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NINETEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

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LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL

3rd Day, 2nd Regular Session

Wednesday, September 23, 2015

The House of Representatives of the Nineteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Third Day, Second Regular Session on Wednesday, September 23, 2015, at 1:50 p.m., in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll and all twenty members were present.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madame Clerk. With all 20 present a quorum is duly established. At this time, the Chair calls this emergency session of the 3rd Day, 2nd Regular Session to order. At this point because this is an emergency session, pursuant to the Open Government Act Section 9908 and the official rules of the House, we need to do a roll call for the House to agree an emergency exist. Three things have to happen. First, a notice has to be sent out in writing with the reasons to justify the emergency. Second, a vote has to take place where two-thirds of this body has to concur. And third, file an emergency agenda and the findings on the emergency in the official records of the governing body. The Chairman has sent out a notice to all the members. The reasons that an emergency exists is based on the urgent need to address the FY 2016 Appropriations Act and the amendment to the Casino Act House Bill 19-95, reference to Standing Committee Report 19-32 to allow the Casino Commission to use fees to fund this operation. Those are the two reasons and those are the items that we will be acting on today. I do not think there is any need to clarify with regards to the budget that a legislative emergency exists. A bona fide legislative emergency and that we have a few days to pass the budget to prevent a government shutdown. So that is pretty clear. Another one is House Bill 19-95 and the purpose for that is as I said to allow the commission to use the fees, first of all to authorize them issue such fees so that they can fund their operations and ensure that the public's interest to monitor and regulate the casino is done. We understand with the meeting that they had with the JGO Committee that their commission employees are currently under a 90 day contracts and if they are not provided with the authority to use the funds those contracts will expire and we would

possibly jeopardize our ability to regulate the industry so that is kind of the reason behind it. That would be discussed and maybe what I will do prior to the vote is open it up for discussion and then we can go to vote after that. So at this time, the Chair will entertain any discussions on the two items appearing on our agenda today and then we can go to the vote. Recognize the Minority Leader.

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the more appropriate way is that there has to be some degree of motions so that we go into discussion. I was going to ask if perhaps if you want to do it in such way that if we are going to define part of the reason that you have just stated with respect to the House Bill 19-19 over the budget. In other words we need a motion in order for us to dispense of any course of action that we may want to proceed. One is if we should dwell on the definition of a bona fide legislative problem or a bona fide legislative, let me just use the word disaster if I may and then we would proceed from there. So that we have at least for the record that we are in line with the intent of what exist as an emergency given that – seems to be two subjects within the context of your public announcement.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: With regards to the motion. We have had one other emergency session prior to this. The way we did it is the same way we are doing it now. We sent out the notice, we had the subject matter in there and prior to the vote to approve this emergency session we discussed it. So I am following the same procedure if you will. I would like to open it up. First and foremost here is the passage of the budget that I want to clear. We need 14 votes for that. If we have that it would be first and foremost and that will not be compromised, we will act on the budget today. The second one, let us discuss it and if we may not have the 14 votes I do not want to jeopardize the budget. We can certainly perhaps take it out and act on it in the next session, but I do want to hear your thoughts on this rather than just go to vote and risk not having the required number of vote. So please share your thoughts. Recognize Representative Vinson Sablan.

Representative Vinson F. Sablan: Thank you, Speaker. Are we going to Public Comments before our discussions?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We have to approve this emergency session first. Recognize Representative Villagomez.

Representative Edmund S. Villagomez: So are we going to be voting based on the two issues or one by one? Or is it a package deal?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Good question Representative Villagomez. When I sent out the notice it had both of it in it so it is a package deal to hold the emergency session for these two reasons. Like I said our big concern is passing the budget and that should be foremost if the other issue could jeopardize that and not have the ability to act on it today then we can certainly consider that. I think even though the Chair has issued these two reasons it is within our prerogative. Recognize Representative Benavente.

Representative Roman C. Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just wondering because I am looking at it and it seems like what we are doing is putting one as a writer. I know the urgency and the budget requirement that is needs to pass today. Unfortunately, the other bill – personally

the way I feel is I would like to see more clarity with regards to the bill and try to consummate as much knowledge and the intent of this bill more and as well as everyone else here, majority of the members. They want to really see what is really up and running with regards to the establishment of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you. Recognize Representative Anthony Benavente.

Representative Anthony T. Benavente: Mr. Speaker just for reason with all due respect. In terms of the emergency I would honestly agree with the budget for the other bill I refer that we defer it for now and concentrate more on the budget issue. I do not think the other bill is being right now for discussion on that matter, but the budget is on a limited timeframe where our good people, hard working government employees are desperate and seeking us too for that issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also agree with that. Some of the members here are not part of the JGO so we were not given an opportunity to speak and I believe the Casino Commission was here sometime last week it was a short notice for me. I did not have time to look at this. I too have many questions with regards to the amendments and I ask the members that we defer it and go through the budget and if we need to pass it by next week we can actually come by and give us enough time to review the bill carefully and maybe ask questions to the Casino Commission on things I need to clarify.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Yumul. Anybody else? Recognize Representative Propst.

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too call the sentiments of my colleagues about deferring this. The word we often hear is “due diligence.” I do not see this as rising to the importance or the magnitude as compared to the appropriations act, which is something that we really need to address obviously and we are going to have to spend a lot of time on that. So I just wanted to say I totally agree with them on that part.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Propst. Any other member? Recognize the Floor Leader.

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess for the clarification because I am getting the sentiments that the budget we can garner the 14 votes with the budget, but not with the other bill. At the risk of not having this session today, maybe ask the Clerk how to – because your request is for a vote whether to have an emergency session with these two items on the agenda. So the question is can you rephrase your motion and leave out this or how do we go about this? I will leave the question to the Clerk or the Legal Counsel.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: I think I will let them answer. Go ahead Legal Counsel.

Legal Counsel John Cool: It is not necessary to make a motion. As Floor Leader you can leave it off the agenda, remove it.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Cool. I was going to say that we have done this where we have taken referred bills back to the committee through a motion and if that is the route that we wanted to take, I was going to ask the Floor Leader to perhaps offer a motion not to refer it back to the committee since the committee had already reported it out, but to perhaps leave it on the agenda and that we can act on it in the next legislative session and that would be what I would be asking the Floor Leader for. Now recognize the Vice Speaker.

Vice Speaker Rafael S. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I tend to agree with you. I was suppose to suggest that scenario. However, you have said it earlier and articulated eloquently and the need for acting on this proposed measure before us. As we all know, time is of essence on this legislation, but because I do not want to compromise the budget process today. Being the author I am amenable to that route however, I ask the members if we can just leave it on the calendar and perhaps call a session as soon as possible so we can tackle on this issue. So that the commission can continue to operate their office to do its duties in regulating the industry. So with that Mr. Speaker, I yield.

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

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we have heard enough from the members and I think everyone is in agreement that we can entertain the budget this afternoon. However we just want to make sure these proceedings is in order. I am not sure whether leaving House Bill 19-95 on today's emergency session is really in order. I think we have to come to an agreement on what is in order. An order that we do not compromise the action to the members during this emergency session. We make sure that the agenda reflects one item only on the agenda and that would be Conference Committee Report 19-1. I think for procedural purposes we have got to make sure that we are in order before we actually conduct official business pursuant to this emergency call. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Chairman of Ways and Means. If we go the route – a motion to leave it on – it would be on the Standing Committee Report part of our agenda and the motion would be not to act on it today even though it will stay in that part of our agenda. I just do not want to refer it back to the committee when the committee has already done its work. Let me just add something, a little bit. I hear the sentiments of the members and I think that is probably the route we are going to be taking. I do want to say though for the record that the casino gaming commission has been asking this body to act on this measure since May, I believe. They have presented a draft bill and a draft bill has then been introduced here by the Vice Speaker, comments were solicited, meetings were held with the gaming commission and we are now at the eleventh hour. That was the urgency that I felt justified the need to have us act on it. In a few days the fiscal year will end. If they are not granted the authority to be able to expend those funds to continue hiring their personnel then we risk jeopardizing our ability to monitor and regulate the casino, which will by the way continue to operate whether we regulate them or not. Nothing in the law says that if we do not fail to monitor them that they would have to close. So it is the public's interest here that is the reason that we should act on it. It is not a new

measure. I just wanted to clarify that I know that there are different views right now. The bill has been going back and forth. I think it started with seventy sum pages. It has been refined because this body was not satisfied with that version, they trimmed it down and the product now is third or fourth. Anyway, having said that I feel it is the consensus of the members and the Chair will ask – where is our Legal Counsel? If there is no objection from the members, I am going to ask the Floor Leader to offer a motion to keep it on the agenda at the Standing Committee Report part for action in the next legislative session. Is there any objection to that? Recognize Representative Villagomez.

