



House Journal

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2008

ADOPTED:
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Second Day

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

The House of Representatives of the Sixteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened in its Second Day, First Regular Session on Tuesday, January 22, 2008, at 2:10 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan.

The Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, I have a prayer that I would like to read aloud so that some of us may join me in what I am praying for.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: If there is no objection.

The members did not object.

Representative Stanley Torres: It is entitled: "*Prepa Hao* Legislative Prayer." Lord, grant us the wisdom and courage to do what is right and good for our constituents, i taotao-ta, and to standby their undertaking of federalization of the CNMI so that we all prevail. Amen.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll and nineteen members were present; Representative Oscar M. Babauta was excused.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

None

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

H. B. NO. 16-1: A Bill for an Act to amend the Commonwealth Code to take into account the Rota Casino Initiative recently enacted by the voters of the First Senatorial District; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Representative Victor B. Hocog

Referred to: Committee on Ways and Means, and Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations

H. B. NO. 16-2: A Bill for an Act to amend Public Law 15-8 to reallocate poker license fees to each senatorial district; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Representative Victor B. Hocog

Referred to: Committee on Ways and Means

H. B. NO. 16-3: A Bill for an Act to amend 4 CMC § 1301 to earmark Gross Receipts Taxes Collect from gambling establishments in the First Senatorial District so they may be appropriated by the Legislative Delegation from the Third Senatorial District; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Representative Victor B. Hocog

Referred to: Committee on Ways and Means

H. B. NO. 16-4: A Bill for an Act to amend Public Law 12-61 governing the deposit security required of funds of the CNMI Government and its various agencies, including autonomous entities; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero

Referred to: Committee on Commerce and Tourism

Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero: Mr. Speaker, if anybody wishes to co-sponsor this bill, I have no objection. Thank you.

H. B. NO. 16-5: A Bill for an Act to amend 4 CMC § 1204 to increase the amount of tax imposed by 4 CMC §§ 1201 and 1202, the Wage and Salaries and Earnings Taxes; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Representative Justo S. Quitugua

Referred to: Committee on Ways and Means

Representative Quitugua: Likewise, Mr. Speaker, any member who wants to be a co-sponsor is welcome. Thank you.

H. B. NO. 16-6: A Bill for an Act to amend authorize the assessment of parking meter fees, to require segregation of fees collected by senatorial district, and to authorize local appropriation of those fees.

Offered by: Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb

Referred to: Committee on Ways and Means

Representative Tebuteb: May I ask the indulgence of the member to allow the clerk to change “Be it enacted by the Sixteenth” instead of “Fifteenth”. I was in a hurry to file this bill, I overlooked it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Clerk, please take note of those technical corrections. Thank you.

H. B. NO. 16-7: A Bill for an Act to include the electrical system upgrade for the Tinian Junior and Senior High School under the funding appropriated under Public Law 12-69; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Representative Edwin P. Aldan

Referred to: Committee on Ways and Means

H. B. NO. 16-8: To amend 9 CMC § 5657 regarding accessible parking for persons with disabilities; and for other purposes.

Offered by: Representative Stanley T. McGinnis Torres

Referred to: Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, it is open for anybody who wish to co-sponsor this bill.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

H. RES. NO. 16-3: A House Resolution to acknowledge and commend Guam Radio Station KUAM, ISLA 63 (630 AM) and the Calvo Brothers and Family for actively promoting the advancement of the Chamorro language and culture through their local music and programming; and to kindly request to include the Carolinian language and culture through their music and programming; and most importantly to humbly request to increase the ISLA 63 power transmission to penetrate and to reach the entire CNMI, as far north to the islands of Pagan and Asuncion.

Offered by: Representative Stanley T. McGinnis Torres

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, if I may read the resolution in its entirety so that the members may understand it, if there is no objection.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I recognize Representative Hofschneider.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, can we just get a copy?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Is that an unnumbered resolution?

Representative Stanley Torres: It is unnumbered.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Can we avail that resolution to the clerk so that we have it numbered and reproduced so that everyone can take a look at the resolution?

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, if there is no objection, can the resolution be introduced by the Committee of the Whole?

Representative Benavente: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recommend that the representative allow the members sign off under their discretion rather than forcing everyone's signature on the resolution.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I will do that. I think we will allow for the discretion of each member to co-sponsor the resolution.

H. R. NO. 16-4: A House Resolution to support the Honorable Governor Benigno R. Fitial's commitment to dedicating public lands in Koblerville for the development of soccer fields.

Offered by: Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb

H. C. R. NO. 16-1: A House Concurrent Resolution to approve revenues and resources of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as identified pursuant to Article III, Section 9(a) of the Constitution, as amended, and 1 CMC Division 7, for Fiscal Year 2008, beginning October 1, 2007, and ending on September 30, 2008.

Offered by: Representative Ray N. Yumul and six others

Representative Yumul: Mr. Speaker, if there is no objection, I would like to place it on today's calendar for First Reading only.

The members did not object.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: There being no objection, so ordered. The resolution will be placed on today's Resolution Calendar for a brief discussion.

H. J. R. NO. 16-1: A House Joint Resolution to approve two additional full-time employees (FTE's) for the House of Representatives to comply with the CNMI Supreme Court's decision in *In Re Pangelinan*, 2007 MP 14, which increased the membership of the House of Representatives from eighteen to twenty members.

Offered by: Representative Heinz S. Hofschneider and three others

Representative Hofschneider: I welcome anybody who wants to co-sponsor.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

GOV. COMM. 16-1: (1/9/08) A copy of Governor's Directive No. 263 (CUC employee's reduction of work hours and 10% salary reduction).

