



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION, 2015

LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

First Day

Monday, January 12, 2015

Mistress of Ceremony Charlene S. Masiwemai: Hafa Adai, Tirow, Good Morning and welcome to the House of Representatives. We will now begin the House of Representatives' installation ceremony of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Before I introduce the members-elect I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the Honorable Alexandro C. Castro, Chief Justice of the CNMI Supreme Court and Reverend Father James S. Balajadia to the dais. (Pause). Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored to present to you the Representatives-Elect of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. Representing Election District 1 are Representative-Elect Roman C. Benavente, Representative-Elect Angel A. Demapan, Representative-Elect Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Representative-Elect Edwin K. Propst, and Representative-Elect Antonio P. Sablan. Representing Election District 2 Representative-Elect John Paul P. Sablan. Representing Election District 3 are Representative-Elect Blas Jonathan T. Attao, Representative-Elect Anthony T. Benavente, Representative-Elect Felicidad T. Ogumoro, Representative-Elect Ramon A. Tebuteb, Representative-Elect Edmund S. Villagomez, and Representative-Elect Ralph N. Yumul. Representing Election District 4 are Representative-Elect George N. Camacho and Representative-Elect Vinson F. Sablan. Representing Election District 5 are Representative-Elect Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero and Representative-Elect Francis S. Taimanao. Representing Election District 6, from the Island of Tinian and Aguiguan is Representative-Elect Edwin P. Aldan. Representing Election District 7, from the Island of Rota is Representative-Elect Glenn L. Maratita. Representing Election District 2, Floor Leader Pro-Tem Representative-Elect Rafael S. Demapan. Representing Election District 1, Speaker Pro-Tem Representative-Elect Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero. Please be seated. Along with our Honorable and distinguished guests, present with us today, the Honorable Eloy S. Inos, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; the Honorable David M. Apatang, Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan; the Honorable Edward Manibusan, Attorney General of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; the Honorable Rory J. Respicio, Senator, *I Mina'trentai Tres Na Liheslaturan Guahan*; the Honorable Ramona V. Manglona, Chief Judge, United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands; the Honorable John A. Manglona, Associate Justice, CNMI Supreme Court; the Honorable Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio, Associate Judge, CNMI Superior Court; the Honorable Vernon P. Perez, Judge, Guam Superior Court; the Honorable Ivan Mereb Jr. Councilman, Rota Municipal Council; the Honorable Herman T. Guerrero, Chairman, CNMI State Board of Education; the Honorable Janice A. Tenorio, Member, CNMI State Board of Education; the Honorable Marian DLG. Tudela, Former Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan. Accompanying the Governor, we have Department Secretaries and Directors. Families, friends, and supporters of our members-elect, I welcome all of you to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Legislature, House of Representatives. Please all rise. I now call upon the Saipan Southern High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. Color Guards for the positing of the Colors, and I also call upon Mr. Gus Kaipat to lead us in the singing of the United States National and the Commonwealth Anthems.

(National & Commonwealth Anthems were sung)

Mistress of Ceremony Charlene S. Masiwemai: Please remain standing as I call upon Father James for the Invocation.

(Father James S. Balajadia gave the Invocation)

Mistress of Ceremony Charlene S. Masiwemai: Thank you Father James. Please be seated. It is with great honor and pleasure that I call on Speaker Pro Tem, Representative-Elect Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, to officially call the House of Representatives' Organizational Session of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to order. Speaker Pro Tem, please.

CALL TO ORDER

The House of Representatives of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature was called to order in its First Day, First Regular Session on the Twelfth day of January the year Two Thousand and Fifteen at 10:50 a.m. in the House Chamber, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madam Mistress of Ceremony. At this time, I now call this Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature House of Representatives Organizational Session to order. Thank you again Mistress of Ceremony for your eloquent and most respectful pronouncement of today's inaugural event, but most especially of acknowledging and welcoming our guest. As such, I also welcome all our distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen, Honorable Governor Eloy S. Inos, I do not know if he is here but the Honorable Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan, our good Mayor of Saipan Honorable David A. Apatang, to Father James thank you very much for your prayers, the Honorable Chief Justice Alexandro Castro and there will be others that I will be recognizing in my statement, welcome to the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives' induction ceremony is hereby called to order. I recognize our House Clerk to call the roll. Madam Clerk.

CALL OF THE ROLL BY ELECTION PRECINCTS

The Clerk called the roll in numerical order by election Precincts:

Election District 1

| | |
|--|---------|
| Representative-Elect Roman Cepeda Benavente | Present |
| Representative-Elect Joseph Pinaula Deleon Guerrero | Present |
| Representative-Elect Angel Aldan Demapan | Present |
| Representative-Elect Joseph Lee Pan Tenorio Guerrero | Present |
| Representative-Elect Edwin Kenneth Propst | Present |
| Representative-Elect Antonio Pangelinan Sablan | Present |

Election District 2

| | |
|--|---------|
| Representative-Elect Rafael Sablan Demapan | Present |
| Representative-Elect John Paul Palacios Sablan | Present |

Election District 3

| | |
|---|---------|
| Representative-Elect Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao | Present |
| Representative-Elect Anthony Tenorio Benavente | Present |
| Representative-Elect Felicidad Taman Ogumoro | Present |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Representative-Elect Ramon Angailen Tebuteb | Present |
| Representative-Elect Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez | Present |
| Representative-Elect Ralph Naraja Yumul | Present |
| Election District 4 | |
| Representative-Elect George Norita Camacho | Present |
| Representative-Elect Vinson Edward Flores Sablan | Present |
| Election District 5 | |
| Representative-Elect Lorenzo Iglesias Deleon Guerrero | Present |
| Representative-Elect Francis Songsong Taimanao | Present |
| Election District 6 | |
| Representative-Elect Edwin Palacios Aldan | Present |
| Election District 7 | |
| Representative-Elect Glenn Lizama Maratita | Present |

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, all 20 Representatives-Elect are present.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Let the record reflect that all 20 Representatives-Elect are present and a quorum is hereby constituted.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We now go to our next Order of Business and that is the swearing-in of Representatives-Elect. My fellow Representatives-Elect, I ask each one of you to rise for our swearing-in as members of the House of Representative and I ask the Honorable Alexandro C. Castro, Chief Justice of the CNMI Supreme Court to administer our Oath of Office.

Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro: Thank you, Pro Tem Speaker. Good morning everybody, please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

The following was repeated by all the Representatives-Elect.

“I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, the applicable provisions of the Constitution, laws and treaties of the United States of America, and that I will faithfully discharge my duties as a Representative of the 19th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to the best of my ability, so help me God.”

Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro: Congratulations. (Applause)

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: You may be seated members. Thank you, Chief Justice for the swearing-in of the members of this House. The next Order of Business is the Introduction and Adoption of House Rules. The Chair will now recognize Floor Leader Pro Tem Representative Rafael S. Demapan.

INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF THE HOUSE RULES

Floor Leader Pro Tem Rafael S. Demapan: *Si Yu'us ma'ase*, Mr. Speaker *yan buenas dias para i members yan lokkue para i bisita-ta pa'go na ogga'an*. With that Mr. Speaker, I am honored to introduce **House Resolution 19-01, “A House Resolution to adopt the Interim Rules of Procedure for this Nineteenth House of Representatives, attached herewith as Appendix A,”** and I move for its adoption. So move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Floor Leader Pro Tem. The motion is for the adoption of the Interim House Rules and it has been seconded, discussion?

Several members voiced “ready.”

There was no discussion and the motion to adopt House Resolution 19-01 was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: At this time, we will now move to the next Order of Business, the Election of Speaker. At this time, are there any nominations? I recognize Representative Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. It is my privilege and honor to nominate my good friend, my *ñao*, and my colleague from Precinct 3, the Honorable Representative Ramon Tebuteb to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Legislature. So move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you for the nomination Representative Guerrero. Are there any further nominations for the position or the Office of the Speaker? I recognize Representative Antonio Sablan.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good morning members. At this time, it is my privilege and honor to nominate for Speaker of the Nineteenth CNMI House of Representatives Speaker Pro Tem Joseph Guerrero.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Alright at this point are there any other nominations for the position of Speaker? If not is there a motion to close nomination? I recognize Representative Edwin Aldan.

Representative Edwin P. Aldan: Mr. Speaker, I move to close nomination.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: It has been seconded. Motion has been offered to close nominations for the position of Speaker. Any discussion on the motion? I recognize Representative Antonio Sablan.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. Just a point of clarification, I think the previous nomination for our colleague Tebuteb, I am not sure if it was seconded?

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Recognized Representative Edmund Villagomez.

Representative Edmund S. Villagomez: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Pro Tem. And that is why I raised my hand earlier to second the nomination of Representative Ramon Tebuteb.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: So noted. Thank you, Representative Villagomez. My apologies to Representative Tebuteb. There are two nominations and both have been seconded. At this point, are we ready for the vote?