Representative Edmund S. Villagomez: Just a question. How does that work when this is an emergency session?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Well in other words it will not be acted today that is all it means. We are not going to touch it today. Even if we get to the Standing Committee Report we are not going to touch it if we adopt this motion. Recognize the minority leader.

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am in line with the Chairman of Ways and Means and we want to make sure we are legislatively in line with our mandates. I would think that if we maintain that route what you just suggested to make a motion but leave it on Standing Committee Report meaning the next legislative regular session would be 72 hours required open government act. If we adopt this we can go ahead and entertain it now or tomorrow even if we say we are not going to entertain it today on the standing committee, but we can entertain it tomorrow within the 72 hours so we still need to make sure we are in line with that so that we do not jeopardize the budget act or to consider. I have had my review with the bill itself. You are correct Mr. Speaker and that the draft has been within our House for that long and just prefiled on August 25th so now we need to make sure at least with those changes that some of the members do not have access or privy with that we understand the whole context from the initial part of the draft up to the final draft that is now part of the Standing Committee Report. So I would suggest perhaps that we just go on one motion and that is for the budget so we do not jeopardize that.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Minority Leader. This motion that I am asking the Floor Leader is basically a motion to say we are not going to act on 19-95. If we adopt that motion we are not going to act on 19-95. The next session that the Chair calls would have to comply with the Open Government Act which means three days notice. The bill has already been prefiled with the House Clerk. There will not be another emergency session after this so it would be a regular session. There will be more than ample time for everybody to review it and by the way I do plan to call it early next week. So everybody will have a chance to review it there will not be one today or tomorrow. Like I said, the only reason is so that we have to either act on it or not act on it and if we are not going to act on it what do we want? Do we want to send it back to the committee and then the committee will have to prefile it or we leave it calendar because the committee has done its part and act on it in the next session. That is basically the two options I feel we have unless a member has another option. Here is the important part, we are not acting on it today. I think that should satisfy the concerns I have been hearing. Floor Leader.

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not think we need a motion to leave it on calendar. We can operate under the understanding that would not make a motion for

its passage or adoption. However our point is leaving it on calendar and we move to item II, Public Comments we will leave it open for public comments, but I am alright with that also.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: We will go for the vote. First of all, if we are not going to do it by motion, I prefer that it would be more formal by motion, we all agree to this what we are going to do. If we are not and the Legal Counsel has already said you have the authority not to act on it so if that is the consensus that is the understanding we have that we are now going to vote on having the emergency session to act on the fiscal year 2016 appropriation then we will put it to vote. Recognize Representative John Paul Sablan.

Representative John Paul P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we are going to go that route, if we are not going to act on the 19-95 because today is the emergency session, how is that – is your standing committee on JGO have to refile this on a regular session because it is in the agenda right now. You know since the commissioners are here, if any of the members have any question we can dissolve in the Committee as a Whole and you can ask your questions to the commissioners. 19-95 as the commissioners has mentioned that there are employees will be affected if there is no such form of funding budget for them to operate to regulate the casino industry. I think we can all agree that it is just as important. There are personnel's here that are going to be affected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Sablan. For the second round Representative Roman Benavente.

Representative Roman C. Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I share the same feelings that Representative John Paul Sablan. As one has mentioned earlier when we got this package, a lot of the information was not disseminated accordingly and equally so we want to get as much information. If we need to go talk to the commission during the breaking period that if we use that time that the Speaker has mentioned, we can use that time up to next week and try to meet with the individual commission or the individual that are involve in this so we can get the information so we do not make a rush judgment and then later on we come to a bind on the situation. So I agree with you Mr. Speaker with that, I agree with you on holding it until the next session. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Actually, I do not agree to holding it in the next session, but if that is the consensus of the members then I will respect that. I want it on today, but our vote will determine whether we can have it today. Recognize for the second time Representative Anthony Benavente.

Representative Anthony T. Benavente: I hear the concern of Chairman John Paul Sablan, but you are not going to get that vote Mr. Speaker in terms of the 14 required vote for these two agenda and I suggest that we separate and get things rolling on the main issue of the budget and let us get on with this session as it is scheduled for today. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you. Any others? Mr. Cool just to clarify, without a motion the Floor Leader will affirm that we are only going to be acting – you have to raise your hand and do the scouts pledge – but we are only going to be acting on one item, the budget bill

and then we go to vote for the emergency session. Is that the understanding I have? Mr. Cool is that in conformance with our rules?

Legal Counsel John Cool: Yes.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Any questions from the members?

Several members voiced “ready”.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Alright with the understanding that our vote, that the Clerk will call will be to approve this emergency session to act on the fiscal year 2016 appropriation act. Madame Clerk, call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to call the day’s emergency session to order with the following results:

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

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 20 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madame Clerk. With the votes exceeding the two-thirds necessary votes. This emergency session will continue. At this time, let us go to item II of our Order of Business, Public Comments. If there are any members of the public who wishes to offer any oral comments you may step up to the podium. We ask that you identify yourself for the record your name and we ask that you please keep your comments to five minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following member made comments:

Ms. Liana Hofschneider

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Any other member who would like to offer any public comments now is the time to do so. If not this body will continue. Members let us now move without objection to item XIII, Reports of Special and Conference Committee and I turn it over to our Floor Leader for the motion to adopt.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

None

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

House Bills: None

House Local Bills: None

House Legislative Initiatives: None

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

House Resolutions: None

House Joint Resolutions: None

House Commemorative Resolutions: None

House Concurrent Resolutions: None

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

None

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

None

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

None

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

No action taken for the following Standing Committee Report:

S. C. R. NO. 19-32: Reporting on H. B. NO. 19-95, entitled: “To clarify the powers of the Commonwealth Casino Commission and to make needed changes to the Commonwealth Code given the unique regulatory oversight of the Casino Industry in the Commonwealth; and for other purposes.” *Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of H. B. NO. 19-95, HD1.*

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before us we have Conference Committee Report 19-1, reporting on House Bill 19-86, HD6, SS1, entitled, “To make appropriations for the operations and activities of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, its agencies, instrumentalities, and independent programs, and to provide budget authority for government corporations for Fiscal Year 2016.” From your Conference Committee recommending the passage of the bill in the form of House Bill 19-86, HD6, SS1, CCS1. Mr. Speaker, I move for its adoption.

C. C. R. NO. 19-1: Reporting on H. B. 19-86, HD6, SS1, entitled, “To make appropriations for the operations and activities of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, its agencies, instrumentalities, and independent programs, and to provide budget authority for government corporations for Fiscal Year 2016.” *Your Conference Committee recommends passage of the bill in the form of H. B. 19-86, HD6, SS1, CCS1.*

