our House Legal Counsels to expediently work on the details. Thank you very much. Let us have a short recess.

The House recessed at 11:54 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 12:05 p.m.

### **BILL CALENDAR**

The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Lizama: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker with out objection, motion to file all pending House Bills in the House of Representatives.

The motion was seconded.

Representative Yumul: Subsidiary Motion, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: I recognize Representative Yumul.

Representative Yumul: Thank you. Subsidiary motion is to allow all Communications coming to the Speaker's Office between today until Monday to automatically be forwarded to the House Clerk.

There being no discussion, the subsidiary motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: Now we will entertain the main motion. Ready.

The main motion as offered by the Floor Leader to file all pending bills, resolutions, other matters pending in the committee, various government offices, and including the Legislative Bureau was carried voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: And now we come to the time when we all kiss and say good bye. Just a humor comment. I recognize the Minority Leader.

Representative Palacios: Mr. Speaker, with your understanding, I would like to request all Communications that was received by the Speaker's Office, the original versions be turned over to the House Clerk so that it will be a record and available to the incoming legislature. I do not know what the procedure is usually, but I would like to request that the original form be turned over to the House Clerk.

Speaker Babauta: Let me just clarify. All documents from various branches of governments and departments that were addressed to the Office of the Speaker and Office of the President are with the House Clerk. That is where all the entire records rest. Let me recognize Representative Stanley Torres.

Representative Torres: Mr. Speaker, that is not necessarily true I went to the Archive expecting to find what I am looking for, but when I came upon the file on regards to Judge Wiseman, there was nothing there but three (3) sheets of documents that came from me. Where are the senate records? All those came with the committee; I do not know what the senate.....

Speaker Babauta: Have you verified with the Senate Clerk's office?

Representative Torres: They should be in the Archives. Isn't the Archive supposed to have all documents from both houses?

Speaker Babauta: It should be in the Archives under the Legislative Bureau.

Representative Torres: It says from the Senate and Judge David Wiseman, and I found that the documents are all from me, nothing from the former Senator J. Adriano.

Speaker Babauta: In the past, some members shared their records that were kept by their respective office to the CNMI Archive or the NMC Archive. They were used as an historical data...*hafa eyi ma scan? Ahi eyi Micro-film.*

Representative Torres: Kabales-na yu. Taiguini ha un kes...

Speaker Babauta: Well, I can see that Representative Torres. I am having a hard time walking in your office. So I hope I can walk freely tomorrow. Well thank you for that observation and comment. I wish that all the members who will not be here next legislature that if you see any documents, please transfer them to the Clerk. Continue, Representative Torres.

Representative Torres: *Otru na issue. Para baihu address si Chairman Dela Cruz. Hu a'atan tatte eyi record Kyle Calabres ni ta confirm para PUC Commissioner, hafa na category ni ma appoint si Calabres. Taya iyona degree gi electronics or electrical.*

Speaker Babauta: I think it came from the business sector.

Representative Torres: Business Sector...

Speaker Babauta: Yes representing the Business Sector.

Representative Torres: Okay.

Speaker Babauta: Ready? Okay we will now go down to item No. 17 before we adjourn Sine and die. I would recognize first my long time and distinguished colleague whom I have known for many years in these halls of the Commonwealth Legislature. At one point in time, we were in the same leadership in three terms, but because of political differences, we parted ways and we continue to be friends. I now recognize my humble Representative Manual Tenorio from the same Precinct.

Representative Tenorio: Thank you Mr. Speaker bai kati. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the most kind remarks. It is very difficult at the end of the day to try to relay our feelings as to going back the past two years of my association as a legislator of the people. Let me just start by saying, that I want to thank each and everyone of you for your participation and working relationship during the entire two years of our 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. This is my 5<sup>th</sup> term actually, I served in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>. It has been a gratifying experience for me working with all of you here for the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I find these two years the most challenging and maybe because of the economic conditions in the CNMI. There are so many issues that we differ with the Administration, and for that matter a lot of issues remain still a problem for the CNMI, and now perhaps will be a challenge for the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I just want to go over some of the concerns that I mention on the sine die and Saipan Delegation. One of the issues that would continue to haunt this government is the fuel crisis. The problem of the rising cost of fuel. We have predicted since the last couple of years that by December last year, the price of fossil fuel will reach a hundred dollars a barrel. And it did, and right now I think it is a hundred nineteen, and that is from what I read about CUC paying the Mobil. And this continues to be a huge problem to our consumers especially those people who cannot afford to pay for their power basic utilities to provide for refrigeration of food, lights for studying, and sleeping. A lot of people will be affected for the reason that this legislature, which I commend even overriding some of the Governors veto, and some important legislation concerning CUC. I know that we have been criticized, and I know that the Administration continues to hammer us down to what we did. I think we did this all in the best interest of the consumer. I am talking for my part. Another issue that I think that would also continue to haunt us is the Federalization issue. I think there is a bill in the U.S. Congress now that would probably pass the Federalization Bill that affects the CNMI. I understand that some of the concerns were also addressed in that House Bill. We continue to read the administration's position that the Legislature would drag this situation, but we are against

Federalization. I recall the petition that was put out by the Minority and some other members of the Legislature agreeing to some of the situation that we put out regarding Federalization. The new Leadership would have to come up with a solid solution on this because we still continue to battle with the Federal Government, and I do not think that is very healthy. This is a serious matter that continues to affect our lives. I have been very vocal on self government because I believe that we should be able to handle our own affairs here as local people. We know what is going on here and with least interference with the Federal Government. We had that experience already for the past 35 years, yet we continue to be haunted with some of the problems that exist in our society. This is one of the reasons that the Federal Government decided to come in. Again it is up to the new leadership to address these continuous problems that we have in our midst. I want to also congratulate all those new members, and the members that made it back to halls of the Legislature. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to them. At the same time for those members that decided to not participate in the Legislative process or those that ran unsuccessfully, I wish them well in their new endeavors. I am pretty sure for all of you whether you are in or out of the House of Representatives, your heart at best are with the people of the CNMI. The feeling is that we want to work as a team and join again in partnership with the Administration. You know these things breaks out into political interest as time goes on. Just bare in mind that whatever happens, I think what counts here is that we are all working here to protect the interest of this community. One other thing that I think will be forth coming is the health insurance issue. As from Retirement that takes part in the health insurance issue, I foresee some problems lurking in the midst of our government. The cost of keeping our people in good health condition is going to continue to rise and this is something the legislature should address before it gets worse. Anyway, I think I have had my five or ten minutes already I don't know maybe because I talk too much. I want to say this before I depart. I am going to be around and I will continue to help one way or another. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Legislative Bureau and the staff, it has been very wonderful and an experience working with all of the staff. I think they have done their jobs to the best of their abilities. They show up at the worst of times when we have problems and cater to our needs. It is appropriate to thank my staff also for being so patient and baring with me for the past two years. I would like thank those people who voted for me despite the fact that I was short by three votes. I challenge the votes not because I dislike the Speaker up there or what, but it is a legislative process that the law allows me the opportunity to challenge the vote of recount. I want to congratulate the Speaker. He is a good buddy of mine. I am very impressed how he manages the Legislature. I want to thank you for your support for the things we have done during our term. With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank especially the Minority Leader and my small minority group here. We did a lot of work in this Legislature. It is very fortunate now that they just turned the tables around. They will be enjoying themselves in a bigger space and stretching out maybe a little.

Speaker Babauta: You going to miss that.

Representative Tenorio: No, because I am actually claustrophobic. I was having hard times for two years. I always want to congratulate them for making it back to the majority. All in all, I wish the best of luck to the Legislature and the new comers as well as the incumbents. Job well done for the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature and keep in mind that we are all in this government together. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you too, Representative Tenorio for your contributions also in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature and the previous terms. I am sure the people would continue to benefit from your participation. I recognize the Vice Speaker.