GOV. COMM. 16-2: (1/14/08) A copy of Governor's Directive No. 264 (Authorizing Negotiation with Mobil Oil Marianas, Inc. regarding Contract No. CUC-PG-07-C021).

GOV. COMM. 16-3: (1/9/08) Certification of vacant position (Physician – Radiology) at the Department of Public Health.

GOV. COMM. 16-4: (1/9/08) Certification of vacant positions (Labor Law Enforcement Trainees) at the Department of Labor.

GOV. COMM. 16-5: (1/14/08) Submitting the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2007.

GOV. COMM. 16-6: (12/26/07) Extension of the Declaration of Emergency for the Island of Anatahan.

GOV. COMM. 16-7: (1/17/08) From Acting Governor Villagomez informing the House that he signed into law H. L. B. NO. 15-75, D1 (To amend SLL 15-12). *Became Saipan Local Law 15-32.*

GOV. COMM. 16-8: (1/16/08) From Acting Governor Villagomez informing the House that he signed into law S. B. NO. 15-15 (Mandatory Insurance for Individuals with Diabetes). *Became Public Law 15-125.*

GOV. COMM. 16-9: (1/14/08) Certification for annual salary in excess of \$50,000 for Dr. Patrick J. Tong.

GOV. COMM. 16-10: (1/14/08) Certification of vacant positions at the Department of Public Health.

GOV. COMM. 16-11: (1/17/08) From Acting Governor Villagomez informing the House that he signed into law H. L. B. NO. 15-19, SNILD S1, D1 (To appropriate \$1,200,000 the payment of salaries of certain government employees). *Became Saipan Local Law 15-31.*

The Chair recognized Representative Hofschneider.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker and members, I am reiterating what I said during the Organizational Session of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation about the local law that was signed into law on the local resources of \$1.2 Million for payment of salaries of certain government employees. Again, I raise this issue to the legal counsel to look at it carefully because I still believe, Mr. Speaker, as stated that under a continuing resolution, you can not inject additional resources without affecting the ceiling already set in place by the continuing resolution level. By way of supplemental appropriation that will kill the continuing resolution and the new supplemental level would be the rule or the guide of total expenditure for the Commonwealth. So, it is advisable that the legal counsel comes out quickly with an opinion we can share with the Administration before any is drawn down on that appropriation because that effectively affect the continuing resolution level. Unless there is money elsewhere that by way of supplemental appropriation, it would be most appropriate. But in the midst of a continuing resolution, the best is to pass a fiscal year budget. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I will take that and ask the legal counsel to come out with an opinion and to advise the body immediately, because it does have perhaps a negative implication on continuing resolution budget of the Commonwealth. So we need to address this issue immediately. For those who were not in the Saipan and Northern Islands Delegation Session this morning, one of the options is to repeal that law so that does not injure the continuing resolution of the operations of the government.

Representative Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, on the same issue, it has been brought up in the past for the legal counsel to also take a look at the legality of the delegation appropriating funds to agencies for operations and whether that is also contradicting the amount set on the general appropriation. Additionally on GOV. COMM. 16-5, it shows that the government realized about \$14,000 of surplus. This is just a recommendation perhaps for the Committee on Ways and Means Chairman to see where this money is going to because Public Law 15-15 says that any surplus will go to the General Fund to augment the employer contribution to the NMI Retirement Fund.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: That is correct.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, on the same communication, it is just following logic that when you have an existing deficit, you can not say that you have a surplus. You have to apply the constitution which specifically refers that any deficit incurred in a fiscal year must be retired within two consecutive fiscal years, subsequent fiscal years. So it behooves one to think that you have a surplus of \$14,000 when you have an impending or an existing deficit. You can not say that you have a balanced budget.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Meaning you can not say that you have a surplus. Thank you.

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

None

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

HSE. COMM. 16-2: (1/16/08) From NR Chairman Tebuteb informing the House about the FDM briefing that is scheduled for Tuesday, January 29, 2008.

HSE. COMM. 16-3: (1/17/08) From PUTC Chairman Stanley Torres to the Speaker with regards to the composition the House PUTC Committee.

HSE. COMM. 16-4: (1/17/08) From Floor Leader Camacho informing the Speaker the he will be off-island from January 17-20, 2008.

HSE. COMM. 16-5: (1/18/08) From Minority Leader Babauta informing the Speaker that he will be off-island from January 19 to February 1, 2008.

Representative Yumul: Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit a letter from my office dated today which basically notified Acting Governor Timothy Villagomez to answer a couple of questions pertaining to the resources for Fiscal Year 2008. I would like to have this entered as a House Communication if there is no objection.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: So ordered.

Representative Yumul: Mr. Speaker, I believe all the members have a copy so there is no reason to have it duplicated except to have the House Clerk number it.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: It will be on record.

Representative Yumul's letter was entered into the records and number as House Communication 16-6.

HSE. COMM. 16-6: (1/22/08) From WM Chairman Yumul to Acting Governor Villagomez regarding the FY 2008 budgetary resources.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Hocog, you are recognized.

Representative Hocog: One oral communication to present to the members. First of all I would like to introduce individuals who are here in the gallery that perhaps can provide assistance to each senatorial district as well as to the Commonwealth if need be. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize Mr. Michael Sammartino from Independence Bank. He is the Director of Business Development and he is here with us this afternoon. If any member would like to meet Mr. Sammartino for vital projects that his agency can assist us with, he is more than willing to sit down with the members of the legislature who in one way or another have any plan that can assist our economic recovery. Another individual that I would like to recognize is Mr. Ken Moha from Commodore, Inc. in Seattle, Washington. This is an opportunity to meet with us of what they can assist the Commonwealth Government and the municipalities of the respective senatorial districts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you, Representative Hocog. Gentlemen, welcome to the House of Representatives.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

JUD. BR. COMM. 16-1: (1/7/09) Certification of vacant positions (Law Clerk, Deputy Marshall, Assistant Clerk of Court) at the Commonwealth Supreme Court.