The motion was seconded.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Floor Leader. Motion has been offered and seconded for the adoption of Conference Committee Report 19-1. Under discussion I am going to ask our good Chairman of Ways and Means who not only is the Chairman of Ways and Means, but also led the Conference Committee from the House to summarize the contents of CCR 19-1 for the benefit of the members and then we can go to discussion after that. Chairman.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon members and welcome to our members of the public who has joined us this afternoon. Let me just try to set a few things in order here. This being a conference committee report and a product where the

conferees or counterpart from the Senate our option this afternoon are basically to accept or reject. At this point, opportunities to amend items under House Bill 19-86 we are beyond that. Let me summarize what we have in front of us. Let me just say if the members would follow us here and this is Conference Committee Report 19-1 reporting on the deliberations of the Conference Committee on House Bill 19-86, HD6, SS1 and again the appropriation bill was introduced on July 16, 2015. The House of Representatives pass the House in the form of 19-86, House Draft 6 transmitted to the Senate on July 20th. Senate made changes to the House Bill in the form of Senate Substitute 1 and transmitted to the House on August 8, 2015. The House then rejected the Senate Substitute on August 25, 2015 and referred the bill to Conference Committee. I believe both presiding officers of the House and the Senate respectively appointed the members of the conferees on August 25th. So basically we had a rejection and an appointment of the conferees the same day and that is just to illustrate the urgency of the passage of the bill. The conferees met on September 3rd and in that first meeting the House conferees basically provided a listing of items for discussions and to convey our messages to our Senate counterparts in regards to our concerns and objections to the Senate substitute version. On that list we included Section 712 and I think everyone who has followed the budget process would understand. What Section 712 basically did to the budget was it tried to allow for the legislature to touch earmark outside funds that was not part of the general revenue and we have cases and we have attorney generals position on issues from other jurisdictions and basically outside sources are not subject to the appropriation process. We also had the Board of Education and PSS on that list and generally it involves and our objection I think most of the members would agree with our objection that this section in regards to Board of Education and PSS concerns basically surrounds the attempt by the Senate substitute to infringe on the constitutional mandate of the Board of Education and the Commissioner to set policies and operate and be responsible for the daily operation of the public school system. Second, we had the issue on salary increases. I know some of our colleagues in this chamber when we acted on the budget there were concerns in regards to why some members of our government employees are getting some increase. Again, back then the salary increase amount that we were talking about was roughly around Fifty sum Thousand Dollars. The Senate substitute basically involved Five Hundred and Fifty Six in five percent salary adjustment and roughly Four Hundred and Forty sum Thousand in other salary adjustments. On top of that the Senate substitute also included roughly \$1.5 Million in new position or dollar amount to fund roughly some additional new FTE's or NOP's. The other issues are salary cap exceptions, emergency operation plans, judicial branch. We wanted to clarify that the amount of \$150,000 included in judicial branch budget is not taken out of what was part of the original budget allotment for the judicial branch. We made clear before we agree to this that it should be additional funding that is allotted to the judicial branch so that it does not impact the overall expenditure for the judiciary during the FY 2016 budget. We also have on that list, the legislative branch, issues regarding executive branch, First Senatorial District, Second Senatorial District and other programs. The CHC subsidy, which was a big issue for the House we insisted since day one that that funding we all know the current situation in regards to the financial standing of the hospital. We want to make sure that we do not jeopardize that subsidy. Discussions with regards to the general programs and basically it is how some of that funds being used. Last two or three items on that list, the discussions are Section 709 under the heading of independent programs and it pertains to the elected AG and basically the language in that provision that came from the Senate version alluded to a language that basically tells the AG to spend \$50,000 of his appropriated funding to hire an Assistant Attorney General for DPS. I think that is the current situation right now. The AG is mandated constitutionally to provide the legal

representation to agencies or the departments of the executive branch so there was no need for that. So we went back to the original language that was included in the House version which basically just says that the expenditure authority for the funds appropriated to the office of the elected AG shall be the Attorney General. The other issue there is the House Concurrent Resolution. This is basically just to remind everybody that by the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 19-1 we were basically in agreement with the Administration that a set limit or projected revenue subject to appropriation is set and this body as well as the Senate is mandated to comply with that setting which is roughly \$145 Million including of course DPL, \$149,452,562.00. So after discussion and like I have told the members of the conferees yesterday as recent as maybe a few days ago, I think everybody questioned whether this legislature will be able to resolve its differences with the Senate, but in the end what we did bring principle that something had to be done to the Senate substitute as passed by the Senate and that was to incorporate the budget of the Marianas Visitors Authority into House Bill 19-86 so that we can invoke the provision of the Administrative Act which basically states that the legislature has the authority to approve reject or modify the budget of agencies such as Marianas Visitors Authority. So an amendment to Section 301 to do just that. Once we did that then we move beyond the impasse of the constitutional issue of tapping MVA funds. In summary and I am sure there are a lot of questions. The House conferees basically tried to insist on all of our areas for discussion, some of them minor and some of them major, but in the end as a result of the modification or the amendment to Section 301 the conferees agreed to modify the Marianas Visitors Authority budget to fund the following. In the amount of \$1,802,403.00 for the DPW street lights. The reason for this is that the Senate's version tapped this amount to fund some of the salary adjustments. The next item on that is \$200,000 stationary x-ray machine for the airport. \$255,000 for the container and loose cargo x-ray machine for the seaport. \$75,000 for a handheld x-ray scanner for the seaport and \$200,000 for the Mayor of Saipan for cleanup and beautification programs. The justification for tapping the Marianas Visitors Authority budget for these items are basically premise on one condition and one condition only that any expenditures or funding can be used out of the MVA fund should be tourist related. Again in our opinion we are at this point when it goes over to the Administration the Governor would then make a determination on the justification on these expenditures under that one single requirement. Also the conferees through the last days of deliberation – Mr. Speaker, if there is no objection, I have not heard any objection maybe I should continue I know there is a five minute limit, but just to be in order. I guess no objections?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: No objections?

Several members voiced “no objection”.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Alright. In the last days of the deliberation process and basically it is just the few days prior to the weekend and the past few days, the conferees agreed to these last provisions and again these are some of the provisions that would basically or the House conferees basically did not want to give in to but we agreed to the Senate proposal on the following. This is the language, “the Commissioner of Education of his or her designee shall be the expenditure authority for the appropriated funds under business unit 1606 provided the expenditure authority for the operations of each public school shall be the principal or his or her designee at its school.” The House position was this, again this is infringing on the constitutional mandate of the Board of Education and the Commissioner to be responsible or set policies and be

responsible for the day to day operation of Public School System. The other consideration that we continue to emphasize during this process up to the last day was this that by doing this every individual, principal at the respective schools throughout the Commonwealth would have at their disposal a fixed amount of revenue at their disposal to operate the schools throughout the school year. Unlike the current arrangement where if and whenever equipment breaks down or other emergency arise at the individuals schools, the Commissioner and central generally come to the aide of those schools to ensure that the emergency needs of those individuals schools are addressed. And if we do not do this then in the end it is the students at these schools that become the victim of this experiment. We stuck to our point on this we even offered to put on the table that alright if the First and Second Senatorial District insist on this that we allow it for the First and Second Senatorial District school principals. To ensure that there is consistency in the operations of the Public School System, the House conferees agreed to this position of the Senate. The Senate substitute also included a provision mandating PSS to allot in the amount of \$120,000 for the following two programs. \$60,000 for the Carolinian bilingual bicultural program for supplies and materials, \$5,000 each for Tinian and Rota and Saipan \$10,000 for off-island competition for the students and \$60,000 subsection (b) to that provision is to provide \$60,000 for the Chamorro bilingual bicultural programs and the same breakdown amount of \$5,000 each for Tinian and Rota and \$10,000 for Saipan. These are what we objected from day one. Any Public School System employee with a doctorate degree shall be paid an annual salary of at least \$60,000.00. The original language included any Public School System except principals shall be paid an annual salary of at least \$60,000.00. If it is to be a compensation plan and fairness throughout the Public School System structure, the House conferees insisted that the disqualification or the exemption language for principals shall be removed. So the intent is to award those individuals that do take the educational time to get a doctorate degree, be compensated justly and fairly and let us make everybody who does obtain a doctorate degree be qualified under this provision. The other provision to the Senate or the Senate substitute is the commission shall allocate from the Public School System or operational fund in the amount of \$60,000 for interisland scholastic sports and activities. I think the information that we have done – but the Public School System does provide funding for these purposes and that the amount that is listed here under \$60,000 is way less than what PSS actually spends for this activity. Also there is an item that we put on the discussion list because we wanted clarification and this is basically mandating the Public School System for the purchase of one school bus each for Tinian and Rota. I think the Governor's submission included this item so we went ahead and retained it. The provision on reprogramming of lapse funds to the respective schools from which those lapse funds would have gone to. Basically this is personal. Personal funding that accumulates as a result of vacant position. The other issue like I have mentioned early is that the language is stating and we went ahead with this provision in the bill because basically it is a restatement of an assisted provision of the Commonwealth Code 3CMC1192, this basically said the Junior ROTC funds shall only be used for the expenses of Junior ROTC program from grade nine to twelve. I know during the budget process there were concerns about the potential or some of the funding for ROTC program being used to support other programs such as the leadership corp. but again we went ahead with this position because basically it is just a restatement of provision in the code. The last item there is for the Board of Education and the Chairman of the Board of Education is the expenditure authority of the appropriated funds under Section 1624, the funds appropriated to the Board of Education will include the cost and expenses of the students representative to the Board of Education and that is just a clarification on what is going on. The other one, we agreed also to the Senate version of reprogram of authority provision if the