Vice-Speaker Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am really humble with the cooperation and the support of the members of this body. In spite of some of the difficult issues that we need to tackle and when it comes to the general well being and welfare of the commonwealth people, I saw the support and interest of the members to put all other interests aside and come together for the entire Commonwealth and its people. As I indicated in the inaugural booklet for the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature, that I will work cooperatively and give you my support. I think I tried my best to do that. And if I am short in doing that, I would like to apologize to the members. I thank you also for your support as your Vice-Speaker of the House. I tried to fulfill the responsibility of that position. And I thank you for help to that goal of achievement. The 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature is a difficult one. The expectation of the people is much higher than the previous Legislatures. With the economic situation that faced us all, the more the people expected us to do more with less. They are times when had to do something that is not liked. I think some people understood why we did it, some did not. We had to do it for the general well being of the people. And in some issues, it makes us be well-liked in the community. Those who are leaving us in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, you will be our eyes and ears out in the community. Personally, I would like to hear from you as you are out there in the community listening and seeing what is going on. Help us here in the Legislature so we can address the concerns on what you are seeing, hearing, and gathering from our communities. I personally would like to thank the Speaker, we have worked hand in hand, sometimes we do not agree with all the issues, but we do have that working relationship here in the House. As you may have seen, there are times when he voted yes and I voted no. The other hand he voted differently. At the end of the day we don't even discuss that and just continue with our work. I really appreciate that. As the budget is reduced, they worked more with less, with a lot of sacrifices understanding that we are in here to help the people although there are times our communities expects us to do more than what we have. In terms of finances, we tried. For the communities of Precinct Four, I would like to also personally thank them, for their understanding and patience. As we deal with issues that affects not only there lives, but the lives of the future generation, and if there is any time I hurt anybody out in Precinct Four or in the commonwealth in general; I apologize for that. Last, I would like extend also a deep appreciation to the staffs of the Legislative Bureau. There are times when it is difficult for them to say no, when there are eighteen of us and everybody is going to them with the same request. I have yet to see any of them with unhappy faces. They are always willing to do more. It is difficult to deal with eighteen members with different minds, attitudes, and personalities. I think the staffs of the Legislative Bureau are well-rounded people, they know the members that are here, and their expectations they carry. It is a learning process for me here. All my years in Education, coming into the Legislature is a new ball game. And for the incoming members, I would like to recommend that they do their homework. If you do not do your homework in this hall, you might be left behind. They have to study their current members and their own members because they know the tricks in the books. They would have to learn fast to catch up and they should not be ashamed to ask for assistance. I know the members that are staying - that they are helpful. They are always willing to help and cooperate regardless of political differences or other issues. At the end, they all want to help. I again would like to thank everybody in this chamber, the legislative bureau, and the Senate. We have some friends in the Senate that really helped us push the issues out of this legislature. There are times when they have differences with us, but at the same time, they are willing to compromise and share those difficult issues with us to come to a conclusion. At the end we realize it is only for the benefit of the Commonwealth people, not the individual interest of the members in this Legislature. So I thank them for that and I hope the incoming members of the Senate will help the House members in realizing what they are going to achieve for the benefit of the Commonwealth people. Towards the end, we are hoping that the issues that are facing us today, we will resolve if not all, but most of them especially the big issues on the economy, employment, our people leaving the CNMI, the federal take over and what not. With the

cooperation with everybody in this Chamber, I think we can achieve a lot in the upcoming Legislature. I also strongly believe that the 15<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives achieved a lot and the members went beyond their expectations to do more with less and do more for our people of the Commonwealth. With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much, and I wish everybody Godspeed as they take the break and re-energize for those coming in for the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I would like to publicly say that I would pitch in my support and cooperation to the Majority and the Leadership of the upcoming 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. If there is anyway I can help, I am will to lend a hand. Again, for the members who are leaving us, we still need your help. As I said, you are our eyes and ears of us in here. We appreciate you all telling us how we are doing in here, how the people reacts out there, and I believe that would tremendously help all of us here. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Vice-Speaker and of course everybody in this House are aware of your contribution. Surely, we will miss your humble diplomatic approach in apprising and reaching a consensus amongst the members. Truly you have exercise a professional leadership during this term on many issues that have left the house. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognized Representative Deleon Guerrero.

Rep. Joseph DLGuerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I will try not to take too long. As members were giving there speeches, I was reflecting back on the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Looking back from when we first started we had the new Leadership, a lot of new members. At the time, there were some difficult issues that we had to face in unpopular decisions that had to be made. I watched the new members initially not coming out aggressive. They were kind of reserved and in the process of learning the ropes. I watched the members from that point - I would not say assert themselves, but begin to be pro-active in the process and blossom. There were times when we were called the "Rubber Stamp" Legislature. From that point on, I think half way through, a lot of decisions were made. There were not just one side yes and the other side no. There is a lot of cross over that reflected a sense of maturity that was reached in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. A member of the Legislative Bureau had mentioned that we had really passed a lot of legislation despite the fact that our resources was down. I want to congratulate everyone here for all of their involvement in process for teaching me. I was learning every step of the way just like everyone else was, and a piece of you stays with me as I move forward also. I want to thank you all for that. I want to also say that I have the greatest respect for the leadership, for the Speaker, for giving the Minority a great deal of respect, by allowing us to voice our concerns as well and for allowing the process to take place and not...*Hafa eyi fino Chamorro ma honu ti man honu.* I think credit should be given to your leadership, Mr. Speaker, Vice-Speaker, and all the members for allowing us to be members of the Committees, for partaking in decision making, and I think in the end if I was member of the public, I would rate the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature as being contentious because of the partisan division here. But in the end there was more cooperation here. I think that surprised a lot of people. I am happy that they were surprised in that way. *Todudus hamyu Si Yu'us Ma'ase talu ni ayudun miyu ni guohu nu i respeta ni un na'i yu. Hopefully, ola mohon lokkue ya enchili. Yanggen mu na'bubu yu dispensa. Gauha ni hu fa lalalu yu guini hulo. An man dibabati hit lao, lao taya baihu na siguru hamyu, taya sinentin baba ginen guohu para todus hamyu. Maolek i sinente-ku an mu nahayan it sina ha man a'kuentusi, man a'gotti, man a' gofli'e. Ya enao baihu gagao hamyu, taigi I Vice-Speaker ilek-na na para mona gigi ha mona, sa man gaige hamyu.* Once you step into this arena, it will be in your blood. You know helping people is an addiction that all of us experience. And I know for those members who are not coming back, I know it is in your heart for helping the Commonwealth people in one capacity or another. I hope you will do so. *Mas para baihu ekstendi agradecimentu para I yota Legislative Bureau Staff, fino Vice-Speaker,* I do not know how you guys

can do it with so many request and never once seen anybody complain. I really thank all of you and the Legislative Bureau for that. *Ya talu para I yoku staff lokkue, baihu na'i agrasimento todú i supotasion ni ma ekstendi not only myself but to the community. Nu Si Yu'us Ma'ase. With that Mr. Speaker, Thank you again and good luck to everyone here. Si Yu'us Ma'ase'.*

Speaker Babauta: Thank you Representative Guerrero for your contribution also in this 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. You absolutely performed well on many vital issues that deal with the CNMI. I thank you for your contribution in the deliberation process and your inputs as well that have managed to practically become laws of our Commonwealth. Thank you so much. I recognize Representative and Chairman Waki. I would leave the Lady to be the last.

Representative Waki: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. Since I always keep things short, I will make this speech very short, like I always do. See I knew I can make you guys laugh. That is what I wanted to do to start of this speech. You know this is my first time actually to be holding this type of position, which I never thought in my entire life I would ever do. I never thought I would be in government service - coming from being a Deputy Sergeant at arms in the 14<sup>th</sup> House of Representative, to becoming Representative in the 15<sup>th</sup> is something that was not in the plan really. But I guess I can say I stepped up in the plate and see if I can be of some assistance. The last two years was more than just a job but it was an adventure most definitely. If anything I can say was more challenging adventures I had in my life. It had helped to increase my blood pressure in phenomenal numbers. I think I bit my tongue more than I ever wanted to. Of course we have had our differences on this floor, but outside of this floor, we were always cordial with each other. I noticed that sometimes we have differences in opinions on the floor, we would get into committee meetings we are fine. That is just a given. We have different personalities, we were brought up differently, we have different educational background, and business background. I think everybody's mind set when they came in here no matter what the differences where, we were here to help the people, whether we differed in how we are going to do that. I think that was the sincere intent. I have learned a lot in the past two years. Patience is not one of my better virtues, but I learned quite a bit in patience. Politics was never in my blood and I don't think it really is in my blood. I basically am here to do a job. I believed, I tried, and I appreciated everything I learned in this particular last two years. I want to thank the people who tried to help me get back in and like we say it is never a lost when you can still go out and do something to see if you can help. That is probably what I will be doing when I get out. I have not yet made any actual firm plans, but I do know that whatever I do out there, will be probably to try to see if I can work with the government in helping the CNMI to prosper. I think that is the bottom line and all I am asking from this body is that, when you come in that we are still one government. Please work and communicate with the other branches; the Executive, and the Judicial. There is going to be a lot of issues. Take nothing away. But I think the Commonwealth in my view is a gold mine. There is no doubt it can prosper economically and the lives of the people can be enhanced, but it has to come in a cooperative effort. I know there are going to be differences, but I think at the end of the day if you really look at where you want to go and what do you want to achieve, I think communication will be the key. I think the mind set and the heart have to take persistence and realize that right now we are not in good times. It is very difficult times. If I am not mistaken, there is conference tomorrow in reference to public and private cooperative and I am going to go there. I hope every member here in the Legislature, both House and Senate go there to listen to this individuals, and see what we might be able to learn from that and hopefully use that to improve our future. In the mean time, at this point of time, I want to say thank all my colleagues in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Like I said, we have our differences but at the end of the day we laughed and I think that is healthy, and many of you I have known for many years. Many of us are related, some are classmates, friends, but the bottom line here is, we