There was no discussion under this Item.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 16-1 (1/10/08) From Zoning Board Chair Henry Hofschneider submitting the annual report for FY'07 fund expenditures.

There was no discussion under this Item.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

MISC. COMM. 16-1: (1/9/08) From Youth Congress Speaker Anita B. Hofschneider informing the House Speaker of their scheduled session for Saturday, January 19, 2008.

MISC. COMM. 16-2: (1/14/08) From Chairwoman Antonia M. Tudela informing the House that that 10th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council is duly organized to transact business.

MISC. COMM. 16-3: (1/16/08) From Chairman Antonio H. Borja, Chairman of the 12th Tinian & Aguiguan Municipal informing the House of its organization.

There was no discussion under this Item.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

None

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Just a note to the standing committees, I would like to begin to finalize the standing committee membership, so those that have not yet submitted committee assignments, I ask that we do so as soon as possible. Thank you.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Let me call for a five-minute recess.

The House recessed at 2:30 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 2:41 p.m.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: We are back to our plenary session. I recognize Representative Tebuteb.

Representative Tebuteb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, if there is no objection I would like to request to go back to Item 4, Introduction of Resolutions. I overlooked to introduce one of my resolutions.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: There is no objection.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Speaker Arnold Palacios: You may proceed.

Representative Tebuteb introduced H. R. NO. 16-2.

H. RES. NO. 16-2: A House Resolution to recognize, congratulate and commend Mr. Frank Strasheim, retired Region IX Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor – Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), for his accomplishments and extraordinary contributions to advance the protection of working men and women in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and for his unselfish service for the CNMI community as OSHA Region 9 Administrator.

Offered by: Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb

Representative Tebuteb: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask to introduce this as a Committee of the Whole and to place it on today's Resolution Calendar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Is there any objection to the Resolution being introduced by the Committee of the whole and place on today's Order of Business.

The members did not objection.

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, I am requesting to place H. R. NO. 16-3 on today's Calendar for adoption.

The members did not object.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: So ordered. I now recognize Floor Leader Camacho.

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, are we back on Item 15, Resolution Calendar?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Correct.

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

Floor Leader Camacho: Respectfully, sir, I move to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 so that we can discuss H. C. R. NO. 16-1 on First Reading.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The motion on the floor is to suspend the rule so that we can discuss H. C. R. NO. 16-1 and it has been seconded.

The motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 to place H. C. R. NO. 16-1 on the Calendar for disposition was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The motion is carried. We are now discussing H. C. R. NO. 16-1 on its First Reading.

Representative Benavente: Clarification, Mr. Speaker. We just voted on the motion to suspend the Rule, I think we now need a motion to adopt the concurrent resolution for the purpose of discussion. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The motion is to place it on first reading only. So we are going to discuss some of the issues relative to the resolution but we are not moving for final adoption.

Representative Hofschneider: Point of order.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: State your point.

Representative Hofschneider: I think what Representative Benavente is trying to make clear is that we acted on a motion to suspend a specific Rule so that we allow the discussion. Now the second motion is for the Floor Leader to move for First Reading and that opens the discussion.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: With that clarified, I need a motion for First Reading.

Floor Leader Camacho: I apologize if I dog-tailed that motion. For clarification, I move for H. C. R. NO. 16-1 to be placed on the floor for First Reading.

The motion was seconded.

H. C. R. NO. 16-1: A HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO APPROVE REVENUES AND RESOURCES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, AS IDENTIFIED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 9(A) OF THE CONSTITUTION, AS AMENDED, AND 1 CMC DIVISION 7, FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008, BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2007, AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2008.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The floor is open for discussion on the Resolution. I recognize the Chairman of Ways and Means, Representative of Ways and Means.

Representative Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. H. C. R. NO. 16-1 is before this Body today because we are trying to ascertain how we are to set the ceiling for Fiscal Year 2008 resources. It is unfortunate that I was not able to locate a communication to the House that reflects the Governor's message dated September 10 and September 12. There is difference of over \$8.6 Million in budget resources that needs to be identified. At this point, I am waiting for communication from the Lieutenant Governor's Office who is the Acting Governor to explain to this Body what figures we are to use. A month ago, the House of Representative of the Fifteenth Legislature debated and passed H. B. NO. 15-328, HD10 that drew upon a budget of \$168 Million. Now that we are in light of a subsequent communication from the Governor's Office to the Presiding Officers of September 12 that \$160,100,000.00 is the identified resources which lacks the Compact Impact Funds to the tune of \$5,171,000.00 and outside general source funding to the tune of \$3,500,000.00 as identified under Public Law 15-71. Those were omitted. At this point, I know this Body wants to move ahead and set the budget ceiling, but we want to do it so cautiously with factual information that is current and I am now just waiting on the concurrence from the Governor's Office as to what figures we are to use.

Representative Apatang: Mr. Speaker, it is kind of confusing because we are looking at two different figures. The original communication from the Governor's Office is 15-483 with a figure and the following day it was changed to another figure. So instead of going back and forth on this, we should wait until the actual communication from the Governor's Office with the clarification delivered to us so we can figure this resolution out on which is the true figure. Throwing figures back and forth is not going to do us any good. So let us get the actual figures so that we can discuss this once and for all.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: That is a well-noted statement. I think that is why Representative Yumul was trying to explain the issue.