members will recall to the House version. What we did was we provided a hundred percent reprogramming authority to the Chief Justice taken into consideration the challenges of everything that is going on down at the court. The Senate version extended the same reprogramming authority to the respective bearers and to the Governor. As much as we want financial control I think we all come to the agreement that this provision, we took that into consideration noting that the current disaster situation that the Commonwealth is in so we went ahead with. We also agreed to delete an entire Section 703 and this is basically just getting rid of a proposed amendment in the Senate to increase penalties and all that. The other one, the conferees also agreed to allocated additional funding to the judicial branch to establish the drug court. Again, we have mentioned that and that is in the amount of \$150,000. The conferees agreed to the Special Assistant for OMB salary increase up to \$62,000. The five percent increase for all law enforcement officers, resident department heads for First and Second Senatorial District, resident Deputy Commissioner for the Fire for the First and Second Senatorial District up to \$45,000 and this is just to bring it in line with what is being paid to those that are here on the Third Senatorial District and we all know the resident Deputy Commissioners are new positions under the new department of fire. The conferees also agreed to restore the Commonwealth Care Corporations' utility subsidy in the amount of \$2 Million. Again, let emphasize we assisted this from day one and again we all understand the situation over there. The conferees also agreed to restore the NMI Sports Association. For those who are not aware of what the NMI Sports Association is it is basically a non-profit organization that has been charged with the maintenance and operations of the Ada Gym facility down there. The funding amount for this is a small comparison to the \$4.2 Million impact that the 42 activities from the Senate and this is around \$75,000. The conferees also agreed to House version Section 709 independent programs with regards to the elected AG and again like I stated earlier the Elected AG is the expenditure authority for the funds appropriated to his office. The conferees agreed to Senate version, funding level for First and Second Senatorial District. Again, during this whole process there were basically 4 major items. The five percent salary increase, the salary adjustment in the amount of \$144,000 – the new positions roughly \$1.5 and again as we moved along we had to make concessions. We understood the need to address some of the current pay scale for those law enforcement officers and we provided additional in this budget. We provided the long overdue salary adjustments. We all wish that we can do all the same not just for law enforcement, but I think it is a start. Again, the funding level was a big item and these were all package. Again let me just say this most of this are included in the Senate Substitute such as the increase funding level for the legislative branch and let me just be specific because some of us do and does have question in regards to some of the increases. Basically, the five-percent increases included the operations of the bureau and the youth congress as well as the increase in the funding level for the leadership account. It is there for everybody to read, but in arguing and in discussing this back and forth and all that when we hold our position we did not have the luxury of two months or three months to try to get our ways on all of these issues and as the clock started ticking down and we are getting closer and closer we started to feel the apprehension of the members of the community of a potential government and in these times we have the disasters. We keep reminding ourselves that there are still too many people in our community that are still living in the dark and as much as we want to object to some of these that we have agreed to we had to find a compromise and a middle ground and say “you know what you give us this but you give up this.” In the end the work of the conference committee is what is before us this afternoon and let me just say and I keep telling this to whoever I can talk to. We were given the message “hold your ground” and we tried and in the end we have to find a middle ground and agree on those

that are workable and those that this budget or this government can carry. I also want to remind everybody that the financial burden that we have included in this appropriation bill would be a burden – most of these are going to be a burden that is going to be carried over into the next budget. The salary increases are going to be there once those NOPA's are processed and signed off those become civil service record for these employees and under civil service employees – these men in blue back here and everybody else that is going to benefit from the salary adjustment and the increase incorporated in this budget will expect that salary to continue for the years to come. We have to be mindful as future budgets are impacted by what is in here, we also have to understand that there are obligations that we do not need to look for they are there. The increase in the annual payment to the settlement fund is there and I believe it is a Three Million or Four Million increase for the next fiscal year. Like I mentioned to the members of the leadership this morning, one thing about appropriation bills is you can put it together a million ways because that is what it is. It is a spending package. Everybody can come up with their own figures and set up priorities, but in the end it has got to be one version and I ask my colleagues and especially the support of the Minority Leader to support. What we have done to put this together is there is no such thing as a perfect budget, all we do is try to come up with a budget that is number one in compliance with the budgeting act, number two a budget that is workable and responsible. I think this budget would address some of our pressing issues. I tried to incorporate everything here. The leadership account is there, everybody can question that. At this point, again our responsibility this afternoon is to either accept the budget in the form of House Draft 6, Senate Substitute 1, Conference Committee Substitute 1 as reported out in this Conference Committee Report 19-1. We cannot amend anything and we cannot delete anything. Again, the adoption of the committee report basically gets the budget passed. As the Chairman of Ways and Means before I yield, let me just say this it is never easy, but I ask every members' support on Conference Committee Report 19-1 so that we can get a budget passed and transmitted over to the Governor to avoid the shut-down. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Chairman Sablan. Before the Chair recognizes any member for discussion, I just want to remind the members that we please confine our comments to the conference committee report meaning if we want to raise a concern regarding how an agency was budgeted but that was not a part of what we rejected that would be outside of the parameters of our discussion. So what was rejected by the Senate is the subject of the conference committee and that we can discuss. First one to be recognize Representative Anthony Benavente.

Representative Anthony T. Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to commend the Chairman of Ways and Means and his Vice Chair Representative Ogumoro and the other member Representative Angel Demapan for working hand and hand with – you know as House members going against the Senate to get these thing going. My question in terms with the special conference is in regards to the 5% increase to all law enforcement officers. I mean all law enforcement how broad is that? Is that alright Speaker?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Recognize the Chairman of Ways and Means to respond.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Yes and we did talk about that. I think we did amend the section on law enforcement and let me just go to the numeration page. The bill basically tries to touch on – let me just say straight out no and the reason is this, the office of probation has

already brought the issue to our attention in regards to salary adjustment whether this included the probation officers. My response to that is this in the House version we did provide for additional position for the two probation officers that currently being paid out of federal grants and it is understanding from the judiciary, the funding for those two positions are going to run out during the course of FY 2016 so we did provide for that and it is after we have worked out the details to this that the issue of law enforcement officers was raised. When we look at the salary adjustments for law enforcement personnel it basically covers for DPS both Saipan, Tinian and Rota. DPS, Department of Fire and EMS, Department of Corrections, Division of Customs and Quarantine, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Commerce ABTC, Enforcement and Compliance Officers and there is a specific worksheet for the officers that are going to be covered under this and I think the budget analyst has put together a worksheet for all those that would benefit as a result of the salary adjustments and the 5% salary increases. Again, let me just say that I think the intent is try to accommodate the salary adjustments for those in law enforcement. As I have mentioned those under DPs, Fire and EMS, Department of Corrections, Division of Customs and Quarantine, Division of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of ABTC, Enforcement and Compliance Officers.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Now recognize Representative Vinson Sablan.