came in here as legislators. We came here and did the job, and I think we should all be proud of whatever we have done and accomplished whether you are coming back in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature or leaving to move on to bigger and better things. I do want to thank the Speaker again for just his Leadership in the 15<sup>th</sup> legislature and as well as the Director of the Legislative Bureau and staff for doing a phenomenal job over the last two years. I have had the privilege to work with the Bureau prior to being a legislator. I tell you they are one, how do you say, productive group of people with the lack of resources, but they do well with what they have. I think they will continue to do so, and I wish them all the best in the future. I like to especially thank my Administrative Manager who has been there for me. Bobbie Mizutani has been there and she has kept me out of trouble, where I didn't know what to do, what was right, what was wrong, and when I needed to find out something, I didn't ask anybody, I asked her. She has always kept me in line and I thank her for that. I think I have become a better individual because of that. I had to bite my tongue because she told me to bite my tongue. I just want to say thank you, Si Yu'us Ma'ase', Tirowaami to all my colleagues in the House as well as in the Senate. I hope that in the future, I can come to this House, sit with all of you, and share with you some of the things that I maybe planning on doing that could coincide with this body, this branch of government to help the people. I hope I can contribute in some way, shape, or form and I ask for your cooperation. I will come in and humble myself to ask for your assistance and your cooperation. So with that, I want to just say, it was an honor, a pleasure, and it was an adventure being here in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I wish you all the luck in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. To my sister here who has been the only female in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature, who has been my buddy. We have had our differences of opinion, but the bottom line is, she is an absolutely wonderful person, and I wish her the best in luck in her endeavors. My colleague Representative Manny Tenorio, wish you the best of luck and your endeavors. Representative Taman, Representative Lizama, Representative Ogo, Representative Ada, and also Representative Seman good luck in your endeavors and may God just bless you and guide you in the direction. We hope we all see each other in the near future. Thank you and take care.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Chairman Waki and the chair would like to thank you for your participation and being part of the Leadership of the 15<sup>th</sup> House of Representative. Also, thank you for you countless contribution, your persuasive debate, and comments during our deliberation on many important issues. They were all well taken, considered, and I thank you and I wish you the best. I recognize Representative Benjamin Seman.

Representative Seman: Thank you Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to first start by thanking you for a great leadership and your willingness to work with each and every one of us regardless of political affiliation, or whether we are minorities or in the Leadership. I felt that your Leadership was very worth recognizing as I didn't feel any friction during this term in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. To my colleagues here who are present and those who are not able to make it today, I thank you for your continued support in working with not only myself, but all of us, and also for your dedication to serve for our public. Not only the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature but during the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> we all worked together. To my Colleagues and Mr. Speaker, since I have retired, I have all the intentions to work now with the private sector and look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature wearing a different hat. I have asked myself, what is it that we need to do in order to work better with the private sector? I will find that out. I have pledge so many times, even way before I became a public servant here in the legislature. I have served the public in many capacities because that is my passion. I will continue to do that outside of this house. Hopefully with my experience here, I will know the better way on approaching you all. I have been involved in many social organization both before and during my term here in office. I will continue on being involve, and I asked that when we come up as private citizens to seek for your assistance, to great passions

that I am really involve with is the Commonwealth Diabetes Coalition, and as the new President of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, I ask that all of you members returning in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, that you will continue to safeguard the Tobacco Control Fund. Within the past 3 or 4 years since the inception of this special funding, I have seen and I think you all have seen the great changes that this money has done for our people in terms of educating our people to live healthier. I pledged to continue to work with this organization so that we can continue to see more prevention and less spending money on treatment. I wish to also thank my constituents, not only in Precinct One, but the entire CNMI. I would like to thank most especially, the people of Precinct One and the entire CNMI people for giving me the opportunity to serve this past three terms. I want to ask that you all allow me to continue to visit your offices, because your constituents will be my back bone to bring their concerns up here in the Legislature. The decision for me not to seek re-election was purely based on a very personal matter, but in spite of that the passion for serving the people is still there. I will not leave politics, I am just leaving office. I think you still need to have a little bit of politics in you to able to work with both Houses. I also do not want to leave without thanking the members of the Senate for your willingness to work with the members of the House. Also most especially to the staff of the Legislative Bureau, I want to thank Evelyn Fleming for your great dedication, hard work, and commitment. To our Legal Counsels, Mr. Joaquin Omar, and your staff for you leadership, thank your for hard work in serving the members of the Legislature. To my family who has been standing way behind me since I decided to seek election back in the year 1999. I never saw anybody any doubt in my passion to seek public office and they have all stood behind me. I never saw one person say you shouldn't because you will not be getting elected in office. They have all given me their praise and support. What I am trying to say is...with out friends and especially your family, you cannot do this all by yourself. It has always touched my heart and I thank each and every one of you for allowing me to work from my heart. I am putting my head up leaving this office. I have every confidence for each and every one of you in coming back in the upcoming 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I have every confidence that you will all continue to work for our people and you will find a better path for prosperity for all of us here in the CNMI. Please feel free to give me a call if you should need my humble advice. I thank you for the opportunity and again thank you to the people of the CNMI, I leave office but I shall continue to serve you all. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you Representative Benjamin Seman. The quietest member since the 13<sup>th</sup> Legislature, he makes things happen silently. Thank you for you contributions since the 13<sup>th</sup> Legislature and of course during my tenure as Speaker in the 15<sup>th</sup> House of Representative. We hope to continue to see your actions out there. Of course I am sure the members are more than open to hear you on those special projects you are working on for our people. Thank you very much. I now recognize Representative Dela Cruz

Representative Dela Cruz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I am not to sure where should I begin, but I also thought I was the most quiet in this chamber? But I guess I was wrong. First of all, I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker for I guess practicing and running this Chamber. I know and I recognize that in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature, you made it a point to treat everyone, every member of this House with fairness and respect. Take nothing away from that. I have looked at your Leadership, and I can safely say that none was treated differently than the other. I thank your for that. I also want to thank the Legislative Bureau; the Clerk, you have done a tremendous job in keeping up with all of us here, 18 members here. And now in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, there will be more to take care of. To the Legal Counsels, they have done a great job with the legislations from each of us presented and introduced. I also want to thank the Senate members for receiving the legislations that we have introduced into their Chamber. I would be remised if I didn't thank my staff, Cheryl, Wally, and

my former Chief of Staff Joe. Joe is here in the gallery, he is here pro bono. I take great pride in my staff on assisting me on a daily basis, and I am very thankful for that, and I know it is going to be another term for the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. To my friend, Congressman Tenorio, the legacy of claustrophobic will continue, as I will be occupying your little mansion on the north wing, I will make sure that it's taken care of although I am thinking of changing the color of the rooms though. To my colleagues that would not be returning in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, I say to you thank you and I hope that whatever you take on as your future endeavors, I wish you all well. You are respected members of the community and I respect you. I guess everything else, Congressman Waki has already taken out of my mouth, so I will not continue to divulge. But it has been a true experience and being a freshman legislator, it was truly and experience to become a member of the Leadership and be given the responsibility of a Committee. I want to thank the members of the committee. I thank you all. You have been very good and some of you have the experience in the past, and that was a plus to the Committee, and I sincerely and grateful for the opportunity to work with all of you and to all the members. With that Mr. Speaker again, I say thank you.

Speaker Babauta: One thing that I must remember that you have manage to push down the newly form Public Utility Commission. I applaud you and your members of the committee, and of course the support of the entire members. That is a legacy for you to remember and all of us to remember. Thank you too for your humble contributions and of course your diplomacy in deliberating issues. I recognized Chairman Ray Tebuteb.

Representative Tebuteb: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I noticed that...At first I thought when you started with Representative Tenorio that you were going to go this route and I noticed...

Speaker Babauta: I practice what I preach.

Representative Tebuteb: I certainly appreciate and humbled for doing that. You know, Mr. Speaker, the first day of your Leadership, was questionable to the point that we were told that if it is unconstitutional, so be it. The last day of your Leadership, in my mind, no doubt, no question about it, I certainly appreciate all the respect that you have given to not only the minorities but to everybody including the staff. To our Commonwealth Minority Leadership, I must say that...I guess I am going to speak on behalf of my three colleagues to my left because I guess they were little emotional that they forgot to acknowledge the Leadership of the Minority. I would take that opportunity and I am being begged at this point to thank Representative Palacios for his Leadership. You noticed that every time or most of the time we start our session that we sit down and we always tell you that your minorities are ready to conduct business. Sine Die, I believe that is also a Chamorro word for "asaina dai" or maybe "ai adai" very positive to that note, Mr. Speaker. Thank you is a very good word that we can verbalize to all of us. I must really thank all of my office staff for the work and especially to all the members' staff too. I have noticed that, and I have seen that there is really a grand camaraderie when I see them just even in the hall ways. To the Legislative Bureau, most of those who has spoken and said that true word and again a simple thank you that is a very grand meaning. Like the Sergeant at arms, every time he comes to the minority or before the session begins, we always tell him ten more minutes. During those times, he would ask ten more minutes? So we acknowledge that, and Sergeant, thank you very much for your understanding and patience. To our Clerk, Evelyn, She is in my wiz, an Encyclopedia or electronic encyclopedia. If I say tax or any number of bills just pops in thin air and I am amazed. I really am appreciative of the last minute things I asked her to do. I am going to make it short, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to speak with our departing friends and for those returning, get ready to rumble because the journey begins and doesn't end. Let me start from my left, to our members who aren't returning, I am just