Representative Yumul: One point that I did not include in my previous statement is the difference embedded within the Governor's communications of September 10 and September 12 is the Memorandum from the Secretary of Finance to the Special Assistant for Management and Budget. (*End of Tape 1 side A*) ...basically giving a \$160,100,000.00 FY 2008 estimated revenue that is constant. The difference between the two is the Governor submitted under the September 10 communication is schedule 1 which in addition to the Secretary of Finance's report of general fund resources of \$160,100,000.00 was the Compact Impact funding and the outside source funding. So that is what we are trying to clarify at this time. I will make a copy available to all the members who wish to have a copy of the messages, but what is disturbing to me is we are drawing upon the Office of the Senate President as the source of these two communications. The House communication is absent.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, may we have the exact funding level for continuing resolution?

Representative Yumul: The proposed or the current?

Representative Hofschneider: The current – what is the last budget level?

Representative Yumul: H. C. R. NO. 15-1 has a funding level of \$163 Million and change, I believe.

Representative Hofschneider: Can we get an accurate figure?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Short recess.

The House recessed at 2:52 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 2:54 p.m.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: We are back to plenary session. Representative Yumul, recognized.

Representative Yumul: To answer Representative Hofschneider's question, Public Law 15-71 had estimated local revenue available for Fiscal Year 2007 at \$163,260,013.00.

Representative Hofschneider: The identified resources under the NMI Constitution the Governor is required to send over declaration of revenues for proposed budget, what was the level on September 10?

Representative Yumul: \$168,771,000.

Representative Hofschneider: What was the revised declaration on September 12?

Representative Yumul: \$160,100,000.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, I think it is highly recommended the Chairman of Ways and Means also ask the Administration what significant drop in terms of the revenue collection is attributed to the drop of re-identifying it from \$168 Million to \$160 Million in two days. There must have been a dramatic drop for the Administration to revisit its declaration of \$168 Million and submit on September 12, two days thereafter, \$160 Million, which is a difference of \$8 Million. There must be a significant drop in the tax collection or a specific source of revenue that has been deleted on the September 12 communication between the Legislature and the Governor. I think that the rule is pretty consistent from the Administration's side and that is the Constitution requires that the Governor send identification of resources for a budget process, but it also gave the Governor the latitude to submit a revised revenue projection. So they are consistent with the authority of giving a September 10 and September 12 identification. Now this is an opportunity for the Governor, since the House is willing to wait and ascertain as to the validity of the \$160 Million, which is the September 12 letter re-identifying the resources, but the rule is that we follow the latest. That is the rule in resources. The Legislature shall not appropriate beyond that identification level, but we can we reduce it or appropriate less than the amount declared by the Governor for appropriations. With that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is highly recommended that we send a very specific question as to the source of income that was deleted from the September 10 letter and not included in the September 12 revised resources. It is also of note that the Fifteenth Legislature nonetheless passed a budget based on the September 10 projection. It would be interesting to some of the returning members as to what legal basis that they followed the September 10 identification and not the September 12 when they had both in their possession.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Maybe we can clarify that but before that clarification, I would like to recognize Representative Hocog.

Representative Hocog: Mr. Speaker, on the same line I think Representative Hofschneider has answered my concern as to the drastic change of revenues that in a matter two days we lost \$8.2 Million. I would like my most able and good Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means to please go and sit with the Governor or whoever is responsible with the resources identification to tell us frankly how much do we have to appropriate so that we can help them approve this budget. In line of that, I would also add that our able Chairman will invite his counterpart from the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee and jointly discuss this matter with the Governor's Office as to the real resources available for appropriation for this fiscal year.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Let me inform you that a number of us met with the Governor last Friday to discuss the budget and the resources that we have. The Governor is off-island and so as the Secretary of the Department of Finance. They will be here and available for a meeting on Thursday. So, Chairman Yumul, would schedule a meeting to clarify this issue so that we can address the concurrent resolution in our next session. I suspect that the \$8 Million, and I have a reason to

suspect, that the \$8 Million is from \$5 Million of Compact Impact, and the \$3 Million is from revenues that were migrated from outside sources or earmarked funds. Those were included in the resources identification in the September 10th communication and were therefor taken out in the September 12. Representative Hofschneider is correct that we have to deal with the latest figures that were submitted by the Administration by law. We will have to clarify this further this coming Thursday.

Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero: Mr. Speaker, you are correct about the \$8 Million, \$5 Million coming from Compact Impact and the other \$3 Million coming from outside resources. The point I want to make for the record, Mr. Speaker, is for the Compact Impact. One, they did identify it on the September 10 resources. I also want to point out that the Governor is cognizant that the House overrode a bill that he vetoed that subsequently became Public Law 15-121 that basically requires all revenues or resources be appropriated by the legislature. The Administration and the legislature may differ regarding Compact Impact funds. It is a grant and as far as the Federal government is concerned, the Executive Branch can expend those funds perhaps outside legislative appropriation, but that does not take away the fact that there is a Commonwealth law, and mind you, that bill was initially introduced in the Fourteenth Legislature by the Governor himself when he was the Speaker. He should be cognizant of that fact and in my personal opinion should be included in the resources for appropriation by the legislature. I just want to state that point for the record. Thank you.