Representative Vinson F. Sablan: Thank you, Speaker. Welcome to everybody the law enforcement staff and first I want to thank the committee that represent the House for their hard work and finally coming up with agreeing with the Senate. I understand that the Conference Committee Report 19-1 is not amendable we can make no changes to it. I just want to come out and state on the record that I agree with many of the provisions that are in the conference committee report. A lot of the provisions is what we need to run this government and to keep our island afloat. There are several provisions that I do have questions about and I want it to be on record. Number one right off the bat I do not oppose the five percent increase for the men and women in blue. What I do have concern with is Section K and how – I will read that it said that “The Conferees agreed to the Senate version funding level for the Legislative Branch.” I know the Legislative Bureau staff will get their share also and there will be an increase to the accounts of the leadership and the majority of each House, which leaves me to question what difference are we in the minority – we reach out the same to our constituents. We use our office accounts in the best interest of our constituents to serve and to assist and I do not see the fairness and equality in having an increase of any sort to one portion or selected individuals representatives and senators it is a tough bet for me to understand. I speak for myself that I put in more than a hundred percent to my community, to my constituents even far beyond my office budget. I tap into my family’s budget. I wish I could vote on specific items of this bill. Vote yes on some and vote no on others, but they are clump together and it puts pressure. Correct me if I am wrong it is in the tune of what \$300,000.00 for the legislative accounts for the leadership. I would rather that money go and provide other salary increase to the other frontline employees of the government. Instead of choosing and not being equal so I just wanted to be on record on that and it is tough. My heart is torn it is a tough bet it is a tough situation, but all I wish for and I want is equality between everybody and had it been an equal disbursements to everybody’s accounts so that all of us can continue to serve our constituents and our people in our precinct. I just wanted to express that out it is tough and I cannot understand the logic and if someone can help me understand that logic that makes me feel different than others, I ask you to make me understand. I know that this was a senate version and I am not pointing to anybody, but the principle giving increases to

certain people and also special assistance in the Administration there are other important employees out there in the frontline and I would like that before even we get a part or amount into our office accounts that we look at these people. \$300,000.00 to the legislative account can take care of the staff for the bureau but it could go to other staff and I am just really preaching a quality here that is all. I do not want to feel different and as representatives we all do our part in the community, but clumping good things and bad things into one bill and stuff it is tough. My heart, my mind is juggling now and I know it is not amendable and we cannot make any changes, but these are several of my concerns on the bill. Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Sablan. Let me chime in here. First of all, I want to make it clear and I think the members here of the House saw that the version that the House passed and sent to the Senate did not include an increase for the leadership. So your concern is shared by every member of the House because that is the version that we passed. The Senate on the other hand felt differently and as you well know in this art of compromise you give and you take. There are some things that we wanted and we could not get and there were some things they wanted and they could not get. In the end it was what was agreed upon. Be it as they may to answer your second part of your question about equality and fairness there is a reason that the a leadership account exists. The figure we may not agree on maybe higher or lower. I think the Constitutional ceiling is \$400,000.00 – you cannot exceed that. The reason that there is a leadership account is because the leadership holds the Chairmanships of committees and committees have financial cost such as holding public hearings, Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Hiring expertise to do a cost/benefit analysis, whatever it may be, those funding are intended to offset or to help the committees pay for such cause. I have seen cases where paying for sometimes a member of one – a member may not be able to travel to Tinian or Rota because his funding is kind of low – it is the Chairman of that committee that would sometimes pay for those cause so there are cost associated. What the magical figure should be has changed over the years, but that is the purpose for a leadership account. In addition to that there are times when the legislature has functions, we will be having our MILA that is set to be hosted this year on Saipan it will be that leadership account that would help pay for those cause. So there are different cause – hosting the *Man'Amko* and so forth. It is not about making – you know not giving minority or whoever it is to offset the cost of the committees. Anyhow, I hope my short explanation would sort of clarify that. We will continue on with discussions.

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: Point of clarification, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Please state your point.

Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb: On the statement that you have responded on Representative Sablan's comment. I am also a member of the Ways and Means. Very specific when we came to the leadership account subject that the Minority Leader had also raised that concern if there is any consideration from the leadership if any that we could tap on with respect to the functions of minority. If you recall, February 2nd of this year on Miscellaneous Communication 19-13 that the minority facts provided this body and this public memorandum of what entails of the minority's recommendations and consideration for this body for this community to take. Within that Miscellaneous Communication, we pointed out pursuant to 1CMC Section 741C3 and let me quote this is the planning and budgeting act "for the operations and activities of the minority, if any in either House of Representative or the Senate, the Minority Leader of the body or an

authorized designee would be the expenditure authority.” I also want to echo the Chairman’s statement just a while ago and if we look at page 25 of the appropriation, I know we are on the conferee’s committee report and if we look on page 25 specifically on line 20 and this is on the Senate and House leadership account, it says “The leadership account of each house shall be \$300,000.00. The presiding officer of each respective house, or his lawfully authorized designee, shall be the expenditure authority and shall use such funds to support the operations and activities of the House of Representatives...” that is what it is this is the budget of the House of Representatives. So with the miscellaneous communication that the minority has put out relative to the planning and budgeting act that was the intent and for that body of the Ways and Means to consider and that is why we let go. Now the conferees has accepted the Senate’s changes or amendment. So with that question Representative Sablan, I think it is only appropriate because the minorities also can come up with minority reports on any of the committees or any of the legislations. I think that is what Representative Sablan was alluding to and from the statement that I heard from the Chairman of Ways and Means and you may correct – perhaps we can go back on record that the leadership account and I quote “the leadership account is for everybody.” Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Tebuteb. Now recognize Representative Propst.

Representative Edwin K. Propst: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had some discussions leading up to this emergency session in the minority and we discussed many things and the word that comes up often that I have been hearing is “compromise” the importance of compromise and politics is a business of compromise. It is essential. The only way we can move forward is to compromise, but with that said there are some things that are disturbing to me. I think everyone in this room including our audience in the gallery knows full well the magnitude the devastation of super typhoon that hit us, Soudelor. I know everyone in this room and everyone of my fine colleagues have gone out and visited your constituents, you have seen their homes, you have seen the destruction and I have seen it full well. I continue to see it every day because I make my daily visits not just in my village or where I stay, but everywhere. If somebody calls us we go out that is part of our job I believe as representatives. With that said, I am a little bit concerned about the \$300,000.00 that was given to leadership. Mr. Speaker, I know you said it was the Senate’s version, but the bottom line is it is still \$300,000.00 and that is about a 67% increase from last year. I am a little bit concern because there is again a struggle that we are going to be facing soon and that is the fact that we are keeping with these numbers, but we are going to have to look at the possibility of paying our share when FEMA comes up with a bill for us. I think we are at 10% is that correct it may go lower, but it is still going to have an impact on us. We are not made of money. These are tough times and we need to be very careful and physically conservative. I would love to see everybody get a pay raise and I am first and foremost the fine men and women at DPS. I have worked with the commissioner, I have been at his office we have legislation that was supposed to give him some money. I have a bill that was introduced, House Bill 19-48 that would have appropriated \$200,000.00 for DPS and \$100,000.00 for Customs it is still sitting collecting dust. I am not trying to put a divide here, but I am talking about priorities and where are our priorities. If we are going to fight, we are going to fight for our people, for those that serve us. I do not feel comfortable. And it is not about fairness, if the leadership can justify why they needed that 67% increase then that is fine, but I would rather see that money go to paying for these fine officers night differential. I do not know when is the last time they even had that or

hazardous duty pay. These guys put themselves in the line of fire everyday every time they put on their uniform even when they are off duty. Many of these police officers are not just friends they are also family. I know their struggles, they have talked about it with all of us and we know the pain that they go through. The only way they can make money is through overtime and then they sacrifice time away from family and that hurts them that hurts the family. My heart is always with DPS, but I do have a problem with giving them a small 5% increase. It is a fraction of what they deserve. The average salary of a police officer of the United States, you know what it is? It is over \$47,000.00 that is a far cry from what our fine women and men are making. So if you really look at this and we approve this budget it is a banded approach and something is better than nothing most definitely they can use it and I know they would appreciate it but it is for this year and next year we are going to go back to the drawing board. The fundamental problem is that DPS needs to be funded appropriately that is just my personal thoughts – I mean not just my personal thoughts, I think everyone shares the same sentiments, but in closing I just want to say that I do have reservations with this budget and there are some other things that I want to point out, but because of time and I do not want to make this last until 10 pm tonight, I will keep it short and simple. I do want to appreciate the fine men and women that – and everyone else in the gallery that came out here and I know everybody wants a pay increase and most deservedly so you do deserve it but I think you should be paid what you deserve and the 5% is a good start, but I do not think it is enough for what you deserve. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Propst. Any other member? Recognize Representative Attao.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to commend the conference committee, Chairman Sablan, Representative Demapan and Representative Ogunoro for the work you have done and congratulate you guys for coming into a consensus. Just on the topic of the adjustment to the legislature as brought up by Representative Vinson Sablan it was mentioned by the Chairman that there was a consensus. What was the selling point that the Senate provided the committee to go ahead and agree with the additional \$121,000.00?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: To respond, Chairman.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Let me just say this there is no easy answer to what went on. We got questioned for taking a stand completely opposite of what the Senate started out with and let me just say that the it got to the point where the media said that the Senate conferees walked out. And that is not two days into this whole process. This is into the second week of the process. When you are trying to negotiate and let me just say this I do not know why I am being asked about the \$300,000.00, I did not insert it in this bill, but I am willing to put that aside and compromise on the other and say “you know what we all agree, we all won.” And these law enforcement officers do need this and I think we have managed to put together a funding source to do this. I still object all though we have agreed to it in principle I still object to telling the Commissioner and the Board of Education how to run PSS on a daily basis. If it is hard to understand the negotiation process – we can sit here and go item by item and say “why you said, I said to this and why no to that.” You have got to look at the overall picture because when you hear terms like this is a complete package then you know you have got some difficulty ahead of you. Again, like I have stated earlier, we did not have the luxury of sitting back and say “no”