Several members voiced “ready”.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: I believe the way we will do this is – I will ask the House Clerk to call for the vote and each member will announce their vote. Before I call the vote, Representative Sablan for the last time.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Again Mr. Speaker and this is just for clarification. I believe when I made the nomination I mentioned Joseph Guerrero. I just wanted the record to reflect that the nomination is for Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero. Thank you.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you for the clarification. There are two Joseph Guerreros in this body today, but I think one has clarified legally that his name is Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero. So let the record reflect that it is the other Joe Guerrero. Are we ready for the vote?

Several members voiced “ready”.

Speaker Pro Tem Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Madam Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the nomination of the Honorable Joseph Pinaula Deleon Guerrero and the nomination of the Honorable Ramon Angailen Tebuteb to the Office of the Speaker of the House for the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature with the following results:

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Representative Edwin P. Aldan | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |
| Representative Anthony T. Benavente | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |
| Representative Roman C. Benavente | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |
| Representative George N. Camacho | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Representative Angel A. Demapan | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Rafael S. Demapan | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Glenn L. Maratita | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Felicidad T. Ogumoro | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Edwin K. Propst | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |
| Representative Antonio P. Sablan | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative John Paul P. Sablan | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Vinson F. Sablan | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |
| Representative Francis S. Taimanao | Rep. J. P. Deleon Guerrero |
| Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |
| Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |
| Representative Ralph N. Yumul | Rep. R. A. Tebuteb |

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, Representative Tebuteb receiving 9, Representative Joseph Deleon Guerrero receiving 11.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madam Clerk. With the vote of 11 voting for Representative Joe P. Deleon Guerrero, I am suppose to at this time ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort me up here, but I guess we will skip that. My fellow colleagues, I am honored for the confidence and trust bestowed on me by electing me to serve as your Speaker. Thank you very much. At this time, let us move on and go to the next item in our Order of Business, the Election of the Vice Speaker. Recognized Representative Antonio Sablan.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the record, I am not sure whether the Chair has recently recognized the result of the vote.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: I did recognize that with 11 votes, the motion to elect for the Office of the Speaker hereby passed. Thank you for that clarification. Going back to the next item in our Order of Business and that is for the Election of the Vice Speaker. The floor is now open for nominations. Recognize Representative Propst.

ELECTION OF VICE SPEAKER

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to nominate Congressman Roman Benavente.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: The nomination has been seconded. Are there any other nominations for the Office of the Vice Speaker? Recognize Representative John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, it is an honor to nominate Rafael Sablan Demapan for Vice Speaker.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: A motion to nominate Representative Rafael Demapan for the Office of Vice Speaker has been made and seconded. Are there any further nominations for the Office of Vice Speaker? There being none, I recognize Representative Angel Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I would like to offer a motion to close nomination. So move.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Demapan. The motion is to close nomination for the Office of Vice Speaker it has been seconded. Discussion on the motion?

Several members voiced “ready”.

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination for the Office of Vice Speaker was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Nomination is closed. We will now put to vote for the position of Vice Speaker of the House. There are two nominations, again I will ask the Clerk to roll call and ask each member to vote for their respective choices. Madam Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the nomination of the Honorable Roman Cepeda Benavente and the nomination of the Honorable Rafael Sablan Demapan to the Office of the Vice Speaker of the House for the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature with the following results:

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Representative Edwin P. Aldan | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative Anthony T. Benavente | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative Roman C. Benavente | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative George N. Camacho | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative Angel A. Demapan | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Rafael S. Demapan | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Glenn L. Maratita | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Felicidad T. Ogumoro | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Edwin K. Propst | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative Antonio P. Sablan | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative John Paul P. Sablan | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Vinson F. Sablan | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative Francis S. Taimanao | Rep. R. S. Demapan |
| Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez | Rep. R. C. Benavente |
| Representative Ralph N. Yumul | Rep. R. C. Benavente |

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, Representative Roman Benavente received 9, Representative Rafael Demapan has received 11.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madam Clerk. By a vote of 11 to 9, Representative Rafael Demapan is hereby elected Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives. Congratulations Representative Demapan.

(Applause)

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: At this point, we will continue to move on the Chair will now entertain a motion to the Office of Floor Leader. At this time are there any nominations? Recognized Representative Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: Mr. Speaker it is an honor to nominate Representative George Norita Camacho.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Motion is to nominate Representative George Camacho has been seconded. At this point, are there any other nominations? Recognize Representative Vinson Sablan.

Representative Vinson F. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I would like to respectfully nominate for Office of the Floor Leader my good friend – person I have much respect for Representative Edmund S. Villagomez.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Motion is offered for Representative Villagomez for the Office of the Floor Leader. We have two nominations and both have been seconded. At this time, I recognize Representative Glenn Maratita.

Representative Glenn L. Maratita: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I move to close nomination.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you. Motion has been offered to close nominations for the Office of Floor Leader it has been seconded. Discussion on the motion to close?

Several members voiced “ready”.

There was no discussion and the motion to close nomination for the Office of Floor Leader was carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We have two nominations. The Chair will ask the Clerk to call the roll. Fellow colleagues, please state your choice when it comes to you. Madam Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the nomination of the Honorable George Norita Camacho and the nomination of the Honorable Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez to the Office of the Floor Leader of the House for the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature with the following results :

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Representative Edwin P. Aldan | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative Anthony T. Benavente | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative Roman C. Benavente | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative George N. Camacho | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative Angel A. Demapan | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Rafael S. Demapan | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Glenn L. Maratita | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Felicidad T. Ogumoro | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Edwin K. Propst | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative Antonio P. Sablan | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative John Paul P. Sablan | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Vinson F. Sablan | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative Francis S. Taimanao | Rep. G. N. Camacho |
| Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |
| Representative Ralph N. Yumul | Rep. E. S. Villagomez |

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, Representative George Camacho receiving 11 and Representative Edmund Villagomez receiving 9.

(Applause)

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madame Clerk. With the vote of 11 to 9, Representative Camacho is duly elected to serve as Floor Leader for the House of Representatives. Congratulations Representative Camacho.

(Applause)

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: At this time, as the duly elected Floor Leader for the House, I ask our Sergeant-at-Arms to escort our new Floor Leader to the seat of the Floor Leader. Thank you, members. Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms.

NOTIFICATION TO THE GOVERNOR AND TO THE SENATE

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: The next item in our Order of Business is the notification to the Senate and the Governor. At this time, the Chair will be appointing Representatives Francis Taimanao and Representative Glenn Maratita to inform the Senate and Representatives Angel Demapan and Representatives Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero to inform the Governor that the 19th House of Representatives is duly organized and ready to conduct business. At this time, the Chair will call for a short recess.

The House recessed at 11:19 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 11:19 a.m.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We will reconvene. At this time, I ask our Clerk if we have any communications.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker we have members of the Senate for notification of the Senate.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We are ready to receive the message from the Senate.

Communication was received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate is duly organized and ready to transact business.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We will take a short recess to wait for communications to the Senate. Short recess.

The House recessed at 11:20 a.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 11:35 a.m.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We now return back to our session. I believe we are ready to receive the notifications to the Governor and the Senate. At this time, the Chair will recognize Representative Angel Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Representative Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero and I have duly informed the Governor that the 19th House of Representatives is organized and ready to conduct business.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Demapan. The Chair will now recognize Representative Francis Taimanao.

Representative Francis S. Taimanao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The President and members of the 19th Senate has been informed that the House of Representatives for the 19th CNMI Legislature is duly organized and ready to transact business.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Taimanao. At this time, we would go to the statement of the individual members, but before I do so I would like to announce that the Chair will be making the appointments to the heads of each standing committee at a later date via memo and just inform the public that those appointments would be out at after this session.

STATEMENT OF MEMBERS

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: At this time under statements, I believe we will be calling them alphabetically. Madam Clerk.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Aldan.

Representative Edwin P. Aldan: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Representative Edwin P. Aldan's Statement

First of all, I would like to thank the people of Tinian. The constituents for giving me the opportunity to come back again and serve them –this would be my third term as a representative for the island of Tinian.

Secondly, I would like to recognize and extend my appreciation to my mom Linda and most especially my wife because during the election everybody knows it is very hard if your wife and families are not behind you and I give that extended appreciation to my extended families.

To my colleagues, I am here and a lot of you know me. I am a player, I like to help and I believe this 19th Legislature consist of various experience. I know we can manage the wave that we are looking or the challenges that we are looking at forward. Mr. Speaker, I pledge to the members that I will work collaboratively with you guys and also to the administration to fast-track important bills that we are going to come up with that at the end of the day, the whole Commonwealth will benefit and hopefully to the people. We need jobs for our people also. That is all Mr. Speaker and members, thank you.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Attao.

Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao's Statement

Buenas, Tirow and good morning, to the Honorable Governor Inos, Senator from Guam Rory Respicio, I apologize I know your colleagues were in here earlier, good morning to them too. Judge Kim Tenorio good morning, Chief Justice Castro, Father James, Distinguished guests, visitors, and ladies and gentlemen welcome to the House of Representatives.

My parents Jesus and Ramona, my partner Jeannie, my siblings and the Committee to elect led by Mr. Mitch Aaron and Ms. Andrea Tenorio join me in congratulating you Speaker Deleon Guerrero, Vice Speaker Demapan and Floor Leader Camacho for formulating the leadership of the 19th House of Representatives. And to the Members, Congratulations to you and your families on your victory.

To my supporters, friends and families most especially the people of Precinct III who have instilled their trust and confidence in me to represent them in the 19th House of Representatives, I am truly grateful, and I promise to work for you.

To the Bureau family, thank you for always pushing me to become a better professional and for your support in my endeavors.

To my fellow colleagues, although some of us may have had opposing political views which led us to play on “different teams” during the campaign process, the people of the Commonwealth has chosen each and every one of us to be a part of team CNMI. The greatest honor has been bestowed upon us by the people to represent them in this Chamber, in the region and abroad. With that being said, the election has ended and placing all political opinions aside, we now have to work diligently and effectively to improve the lives of the people of this great Commonwealth, and to that end, I pledge my full cooperation, dedication and commitment to such cause.

To everyone present here today, for those watching at home and for those that cannot be with us, on behalf of the members of the 19th House of Representatives thank you for affording us the honor to be the voice and face of the Commonwealth for the next two years.

To my parents, my partner, my siblings and their families and to the Committee to elect thank you for all your time, effort, determination, commitment and patience as I pursue my political aspirations. I am greatly indebted to you all.

I end with a quote from an unknown author which states, “Nothing is impossible for the mere fact that within impossible is the word possible.” So whatever actions we take and whatever problems we face, we as a Commonwealth can find solutions it is possible. Without possible there is no such thing as impossible.

Si Yu’us Ma’ase, Ghillisow, Salamat Po, and thank you all!

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Attao. You may continue Clerk.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Anthony Benavente.

Representative Anthony T. Benavente: Thank you, Clerk. Like Representative Ralph Yumul would say, “Do not let BJ speak first because he is going to say it.” And that is what you did, you put it nicely Representative Attao.

Representative Anthony T. Benavente’s Statement

Thank you. I congratulate 19th Legislature Officer, Speaker welcome again you were an inspirational Speaker in the 18th and I congratulate you again here on the 19th. And to our Vice Speaker Representative Ralph Demapan and our good Floor Leader, I am sure being selected as officers you will help us to do what is right here in this 19th Legislature. I too would like to extend my utmost appreciation to my wife and my sister here Melvia; I called her on behalf of my mom. So I am really proud that they are here, my brothers and sisters, my family that are also in this chamber. With that I also want to express congratulations to our good Governor and the Lieutenant Governor and I welcome all the dignitaries from off-island and our elected officials and to the organized Senate members. So with that I stated that no matter what I will continue to work with the 19th Legislature and do what is right for our people. Thank God for having our good Precinct 3 people recognized and put me in here again. I am trying and I will continue to do

my best. Let us just say that we should show our good people how we work, show our good why we work, and show our good people in the manner of which we work so we will continue to do what is right for them. Thank you very much.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Benavente. Continue Clerk.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Roman Benavente.

Representative Roman C. Benavente's Statement

Thank you and *Si Yu'us Ma'ase* good morning to everyone. I was wondering if I should speak Chamorro or I speak English because I am also fluent in Chamorro. First of all, I would like to thank the Lord for assembling us here today. This is a unique assembly that we have as a Legislature of the 19th Legislature as we celebrate to be assembled to take the Oath of Office and to formulate Speakership or Leadership for the 19th Legislature, I really appreciate that. I would like to welcome the Leaders from Guam, Senator Respicio and Speaker Judi Won Pat who was here and to the judges and to the Governor *Señót* Eloy Inos who is here in the chamber and everyone Judge Kim Tenorio that are here, I would like to recognize all of you guys. You are a witness to this celebration that we have here today. First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife behind me Andrea, my son Jeremiah, and my other son David that is in the office on the other side with my daughter Darrah and Rita, they stood beside me during the thick and thin of the political arena and I gave them so much appreciation with respect. With that also, I would like to extend my gratitude to all my colleagues that have worked in the 18th Legislature. We all work together Mr. Speaker. Thank you, we all work together and we work diligently together. We set our principles and we move ahead. We have our differences and we accomplish and we move ahead and I hope that this would be a better challenge because we are facing a huge challenge ahead for our island, for our economy, for our people as well as our education for our children. So with that, I would just like to congratulate everyone that is here who made this possible, to the Legislative Bureau, to our Legal Counsel and to everyone. I do not want miss everyone, even Judge Castro that is up here, I thank you Sir. With that again, *un dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase* and thank you with respect. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Benavente.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero's Statement

Good Morning members, Governor Inos, Chief Justice Castro, first elected CNMI Attorney General Edward Manibusan and his wife – I believe they already left – Father James, distinguished guest, friends, families, supporters, ladies and gentlemen.

I am profoundly humbled and honored for your presence here with us today. To our distinguished guests from Guam and abroad, thank you for being a part of the 19th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature Inauguration Ceremony. Your being here today manifest the

embodiment of the interests of our democratic legislative process. It is history in the making for this great Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Let me personally congratulate and welcome returning and incoming members to the 19th Northern Marianas Commonwealth House of Representatives. It is my distinct honor to extend my heartfelt congratulations to each one of you as you are sworn in today. Your election to public office certainly is recognition of the respect and confidence you have earned from your community. I look forward to working with each and every one of you with steadfast in building a stronger and more prosperous Commonwealth. Given the economic growth and development our Commonwealth has seen in the past years, our challenge is to bridge the gap for a sustainable economy and improved and affordable living conditions. This is an important time in our history. The people of the Commonwealth have placed their trust in us. As is the case with any big challenge, hard work lies ahead, and I am sure we are all eager to immediately begin our work as Legislators.

It is also my distinct honor to commend our elected Speaker, Vice Speaker and Floor Leader. Your election to these noble positions is reflective of the respect and confidence you have earned from your colleagues. I know you are up to the responsibilities this office brings and I wish you all the very best of luck.

To the people of the Commonwealth and most especially from Precinct 5, I am deeply humbled for your vote of confidence to continue to be your public servant. To my families and friends, I wish to express my deep appreciation for your support during my campaign. I am forever grateful that no words of thanks can ever be expressed.

Last but certainly not the least; I want to thank the Legislative Bureau staff for their untiring efforts and hard work in preparation for the Inaugural Ceremony. It is also my distinct pleasure to recognize Ms. Char, the Mistress of Ceremony for her solemn Inaugural pronouncement.

Members and viewers thank you, *Si Yu'us Ma'ase* and *Ghillisow!*

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Guerrero.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Angel Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you.

Representative Angel A. Demapan's Statement

Hafa adai para todos hamyo, tirowami Mr. Speaker, colleagues, honored guests, families and friends and the viewing public thank you for joining us this morning.

First, I would like to convey my most profound gratitude to the good people of Precinct 1 for your vote of confidence and for affording me this opportunity to represent your interest in this noble body. To my supporters from outside my precinct, thank you so much for all your help and encouragement. I am deeply humbled and grateful.

To my better half behind me TaAnn, our children and our families and friends here and in the Marshall Islands, I can never thank you enough for standing by me throughout this endeavor. Your love and support strengthens my resolve to do what is good and what is right.

Governor Eloy Inos it is was an honor to serve as your Press Secretary up until yesterday. *Dangkulu na si Yu'us Ma'ase* for your trust, your wisdom and your mentorship. Here we are now; while we find ourselves in different branches, our roots remain the same our blessed Commonwealth. I look forward to working with you and Lt. Gov. Ralph Torres for the benefit of our people.

Chairman Roy Ada and the members of my Committee-to-Elect: what can I say? You pushed me every day and above all, you never stopped believing. Thank you for taking this journey with me. Chairman Jack Deleon Guerrero Torres and the Precinct 1 Club, GOP President James Ada and our party mates: thank you too for your support. I am forever indebted to you all for sacrificing your time and resources to bring our campaign to the people. Today, we turn a new leaf and I stand ready to work hard to bring results to the people.

I wish to pay tribute to the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas for his vision to establish the CNMI Youth Congress to serve as a venue whereby our youth would have the opportunity to learn about the legislative process and the responsibilities of a lawmaker. Today, it is my honor and privilege to bring the late Vice Speaker's vision full circle having served in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd CNMI Youth Congress and now in this 19th House of Representatives.

I want to share an advice I hold dear from my tallest supporter, former Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann. "Leave this place better than you found it." This simple advice embodies the very reason we all ran for office. To make the good better, and the better, best. While we have seen much progress lately, we must continue to work hard collectively to keep the Commonwealth growing. We must find common ground between stimulating progress, but still preserving the core.