putting in my own words that best describes what I see. Representative Manuel Tenorio, for example the best way I can come up with, most of the time in session, he will sometimes say, "I am confused". The way I would deal with him saying he is confused is I would say, "brownused" and he would say tebutebused. Those are nick names for me to connect. He also mentions, "I will stick around". So I will say to him, "Stick around brown". To our Floor Leader, with all do respect with the health and all issues, Representative Florencio Deleon Guerrero, he faced the challenges that was presented. I feel that I don't need to specify things he has said during motions and calls. But I respect him for the challenges he encountered. To Representative Ada, I call him the "journey man" of all parties. Representative Taman, simple words of the Municipal Council of the Pozzollan issue. I learned a lot even talking to you on a personal level besides our legislative issue. I must say I really admire your point of view whenever we talk on issues about the good intentions of the matters we discuss and I appreciate your understanding on that. To Representative Ogo, I call him the "Terminator". During budget process for example he terminated Representative Waki and he chased down Senator Manglona, but at the end of the day, the intention on your end was what you felt was good for the community and I respect that. You are straight forward and I think those are grand leadership traits and qualities that are very important. Representative Seman, he is a stern, vocal, and very adamant protector of the tobacco funds. I will preach, teach, and continue to support him on that. To our pro tem floor leader, Mr. Patience is really the true leader and your patience is more than a virtue to all of us. I think I will save the last one for Representative Cinta Kaipat, very...Oh sorry let me go to Representative Waki first. He likes the words that whenever he says in between, "besides the bottom line" and "what do you say?" and "how do you say it?" Again, I see you as a great debater and with all good intentions. Let me tell you Mr. Speaker and to all members, even when the leadership was formed, I tried my best to ask Representative Waki to join us, and at one point we finished about ten bottles of wine at Aqua at his expense. At the end of day, I don't know how many hours later, I fell. There have been many controversial issues that we all faced and one of the big ones are also from your office on Article 12 on Constitution matters. I must say that Representative Waki and I have come a long way besides being classmates and some other things I do not want to say on record. Representative Cinta Kaipat, I will continue to protect PL. 15-38 and I will continue to address and listen to your recommendation. You have enlightened me in so many ways, but you may not know it, but I had a lot of great deal on all your points and the issues that we faced. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for your leadership, your respect to all members, and especially to me and my office. It has not end for us and as well for those who may not return, the overall picture that I see in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature is of course the over-ride that we have done. At the end, it is a positive acknowledgement that we all share together in trying to address the opportunities we encounter good or bad. Thank you Mr. Speaker

Speaker Babauta: Thank you Representative Ray Tebuteb. Like Chairman Dela Cruz and Representative Seman, I observe you up here during sessions, as a silent mover of the decisions. I really do I see your arguments on the issues that your vote always reflects the intent of those matters. For that, I highly respect your contributions and appreciate the many comments you made and suggestions that this House has managed to produce. I would be the first to congratulate you on being the Chairman of the next Saipan Delegation and you have my support my colleague.

Representative Tebuteb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Speaker Babauta: Let me recognize my distinguish member from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Senatorial District, Chairman Aldan.

Representative Aldan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. If I may Mr. Speaker, will you allow me to speak in where ....

Speaker Babauta: Proceed.

Representative Aldan: Thank you *ya finene'na Mr. Speaker malagu yu na baihu na'i hao un dangkolo na agradisimento ginen ta'dudung na korason-hu ginen I familia-ku para I botadot I 2<sup>nd</sup> Senatorial District ni mana'i yu nu esti na oputtunidat. Para bai ma elihi halom guini na pusision ni as a Legislator. I sigondu, malagu yu bai rekognisa yan baihu na'i hao lakkue na un dankolo na onru put i todū i abisu siha asistimento ni un na'i yu guini i 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Yan i oputtinidat ni un na'i yu ni baihu u kurihi mona i komite i Natural Resources. Magahit na kumu freshman, nuebo na legislator, bula nu challenge anai matachung yu gi Natural Resources na komite. Finene'na taigue giya guohu i eksperensia. Ya ginen enao na notibu lakkue Mr. Speaker, u nana'i i membron i Natural Resources ni sinseru yan dankolo na agradisimento poti todū i koporasion-niha durante esti tiempotta gi 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Para i yoku Chair-woman, Thank you Representative Kaipat. Si Manny, Si Arnold, always keeping us on top of everything on the major members. Ti lachi yu na u konni si Manny, hu select si Manny para hu malom gi Natural Resources. I think one of my best decisions in, as far as selecting the members, was him because he was very well aware of the history i Natural Resources. Siha yan si Arnold, out of, I believe everybody of the membership, they were the senior members; the returning members for the committee. Ya thank you todū para i komite. Para si Melchor Mendiola, I yoku Legislative Assistant para i komite. I went thru three Legal Counsels Si Antonette, Si Ian, yan Si Rosemond, Thank you lakkue' para hamyu. Para i consultations durante i man impotanti na bill ni tana ke'ke' falofan guini gi san papa' na guma. Mina tres Mr. Speaker, malagu ha lakkue' para baihu chuli esti na oppottunidat ya baihu ekstendi un Si yu'us Ma'ase' para todudus i membron i mina kinsi leyeslatura. Inengragerasia i senate na offisina. Para i supotasion miyu para ayu siha na bill u intrega halom, para ta ina, ya para ta attan, yan para ta bota. In particularly para i second senatorial district eyi i house local bills ni puru revenue generating para islan mami Tinian. Impotanti para hami sa i ekonomia ginen i central government, gof makat esta para hu fatu papa, ma'makat. Guaha nu bula siha na priorities lakkue' gi CNMI wide ya eyi siha na lai hu introdusi halom nu para'u ayudayi di'dide, masaha di'dide lao guaha i munisipat Tinian. Yan ginen enao, on behalf on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Senatorial Leadership yan i taotao Tinian, en ekste'stende un agradisimentu para hamyu ni i man gaige guini gi 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Uno, para I yoku staff as Ami, hu ekste'stende Ami un dankolo na agradisimento para todus tiempo man agang hao un na, as a freshman ti gof payung yu ni hafa siha next na uyu lao. Desdi anai hu tutuhon macho'chu guini she always keep.....*

Speaker Babauta: Sergeant, the microphone.

Representative Aldan: (Continued)... *Para si Ami, Thank you Ami para todū i supottasion. You kept me on top of everything. I uttimo para i familia-ku, Si Yu'us Ma'ase' para I supottasion yan I kinonprendi. Common from fino niha an outo island boy, I have to fly up and down ya hu ekstestende enao para i asagua-hu yan familia-ku. I uttimo, para baihu gagao esti siha I maneluta ni para hu ma bira tatti gi 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, pot fabot tana para fan dai I casino legislation sa guaha mas critical sina ta address in the future. Put enao ha Mr. Speaker, Si yu'us ma'ase'. One last thing*

*Mr. Speaker, malagu yu para baihu chule este na oppottunidat para baihu na'i nu un dankolo na agradesimento para I Minority Leader. Kana todus ha tumungu he is not only older than me but he is also related to me. Lao para todū nai i abisu duranten anai matu I man makat siha na disision. Ya un baba mas i titanos-ta. Thank you Mr. Speaker.*

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Chairman Aldan. We all know that you are the Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee and your committee members have excelled hard in this term. You managed to execute a lot of major piece of legislation and that includes the new direction of our economy. By granting many huge businesses, land lease to participate in that development of our commonwealth. I do not know if you know that your wife, Rosie was peeping on the door watching you, it looked like you were just about to break down. But I know that she is praying for you and we are happy to see you back again next week Monday. I thank you for all your effort for being the Chairman of your committee and of course your honorable members of that committee. To my distinguished long time associate in this chamber where he and I have tide the record of this Legislature. I would like to recognize my colleague and my friend, Representative Stanley Torres.