resume and we say “no” we come back tomorrow and say “no” and the next day we say “no.” And in this process the word compromise means that you take some or agree to some that if you had a choice differently you say “no” and with regards to the \$300,000.00 and you are right it is an increase of roughly \$120,000.00 that is a proposal that came from the Senate and it came with their version and it remained on the table and up to the last day that is some of the last things that we agreed to. I appreciate the question, but again it is just understanding that we needed it to move. Again, I ask for your support for the committee report.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Representative Attao, you still have the floor.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker, you have mentioned that the breakdown of the leadership account stated to hire specialist in certain fields and stuff. I believe the Legislative Bureau provides the services to the members of this body for quote unquote professional positions. I take you guys to page 25 on the budget bill under the Legislative Branch number 2 line 4 through 11 where it says “Funds allocated for the operations of the member’s office, including, but not limited to, the personnel cost of the member’s employees and expenditures as authorized by the adopted rules of the Senate in the case of the Senate member, or the adopted rules of the House of Representatives in the case of a House member, or the Legislative Bureau, may be expended to defray travel and incidental expenses for the purpose of attending to the legislative business outside the member’s senatorial district.” I read this and hoping that the Director of the Legislative Bureau is listening and the employees of the Legislative Bureau because technically what is stating in this specific language is funds within the Legislative Bureau can be utilized for that purpose, which is technically an increase of that \$300,000.00 should it come to that point. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you. I am glad you pointed that out. For those of us who have been here a while having sat and been a Chairman, most of the time it is the committee and the individual members that pay for their travel. This is the first time I have seen this language that says that the bureau will absorb those cost. Anyway, this goes back to the \$300,000.00 that Vinny – and I was merely trying to clarify based on past experiences what the leadership funds are used for. When I used the example about the economist, you are right we do have an economist, but I have seen when I was Chairman of PUTC and we were reviewing a very extensive bill, I wish we had the funding to hire the expertise in telecommunications. Often times the committee do not have those kind of funds, but if they did those would be the type of activities is allowable of which those funds can be used towards and I am just merely trying to clarify how those funds are used. Thank you for the note Representative Attao. You still have the floor.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: I yield for now Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you. Any other members? Recognize Representative Lee Pan.

Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I commend our conferees committee for working diligently to come up with a budget. To our colleague Propst, I totally agree with you, but be mindful that the Governor has the last stand on this. I just got word that the Senate had passed this bill. So if we are going to continue arguing, we are not going to

resolve our differences. Debate is a healthy issue, but we are at the last hour of this and I do not know where we stand on this. As to the men in blue, the Vice here has a 19-95 that is the solution for their increase. If we work hard on that bill we are going to see a higher number of budget for next FY and they can be the first group again to get that increase. Everybody needs a raise not only our men in blue. Our DPW workers other offices that have employees for ages, some of them retired without a salary increase. Some of them resigned without a salary increase. So we can debate and debate, stay here all night, try to figure out what is the right budget but if we do not work out together and just say “let us give it to the Governor and let the Governor make the decision.” The Governor can say “alright this leadership account, I am not going to give them the \$300,000.00.” You know he is the final say so and we can continue this on and on and we are not going to get through it but if you give it to the Governor it is going to take an effect. He can veto it entirely and then what, how do we explain it to the employees of the government? Are we going to be the one to be blamed? I do not think so. We submitted a good version of the budget to the Senate. The Senate thought it was not right and as the Chairman of Ways and Means explained it. It was the Senate’s doing. We cannot tell the Senate what to do. We can go over there and say this is what we want and I want you to do it this way and I do not think it is going to happen. They have their own way of dissecting this budget. They did, they compromised, they come up with this – I was not really happy with it to be honest with you, but I am not going to stand out there and show my face and the first government employee that I see says “what did you do with the budget?” am I to be blamed? I did my part. We all did our part. So we have to be very mindful about how we handle this right now and I highly recommend we act on this and move it on and give it to the Governor. Let him make the final decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Lee Pan Guerrero. The Chair now recognizes Representative Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero.

Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Honorable Speaker. Just for point of clarification, but first I would like to praise the good work of the three House conferees and congratulations for a job well done. Just for point of clarification, I want to refer to personnel service worksheet number 25 and that is under the Department of Finance Customs for the island of Rota. I am seeing there is a two step grade increase and the increase that we are to vote on is for a 5% raise increase and that is on attachment 25 it is handwritten on the attachment. I do not know if the conferees have an explanation. I am seeing this that there is a two raise increase for the Customs Personnel in Rota under the Department of Finance and I thought that we all agreed there is only at 5% across the board pay raise. The personnel service worksheet, handwritten number 25 it is an attachment. Speaker, I just want to get some point of clarification if this is an oversight or it is an intent to provide a two step salary increase for one Senatorial District. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Deleon Guerrero. Take note. Recognize the Chairman of Ways and Means.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Let me get a clarification from physical analyst Mr. Speaker, because basically this is not the adopted – we have one column is 5%, the other says 10% and again the good colleague here basically the activities fall under – again when it comes to salaries it is three categories. One the 5%, the other salary adjustments such as the 42 to the 45 for the Directors and Deputy Directors and others and I do not know whether this is a personnel

worksheet proposal sheet. Dave can you get a clarification why on this column we have a 10% pay raise?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Let us take a short recess.

The House recessed at 3:40 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 3:46 p.m.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Alright, thank you members. We now return back to our session. We left off under discussion after the Floor Leader offered a motion for the adoption of the FY 2016 budget the Conference Committee Report 19-1. Under discussion? Any further discussions, any members? Recognize Representative Benavente for the second time.

Representative Roman C. Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to – maybe I take this as the last approach to the conferees. I think personally you guys did whatever you can do. There is too many mines in that and everyone has different agenda, different choice and it is hard to work with each and everyone's interest. To three of you Representative Demapan, Chairman Sablan, and Representative Ogumoro I applaud you for a job well done and the negotiation that have gone through the process. I personally know that every budget here it is never perfect numbers, never a perfect figures. One way or another something has to be compromised to meet others' priorities, but I wish and I hope as a representative that we can come to a point where we can satisfy each and every one of us, our community, our employees, the government employees, like the police department, the customs and all those essential agencies that are involve. I like to say it this way, we can do whatever we can as each individual, but yet we get criticized for what we do and yet we try our best to do it. So I just heard earlier that Representative Lee Pan said that the Governor is going to veto the budget. It is the Governor's prerogative. What we need to do is try to be as comprehensive as possible as fair as possible, I know it is never going to be 100% fair but we come to a meeting ground and we come on record that we have done our best to try to put this budget together. I can say this Mr. Speaker, let us move ahead with the intent of the Floor Leader and if the Governor so decide to veto maybe he might do some line item veto or something within the budget that would probably satisfy or dissatisfy, but that would be on his ballpark. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Benavente. Anybody else who has not spoken yet before we go for a second round. Representative Yumul you are recognized.