Colleagues, I am a believer that level of leadership is measured by how we grow with time, how we grow with the people around us, and most importantly, by the decisions we make to either grow with progress or keep the status quo. By the will of the people, here we are. Let us serve our people honorably and with utmost respect and humility.

In closing, I wish to share this occasion with three very special people who are no longer with me, but remain close in spirit. My late father, former Congressman Juan DLG. Demapan, my late mother Rosario, who blessed me with her approval to run for office last year before she left us, and my Godmother Lucinda, who just passed away last Friday. The life lessons I have learned from them are lessons I will hold dear in my endeavor to serve you the great people of the Commonwealth.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay, and Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, Representative Demapan.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Guerrero.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero's Statement

Good morning. First of all, I would like to say a big thank you to my wife who is behind me, she stand firm and she believe in me throughout my campaign. Thank you to my wife, my kids, especially *para i familian Pan, i man átungo', i man parentis*, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Para i diknatario buenas tatdes sa esta talo'ani. Governor, distinguished dignitaries from off-island and on-island *hafa adai*.

First and foremost, congratulations to each re-elected and newly elected members of the House. It is such a privilege to be here today. Our hardworking wonderful campaign team deserve special recognition for the long days and nights and all their efforts to help get us where we are today, but most importantly *un dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase* to the people of Precinct 1 and our respective precinct for entrusting their vote of confidence to us. Without you I would not know if I am making the right decision or not.

What an honor it is to be here today and to be a part of the CNMI's 19th Legislature. The moment I decided to run for office was the moment I took my oath and pledge to stand as a voice for the people. My loyalty has since the beginning been with the people of the CNMI. I will not be here today and let that pledge fade away. The road ahead of us is a long curved rocky road. There will be days we will not all agree with one another it would get stressful and tiring and hard, but we are team –can I emphasize the word “team” – teams stick together and overcome obstacle for a common goal. What is our goal? Our goal is to get that long, curved, rocky road paved to make it a better CNMI. The reality of it is this is not going to happen overnight. It may not even happen in a week either, but I have confidence that the twenty elected officials here before you today have what it takes to get things moving. I cannot stand here today and give you a list of things that I will accomplish because I do not stand to make promises. I will not promise anything, I do not stand by promises. Why? I ask myself, do you not stand by promises? Let me ask you, have you ever made a promise out of spite, out of a situation where you wanted to please someone, because I know I have in the past. Let me ask you, was there ever a time while that promise was made and that something unexpected happened that cause you not to be able to fulfill that promise? I think it is safe to say we have all encountered that scenario. So I stand here today to ask each and every one of you, let us put promises, political affiliations, biases, issues and problems aside. Let us work together. Let us do this together.

I want to emphasize that even though the seat I will now occupy as a room for one it represents the CNMI as a whole. My commitment is to serve the people, be a voice for our people, and to take action. Let us not waste time. Before I end, I would like to share a quote from the 32nd President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. In his first inaugural address when the nation was in depression he said “This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

So before I end, let us not be afraid of what has happened, what is happening and what is to come. With common sense, team effort, hard work, and determination we can and we will make this a better CNMI.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghillisow, and Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Guerrero.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Maratita.

Representative Glenn L. Maratita: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase.*

Representative Glenn L. Maratita's Statement

Governor Inos, Chief Justice Castro, Speaker, *yan para i man ga'chong, i familian miyu, para ayu lökkue siha i man gaige gi na mañe'lo-ta yan mañaina-ta annai ma testiguguyi este pa'go na ha'ani i espesiât yan meaningful na iyo-ta seremonias. Pot fabot sedi yo' lökkue ya bai hu sangan hao hu ekstende pare-hu para i pumalu siha na ti man presente pa'go pot lá'yiyi i achakin familia or maseha hafa. Finéne'na hu na'na'i dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase yan agradesimiento para i taotao-ta, i mañe'lo-ta ginen i tano-ta i gatbo na islan Luta. La bulla gi lista para bai hu sangan annai para bai ekstende este lökkue na agradesimiento lao téneki ha chule i sinko minutus na ma na'i yo'. Ta'lo ya bai hu na kádada lao antes bai hu tutuhon lökkue buente ilék-hu na maolek este na opottunidât para bai hu rekognisa i gumo ilulu imona este i hinanao-hu as Señora Denang Mesngon. I gurupu siha, I can say that they are very instrumental and I am blessed to be surrounded by very good people. Some of them are very instrumental ya ma pipit-yo' mo'na guini na hinanao ya ayu na malago yo' na bai hu rekognisa. Entremas malago yo' bai hu rekognisa lökkue i gumaigueña i asaguan-hu ya hu na'na'i pesunamenti dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase pot bai sigi ha na'i yo' mo'na na este na sensia ya ginen i pinasiensia-ña uttimoña gumaige yo' pa'go yan hu na'na'i gue nu enao na dánkolon respetu. Parehu lökkue hu ekste'tende este para i mañe'lo siha, si sogro-hu yan si sogra-hu, yan todú ayu siha na mañe'lo-hu yan parientes-hu siha, familia, man átungo, annai ma basi-ha este na konfiansa magi giya guahu ni para bai hu kontinua sumetbe siha i gatbo na isla-ta. I am truly honored and I am blessed to know that their confidence in me has not gone lost. Annai hu tuge' papa' iyo-ku mission statement mu maga'gahet yo' annai ilék-hu, I want to build stronger relation between our islands and I look to work closely and effectively with all of you, the Senate, the Administration, and for that matter everybody. Man ga'chong ti hu tula'laika i pusisión-hu guenao na manera. Esta monhayan man ma pega hit halom, man ma pega lá'yiyi ginen i konfiansan i taotao annai para ta sietbe siha ya ayu na ilék-hu maila ya ta fan hanao mo'na ya yanggen ginagao'gao na para ta fan ayuda gi katkuet na manera pot fabot maila ya ta na fan asagua i tiningo-ta ya ta asaguani para i minaolek i taotao-ta entiramente. Hu tungo ha na lá'yiyi buente guaha esta humongok annai ilék-hu duranten i nana-hu gef banidosu yo' yan gef ya-hu bai kontinua ya bai sigi ha sumangan este na kuarto na letran "i" gi Chamorro, "I" gi English esta lá'yiyi basia este guatu gi ayu ni man ga'chong i primét sesso man ali mami. Ina gofli'e', ina komprende, ina angokko, yan ina guiya gi halom hita. Pot fabot, listo yo' para bai facho'cho' yan hamyo maila ya ta chagi nina'siña-ta para i minaolek i tano-ta. Buenas dias para todos hamyo. Si Yu'us Ma'ase, kon respetu.*

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase,* Representative Maratita.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Ogumoro.

Representative Felicidad T. Ogumoro's Statement

Good Morning Governor Inos, Chief Justice Castro, Reverend James Balajadia, distinguished guests, families and friends.

Mr. Speaker and fellow colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, for your election to the Speakership and for your acceptance of such an enormous responsibility. My congratulations also go out to Vice Speaker Demapan and to Floor Leader Camacho. To all of you my fellow colleagues, I look forward to the opportunity to work with you this term.

I would like to share with everyone gathered today the vision that has guided my work for the people of not just my precinct, but for the entire Commonwealth: “A strong, sustainable Commonwealth, where the right to control the resources and the destiny of the Commonwealth remain in the hands of the people of these islands, and where an improved quality of life is enjoyed by all who reside here.”

What does it mean for us to have a strong, sustainable Commonwealth? It means having a strong economy that creates jobs for our people; an economy that generates revenues that support our government's mandate to provide public services. It is developing our islands in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

What does it mean for the people of these islands to control the resources and the destiny of the Commonwealth? It means allowing us to exercise our right to govern ourselves, as guaranteed under the Covenant. It means understanding that there is a group of people who are recognized by the CNMI Constitution as being persons of Northern Marianas descent, and respecting that fact. It means requesting the U.S. Congress to recognize and respect our ancestral rights to submerged lands and waters surrounding our islands, and to return such submerged lands and waters to the rightful owners, the people of the Commonwealth who are persons of Northern Marianas descent. It means regularly reviewing our relationship with the United States of America to ensure that both the CNMI and the U. S. continue to act in accordance with the provisions of our Covenant Agreement. It means questioning U.S. military proposals for further land acquisition. It means questioning U.S. congressional policies that seek to make sweeping changes to our immigration and labor laws without proper consultation, in ways that will greatly impact the social, economic and political wellbeing of our people. It means demanding prior consultation on policy decisions that are not consistent with the spirit of our Covenant Agreement.