Representative Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, it is around that time in September when the Acting Governor declared a State of Emergency for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC). Probably that is where the \$8 Million went. That issue or question can probably be answered when the Chairman of Ways and Means tries to find out what happened to the \$8 Million that disappeared from the original communication identified as resources. I remembered in one of the sessions, I think it was you, Mr. Speaker, who asked if the Governor can give the legislature the breakdown of funds reprogrammed as a result of the declaration of the state of emergency. And now with the question of the disappearance of the \$8 Million, that would answer the question that you asked previously during the Fifteenth Legislature.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Yumul is going to have to ask a lot of questions. I recognize Representative Hofschneider for the last time.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, that may sound logical that under the Executive Order the Governor is privy into dipping into the General Fund, but here is the irony. When you receive outside sources not included under P.L. 15-71 or FY'07 Budget, you cannot expend that. You have it identify that in a subsequent year. Two sources – one, I keep hearing about cover over, this is tax that is returned to the Commonwealth. That is a new source of income, a new source of resources. To use that, you need to pass through the legislature and the legislature shall first bless that for that money, however the amount is, in order for them to dole out the refunds and the rebates if that was the intended purpose and applied to. Two, the Compact Impact, if it is not included in P.L. 15-71 you cannot dip into it. The outside sources, as referred to, you must clearly identify what outside resources in order for you to send to the legislature for appropriation, so those new incomes that are outside P.L. 15-71, they now have authority to use that in a continuing resolution. So long as the level continues to maintain itself at \$168 Million, you cannot touch that. If you want to touch it, then a supplemental budget must be sent over for appropriation. Those are new sources that have been identified on September 10, but disappeared on September 12.

Representative Benavente: Mr. Speaker, rather than continue to guess as to what happened with the \$8 Million, we have already scheduled a meeting with the Secretary of the Department of Finance for Thursday. I truly believe that even though it is necessary for us to expedite the process of adopting the concurrent resolution and thereby putting a budget together, we need to scrutinize this concurrent resolution. We need to have this hearing and that is the normal process. So, I would like to recommend that we hold off any further discussion and ask those questions to the Secretary when we meet on Thursday. Thank you.

Representative Sablan: Just to clarify, is this meeting on Thursday with the entire body?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: No, I have asked the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means and the members of the Committee to meet with the Governor and most likely the Secretary of the Department of Finance to get the information from them and if there is a change from the \$160 Million level, then we will need a formal communication from the Governor so stating that.

Representative Sablan: And I realized, Mr. Speaker, that the Committees are not finalized yet, but can other members request to be included? I would like to be one of them.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I will leave that to the discretion of Representative Yumul. Let me order you to include Representative Sablan in your negotiating committee.

Representative Yumul: So ordered.

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, you touched on the point about whether or not the September 10 or September 12 are only two communications sent over to the House. We need to find out whether there are other communications that indicate different numbers than what is now before this body before we can even assess.

Representative Yumul: Mr. Speaker, just to touch on Representative Hofschneider's comments about the cover over. As we are aware of if the Administration does not pay refunds or rebated at the end of the fiscal year, I believe that adds on to the cumulative deficit of the government. Therefore, if this \$20 Million did, which it did, get disbursed, then I am pretty sure coming down the pipeline there is going to be a communication from the Secretary of the Department of Finance saying that there is a \$20 Million reduction in the cumulative deficit. Therefore, answering your question from the 15th Legislature as to what had happened to that.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Before we get to far into the cover over issue, let us dispose of the motion to adopt H. C. R. NO. 16-1 on First Reading. Is that the motion that is on the Floor?

Floor Leader Camacho: That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

Representative Benavente: Mr. Speaker, I believe there might be a mistake in the process. Can you just call for a short recess and verify with the Counsel and the Clerk on our action?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Short recess.

The House recessed at 3:10 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 3:14 p.m.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: We are back in plenary session. I am going to rule that we will just suspend action on the resolution itself. We will suspend discussion and action pending the meeting of the members of the Committee, the Governor, and the Secretary of the Department of Finance. We need to get all the information in order to further discuss and dispose of this Concurrent Resolution. Is there any objection to that.

Members voiced “no objection.”

Speaker Arnold Palacios: So the Chair rules that that is what it is going to be.

Representative Hofschneider: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. You are out of order. That is the domain of the Floor Leader, so that we do not set precedence.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Because there was no objection raised to the recommendation, that is why I went ahead and ruled. I do not mean to impose or say that I am the rule, but I am just consenting to everyone. Now, is there any other issue? Representative Hofschneider earlier mentioned the issue of the cover over and Representative Yumul also commented on this particular issue. This a very important issue that needs to be resolved between the Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch in terms of how the cover over tax issue has to be addressed. Just so you are informed, I have asked our legal counsel to look into this particular issue and do a legal research. I know that we attempted to do that at the tail-end of the 15th Legislature, but this is an issue that is carrying itself over to the 16th Legislature and it will and is now on our table to resolve with the Administration. The legal counsel will submit a report to this body on this particular. At that point, we can decide how to pursue it, if you may. Is that okay, Representatives Yumul and Hofschneider?

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear. I am not rising for the sake of raising cover over, but to the remarks made by Representative Quitugua as to the assumption of where the \$8 Million went, unappropriated funds can not be used. Unappropriated funds, whether it be cover over, Compact Impact or outside sources, without the legislature, it is very clear in the NMI Constitution that you can not just arbitrarily rule and take money unappropriated by the legislature and defray however priority they may seem appropriate at that time to pay for fuel or otherwise. The point is the Constitution gives us the prescription and in reference to his remark and the assumption that they may have used that money to purchase fuel. So be it, Mr. Speaker. The point is unappropriated may not be expended under the Constitution of the Commonwealth, period. We need to bless it before they start expending a penny.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: So we will wait for the report from the legal counsel and address the issue once we get the legal guidance. Anymore resolutions to adopt?