Representative Ralph N. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before we vote, I just wanted to come out on record it was pretty much a tough conference committee and the Senate played the cards right by putting all first time re-elected into the conference committee. So it puts them on the driver's seat and it puts us also at a disadvantage because although I do support the raises for law enforcement there is other parts of the budget that increases so much in the Second and First Senatorial District and that is what bothers me because the same conference committee last year we agreed to lowering down our own personal budget just to allow I believe the First Senatorial

District to pay some of its debt back to I believe it was CUC or I am not too sure, I might be wrong but I believe it was to CUC. Now we are doing it again. I guess it is a package deal with what the Chairman said and it is tough. They did move funding all over the place and I am not too sure, I have not broken it down, but we lost over \$160,000 at the Fire Department. We have lost about \$58,000 in Finance, although the Customs are getting a raise and that is only a \$44,000 increase, but some other accounts were touched. And although DPS is getting an addition of \$590,000, I believe everything else we – the Third Senatorial District is sacrificing for the First and Second. So it is very hard where it is tough, I would not want to be in your shoe Mr. Chairman, but as long as we fight with what is right and I actually have a higher expectation. This time I guess the hands of the conference committee were actually tied so that is what I disagree with. The 100% reprogramming with the administration at first I did not agree, but because of the super typhoon Soudelor we do need to give the administration that flexibility to address FEMA and what is going to be owed once all is said and done. I cannot say much, I have seen all the numbers beings moved left and right and I cannot support this bill as it stands right now and it is frustrating because we either vote “yes” to accept it or vote “no.” I am not sure if our Legal Counsel John Cool can actually find a loophole, which he did find in the Constitution. So maybe there is a loophole Counsel that we can actually amend and move funding around – maybe not but it is my stance and I respect everybody’s position they all have good points but as it stands the Third Senatorial District pretty much is sacrificing a lot and if it is going to be for DPS or Customs then it should be. With regards to addressing other salaries, I think we have other bills in the Ways and Means Committee that could address it but like what you have mentioned it is already at the eleventh hour and we cannot do much. So with that Mr. Speaker, I yield. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Yumul. I think you brought up something very significant. Under normal circumstances we had the luxury of time to be able to negotiate further our wants or our concerns. When the amendment was made to our Constitution not to create further deficits by requiring that budgets be passed by the end of the fiscal year, which I supported by the way it did not come with exemptions that said that in the event of a major disaster we can extend that deadline another thirty-days. There was no such language so that took away nearly a month. As you well know we did not even have an office. We were situated, the Governor’s Office, the Courts and thank you by the way to our Judicial Branch, but it is what it is. With the constraint of time they were under the gun to get something passed and I guess without the luxury of time they had to look at the big picture. And we have to be mindful that it is not just us, the House and the Senate. The Governor also has a role and if he does not have enough time even if we pass the budget today – if he feels he needs more time to review this and approve it – he could approve it or veto it. By the way, Representative Roman Benavente I just wanted to clarify that Chairman Lee Pan did not say that the Governor is going to veto. I think the breaking news is he may veto. I pray that he may not. The point is that even under the planning and budgeting act he has a certain amount of time, I believe September – we should have passed it and gotten it to him a month before the end of the fiscal year and we did not. I do not think that is our fault. Nobody knew that the typhoon was going to hit. Be it as it may we have something in front of us. I wish it was different and we have more latitude in negotiating our concerns. With that we will go with a few more comments and then go for the vote. Any further discussion? Recognize Representative Aldan from Tinian.

Representative Edwin P. Aldan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I would like to commend the committee for compromising with the Senate. As you remember when we had our session at the court house, I supported the Senate version due to the fact that it gave more budget for my Senatorial District and at the same time during that session Mr. Demapan did explain to us how the \$2.5 Million was spread out. So I beg to differ with my colleague that majority of the funds went to the First and Second Senatorial District. Based on Mr. Demapan's analyst presentation was majority of the funds went to the Third Senatorial District and then it spread out to the Second and First Senatorial District. Be as it may, the conference committee went on and agreed that the best way to resolve what we are facing with October 1st hanging around the corner, us not having the luxury like you said Mr. Speaker of days to continue on the negotiation between the Senate and the House. I think the conference committee agreed with the Senate is good. It is good for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota for the CNMI. They tried their best to get the House version, which is almost likely giving what the Governor wanted. Basically, almost majority of what the administration requested. The House members agreed to that and it was sent over to the Senate. The Senate rejected, they wanted their own version and I supported it. Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to thank the conference committee for coming up with such budget and hoping that despite the breaking news on Marianas Variety, the Governor signs it into law and that would be his prerogative if he wants to item veto any part of the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Aldan. Further discussion. Recognize Representative Angel Demapan.

Representative Angel A. Demapan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just begin by saying that after the House rejected the Senate version it was time to appoint the conference committee and Chairman Sablan and the Speaker approach me and asked if I was willing to serve in the conference committee and for some reason I said "yes." And after they appointed me for some reason again I said "thank you." On the first day of the conference committee I was trying to figure out why I said "thank you," but with all that aside and conference committee being as tough as it is. For those of you who listened in or watched the proceedings of the first few days or the first week of the conference committee, you all know very well that your House conferees stood very firm, solid to defend the desires that we pass in our House version. We stood firm not to take a stand against law enforcement, not to take stand against Customs equipment, not to take a stand against any other thing that was in the Senate version, but we stood firm because we believe in principles. We believed that to do what we intend to do we have to do it the right way. We believe that the source has to be there. And so doing that we held our ground for as long as we can and it resulted in a budget deadlock it dragged to the second week and everybody saw that that administration took steps to start beginning preparations for a possible government shut down. So with that our backs were up against the wall, but still we exerted every effort to compromise as much as possible. Whether we like it or not, whether we disagree with a lot of the things that was compromised in this bill, this legislature is bicameral and nobody can change that at this point. So we have to operate under that notion because we are bicameral in nature what we want here must muster the support of what they want in the upper House as well. So the bottom line is it boiled down to averting a shutdown, which we do not even know if it will avert even if passing the budget today. It boiled down to us safeguarding the livelihood of our people who are not leading ordinary everyday lives today because Soudelor came and changed the way we live. So with that hardship that they are experiencing now we had to make a decision to compound that hardship or not. It came down to having a product that will pass this House a product that

would pass the Senate and a product that hopefully will get the approval of the Governor. We can sit here all day and disagree and debate and talk about how we should have showered the money all over the place in so many different ways, but the bottom line is when you give, you take away. So the biggest question here is not who you give it is who you take away from. Do we raise DPS to \$47,000.00 per police officer and shutdown our hospital? Do we raise our hospital staff and shut down our DPS? It is going to come down to who you take away from and the only thing that restricts us here is we are working with \$145 Million Dollars in available revenues for appropriation. Had that been much more all our dreams would come true. Had the conference committee reported out similar versions of the House version that we passed on July 17, not last week but the House we acted swiftly in the hopes that we give enough time to the Senate and the Administration. Had we reported out something similar to the House version I am sure we would not be here three hours in still arguing about things we disagree about. Let me say this we worked very hard in conference committee because we needed a product and to the best of our ability as House conferees this is what we could get the equal number of Senate conferees on the other side to agree to. What this means is our job does not end with passing this budget. Our job simply begins now with passing this budget. We need to work innovatively to find ways to increase revenue generation moving forward because these are projections these are not actual money in the bank. These are projections that we have to help the government realize and these are projections that we have to help the government try to exceed so we can further fund appropriately and properly the services the employees the department and agencies that need it most because they deserve it because they work hard day in and day out. We need to come together and figure out government employment. House Bill 19-3 is lingering in the House because we have not identified the funds for it but we need to come together and find innovative ways to identify that funding so that we give all other government employees the pay raises they deserve law enforcement or not but they have all waited the same amount of time, some longer, some shorter. This is our solemn duty as law makers, this is our solemn duty as leaders. It does not end with passing this budget, we pass this budget we basically put a framework in place. The effectiveness of this framework is going to depend in everything we do all the decisions we make in the coming fiscal year. So we can sit here and drag this on and lose another day and come another day closer to a possible shutdown. We have all been through the shutdown and it is not a nice time. Families suffer, innocent children who have no part in this process suffer because we cannot agree on anything. So as a conferee of the House I am appealing to this body that we make this decision today to move forward with a product that we could have only come to agree to with the Senate conferees. Had it been a full House conference committee with no senators I am positive this is not going to be the product, but this is the reality of a bicameral legislature. So I am appealing to this body that we move forward for the sake of the government, but more importantly for our people who turn to our government to make the right decisions who turn to the government to make sure we keep government services open. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Demapan. I want to congratulate the conference committee. I do not know if many people know this but when they were on a deadlock it was through the leadership of the Chairman and the conferees who came up with a proposal to be put on the table. This thing would have dragged on longer so I want to commend the Chairman and the conferees to take that initiative to get the conferees back on the table so that they can continue and expeditiously compromise. I do not know if a lot of people know that but thank you member. With that are there any further discussions before we go to vote. Recognize Representative BJ Attao for the second time.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a quick question on page 4 of 6 under item (d) it said, “The Conferees agreed to delete in its entirety Section 713. Violations of Spending Limits.” Would that infringe into the planning and budgeting act authority?