What does it mean to have an improved quality of life, to be enjoyed by all who reside here? It means working diligently to continue enhancing our tourism industry and effectively guiding our casino industry so that all residents can benefit. It means working to ensure that we work to conserve our natural resources for our children, while responsibly and sustainably exploring the potential of these resources to ensure the strength of our economy. From agriculture to aquaculture, commercial fishing to seabed mining, eco-tourism to edu-tourism, there are so many possibilities for us to continue working towards economic self-sufficiency.

There is no doubt that the CNMI is home to a diverse community, made up of individuals from around the world that have settled here and who make their living in our islands. It is what makes us unique and special. It is certainly possible for everyone who lives in the Northern Marianas to enjoy a quality of life found nowhere else while at the same time protecting the indigenous people of the land. It is made possible through respect. When respect and priority are afforded the people of these islands, then all will benefit. I see it as my obligation and duty to work to ensure that our indigenous people do not become marginalized and neglected as have the Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Australians Aborigines, New Zealand Maori, Chamorros of Guam, and so many others in their own homelands.

In closing let me take this opportunity to share a few words from the esteemed Dr. Samuel Betances during a recent visit. Dr. Betances is a familiar fact to the Marianas, where he has taught numerous courses on the maintenance of language and culture, and was tasked by our government to assist with establishing to assist with establishing our Bilingual Education Program as well as our Northern Marianas College.

I quote: “The language that you have is the language of your culture. Once that language dies, it cannot be replaced again. We will lose our identity. You should take steps to ensure that the next generations are rooted in language, rooted in identity, rooted in the land, and rooted in each other’s commitment, that as long as there is a world, there will always be a Northern Marianas, and there will always be a Chamorro people, and there will always be a Carolinian people, and there will always be some of us who are invited from the outside, provided we add value to your quest. No one should be welcome that devalues your dignity, your humanity, or your people hood.” End of quote.

Let me repeat: “No one should be welcome that devalues your dignity, your humanity, or your people hood.” It is possible to accept our diversity, and embrace it, while recognizing and respecting people of Northern Marianas descent.

Mr. Speaker and fellow colleagues, over these next two years I will continue my work for a strong, sustainable Commonwealth, where the right to control the resources and the destiny of the Commonwealth remain in the hands of the people of these islands, and where an improved quality of life is enjoyed by all who reside here.

In closing, I would like to share with you all a question that some have asked, almost in disbelief, following these last two elections: “How does this woman continue to get elected?”

The answer to that is: by the grace of God, the confidence of the voters of Election Precinct 3, and the hard work of my family and supporters. I am deeply humbled and grateful to all those who have made it possible for me to return and continue to make a difference in the CNMI.

Si Yu’us Ma’ase and Olomwaay.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Ogumoro.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Propst.

Representative Edwin K. Propst's Statement

Good Morning Mr. Speaker, good morning Chief Justice Castro, Father, our distinguished guests, my fellow colleagues it is indeed an honor to be here today and I am most especially grateful to the people of Precinct 1.

As a representative of Precinct 1 that I promised our precinct and our community to serve always in their best interest. So as I sit here this seat does not just belong to me. This seat belongs to the people who put me here. And with that said, if I do not perform I can certainly count on not being here in two years if I choose to run again, but I am not here to only represent our people of Precinct 1. I represent our community, this beautiful island, our Commonwealth; each island. Representative Lee Pan mentioned and talked earlier about team work and I think that is one of the most important things that we must focus on.

One of the things that I have always said to all my colleagues when we have met, I have said it from the beginning, there is no majority and there is no minority with me. We are all one and we are here today to represent no special interest, but only the best interest of our people. And that also includes for the people who did not vote for us. We represent everyone and that is what we are going to focus on and that is what I am going to do. Yesterday's mass is very interesting because the homily by Father Ryan, one of the things that he said that really stuck with me is that "you cannot shake hands with a clenched fist, you can only shake hands with an open hand and an open heart" and I firmly believe in that. Any grudges of the past, anything that has happened before will not matter because right now all that matters is this body right here. I wanted to say this with most sincerely that I believe in each and every one of you. I have said from the beginning when we have met that I look forward to working with and that is the absolute truth. There is no partisan politics with me, I ran as an independent and I hope we can all come to that agreement. I also do not care about being in the spotlight, I do not need my name on things, but I just want us to work together to benefit our precinct and our community; that is what is most important to me that is what is most sacred.

One of my very strongest – biggest goals today is not to get emotional and not to get teary eyed because this is a very emotional day and there are several reasons. My good colleague over here mentioned about those that are no longer with him and I applaud his speech, he spoke from the heart and it is very meaningful. I also think about many of us who have lost our family members, friends and it kind of reminds us how short life really is. We are here, we are put on this earth in these beautiful islands to make a difference and I think with this group right here we have the greatest talent to make this happen. As Representative Lee Pan said we can only do it if we work as a team.

There are so many to give thanks to but I would like to thank my wife, my soul mate, my boss, my wife Daisy who has stood every time with me, unconditional support and I am forever grateful to her. When we decided to run we had a long talk about it because everyone knows this that has ever run it is a huge sacrifice and we think about the financial sacrifices. Leaving a job that I truly love to do this it is difficult, but every one of you has made that sacrifice so I was more than happy to do the same. I am glad that she supported me on that decision and encouraged me the entire way. I would not be in this seat if it were not for an amazingly talented committee who stood by me through thick and thin. My Chairwoman Ana Ada, my Vice

Chairman Kimo Rosario, my Treasurer Ed Calvo and there are so many of my committee members from on-island and off-island who reached out and encouraged me. It is difficult to run, but we did because we wanted to put our people first and I will continue to do that. My parents, my mother in-law, my father in-law, I am so grateful to them for always standing by me and even coming out and waiving with me that has said a lot. I thank them for their wisdom and their guidance. My father who sits behind me – the tall gentleman in the back – he is easy to spot, Ivan Propst. I do not want to look back at you because I do not want to cry, but I am so grateful to you. You have raised me to be what I am today and I am forever grateful to you. I have a bet with Representative Ralph Yumul and I am going to try and win it because he said he is going to see tears. So I am going to try and win that Fifty Dollar bet. I also want to thank the first love of my life, my mother, who is at home right now. Unfortunately, she is bed ridden and could not be here today, I saw her this morning and I gave her a big kiss and she cannot really speak so much now, but I can tell when she was looking at me how proud she was. So to my mother Juanita, thank you. Everything I am today is because of you. Thank you for all your sacrifices. I am almost done.

This has been my home for 42 years now. Yes, I am really that old. And I would tell you, I could not think of a better place to live and raise my children. I am an adopted child by so many of you. So many of my uncles and aunties, my *kompaires*, *komaires* – you look pass the fact that I may not share your blood, but I share your vision and your goal and that is to put our people first each and every time. No special interest with me, what you see is what you get. I will work with you, I will be kind and courteous, and I will tell you exactly how I feel. And if you do something that hurts me, I am going to come and let you know about it because I do not like to talk behind people's backs. I believe in speaking to your face. So if you have a problem with me, if I said something to ever offend any of you and I hope I don't, but if I ever step on your toes and do please call me on it, let me know and I will apologize to you. Please know that. One of the greatest things about what I have learned from many great leaders, so many statesmen is humility and I will always focus on that.

I want to leave with a very powerful quote that always sticks and resonates in my heart because I always believed in serving people first, not parties. And this is nothing against parties because parties are good and it is the laws of the lands and that is how leadership gets done. As the late President John F. Kennedy said, "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past, let us accept our own responsibility for the future." Before I close, I want to give a shout out to my former Representative Tina Sablan who has sat here before who flew out all the way from Hawaii just to be here today. No I am just kidding she came for her parents, but she still made it today. She is my little sister and I always appreciate her advice and everything else. I would also like to recognize my sister Gloria and her husband Judge Vern Perez from Guam. Thank you for flying out of Guam to be here on this special day, I am so honored that you guys came out. Also my *kompaire* who is right there – Joe Guerrero – *par*, thank you for everything. Everyone thank you for this opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to working with you and every single one of you. Thank you for your time.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase. Thank you everyone.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Propst. I think we have a few more and then we will spare you the pain and agony and go to lunch very soon. Please continue, Madam Clerk.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Antonio Sablan.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan's Statement

Good Morning, *Hafa Adai*, and *Tirow* to our distinguished guests – the remaining distinguished guests that are here, to our families and friends who are here with us this morning. We are honored and we thank you for your presence. To our viewing public on television, good morning. *Buenas tattedes* as my good colleague have reminded us earlier.

First, congratulations to you Mr. Speaker, Vice Speaker, and Floor Leader on your elections to the leadership for this 19th House of Representatives. I would also like to extend a special congratulations all the members and your families. Today, you our families, friends, and the people of our Commonwealth are as much a part and deserving of today's special occasion as for us members. Today, we are here because of you and for you.