Representative Torres: Thank you Mr. Speaker. It's going to be a long speech and first I would like to thank all the staff from the Legislative Bureau and every employee of the House for their hard work in supporting our activities. Mr. Speaker yan Members, allow me to speak *tagatnan liguamoro*. *Na'i yu di'dide attension miyu ya bai Saluda hamyu buenas tatdis.*

Speaker Babauta: Consigi

Representative Torres: - *ni ta fa'fana mona yan i oppottunidad, obligasion-ta na debi ta chogui maolek yan onesto para todū taotao-ta. Ke di emunus di gos kuantos ha. Obligasion-ta moratta kumu ma elihihit na sibienten publiku na ta chogui mas i onesto yan gi intigridad. I taotao-ta man manifesta yan abladao na hita inayik niha. Ta nisisita na tafan machocho' kon inemidi yan i admirisasion-ta. Ya naturat un mapegayi i makat na katgu atmismu ta na guaha mas inadahi i masgastangna i finkas publiku. Apariset ha diluntu para resutan I mamalinkuenta hit gi onesto i fuetsan todū. Hu ensita na ta embrasa i mission koporasion yan i – para i merahon tiempon konometrat para taotao tano interu marianas. Hu prumesa ya hu impena na kontonua kumatga intiresta yan I taotao-ta yan todū i korempendun babarias halom I gobetnon-ta. Kon saludu inamidi. Si yu'us ma'ase' puti I silensio na momentu atension miyu. PREBA HAO! MAMA!*

Speaker Babauta: *Lami lastima sa ilek-mu silensio ya umesalao hao. Representative Stanley Torres thank you. Si Yu'us Ma'ase' lokkue' ni patisipasion-mu guini na lehislatura yan si yu'us ma'ase' ni relasion desdi mina nuebi na kongrasista. Mahaluma hu na lamekgai na taotao marianas umagradesi i chechomu guini na tiempo. Yan i presipatmenti pagu na tetmanu. Uno hao eyi muna fan ma'mata i mangachong-hu. Parehu ha I man lachi yan man tunas na assuntu siha. Si yu'us ma'ase' ni enao kontribusion-mu. Ya hu diseseha na ta ali' mata gi otrū simana gi parehu na pisu. Yan gi, piot sa bisinu hit. Thank you very much Representative Torres. I sincerely appreciate and treasure your companionship in both socially and professionally in this chamber. And of course once again, the members asked me to personal effort in recovering the lost funds.*

The Chair recognized Representative Ogo.

Representative Ogo: Thank you Mr. Speaker. *Sedi yu sa anai hu konsidedera hafa mas para baihu ilabra pagu na oga'an. Hu a'atan I figurana esti i matata'chong hit ginen man halom it gi mina kinsi na liheslatura. Ya I linele'hu i figurana kulan mohon eyi ni hana fan hasso gas "Noah's Arc". Ya hu a'atan hao ulu Mr. Speaker, na kumu hagu i manienten esti na batko, ya yahu para baihu ilabra mas hafa si Representative Deleon Guerrero palabrana gi ti gof atman ha ilabra put hagu. Hu konsidera gi tiempo desdi ni man halom hit, seis mesis ni man a'chanda hit. Guaha I gurupon I mayuria, guaha gurupon minoria. Gi halom I seis mesis, man a'chanda hit, ta tatatitiyi si Speaker*

*hafa I malago-na I leadership. Lao mappla' enao, mappla' enao sa gi kada manguentos I man eksperensiao gi lagu, ya hami ni timan eksperensiao gi san haya, en pila' enao sa ma'ma'titinas rason gi san lagu. Ya Mr. Speaker eyi muna en guaiya hao nai Speaker, ya hu para baihu sangan enao na un sedi ham para baihu fan ma'matinas desision maseha mayuria kumu dina'danchi i manuria. Hafa na para ta chanda i denanchi. Uno hit ha guini, gi kada taotao pesunat dumintitina hafa na desision para ta fatatinas para I entieramenti marianas. Enigi pumula' enao sa I maolek na intimidasion-mu Mr. Speaker, yan maolek na che'cho-mu na un sedi ham gi majority group na para baihu fan tatiyi hafa maolek gi konsiensan mami. Pues yahu nai baihu faisen todun na padda'i fan kanai para i yota Speaker. Lokkue' nu yahu para baihu na'i Si Yu'us ma'ase' i LB Staff, espesiatmente i yoku Legislative Assistant ginen si Melchor Mendiola pues guatu as Francine Sablan. Yan mampus I bumachacha' i yota House Clerk as Eve Fleming, Si Yu'us Ma'ase'. Para i yoku Legal Counsel gi as Ian Catlett yan at the same time guaha ni hu ayao si Antonette Villagomez, Thank you very much. Nu para hamyu nu i members, hu senti na muayuda hit mona dos anios ni man hita. Mampus man'ayuda hit, en ayuda yu lokkue' gi anai para baihu pasa maski miyon pesos para papa Luta. Sa yan ti hamyu anai guohu uno ha guini, guaha anai esta hu chochonik, kumikiluluk gi oriyon esti para baihu dekka' hamyu na suppotta fan esti para Luta. Guaha nai hu konni i gurupu-hu ya hu na fan meeting yan i minority block ya ti ha tungu si Speaker put para'u ma pass ha para Luta. Nu masusedi enao nai eyi guaha sumangan guini earlier, na debbi un tungu i gandonna esti nai. Sa anai un angokku i majority, ti'un tungu hafa i minority nai. Pues eyu nai un nisisariu un chuli i sensian minority ya'u combine yan i majority siempre manunao-ha. Lao enigi eksperienza siha hu li'e' gi halom hita na membro siha. Ya taya na majority na gurupu guini sumusedi nai man meeting hit i leadership meeting ya esta ilek-ta na para ta block esti na bill ginen I minority gigun duru I bonito na mensahi--Dos ha tetenan, para hamyu ni para un fan halom talu gi 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, hu tomapadiset hamyu todun para i supottasion miyu yan na'i pot fabot cooperation i para'u halom i nuebu na kongressun mami ginen Luta, Si Victor Borja Hocog. Hu sosoyu' hamyu tomapadiset hamyu suppotta pot fabot munga na uno ha utumona todudu un suppotta. Si Yu'us ma'ase' ya'un na'i fan si Victor cooperation. I ottimu, para I taotao Luta ni ma na'i yu chansa put kuarto anios guini gi liheslatura, hu na'na'i hamyu un Si Yu'us Ma'ase'. Ginen guohu tihu na fan mamalao hamyu, mampus yu magof ni yoku performance gi halom kuarto anios hu tungu na miyon put miyon na ganansiha hu manao papa gi Luta. Pues para hamyu na taotao Luta, Si Yu'us Ma'ase' hinengen miyu guiya guohu. Talu ha have a prosperous year para todudu hamyu gi 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Si Yu'us ma'ase'.*

**Speaker Babauta:** Thank you, Chairman Ogo, and I must say you have executed properly on your term in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I applaud you for getting the budget out for the last Fiscal Year. Although you took part in this Fiscal Year, unfortunately the Senate did not make it happen. But all in all, you and your Committee have managed to produced a tremendous job well done. Thank you for serving the people of Rota and the people of the Commonwealth. I now recognize my dear cousin, Representative Candido Taman.

**Representative Taman:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. First, I want to thank the Lord for giving each and everyone a gift of life. We are today sitting here on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of 2008. I also like to thank all the people of my Precinct, Precinct 4, who have given me the opportunity to serve in the last 2 years in this body. It has been a very long and winding road with difficult challenges. I am not particularly happy with the result of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature's work, but I must say that I am very proud, even the fact that we displayed a lot of bi-parties and actions in this House, because of your undisputed parliamentary ability, and your humble mediation with all the members in this Legislature which includes the senate – the first Order of Business in this 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature, the testimony that every one of us was very much willing to cooperate with the Administration, and we

have given the Administration the opportunity to exercise its ability to move forward for a better Commonwealth. Along the way, the journey becomes a little bit rough, mainly because we have forgotten that we are only human. We all make mistakes, and the mistakes that we made was a result of the emotions that was penetrated into our hearts and we forgot to come to the table with profound solution. Nevertheless, we continue to work and with your Leadership and the Leadership of our Minority Leader, I will reiterate again, that I am very proud of the result of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I know that we are fazed with so many difficult challenges. We tried to put our hearts together. It wasn't that easy. It was because we came emotional at times. I know that I am not going to come back to this 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, I know I will be out looking for a job, and with that in mind, I took every free time and try to compose an album for my family's subsidy during the interval. This album will be due in about two weeks and I wrote a tribute to our sons and daughters, particularly our heroes of the Marianas who have given us their ultimate sacrifice. In this album, Mr. Speaker, I wrote one song and may I ask the indulgence of the members to recite one verse in one of my songs.

Speaker Babauta: Without objections?

All members agreed to no objections.

Speaker Babauta: Proceed and Continue on Representative Taman.

Representative Taman: It goes like this, "The kingdom of man is corrupted. From power and greed they so adopted. They lost the value, the virtue of life, the poor will die, and the rich will survive. There is no more love, no one cares, and life is like hell on earth. Cause we live in a material world where dog, dog, dog eat dog". Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if I sound disrespectful...

Speaker Babauta: Continue, continue...

Representative Taman: Before closing, I would like to thank each and every one of this body, I have learned a great deal. The important things that I wanted to have been said over and over by many of us, and I share the same congratulatory message. Every one worked well here in this body. The Legislative staff and the Legislative Bureau, everyone has been so cooperative and it's not easy to say farewell. I think it is not even proper for me to say farewell because man I will tell you, even if I don't serve in the capacity of a Legislator, but I will be one great contributor to this community for the rest of my life. Thank you very much.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Representative Taman. I am sure the members join me in appreciating your contributions in this House. You and like the few others, have most of the time sat there and listen to the debates and comments made by various members. At the end, you make one minor contributions to the debates that have conclusive desire of each member normally convincing enough to partake in those discussion. I am sure and I know that if health permits in the future, many people would like to see you back. I wish you luck my brother and the family, and like the members have echoed earlier, we welcome your thoughts and ideas in the future. So please visit us once in a while when time permits so that we may share other important ideas for our people. Thank you for you contribution. I recognize Chairman Yumul.