Representative Hocog: Mr. Speaker, the statement made by Representative Hofschneider about revenues that are identified new, unappropriated, after knowing that it has been expended, what can this legislature do about that? It was expended before appropriation, it was not authorized. May I ask my good colleagues that we memorialize what was used and provide the legislature what is the balance of what is unused so we can be in service with the Administration? At this time, Mr. Speaker, the cover over that Representative Hofschneider is claiming needing to be appropriated has been expended. It has been expended, Mr. Speaker. Are we meaning to say that the Administration

has expended those moneys illegally and here we are sitting that have the ultimate authority to legislate appropriation for usage of funds distribution in any which way that it is appropriated? So what I ask and what is needed now is perhaps we can memorialize the funds that are already expended and disclose the balance so that we can proceed and assist the Administration with those funds that have been retrieved supposedly it is not for fuel, but for other purposes.

Representative Hofschneider: Simply put, Mr. Speaker and members, I think that the remedy is judicial remedy. It is very obvious. To memorialize after a fact is in fact condoning repeated action. What other expenditures have not been shared or known of this body. I remember, Mr. Speaker, in the 13th Legislature there was an amendment added to the tax provision whereby anyone dipping his hands in the cookie jar for tax refunds or tax rebates becomes a criminal offense. We passed that law simply to safeguard the abuses on reserving as required by law for refunds of those taxpayers in the most appropriate time. Now one thinks that the cover over may go in and supplement the annual escrow an obligation to start putting in anticipated refund at the end of the year. One may say and can make the argument that fits the mold that the cover over was coming out of the escrow which is prohibited from being dipped into and defray the cost of operations of government. But if logically you remove that cover over and ask in the midst of a fiscal year if you have deposited as required under the law for the anticipated tax refund year. If the answer is yes, then where did it go if you used the cover over to pay out the refunds and rebated. And logically, you can turn it around and say if you did not use cover over for refunds and rebates, can you show us the ledger that in fact you have been following the law in putting aside into the escrow for the anticipated timely issuance of refunds and rebates. On two fronts this body may conclude that one of the sourced is illegally unappropriated and expended.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Is that clarified, Representative Hocog?

Representative Hocog: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think Representative Hofschneider has a point, but there are times too that we cannot ask those constituents who have received their rebates to return those payments to the government for appropriation. It will be a good gesture from this honorable House to probably ask the Secretary of the Department of Finance how much was paid out for those rebates and probably memorialize those to avoid future legal argument as our economic state of finances are at stake and we cannot afford a legal battle. I think that inadvertent or oversight of the Administration, this legislature, Mr. Speaker, I believe can memorialize the Governor's action for the benefit our constituents. But to ensure, I agree with Representative Hofschneider that we should be checking from time to time whether there is contribution made or accounts being place for the future tax rebates to our constituents. So I ask my fellow colleagues to be humble and chilled out and let us memorialize the action. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Let me reiterate I have instructed the counsel to look into the issue and report to the House so that then we can discuss what options we do have and how to proceed in addressing this issue today and even in the future. We need to lay the foundation and the groundwork because Representative Hofschneider is correct we do have a law which gives a rather stiff penalty for misappropriations of funds from the rebate escrow account.

Representative Sablan: Mr. Speaker, I just like to state for the record that as one of the newest and youngest of this body (*End of tape 1, side B*) (*Beginning Tape 2, side A*)would ask any of us to ignore a serious issue such as this. Thank you.

Representative Reyes: Mr. Speaker, is the government getting audited, and how often does the government get audited. My point is I think these are likely to be spotted by the auditors. Are we getting the audit reports or none at all, or when was the last time? Perhaps to the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means a better scrutiny on the budget submitted by the Governor. I wish we just had more time to look at the budget. We are all facing difficult times and we are going to rush it out, but I think we can all do this together by working together. I think it is utmost necessary that a better line of communication be established between this house and the administration together with the Senate. It appears that we find ourselves discussing a lot of items that needs some answers. I think once we have established that line of communication downpad with figure down pad, the whole body would be pretty much unanimous into moving forward. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Thank you for those thoughts. Mr. Floor Leader, next resolution.

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, I move for the First Reading of H. R. NO. 16-3 submitted by Representative Stanley Torres.

The motion was seconded.

H. RES. NO. 16-3: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND COMMEND GUAM RADIO STATION KUAM, ISLA 63 (630 AM) AND THE CALVO BROTHERS AND FAMILY FOR ACTIVELY PROMOTING THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE CHAMORRO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE THROUGH THEIR LOCAL MUSIC AND PROGRAMMING; AND TO KINDLY REQUEST TO INCLUDE THE CAROLINIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE THROUGH THEIR MUSIC AND PROGRAMMING; AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TO HUMBLY REQUEST TO INCREASE THE ISLA 63 POWER TRANSMISSION TO PENETRATE AND TO REACH THE ENTIRE CNMI, AS FAR NORTH TO THE ISLANDS OF PAGAN AND ASUNCION.

Representative Hocog: Clarification, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Hocog, recognized.

Representative Hocog: I think the Floor Leader should move for the adoption of Representative Torres' resolution.

Representative Hofschneider: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: State your point.

Representative Hofschneider: Did we dispose of the first motion to suspend the First Reading of H. C. R. NO. 16-1?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Yes.

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, I apologize, it was pointed out to me. First Reading pursuant to the House Rules also entails adoption. If I clarified my statement on that, I move for First Reading and adoption of H. R. NO. 16-3 submitted by Representative Torres.

Seconded by Representative Hocog.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Is that for final adoption?

Floor Leader Camacho: Yes.

Representative Sablan: Is there going to be any discussion, Mr. Speaker?

Representative Hocog: Mr. Speaker, I think adoption of a resolution is final, so I think the Floor Leader's motion is in place and is in order.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: So let me restate the motion, the motion is to adopt H. R. NO. 16-3. Discussion on that motion.

Representative Hocog: Ready for the question.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Representative Sablan, recognized.

Representative Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask Representative Torres to explain the rationale behind the resolution. Maybe we can open up the discussion with that.