Mr. Speaker and members, it is again indeed an honor and a privilege to be sworn in as a member of this 19th House of Representatives to continue serving the best interest of the good people of Precinct 1 and of our Commonwealth. I strongly believe that in the past two years, through dedication, hard work and cooperation, we have managed to get our Commonwealth's economy back on track to recovery. But, no one can deny that many challenges remain and surely many of them extremely difficult. But, we have decided to take on those challenges by seeking the offices we now occupy. The people have spoken and have entrusted us with the responsibility to do what is right to improve the lives of four people and those that call our Commonwealth their home. Whether we all realize the burden or not, it is our solemn duty to ensure that we do not lose that trust down the road. Meeting those challenges head on will often be difficult, but again having served in the precious two legislatures, I believe there is only one sure way we can all be successful in our endeavors and our resolve and that is with this House working together cooperatively with the Senate and the Administration. There is no other way. We owe it to the community we are sworn to serve. It is our obligation to listen to the many voices in our community. Our priority must continue to be the improvement of our economy. We must do all that we can to encourage new investments, but not at the expense of other businesses who have been a positive long term business partners in our community. But let us also not forget that as we encourage and welcome new investments, we must ensure that our environment is protected.

Our beautiful and pristine natural environment is our tourism industry. And tourism is our number industry that drives our economy. Therefore, we must continue to provide adequate support to our tourism industry. Simply put as the famous phrase goes and this is a modified version, "it's all about the economy." Having chaired the Committee on Ways and Means the past two years, I can attest to the many financial obligations facing our government. A thriving healthy economy will help this government deal with those financial challenges.

I would now like to take the opportunity to thank the important people in my life. First I would like to thank my wife Pat, our children and families for all their support in allowing me to

continue to live my passion to serve our people and our community as a member of this honorable august body. A special thank you and *dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase* to the good people of Precinct 1 for once again entrusting me with your vote of confidence to continue to represent your best interest as your representative.

To the members and my colleagues from Precinct 1, again congratulations to everyone. To the many other people in our community who have in one way or another have extended their support, thank you.

Lastly, I want to thank my staff for all their untiring dedication and hard work the past two years. This privilege to serve our community will not be possible without all of your support. In Closing, Mr. Speaker and members, reflective of many of the previous members have already stated, I am ready to work with all of you for a better Commonwealth for all. Our people and community demand it, expect it, and deserve it. Nothing less!

Thank you *yan Si Yu'us Ma'ase para todos*.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Sablan. Continue on.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of this august body.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan's Statement

Hafa Adai and Tirow. First of I am extremely honored to welcome all our distinguished guests, family and friends and most importantly the general public for being here this morning to witness again the historic event in our democratic process as we usher in this new chapter in this 19th Legislature. Secondly, I would like to thank our Chairman of election Precinct 2, Mr. Jesus San Nicolas Lizama and all the members for their untiring support and confidence in me. To my fellow constituents from election Precinct 2, words cannot express my humble gratitude for the vote of confidence you have bestowed upon me this past election. I would like to also express my sincere and utmost gratitude to my wife who is behind me and my kids who are the greatest supporters for my endeavors. I would like to thank my grandfather who is behind me as well, my mother who is here in this chamber, my siblings and their family, thank you. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, there is a lot of things ahead of us – challenges that we face – I look forward to work with all of you to bring this great Commonwealth to a greater place. So to my colleagues in this Legislature I pledge and commit an active engagement with you in protecting the welfare and interest of our people.

Dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay, Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Sablan.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Vinson Sablan.

Representative Vinson F. Sablan's Statement

Good afternoon. I was so excited to start serving that I did not write any speech, but I decided that it will come from my heart and just a little from this paper right here. Good afternoon Speaker, Vice Speaker, Floor Leader, all the distinguished guests, the Governor is not here, the Senate Judiciary, the Mayor and of course our first elected AG and also to everybody that is joining us today and to the members of the 19th Legislature.

I am truly honored to sit with great people. I call all of you great because the people of the CNMI in your respective precincts had faith, had trust and had respect that you and I would do everything in the common good of our people of the CNMI. I personally sit here today for one reason is to serve the people of the CNMI and also to serve our people of Precinct 4, but most importantly is to serve our children that the decisions we make today or in each of our sessions that they may enjoy the fruits of that decision in the future. I am a firm believer that we borrow or this Commonwealth belongs to our children. Through the many nights of thinking of my journey to serve there is one thing that I always thought is in thirty to forty years I want our children to still have the CNMI, to still have the practices, the traditions, the cultures, and the language that our parents and our grandparents shared with us.

And I thank the previous leaders all the way back to Trust Territory times and for the people that ensured that we have our Covenant and Commonwealth, I want to say thank you to them. They are the people that ensured that we have our CNMI for us to enjoy and it is just very important for me to make decisions to ensure that our children have the same thing that were passed on to us and that we do not lose anything of our CNMI. This was not a plan, I did not see Congressman Vinny Sablan in my future, last year or five years ago or ten years ago. It was a calling and I really remember the day, which was in April that people started coming to me and asking me and saying, "Vinny you should be our representative" and it was the most humbling thing that I ever experienced to have people come up to you and tell you that they believe in you, they trust in you and they would like you to represent them. Before that I have gained a love to serving our community and I believe that is the main thing why people were coming up to me is because of my work in the schools as a parent and in the church and also in numerous youth programs in our CNMI and in our community. I tell people that ask me, "did you ever see yourself or plan to do this, was everything that you did in the past in our community aim towards this or is this the reason why you were doing it?" And I looked at every single person that asked me that and I told them, the reason why I served my community and gave myself entirely and volunteered each time was to teach my children the importance of helping and the importance of being someone in the community. I truly believe that by doing that they could grow up and think back to say "my dad brought us around the church, the schools and he cared for us." I just want them to take that with them when they grow up. So it was fate for me.

Before I get to the thank you and I am going to try and not be emotional, if I am I apologize. This one person that I wish was here and I know he is looking down at me and he is the person that made me a man, my father or my dad, the late Juan Reyes Sablan. He is a very simple man, never sat in the legislature or never really had political ambitions. No one ever guided me to do this. I did not grow up around politics or aiming to be a Congressman, I never grew up around that. My heart and the people of Precinct 4 are the ones that entrusted me to do this. Before my father left us with a short life of 49 years old, through the nights of caring for him, he looked me in my eye

and told me “I am sorry my son, but I am going to have to make you a man in the short period of time, I know it is not fair for you but I will try my best to make you a man give you the lessons that you need to become a man.” I will not tell you all the lessons because we will be here till dinner time, but if there are a couple of things that he said is “Be a man of honor. Be a man of your word. If you give someone your word my son, you never take it back that will tell lengths about you and you will gain respect from that.” The third thing was to “leave your mark by helping the people.” In saying that what I want to do is to leave my mark so that in the future my grandkids, great grandkids, or great great grandkids that I may not be able to see or meet, all I want is for someone to cross pass with them and say, “I know your great great grandfather or your great grandfather, his name is Vinny Sablan and he was somebody that always helped his community. He was a man of honor, he was a man of respect and trust.” And I say this because I hope that my great grandchild in the future would take that standard of living and live by that standard to say “my great grandfather was a great man” and I will continue that legacy and I will become great myself.

Now to my thank you – almost done Speaker – first I would like to thank the Lord, he is the one person that I always ask for guidance to touch my heart, touch my mind and to hold my hand and guide me to do good things. To my wife Roca that sits behind me, I want to say thank you, you are my greatest supporter and without you I could never have gotten this far, you are my backbone, you are my heart and you are everything that I am today. To my kids as well, tell you a quick story when my wife gave me the blessing to run for office, I sat my children down and they are in elementary school and I said “kids what do you think if dad becomes a Congressman?” My son looked at me and said, “What is a Congressman, what do they do?” I said, with your blessing you join me in this journey and you will learn and see what a Congressman does and it is to help people. To my mom sitting behind me, I want to say thank you for your support and your love and everything that you have taught me, to be kind and to be pure and to have integrity. Mom and dad, you gave me my integrity and I plan to keep that and at no cost I will ever leave what you have taught me. To my mother in-law Sofina and my in-laws, brother in-laws, thank you for welcoming me into your family. My wife is the reason why I ended up in Precinct 4 and it was a question in my journey, they tried to find out where I was from and I had to explained very much each time I visit there house. To my siblings who are here and my brother that is unable to attend, thank you guys I love you guys, we grew up together and I hope we continue to raise our children in the same manner we were raised. To team Vinny, my committee, I want to say *Si Yu’us Ma’ase* and thank you, without you guys this would have been so much longer.

Last to the people of Precinct 4, I am truly humbled, truly grateful and I will represent you and your families and your children in the best manner and again in all the integrity that I have been given. So in closing I want to actually read my mission statement to all of you. I know it is in the program, but I think it is only fair that you hear it from my mouth.