Representative Yumul: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Before I do that, let me acknowledge the presence of our former Lt. Governor, Former House Speaker, and also an incoming member of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature in the gallery, Representative Diego Benavente.

Representative Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You took the words out of my mouth. I was going to recognize our former Lt. Governor. Former Precinct member of yours, right Mr. Speaker? Anyway, I thank this Legislature. We have added a few new words such as Ganansia and how do you say, Preba Hao. So it's nice to know that there are colorful words still being expressed even though we debate very vigorously and adamantly for the legislations that we care fighting for. I think I am the only member this House body going from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> that will not move office. So in his infamous words of Mr. Joe Guerrero, "to those who are moving over, you are moving from the flying pen to the scratch pen" and vice versa. I never knew there was such a terminology in....

Speaker Babauta: Only if you are a cocker.

Representative Yumul: To my dismay, we should have done something obviously to expand the open warehouse at the back of the building and move over the bureau members so that every member hall has larger rooms. Unfortunately, we did not tackle that and I heard a monstrous of a project would have cost them a Million dollars. But, I am willing to look into that in the next 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I know this 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature will be my last term as the youngest member, I think I held that position and title for 4 years, and before that, I believe it was Representative Joseph Deleon Guerrero that held that title. Coming in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, I believe the youngest member will be 26 years old and will be joined by other 30 something's. I think it is a sign that we are finally seeing more generations other than our own. The younger generations are coming forward assuming the great responsibility of upholding the Constitution, the Laws of the C.N.M.I., and moving ahead. This Legislature also has the privilege of having a very well, honored, and a much accorded musician. I believe, we only heard him officially sing once and of course because of a solemn sad occasion where we witness and took part in the first State Funeral for the former Governor Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero. We never heard him sing afterwards so, maybe we can ask him to sing us a short appropriate song that we can all sing together. We saw even in today's final speeches, Representative Torres surprised me because I even leaned over to the former language Committee Chairman and Executive Director and asked him is this guy still speaking Chamorro because these are pretty deep Chamorro. And he says back to me, I wonder who his adviser is? I am pretty sure it all came out from his heart, and I like to see that more into the incoming 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Similar to Guam where we should have an official posting of places and things in both the Carolinian and Chamorro language so that we can all learn these words. Also in the last MVA semi annual meeting of the memberships, a very prominent business Executive and Economist if you will, talked of the biggest concerns from Tourist, so that when they come to the CNMI, they want to experience the CNMI and see the variety of food, the activities that are very common to them in their home or country. They want to be what we are, which is our heritage as Chamorros and Carolinians. Of course, coming back to this body, the outgoing members in my opinion, you all have contributed a lot to the debate. Every word that you mentioned and brought forth did shed a lot of light in the way I conduct myself as a Legislator, help me make my decisions more solid and clearly. The veteran Legislators, I also looked at them for historical perspective. Unfortunately, as said by Representative Torres, I gone down to the Archive and found three (3) pieces of paper pertaining to an issue he knew is worth boxes and boxes of important documents. I am one of those types when I read history books or documents pertaining to the past, I really read those things carefully and thoroughly. I appreciate what was said and written and give us a glimpse of the mentality from the people back then. What they were thinking and what they were trying to do to

better the commonwealth. I really value that and I see that in Representative Manny Tenorio. Just like Eve and even the Speaker are filled with knowledge and have a very detailed debt. I challenge anybody right now to ask the Speaker, any former Representatives going as far back as the 1<sup>st</sup> Legislature and he will tell you what chairmanship that Representative was apart of. That surprises me. In fact si former Manases Borja was the chairman of what committee? Mr. Speaker?

Speaker Babauta: Which term?

Representative Ray Yumul: His first term in office? Anyways, I will cut it short. I value everybody's comments over the past few years. I really do appreciate working with every one of you guys. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Chairman Yumul. I also thank you for your humble cooperation during this term, primarily for most of the time clarifying many issues during our debate, and I thank you for your contributions. You have excelled also and the same goes with all the others equally. Your participation for the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature was very much appreciated, not only by me alone, but your entire colleagues, people you represent, and of course the people of the commonwealth. And now to my confidante, Floor Leader Pro Tem, Representative Jesus Lizama.

Floor Leader Lizama: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members, and my fellow colleagues. Allow me first to just say a few words to the people of Election Precinct #2. With the election now over, I would like to take this opportunity to bid each one of you Farewell, and express my sincerest appreciation for the great opportunity you have given me in the House of Representatives. As most of you already know, throughout my terms in the Legislature, I have always trust you and have placed me as your – and have used that as a standard to guide my decision on the floor of the Lower House. Day in and day out, I gave it my best to improve the lives of our people and I trust that my efforts contributed positively towards that goal. To all Precinct Club, Committee Chairman, Officers, and members, I salute you all and say Si Yu'us Ma'ase', Oloomwaay. *Thank you para todus ni gineftao yan animun miyu.* I extend my deepest appreciation *yan un dankolo na si yu'us ma'ase'* to all my office staff for their hard work during my term. To LB Director, Deputy Director, House Clerk, Journal Clerk, Legislative Assistant, Legal Counsels, and of course the entire LB Staff; *Si yu'us ma'ase.* To you, Mr. Speaker, thank you and *si yu'us ma'ase* for your Leadership in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. To my Vice-Speaker, my Vice-Chairman, and Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare; I thank you all most especially for the Committee members for your hard work. To my wife, Trinie and our children, I will be forever grateful for their unselfish support you have all extended to me during my two terms in the House of Representatives. Mr. Speaker, and to all the members, I take this new chapter in my life. I want to assure you that I will always be ready and enable to assist our people in one way or another. Mr. Speaker, *sedi ha yu un ratutu.* *Eyi, Mr. Speaker,* to my colleague, Representative Aldan from the island of Tinian, with no offense Mr. Speaker, from yesterday's session, with no offense, on that gaming bill. *Ti hu chogui eyu Mr. Speaker put para baihu espanta eyu siha na Investors ni para hu fan halom guiya Tinian. Hu cha'chagi manu sina para baihu chogui para i tano-ta guini guiya Saipan. Entri mas Mr. Speaker, i revenue or i investment. Put enao na rason Mr. Speaker talu un biahi with no offense to our colleague from the island of Tinian. Sa kuno mohon ta pasa eyu Mr. Speaker, to my colleague precinct 4, an manao hao katan nai, way back esti. Un attan eyi La Fiesta, guaha eyi ilek-na fabulous nai sa bonitutu. Pagu nai anai manao hao guatu siempre ilek-mu lilos diablus sa otu kakona. Lao enao ha Mr. Speaker and once again to all the members, farewell, Si Yu'us Ma'ase', Oloomwaay, yan Thank you. Guohu si Representative Jesus San Nicolas Lizama.*

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Chairman Lizama. There is no doubt too that you as Chairman of H.E.W have excelled tremendously in this term. Although not vocally as the others, but you have apostles that joins you in that form. Silently, you have worked hard to move out important legislation such as the Medical Professional Licensing Board that was recreated, and other important issues that deals with Health, Welfare, and primarily our Education system. I thank you for your contribution for the past two years and also the previous term. I ask that you continue to inform us of any important issues that require an immediate attention of the legislative body. I would assure you my colleague that I will be there, and of course all of us will be here to listen to your comments in respect to various issues concerning our people. I thank you for your contributions not only to our people of Chalan Kanoa and Susupe, As Lito, As Perdido, Fina Sisu for that matter – your achievement and accomplishment that benefits our people of the Commonwealth. Wish you well and on the same note urge you to finish your project in your farm so that we can probably bump into your place once in a while for hot lunch. Thank you. Now I recognize our able and distinguish Chairwoman Representative Jacinta Kaipat.