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, Radio Station KUAM ISLA 63 has been doing the Chamorro program. My intent in the resolution is to commend them and request that they increase the transmitter power so that it penetrates the entire Marianas. There is a location in Saipan when you cannot hear it, only when you are at Mt. Tapochau and only when you have a new radio receiver such as the ones in new cars with V-6 engine with high amperage bearing and so forth. I frequently listen to this radio station and it makes me feel good and proud to hear a Chamorro culture and programming because it lacks in our own island radio stations. Everyday you will hear DJ's coming up in the spots like the "Island Girl" her name is Helen Aguon who frequently says, "Hello, line 1, *gaige hao gi aire.*" It makes me feel good and KV Kev would frequently come up and say, "*O sa' hunggan, siempre sa' i kustombre.*" The intonation of that DJ or person reminds me that he may be from Umatac, similar intonation with Rota. When I am driving, I enjoy my driving. It keeps me alert.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I think we get your point. Representative Sablan, did he answer your question.

Representative Sablan: Somewhat, yes.

Representative Reyes: Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment Representative Reyes. It just shows that he cares for the Chamorro people on the island as well as the Carolinians. We all talk everyday about culture and tradition, about language, when you lose our language you lose your identity; so, I commend Representative Stanley Torres for coming out with a resolution for a radio station although it is not on the island. Chances are, who knows, with this resolution, they might even bring somebody here and get a radio station going.

Representative Benavente: Mr. Speaker, I have a concern on the page of the Resolution on lines 15 through 18. I am reading it and I do not quite get why that statement was necessary to be included. Is that a program hour? It is just not proper. I would rather that this type of a statement be removed in a resolution document, unless it has a meaning.

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, no offense to my good colleague. It shows that he does not tune in to KUAM. This is a regular program and comes up with humor, this is part of their humorous program. They even do it with their Filipino citizens and I understand even in Palauan.

Representative Benavente: Mr. Speaker, no offense, but it still does sound offensive. I rest my concern at this time.

Representative Sablan: My primary concern with this Resolution really deals with my understanding with the purpose of resolution is to offer serious commendation to people for extraordinary work and contribute in meaningful ways to the community. I enjoy the humorous radio stations just like anybody else, but at the end of the day this will have the names and signatures of our colleagues, assuming that this gets adopted. I want to know, first of all, what our priorities are in this legislature and second of all, I do not take lightly the resolutions that we just pass from this house. Finally, for the record, I have been to Pagan and they listen to this radio station up there, so this might not even be necessary. Thank you.

Representative Hocog: Mr. Speaker, actually this House resolution is an expression from Representative Torres, It is equal to writing this to all the individuals listed, but I actually congratulate him for putting this before us to be part of his appreciation to these people and this radio station that is providing us the local sounds and music. This is nothing more other than to express appreciation of the program. Thank you.

There was no further discussion and the motion to adopt H. R. NO. 16-3 was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: H. R. NO. 16-3 is hereby adopted by the House. Mr. Floor Leader, anymore resolutions?

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, if there is nothing more on the Calendar, I move to adjourn. There is another resolution?—I apologize. Let me withdraw the earlier motion. Mr. Speaker, I move to adopt H. R. NO. 16-4 submitted by Representative Tebuteb.

The motion was seconded.

H. R. NO. 16-4: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR BENIGNO R. FITIAL'S COMMITMENT TO DEDICATING PUBLIC LANDS IN KOBLERVILLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCCER FIELDS.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I recognize Representative Deleon Guerrero under discussion.

Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to state for the record that I support the intent of H. R. NO. 16-4 although I am not entirely clear what it is asking for. On page 2, line 6 which states that the Governor has made a commitment to the NMI Football Association to dedicate a parcel of land and that we are supporting his commitment. I am a little unclear about this because that area has already been dedicated for use as a sport complex. Title has been given to the Department Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA). There are two lots there. I am familiar with that land area because I have been submitting over the years repeated applications for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to develop that area for the sports complex. In the application process, we had to clearly show that there was title dedicated for that purpose. So as far as

dedicating it, that has been done. I think the commitment that needs to be shown is for the dedication of funds for the development of that area for soccer fields. There is already a plan developed by Football Association in addition to the Department of Public Works to include a combination of a soccer and football field and for little league baseball and major league baseball fields. Again, if we are going to be urge the Governor to dedicate that area, that has been done. So can the author enlighten me, maybe there is something I am missing here.

Representative Tebuteb: Basically this is the support of the commitment that has been ongoing even before the present governor came into office. Not necessarily the sports complex in general, but at this point there is only one – there is not enough soccer fields that the program is utilizing. It would often use either the airport area and also the track and field at the Oleai Sports Complex. That is my main concern so that we support the commitment made by our government or the governor in this case to try to identify. If you notice this also will go to the Department of Public Lands for that purpose. My biggest concern is that the track and field facility that is being utilized by soccer association, not to push them out, but that is the only track and field facility in the region that meets that standard and that is basically my main concern in trying to support the intent of the governor's commitment as well as the sports families' commitment in trying to identify a specific soccer field. Thank you.

Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero: I guess what I am saying is the wording on this resolution asks that a parcel of land be dedicated for the development of soccer fields. What I am saying is that that has been done – there is land that is dedicated for that purpose. I guess what it needs is funding to be able to develop the parcel of land for soccer fields, so perhaps rewording the resolution to ask for support for funding to develop that area for soccer fields. The title has already been given to DCCA for the purposes or intent of the resolution.

Representative Tebuteb: I certainly would certainly welcome and also support anybody from that precinct to come up with the funding.

Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero: In other words, we are going to the exercise to dedicate a piece of land that has already been dedicated. So, do we need to adopt a resolution that really is not needed?