My mission statement is “To have a clear and unwavering commitment to doing what is right for the common good of the people of the CNMI.” A message from myself and about myself is “Be humble and caring, have integrity and respect, be genuine and happy.” I live by these core values that have been instilled in me by many people and hope to pass on to those I cross paths with. I must continue to learn and grow through my entire life. My greatest success will be through the eyes of my family and our people; I must build and positively develop that relationship every day of my life. Put faith in the Lord, through him anything is possible. Thank you members.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Sablan. And maybe before we proceed further, I want to remind the members that it is almost one o'clock and we still have seven members that have not spoken. Perhaps for the remaining members to maybe pick up the pace a little and we can allow our people to avail of the food that has been prepared. I am sorry I do not wish to take the thunder out of anyone's speech and if you decide that is your option I just wanted to recommend if possible. Madam Clerk, please continue.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Taimanao.

Representative Francis S. Taimanao: Thank you, Clerk.

Representative Francis S. Taimanao's Statement

Hafa Adai, Tirow honorable representatives, distinguished guests, families, friends, ladies and gentlemen.

First and foremost, I thank the Lord for giving me the strength to undertake this responsibility of representing our people of the Commonwealth. I further ask for his guidance to give me the certitude in making moral and just decisions on issues placed before me. In the same token I want to acknowledge several individuals who have played an important part during my campaign. My Chairman Mr. Marvin I. Deleon Guerrero, Vice Chairman Mr. Lewis L. Pangelinan, Treasurer Mrs. Mildred Sablan Camacho, and Secretary Ms. Rose Sharon Taimanao and their spouses. As with my committee, individuals who have vigorously given me their blessing and support from day one is none other than my wife behind me, Frances Terlaje Taimanao, my children, my mother Carmen Songsong Taimanao, my parents in-law Vicente and Maria Terlaje, Mr. Jess Hocog, my siblings and families from both sides on-island and abroad. Above all I also like to extend a sincere gratitude and many thank you to the people of Precinct 5 for entrusting me and having the confidence to represent you.

To my fellow colleagues, congratulations. Let us have one common goal and that is to enrich the livelihood of our people and to protect our remaining resources for our future generation. To the people of our Commonwealth we are faced with many challenges as we know. I ask for your support and understanding as we take on these challenges so we may find solutions that will enhance our way of life as a whole.

Un dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghillisow, thank you, *Maraming Salamat Po*, have a nice day.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Taimanao. Madam Clerk.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Tebuteb.

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: Thank you, Clerk. Mr. Speaker, I was prepared with your earlier statement. So I will go ahead and offer my statement to the Clerk to put on record, but before I do that I have compacted my conversation on the floor to just about one page. Before I do that let me just acknowledge that my family and I acknowledge the presence and welcome our dignitaries, especially for those who continue to be on the floor with us, Judge, Father Balajadia, Honorable guest from Guam Judge Perez, my former colleague Tina Sablan and especially those

special guests in the gallery. I see former speaker Deleon Guerrero. I will provide for the record my prepared statement. Again, I want to thank our Precinct 3 confidence those who chose to elect me and my friends who are in this chamber right now and also to those who chose not to elect me. It has been seven terms in this House so I will leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Tebuteb. Madam Clerk.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Villagomez.

Representative Edmund S. Villagomez: Thank you. Because not only can I hear Representative Anthony Benavente's stomach, I could also hear George's stomach and my stomach as well. So I will just go ahead and start off with the way former Representative Chris Leon Guerrero started his speech in one of our Sine and Die sessions when he said "thank you, thank you, and thank you.

Representative Edmund S. Villagomez's Statement

First and foremost, I would like to thank the good Lord for blessing me and blessing all of us with the gift of life and the opportunity to serve our people in our respective precincts and in the Commonwealth as a whole.

Second thank you goes out to my parents, just like Vinny, I can make a list but I will probably be here until next week. So thank you for everything. To my family, my sister who was the Chairwoman to the committee to re-elect and in this election I wanted my family to be involved in all the campaign and the stuff that the committee goes through. So they really were family by blood. So I thank you and I appreciate all of that.

The last thank you and definitely not the least is the people of the CNMI especially Precinct 3 for giving me the opportunity again to serve them for the third time. One of the qualities, just like Representative Vinson Sablan brought up that they like to see in their representative is a man or woman of their word. You give your word and you follow it through that is one thing they have always pointed out about me and some of our representatives. I appreciate that they appreciate that and I appreciate people that carry that value as well. So I give my word to the people of the Commonwealth and Precinct 3 that I will continue to work for you by working with my fellow colleagues, the Administration, the Senate and other divisions and agencies and branches and other organizations in our community to work for the benefit of this great Commonwealth.

Thank you very much.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Villagomez.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Yumul.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you Lin, thank you Mr. Speaker.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul's Statement

Hafa Adai and good afternoon to our honorable and distinguished guests, I know Governor Eloy Inos left, Chief Justice Alex Castro, our guest from Guam Judge Perez, former Representative Tina Sablan, colleagues, families and friends thank you.

Citizens of the CNMI I am here before you today as your public servant who is deeply thankful and honored to represent you in our great CNMI.

To the citizens of Precinct 3, my constituents, thank you for giving me the opportunity again to serve you. I am sincerely humbled by your confidence in me and I promise to continue to fight and work in your best interest.

I want to thank my parents, my mom and I think my dad is somewhere out there and my grandma who is home, thank you for your love and support. I would especially like to thank my wife Joy who is probably videotaping me right now, who has shown her endless support for my drive to continue to do what I to do – which is to serve our people of the CNMI.

To my brother and former Senator, Ray Yumul I believe he is out there, who has continued to support me in my dedication to public service and who has advised me a lot and I hear it every day, I will not forget.

To my campaign team Carl Hocog and Shani, friends and all, I offer my heartfelt thanks for all your time and commitment.

On a personal not, I would like to thank my office staff Ashley Benavente and LJ Deleon Guerrero for their continued hard work and commitment to me and this office.

Thank you, *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*, *Ghillisow*, and *Maraming Salamat Po*.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Yumul. Madam Clerk.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Camacho.

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you Lin.

Representative George N. Camacho's Statement

Integrity, service, and honor.

Integrity: Upon being elected to this office integrity is inherited. It is given to each and every one of us. Much of the time, integrity is lost or questioned. However, your presence here in this chamber deeply implies what character each and everyone here has. We do not need to continue to police ourselves. I know the people are a great judgment of character and have entrusted you for their believe in you as a member of the 19th Commonwealth Legislature. Their trust is in us encumbered and we shall continue to uphold their trust and keep that integrity intact.

Service: As members of the 19th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature it is our first and only duty is to serve. We shall serve what is the best interest of our people. We have taken upon ourselves this responsibility to service and we shall provide such duty. The needs of our people is why we serve. We shall uphold our Constitutional duties and continue to provide for our people in the best of our ability and in our capacity. Many issues the people of this great Commonwealth face on a daily basis is our duty to make their lives a little better each day.

Honor: It is understandable that this position does not come easy. Many challenges we shall face each day. There will be many differences on many issues. We most certainly will disagree on matter, but working for the people being elected to this position is quite an impressive honor. Having the trust and confidence of our people is an honor that I can never repay. I feel privileged having this opportunity, an opportunity to represent the people of this great Commonwealth. A position I do not take lightly and every day I shall do my duties for I am truly humbled and greatly honored.

In closing Mr. Speaker, as always I will first like to thank the good Lord above for giving the opportunity to continue to serve as a representative of the 19th House. I would like to thank my wife, my family for their patience and believe that I can serve our people. I would also like to thank the committee, various officers, chairs, my staff and everyone who has helped during the long and difficult campaign road. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the great people of Precinct 4 and of course this is inclusive of the residence of the beautiful Northern Islands. I congratulate everyone in here and I thank you all for your confidence in electing me as your Floor Leader. I shall do my duty to the best of my ability.

Thank you everyone, *Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghillisow.*

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Floor Leader.

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Representative Rafael Demapan.

Vice Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Mr. Speaker yan buenas tatdes para i taotao-ta todun ni man gaige pa'go.*

Representative Rafael S. Demapan's Statement

Hafa adai, tirow para hamyo publiku Marianas i mas man ma'gas mami kululo'ña i man amko siha. Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay para todun hamyo pot i konfiansan miyu giya guahu ta'lo gi i ma'pos na Nobiembre ya bai hu sietbe hamyo mas. Tayuyuti yo' guini na terminu enao gue hu fa'faisen.

I also join my family and colleagues, extend my utmost respect to all fellow residence, dignitaries, Chief Justice, Father Ryan, especially those who traveled from abroad to witness another historical installation of our self government. With gratitude and humility we solemnly gather here today, ready and ready and willing to map out realistic and practical legislative strategies to tackle the most pressing policy issues over the next two years. We are all duly bound to help out and safeguard public trust. As your Vice Speaker for the next 12 months, I strongly believe that bare of physical or ideological shall come in the way of economic and social

progress of our people. I pledge unequivocal partnership, not partisanship. No public issue is too complex that together we cannot solve when we map out and prioritize our legislative strategies with deliberate results. Military build-up, economic expansion, accelerated local private sector employment, looming labor shortage, massive infrastructure development. We must be steadfast and unwavering in our moral obligation to solve problems to responsive legislation.