Representative Kaipat: I asked my staff to pass out some hugs and kisses. I figured that since Representative Torres had passed out some green oranges that we would follow that up with these sweets because it does reflect my feeling right now. It is kind of bitter sweet isn't it? We are here on our last day and for the last time. I was trying to vie for one of those awards of being one of the quietest ones here but I guess you guys aren't going to award me that. Mr. Speaker and my distinguish colleagues; there are so many people here to thank. Let me start first with the wonderful people of Precinct 1. Those who voted for me and put me here on this chair, I will always be grateful and truly honored to serve the community and I will continue to do that. This year marks the tenth year that I had return to the Commonwealth. After being gone for about twenty (20) years and sitting up here, and being a lawmaker is probably one of the last things that I would ever do, although people have come over to me and asked me to run. Some of you knew my late Father, who was a lawmaker and represented the Northern Islands. We were in Pagan when his life was cut short thirty four (34) years ago. I recognize that putting my family through the political arena, is not something I took lightly. I do appreciate all the support that they had given me especially my mother and my siblings. We were very young when my father was killed; I was ten years old at the time. My mother was pregnant and there were younger kids. So it was a big struggle for us and the thought of leaving our Island and going off to further my education perhaps getting a better education is what sustained me so I could come back and help contribute to improve the lives of our people here in the Commonwealth. I hope I have made a difference up here. I am glad to be here to share that experience with all of you in whatever small way that I have contributed. Mr. Speaker, it is really important – a ship can sink if it does not have the leadership and the crew acting in units. And there are times when we had not shown that unity, but ultimately in the end when it came down to representing the interest of our people, there is no doubt that we always manage to find ourselves back in line helping, working, reaching across the isle. When I speak about the type of people you need to succeed, I would remise if I do not recognize my truly fantastic staff. I started out with more than Dennis and Daisy but they are the only two that I have today. They have been with me, working steadily, giving their best, and they have done more than I ever asked of any staff. When we have had to ask them to cut their own meager salaries they have done that, resisted any type of temptation to ask for raises at the time when we so badly need resources. So Daisy and Dennis, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase', for all the work and all the loyalty, excellent work. There is a saying about good people, there are always others always line up who want to take you on, so I am very privileged, Thank you Daisy and Dennis. The Bureau staff, I know that I worked closely with some of you such as Ian, Elaine, and Melchor. I had the pleasure on working with you all a lot closer than I had with the others. But make no doubt about it, I

appreciate all the work, the work that every single Bureau staff has given our office. Ian, you definitely are an “institution” and I know my term has ran out, but I would like to verbally recognize you and hope the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature would give you a resolution recognize your accomplishments. I would really appreciate that. I want to thank our colleagues at the Senate, our friends who have also through the last couple of years worked with us. We have not always seen eye to eye but that is what being a lawmaker is, sometimes you agree, sometimes you do not agree. I thank you, each and every single one of you the privilege of working with you. My colleagues here in the House, let me just say that, I have no regrets working, collaborating, and debating with you all. I was very happy with the JGO staff and JGO Committee Members that I was able to work with past couple of years. The Minority Leader and the others can always be counted on to debate and help improve the loss. That is what it’s all about and then when we bring those laws out here on the floor, I knew that I could always count on each of you to make the discussion more fruitful and pass better laws. If there are a few things I would like to request, if I may, I know most of you have more experience than I do as a lawmaker, but I would continue to invite you to leave your offices and go out, go to the front lines, and see what is happening out there. And really get the benefit of the people who are on the front line, not just the benefit of the bosses, and that is where you really find out the truth of what is really happening. The real people down there, the lower ranks I would say. I know that we worked on some really big issues, big laws, when the Natural Resources Committee was working on public hearing to dismantle M.P.L.A. There were a lot of emotion writings on that, and that was quite an experience. And of course, our Labor bill. That public law 15-108, despite everything else that people have said about it, I continue to believe that, that is a landmark Reform Bill. I want to thank each and every single one of you for all you did to help me work on that legislation to pass it. Someone thought that I was trying to get that pass so I would have a legacy to leave behind, but for me, it was never about legacy, it’s about improving things. It is about fixing broken things. Having come from that particular area, I was more privy to a lot of things that many of you, many of our people, and many of our critics are not aware of, but needed to be done. A lot of loop holes were closed and I didn’t do that just for the locals, I did that for every one. Even businesses were not aware and even the guest workers were here, who may not appreciate that law today. But the whole intent was to improve things so we all can work side by side, live together cause let me tell you, as we all know over the years, it doesn’t matter nationality you are, if the law is broken here, who gets the black eye? It’s the people of the Commonwealth. That’s what made the difference for me when I worked on that. Many of you worked on it, there was a Task Force who worked on it for many months and again I thank every one who put in all the hard work. I want to thank the Administration also and the Governor for signing that into law. Mr. Speaker, obviously there are so many things said about you that I could not dispute. But one of my favorite things I want to say about you is, it is true that you are the consignment mediator and that is because even though you willed at the power, you continued to let the members be participants in the process and that is a very good thing. It shows a leader who is confident in himself to allow others to participate in the leadership. I personally thank you for that, I thank you, I felt that you have given me the respect that the people from Precinct One would like me to have as a Representative, and even the people of the commonwealth. I thank all my colleagues in here because yes, although I am out numbered in here, I will say this again, I didn’t feel that was a disadvantage. You have accorded me the respect and I thank you all so much for that. Vice-Speaker, there are so many times where I turn to my right and I would ask you...What’s going on? And I want to thank you for being such a good mentor among the Speaker and everyone else. There is a lot of learning that went on here and I continued to learn. Thank you so much and un dangkulu na Si Yu’us Ma’ase’ and please continue to mentor me as I continue to visit you. My body, Representative Waki, there is many more good than just a bump on the road. In that relationship, you can be counted on and you are definitely a formidable debater. You talk about the bottom line

and you advance the business interest. But I tell you what, you are very articulate and I admire that. Representative Dela Cruz, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of your PUTC Committee and I appreciate and enjoyed working with you. And to my Niao, Representative Aldan, your passion for district, your Senatorial District comes through. Even though you are one person, I could also say that about Representative Ogo. You may be one Representative, each of you representing your districts, but you sure do debate as if you were ten. That's something to be said because of your passion that comes through in advocating for your respective senatorial district, and I appreciate that. To my fellow retiree, Representative Lizama, you amaze me. I have heard more from you in the last couple of weeks than in the last couple of years. But again, you stepped in and became a terrific floor pro tem and I appreciate all that you have done to make help our session go smoothly. I always appreciate your good cheer and sense of humor. To Representative Taman, I cannot wait for your album to be released, so you can count on me for a sale. Thank you and I know this is also your first term as well as mine. I appreciate the times that we may not have always agreed, but we respect each other, and that is what it is all about. To the Minority Leader, I have really appreciated, talking about someone who is a strong leader and articulates. You know the issues. You can always be counted on to bring them out. You helped enlightened me and always enjoyed the debates and the ways you helped to make our bills better. Even though sometimes you guys complain, I kept JGO. But thank you anyway. To Representative Torres, you always make things interesting. Preba Hao...Thank you for making sure we are not bored. And to my brother here, Representative Tebuteb, Thank you so much. I think that your speech was more humorous. I wish that you had not stop at only those of us that was out going or leaving because really it was spot on with your observations. No wonder why you have been one of the quiet ones. You have been storing away those nuggets of information to get everyone. Thank you for that. Representative Tenorio, you have been...I think one of the memories that I would take with me when I leave here, is one time when I was anticipating one of your hot bills to come around. When it came to that, I could not wait to shoot it down. When it finally came to that part, you put your hands up to your face, and the whole legislature erupted in laughter. I will always remember you for that with affection. We have debated and sometimes things get testy but ultimately there is respect for each other, and the bottom is you recognized what is best for our people. Leave the self interest out; always put the interest of our people first. So again, thank you all for this opportunity. I don't know where I will be next time around but it's been a blast and I thank you so much.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Chairwoman. Again you have excelled more than I expect. Having the experience of being a Hearing Officer, your background in education, and you has lightened the work with the committee. That is one of the reasons I chose you to be the head of the JGO Committee. You are articulate and have defended a lot of bills that have managed to pass this House belonging to members of the House; in defending those bills. Thank you for your promptness in getting those bills out. One thing for sure, this legislature has finally initiated the long awaited Labor Reform Bill. I applaud you, your members of the committee, and the House for doing so. I wish you luck in your endeavors and please to all of us that would be coming back; we are here to continue to invite you for your pro-brono comments and suggestions. We do need help from individuals like you, Chairman Waki, Chairman Lizama, Representative Manny Tenorio, Representative Benjamin Seman, and the others; please come and visit us once in a while. I thank you for the professional and social relationship we have established together for the period of two years. Thank for your graciousness in accepting a lot of my comments in respect to deliberations of issues in this Chamber. Thank you so much and I wish you well and the family. I would like to recognize the Minority Leader.

Representative Palacios: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Gee I feel so honored. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, we closed the chapter in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature, and we can entitle it - we are in title to give it a title mutual respect. You know the first six months as Representative Ogo has stated, was contentious. That is almost natural. I guess in...politics but as we move a long and each of us settle in to the passion of doing what is right individually in our hearts. I think you see the diversion views come together. I debated passionately just as every one of us debated passionately. Some were verbally, some took more time than others to explain their views, but in the end when we take the vote, we voted with our hearts for our people. Mr. Speaker, there is no question that your Leadership despite the many different views and differing respective on the issues that came before this legislature, it really steered us and it is an impediment of really what civility is. You made sure that everybody was given the chance to express their views on the floor. In the end, you did have control, obvious control and confident in your ability to make sure that when the house deliberates does so in a civil and honorable manner. I have no regrets. I know in some quarters, the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature was blamed for everything. We were blamed for the problems from CUC, from the problems of our schools, and from the problems of our hospitals. It seems to always filter, for some reasons it kind of filters more to the House of Representative because of the number of members in the House. But you know that I take comfort in walking away when we close this booth. I would say that the 15<sup>th</sup> legislature was, and tried its best in fact result some of the outstanding issues that have accumulated and compounded itself over bad policy making, not to our own doing. There were a lot of bad policies that we had that were instigated in the past and ended up on the lap of the members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature. We dealt with it I believe in the best we could. I always tried to look at everyone across the isle straight in the eye and look at their hearts when I debate. Or when I try to make my eighth votes, the minority votes become ten. I look at the Vice-Speaker, figure how and what would make this guy tick, so I can at least get his vote for one legislation for the minority. Then he does this, "okay". I look at Representative Kaipat and I know that the only way to get her button to be passionate is to be very passionate. But Representative Waki, he has got the toughest vote - very hard to...I tried. Mr. Speaker, did you know how I would get Representative Ada's vote? I text him, no it's a joke. I know that we laugh today but we did our best. I have no regrets serving you all with mutual respect. I walk away with mutual respect for each and everyone of you. Talents are useless, college, and individual talents are useless in a group or organization if you cannot pull the talents and create synergy towards a common objective. I know I have raised some ire personal issues, but it was never my intent to do that so we can air it out. I am very appreciative and grateful of these wonderful life experiences in the last 2 years. To those that are not returning, I commend you for the work you have done for the last 2 years. Our doors will be open; it will always be open for recommendations and suggestions. To those who are returning, I think there is nine (9) of us that is returning if I am not mistaken.