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Let me ask this question – is there any conflicting use between dedicating this area for soccer fields and what you are saying which is for a sports complex? Is the sports complex going to be multiple use?

Vice Speaker Deleon Guerrero: No. I guess whether it is football or soccer, the land has been dedicated for those purposes already. The title is held by DCCA. There are two parcels, as a matter of fact, on one we developed the youth center in Koblerville, but that youth center is also built to support the future development of any sports complex. But we are passing a resolution to dedicate the parcel of land and what I am saying is it has already been dedicated. Do we need to adopt a resolution to do something that has already been done? That is the question.

Representative Reyes: Mr. Speaker, I think Representative Tebuteb is trying to get some sort of a development done in my district in Koblerville and I appeal to the rest of the members to support that project. On the other side, Representative Guerrero's comment is true. I recall that area indeed has been given to DCCA for a sport complex. What I am worried about is if this resolution would affect it in any way. I do not know how much of that land was given, but there was at one time a drawing or sign as to the complex that was to be built in that area. I do not know how big of a land

was given to DCCA for this project, I do not know how big the property is, but I just do not want it to be in conflict.

Representative Tebuteb: I guess the biggest concern or the other reason why I did not put a specific parcel or lot number on this resolution is so that we allow the Secretary of Public Lands and the people working behind the development of a soccer field to support that intent. Let us pass it. Thank you.

Representative Apatang: Mr. Speaker, I am very much aware of this sports complex at Koblerville because I was the one pushing for the clearance of that area way back during the Froilan Tenorio Administration. The first intension was to build two little league baseball fields there to entertain little leagues from outside the CNMI. However, the problem there is with the wildlife otherwise that place would have been cleaned by now. We started clearing but the Division of Fish and Wildlife came in and stopped the project that is why it is still sitting with all the trees. I also remember there were some contributions to build the complex but I have no idea what happened to the funds at this point in time. I have no problem with building a soccer field, a big all purpose field so that we can all share it if we can clear it with the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Is that good? Thank you.

Representative Benavente: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I remember that when the good congressman introduced this resolution, he had asked that without objection it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole. I once again air my concern about that and I hope that we would stop that, Mr. Speaker, because as we can see from the previous legislation there was one member who objected to the resolution and if we had gone along with that decision, this member would have been a signatory of that resolution and voted no on it. And again with the absence of Representative Babauta, it is just unfair that that kind of a request be made. I hope that we would stop that and if anyone wants to introduce the legislation they may do so upon the request. With all due respect to my colleague, I do not mind signing off on this resolution, I would just like to stop this Committee of the Whole sponsorship.

Representative Tebuteb: With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like the request the request for a Committee of the Whole on this resolution. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Okay, the request is to withdraw, so the resolution stands as it is now and invites those who want to co-sponsor. Ready?

Representative Torres: (Inaudible)

Representative Apatang: The birds, there are a lot of birds there and the *karisu* that is why we cannot touch it. The birds are flying from Coral Ocean Point all the way around, otherwise that place would be clean and have two little league fields by now. Thank you.

There was no further discussion and the motion to adopt H. R. NO. 16-4 was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: H. R. NO. 16-4 is hereby adopted by the House.

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, a motion to adopt H. R. NO. 16-2 offered by Representative Tebuteb.

The motion was seconded.

H. RES. NO. 16-2: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE, CONGRATULATE AND COMMEND MR. FRANK STRASHEIM, RETIRED REGION IX ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR – OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA), FOR HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADVANCE THE PROTECTION OF WORKING MEN AND WOMEN IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI), AND FOR HIS UNSELFISH SERVICE FOR THE CNMI COMMUNITY AS OSHA REGION 9 ADMINISTRATOR.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Discussion on the motion. Ready for the question?

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt H. R. NO. 16-2 was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The motion carries, the House has adopted H. R. NO. 16-2. I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, if there no other resolutions on the Calendar, a motion to recess subject to the call of the chair.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: Mr. Floor Leader, we have one more, H. J. R. NO. 16-1.

Floor Leader Camacho: My apology again, Mr. Speaker. A motion for the adoption of H. J. R. NO. 16-1 submitted by Representative Hofschneider.

The motion was seconded.

H. J. R. NO. 16-1: A HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION TO APPROVE TWO ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES (FTE'S) FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO COMPLY WITH THE CNMI SUPREME COURT'S DECISION IN *IN RE PANGELINAN*, 2007 MP 14, WHICH INCREASED THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY MEMBERS.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The motion to adopt H. J. R. NO. 16-1 has seconded. I recognize Representative Benavente.

Representative Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope there will be no objection from the author of this joint resolution and I would like to ask if I can co-sponsor the resolution. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: There is no objection.

Representative Stanley Torres: Mr. Speaker, may I move for a roll call for the adoption of that joint resolution.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: I will think about that. I recognize Representative Hofschneider.

Representative Hofschneider: It would give a lot of strength, Mr. Speaker, if we have a concerted unity for the support of the resolution. Thank you.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: For you information, if you look at the heading it is basically to add two full time employees (FTEs) for the House of Representatives. Those are for the two new seats. We need to do that so that our two new members of the House of Representatives can be fully compensated just as everyone else. This is something that needs to be done. Any further discussion?

Several members voiced “ready”; and the motion to adopt H. J. R. NO. 16-1 was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The motion is carried. H. J. R. NO. 16-1 is hereby adopted. I recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Camacho: There are no more resolutions, right?

BILL CALENDAR

None

ANNOUNCEMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Camacho: Mr. Speaker, I move to recess subject to the call of the chair.

The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Arnold Palacios: The House stands recessed subject to the call.

The House adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn C. Fleming
House Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

None