Honorable members and fellow residents, I pledge to you as your Vice Speaker that your House of Representative is as ready as ever to work relentlessly through our strategic alliance with the 19th Senate and the Administration of Governor Inos and Lieutenant Governor Torres. Together, we will build bridges, together we will solve problems, together we will bring social austerity and economic prosperity once again for our people. A dawn awaits us and I am humble and honored to work with you all.

On a personal note, *malago yo' na bai chule este na kotdét ya bai hu na'i gracias, dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase para si nana-hu, si tata-hu gaige mu halom yo' na omega TV, sin este dos táigue hit guini na memento. Entre mas i supottasion i bendisión-ña komu saina. Lokkue para i mañe'lo todú, i famagu'on-hu, gaige ha lokkue i lai-hu matto lokkue ginen Amerika. Hu chu'chule lokkue este na opottunidát spesiát na kulo para i komitin i Demapan to re-elect i Demapan-Sablan – former Congressman Jess Lizama – todú tiempo lokkue tinatitiyi ni asagua-ña si Auntie Daling ya ginen guahu, dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase Mr. Chairman. Tinatitiyi lokkue para i miembron i precinct club sin hamyo ti bai gaige pa'go na memento. Lao mas spesiát pa'go i pa ta na'i dánkolo na kulo para i taotao Marianas spesiatmente i taotao Precinct 2 gaige fetsa gi hamyo ya ginen in fetsan miyu ma na'na'i mo'na mas ganas para bai hu kontinua hafa maolek para hamyo para hita todú Marianas ya ginen enao giya pa'papa gi halom i korason-hu hu na'na'i hamyo dánkolo na respetu para enao na bendisión. Ya hu ha lokkue para bai chule este na time bai rekognisa lokkue iyo-ta former Speaker as Obe yan i asagua-ña para todú i ayudu ni ha ekstende para guahu yan si Congressman Sablan. Si Yu'us Ma'ase Mr. Speaker yan este ha buenas tades.*

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: *Si Yu'us Ma'ase* Vice Speaker. For the record I will be the last. I will join my colleague Representative Tebuteb sparing you from the pain of reading my eight page statement and just narrow it down to the important points, very short.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero's Statement

First of course is to recognize and extend an appreciation to our dignitaries. I had a whole list, but I kept crossing them out as they keep leaving the room. So we really have to pay tribute to the Honorable Chief Justice Alexandro Castro, *si Pale* James Balajadia, *iyo-ta* off-island dignitary *unu ha sosobla si* Honorable Judge Vernon Perez from Guam Superior Court. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase Judge.* Presiding Judge Robert Naraja, thank you. I also want to recognize our former representatives and friends of this body Former Representative Jesus Attao and Representative Tina Sablan. Also at this time, I want to thank everyone for your patience and understanding in being here and bearing with us. To the families of all the members I ask for your understanding. I know in the case of leaderships and caucuses I know it is sometimes difficult. All of us here have been friends and have been my colleagues for a long time and it is never easy when these kinds of decisions are made.

Let me start by clarifying something about this new leadership. I think I have seen some faces and eyebrows raised when our new Vice Speaker mentioned that he will be Vice Speaker for one year. Let me clarify that as everybody knew three people have been vying for the Speakership since the general election. There was an impasse that went throughout, there were many negotiations, discussion, but less than 24 hours ago that impasse was still there. We forged the current leadership based on an understanding of shared speakership and this unique arrangement it was agreed that Representative Demapan and myself would each hold the Speakership for one year. With me as the Speaker for the first year and the Vice Speaker Demapan on the second beginning the second Monday of January 2015. This unique and unprecedented agreement is really intended to break the impasse because we were seriously concerned that today could possibly be no leadership per se and we would be operating under a Speaker Pro Tem and no committee chairs and we would not be able to conduct business and would not be able to inform the Governor and the Senate that this House stands ready to transact or to conduct business. So for better or for worse I ask my colleagues, I personally have confidence that I can work with every one of you. I know each one of you on a personal level. I think if I was to be asked what could perhaps be my strength it would be the long term relationships I create with people and trying to improve on those relationships. You may call it politics, call it what you may, but it can work. It is a two way street of course, but if we all come on board with the same type of attitude I guess of working together as was echoed by just about every member, I too have optimism that great things can happen. I will pledge that I will exercise this authority or temperate rather, with patience, with understanding, with compassion and with fairness. You can always call me if I am not doing my part, as Representative Propst said, I will apologize if I have misgivings or shortfalls. I do pledge to work with every one of you and hope that we can all do the same.

So with that I want to take the time to extend also my gratitude to very deserving people. I would like to start with my father and I am glad I did not bet with Representative Yumul, I think you have made a lot of money already. To acknowledge the guidance of my father who is by far my biggest critic and the support of my wife and my children, my siblings, my entire family for their untiring and unwavering support. Especially for enduring the hardships that comes with this territory for enduring many sacrifices on our behalf. I also want to thank my Chairman for the Committee to elect and my good friend Mr. Diego Benavente who is my committee to elect Chairman, Vice Chairman and I think the only official committee member in my committee to elect, thank you Mr. Benavente – the lone ranger. To the people of Precinct 1, I humbly represent, also without your continued support I will not be here and I will try my best to continue to serve you as best I can, *dánkolo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase*. As Representative Propst said to everyone, those that supported me and even those that did not, and I continue to ask for your guidance, not just to myself, but to all of us here. Our decisions here are based largely on your advice. So we continue to ask for your advice. With that I want to lastly take this time to thank our good Lord for all the blessings he has bestowed in myself and all of us. With that ladies and gentlemen, for my favorite part it is with great pleasure and I am honored to extend an invitation to each and every one of you to please join us for lunch to be served in the Legislature's lawn in the front of the building. I also want to take this time to remind my colleagues that immediately after adjournment we will have our official picture taking up here at the dias. If there is nothing further I would like to ask the Floor Leader – one more – before we offer a motion. Recognized Representative Tebuteb.

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also felt and this is important to me that I do not take things for granted and recognizing our dignitaries. So I want to also recognize Judge Naraja and because I was looking out there trying to figure out who are the dignitaries I could recognize. I completely forgot about my mentor sitting behind my friend back there. My mentor Representative Attao, my apologies because when I recognize people it is sometimes difficult because when sitting in here and it seems like you are a part of us and this not the only first time I may have missed you and I apologize for that. In closing Mr. Speaker and members, I must convey a very strong message to all our guest especially our off island visitors that I wish you a very safe journey back home. Let me sum up my last words and I was trying to reflect on Dr. Betances comment made by Representative Ogumoro and on the traditions and cultures. I was timing you Mr. Speaker because when you said you had eight pages and so forth I figured that with that part of your pronouncement on clarification. I think it is only important that I also take this opportunity because it is important on the culture and tradition that Representative was referencing Dr. Betances and he summed it up – you kind of have a long quote – and I really appreciate that he summed it up. And I want to make sure that our visitors coming to our House, coming into this chamber and leaving going back home and not only on-island especially those who have traveled far and he summed it up that it is ok to ask your guest to help you with your quest and those are traditions and cultures, I think you were referencing Dr. Betances, I do have other items, but at this point thank you Mr. Speaker for that opportunity.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Tebuteb. One more before we turn it over. Vice Speaker.

Vice Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this is just to clarify your statement rather than 2015, 2016.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you so much otherwise I think I would step down tomorrow. Thank you for the clarification.

ADJOURNMENT

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Floor Leader, may I ask that you offer a motion to adjourn and then I will turn it over to our MC for the closing and the benediction.

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hereby move to adjourn this 19th House Organizational Session.

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Floor Leader. Motion has been offered and seconded. Discussion on the motion.

Several members voiced “ready”.

The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote. There was no nay vote.

The House adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Mistress of Ceremonies.

Mistress of Ceremony Charlene S. Masiwemai: Thank you, Speaker Deleon Guerrero. Please all rise. At this time, I ask Father James to deliver the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

(Father James S. Balajadia gave the Benediction)

Mistress of Ceremony Charlene S. Masiwemai: Thank you Father James. Ladies and Gentlemen and Honorable guests, this concludes our Inaugural Ceremony for the 19th Northern Marianas Commonwealth legislature. On behalf of the Members of the House of Representatives and the Director of the Legislative Bureau, *Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Ghillisow* and thank you for joining us witness this memorable and historical event. The Members of the 19th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature and the Legislative Bureau invite you to join us for lunch on the legislature's law adjacent to our location.

Respectfully submitted,

Venetia A. Sanchez
House Journal Clerk

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY: 1st Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY: NONE

THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY: NONE