Speaker Babauta: I do not know but I have 9 already.

Representative Palacios: To the 9 of us that are returning on the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, we will carry over some of the agenda's that we have left on unaddressed. Let us take that in with our new colleagues in the upcoming 16<sup>th</sup> legislature and show them that despite the diversion views that we will have, it is not going to 18 members anymore, it's going to be 20. We can show them that we have worked on it on the 15<sup>th</sup> and we can continue on the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. To Mr. Speaker, thank you. To all the Minority members, I tell you it wasn't easy on getting seven other points of views also. When we come in here, we pretend we got our game face on, but we would always look around cause someone always has an issue with the particular position we take. We put on our game face and then say... Thank you very much for the 2 year of productive experience, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: The 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature has produced approximately 124 public laws. Not counting the local laws and the many committee reports that have been executed by this House. There were many compromising conferences that I have manage to engage; both the majority and the minority members to participate. Thank you for your genuine support to my office and that of the members of the majority group. I hope you and I will continue to display this relationship in the upcoming 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature. I guess its 1:10 p.m., and I don't want to drag all the members and primarily our Bureau staff, and employees in our offices. I recognize Representative Taman.

Representative Taman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the year 2006 the first day of this 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature we were inaugurated on January 9<sup>th</sup>. It was my birthday and in this sin die session, it happened to fall on my birthday again. That is why I thank the lord for the gift of life for every one of us and I sincerely invite everyone to my birthday luncheon. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: We wish you Happy Birthday my colleague or our colleague. Before we adjourn and before we expedite this session out of the way, first I wish to extend my gratitude to President Mendiola, and members of the Senate for recognizing the importance of having all these legislative issues out of the way of this Legislature. I thank them for pursuing the passage of many vital policies that we executed. Second, our able House Clerk, Evelyn who have I guess many years, over decades working the Clerks Office, Thank you for you patience that you have extended to all of the members of this House in various ways. To the Legal Counsels, thank you for addressing the many various desires of each and every member in producing a very important piece of legislation for all of us. We thank the Legislative Bureau staff and the many committee assistance who have in one way or another have diligently perform to the respective office of the House of Representatives. Representative Florencio Deleon Guerrero requested that I extend his sincere appreciation to each and every one of us and to all of you for the past 2 years on working together. He presently is in Washington State, and he called me up yesterday to ask me to extend his congratulatory comment to the incoming members of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature and good luck to those who aren't coming back. He will be returning in two weeks.

Representative Kaipat: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I would be remised and left if I didn't congratulate those of you are coming back. I really do mean that sincerely and from the bottom of my heart. I hope your inauguration will go smoothly. And bare in mind that usually we have a lot of visitors and dignitaries here and it sure would be great if we could have a very happy and positive inauguration. So that would be my wish to all of you to have a great one and congratulations again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you, Chairwoman. I will continue a little bit. I wish to express my unending and humble gratitude to each and every one of you for making my duty and responsibility as a Speaker of this 15<sup>th</sup> House more enjoyable, enlightening, and of course you have relieve many of my emotions up here, by allowing each and every member to participate in various differences of issues. Sometimes when I look at my left, my right, then look up at the front, and I said Gee okay short recess. This is how we can deal with this. I sincerely appreciate the – of each and every one of you in dealing and coming to a compromising solution on addressing various legislations. I thank you for you positive demeanor, your discipline in this Chamber, as Representative Joseph Guerrero once said, although at times he may be hard but he does ask for forgiveness if one takes it personally. I always tell members, primarily freshmen members, in politics that the worse campaign have yet to come and that is on Inauguration Day and forth on. Meaning, you do not have a party in this Chamber once you are in. You have issues to do for the community. We all know that all of us are elected in different districts and every district have different needs. So eventually,

things like this will happen especially during Delegation Session. That is when you see the non-partisan argument of cutting the pie fairly and evenly, but I believe in prioritizing based on our districts needs. I will continue to support that philosophy. Well, it is time of the day that we need to call it off. I will be remiss if I do not thank the members of the Leadership for your trust and confidence in me, leading you all and in this house to this conclusion in this chapter in our political life. Once again, the Bureau does sufficient invitation to invite all of you, but as the Speaker of this House, and the incoming Speaker joins me, in inviting each and every one of you to participate and I hope you all find the time to be with us in this Solemn Ceremony on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Also, we have Inaugural Mass at 3 p.m. on Saturday. So you are all welcome. As someone mentioned earlier, not only does it commensurate with Representative Taman's Birthday, but the incoming Speaker, Minority Leader Palacios; my office and the staff have coordinate lunch that is practically becoming a *merienda* at this time. I thank the staff and the members that have contributed to this special day for all of us members, staff, and of course the Legislative Bureau employees. Last but not the least, I thank the members of the CNMI Media, KMCV, Marianas Variety, Saipan Tribune, and various columnist; who have in one way or another delivered information to our people. I will let the members be the judge if they are right or wrong. But I thank the media for being here for almost practically on every session to get information so that they can disseminate what the Legislature have done on that specific day and what they intend to do on the next day. I thank you for your contributions in offering information's to our commonwealth people. That being said, I enjoy it, every bit of it, and in many times I laugh within myself, I get mad within myself, but never did you ever see my face in this Chamber get pissed at someone for the longest period of time. I enjoy every bit of it that I am up here sharing parliamentary procedures and of course, directing this House on a very fruitful conclusion, and let us give ourselves a big round of applause. Let me recognize Representative Manny Tenorio.

Representative Tenorio: Mr. Speaker, I was just going to ask you if you can personally start the birthday song for outgoing....

Speaker Babauta: Definitely. Before, I recognize the motion to adjourn on the Birthday day song, may I invite the incoming Speaker, Mr. Arnold I. Palacios to join me up here on singing the birthday song. I am actually presenting the keys to the office of the Speaker.

Representative Palacios: He wants to give me this too.

Speaker Babauta: And I will ask him to sit with me here for the adjournment.

Representative Yumul: Mr. Speaker, I think if I am not out of order, I would be remiss if you did not invite your Vice-Speaker up there with you.

Speaker Babauta: Definitely, Vice-Speaker...

Representative Taman: And the pro tem Floor Leader

Representative Torres: Mr. Speaker just to remind that before we scatter here, you need to say a prayer for the grace...

Speaker Babauta: Of course, let us adjourn, sing the Happy Birthday song, and then we shall all say grace. Okay? We are inviting also the incoming Vice-Speaker, Representative Joseph Deleon Guerrero. Please, I ask all members to have a seat after the adjournment so we can sing a beautiful

happy birthday song to our departing Representative Candy Taman and say grace. Floor Leader, motion to adjourn Sine Die.

Floor Leader Lizama: Mr. Speaker before I do that, may I ask the incoming Speaker if I may take my name plate with me.

Speaker Babauta: Oh to take your name plate?

Floor Leader Lizama: Yes.

Speaker Babauta: He has no authority, I will grant you that.

Floor Leader Lizama: I am Mr. Speaker.

Representative Palacios: You are more than welcome.

Speaker Babauta: Just because he is from the same district one. Okay Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Lizama: Motion to adjourn, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: Motion to adjourn Sine Die has been seconded, discussion on the motion. This House adjourns Sine Die until next week on January 14, 2008. Please rise for a birthday song for our Representative Candido Taman. May I ask the female vocalist to lead the birthday song, Chairwoman Kaipat.

All members singing Happy Birthday lead by Representative Jacinta Kaipat

Speaker Babauta: May I ask now our distinguished Chairman, Representative Waki to please say Grace.

Representative Waki: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

All members recited Grace led by Representative Absalon Waki Jr.

### **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Floor Leader Pro Tem Lizama: I moved to adjourn sine die.

The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

The House of Representatives of the Fifteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature adjourned *sine die* at 1:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Journal Clerk, House of Representatives

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**APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS**

**FIRST APPEARANCE:** First Appearance of a local bill is the day of introduction

**SECOND APPEARANCE:** NONE

**THIRD APPEARANCE:**

H. L. B. NO. 15-75: To amend Saipan Local Law 15-12; and for other purposes. (Rep. Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero +7)