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Recognize the Chairman.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This item on page 4 (d), generally Section 713 of the Senate Substitute attempted to include an amending language to existing statute on making the individual responsible for the over expenditure and I think that the Senate tried to change the language. During discussion we came to the consensus that we just go ahead and leave the current language under that statute to the way it is and basically it is a provision to I think the penalty – the finds. So by removing Section 713 we basically agreed to disregard the intended amendment as proposed by the Senate version.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: So it would revert back. So any overspending would be –

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: To current language in the statute.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: Alright. Thank you Mr. Chairman and with that said Mr. Speaker I would like to thank Representative Angel Demapan for giving us a synopsis on the budget deliberation process and in addition to that I understand that it is a tough battle when you come to the numbers and provisions that would marry those numbers into what is going to govern the CNMI in its entirety. With that being said I am pleading the Committee of Ways and Means as a bunch of the negotiations stalled on the provisions of taking the money away from MVA and putting it to assist our law enforcement entities. We have House Bill 19-36, 19-48 and 19-60 that would assist DPS, Division of Customs and CHCC and its utilities. We took away about two point sum million dollars if we do approve this budget from MVA. In these three legislations to the tune of \$4.9 Million Dollars is available for appropriation in this legislation. I plead the members of the Ways and Means Committee to look into these legislations to work whether to assist more in our enforcement entities or other government agencies or give back some of the money to MVA. The typhoon hit us and we all understand that. IT&E’s fiber optic situation that hurt us too. The tourism industry is dependent nowadays on a lot of technology and IT&E hurt that the typhoon hurt that. So until we know those numbers in detail it is a projection like Representative Demapan said like everybody else says, but these three specific legislations are monies that are there readily available to move. If we can as a body move on these legislations to add to this projection that we are going to be approving or disapproving this afternoon, we are \$4.5 Million Dollars ahead already. So I plead to the members of the Ways and Means Committee and to this body and the members of the Senate that we push this legislations forward and get that \$4.9 Million dollars flowing into this economy. Again, I thank the members of the conference committee, the members both from the House and Senate for coming up with this solution for what is affecting us now, but what Representative Demapan said it is a projection. With these three legislations that is \$4.9 Million dollars we can start moving on by October 1st. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Attao. Could you repeat the three House Bills again.

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao: 36, 48, and 60.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Attao. Are there any further discussion? Are we ready? We will give the last closing remarks to our Chairman of Ways and Means.

Representative Antonio P. Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Basically, I just want to take the last remark before we go to the main motion. I just want to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank some of the people responsible for getting us to where we are today. First of all, let me extend and acknowledge the work of Vice Ogumoro and her conferee Chairman Demapan. I also want to acknowledge the work put in by the members of the Ways and Means. I know what we put together is basically out of the involvement of the committee. We also want to extend our appreciation for the hard work put in by the bureau staff, the LA’s and the Legal Counsels. I want to acknowledge the help on a daily basis during all those committee meetings the support and the help put forth by Ms. Vicky Villagomez from OMB and the members of the respective departments during their appearance before the various committee meetings. Lastly, let me just extend and acknowledge the appreciation for the work to the Senate conferees, Chairman Hofschneider and the conferees Senator Palacios the Floor Leader, Senator Mesngon from Rota and the alternate Senator Cruz from Tinian. During this process it is a very difficult process, but during all these process we talk about how we have sacrificed for the First and Second Senatorial District. Let me just say this that in defense of the members of the First and Second Senatorial District, let me just say that the Senate they even put on the table if we could have used the money earmarked to the First and Second Senatorial District for their share of the Public Law 18-1 and these are basically money that is earmarked to those districts for tourism enhancement. Because we were talking about MVA funds and all this they did put that on the table, but because they are earmarked and they are not part of MVA budget then we could not touch them. The offer is there and I think we can go back and see what we can do with that offer on other appropriations. Let me just say this and I think the money here is wrong three hundred, four hundred thousand and I think that is an amount that continues to build. Again with that I yield and again I ask for everyone’s support on adopting the conference committee report. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Chairman. I think when you said bureau staff LA and Legal Counsel and including our Fiscal Analyst too as well for our work of putting the figures and making sure that they jive. With that are we ready for the vote. Madame Clerk, please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of Conference Committee Report 19-1 reporting on House Bill 19-86, HD6, SS1, CCS1 with the following results:

Representative Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao	yes
Representative Anthony T. Benavente	yes
Representative Roman C. Benavente	yes
Representative George N. Camacho	yes
Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Representative Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero	yes

Representative Angel A. Demapan	yes
Representative Rafael S. Demapan	yes
Representative Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero	yes
Representative Glenn L. Maratita	yes
Representative Felicidad T. Ogumoro	yes
Representative Edwin K. Propst	yes
Representative Antonio P. Sablan	yes
Representative John Paul P. Sablan	yes
Representative Vinson F. Sablan	yes
Representative Francis S. Taimanao	yes
Representative Ramon A. Tebuteb	yes
Representative Edmund Joseph S. Villagomez	no
Representative Ralph N. Yumul	no

House Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, 18 members voted “yes” and 2 members voted “no.”

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Madame Clerk. With the vote of 18 affirmative votes, Conference Committee Report 19-1 reporting on House Bill 19-86, HD6, SS1, CCS1 hereby passes the House. Members before we adjourn, let us go to Miscellaneous Business and then Announcements and then we can adjourn.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

None

BILL CALENDAR

None

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Under Miscellaneous Business recognize Representative Anthony Benavente.

Representative Anthony T. Benavente: I do not know if it is miscellaneous Mr. Speaker, but subject to the House members to maybe look into the assistance or the proposal that we would be hosting maybe the off-island utility crews from various islands and also from GPA I think some will be leaving next week on October 2nd. So if that is possible that maybe the House can conduct something for these group of people that are here helping us. I only hope that we – I am pretty sure that we did that in terms of meeting the CUC member. So hopefully that this House provides that accommodation to host them. Thank you.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Representative Benavente. I am glad you brought that up. We did talk to Gary from CUC and informed him that we would like to host, but that he would have to let us know when we can do it and when those line crew would be

available. I was talking to Joe Torres from CUC board and he said that the board would be hosting the crew on October 2nd I believe and if we wanted to join in with them we can do so. Can I ask our Chairman of PUTC to communicate with CUC and find out when? I would love to host them even all of us. I know that our constituents appreciate their help and whatever we can do also would be appreciated. So Chairman *taya guaha ya maseha hagu un check si Gary ngai'an ni siña ta* schedule or maybe just tag along with CUC board and join them? First things first we need to find out when we can do this and if we cannot then we will take out of my pocket or kill a pig somewhere. Chairman Aldan.

Representative Edwin P. Aldan: Mr. Speaker in line with colleague Benavente's recommendation. Also I would like to ask the leadership and our colleagues if we can come up with – I know we have this in mind, but we need to work on it – a resolution to recognize their untiring contribution when Soudelor hit us here in the Commonwealth. Maybe you can have John or somebody work on it.

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Definitely. Thank you. Many crews to thank. Another Miscellaneous if there is nothing else for discussion. We will take our cue from Chairman of PUTC and I will have the Sergeant at Arms coordinate with the rest of us as far as what we can provide. On another matter, I do not know if you guys have – a concern has been brought to my attention about the issue of our funding. Traditionally or historically the end of cutting any purchase orders is September 15 and you can do request for payments up until September 30. This year, some members brought it up to my attention that Finance has changed that and now nothing can be processed after September 15 except maybe for payment of fuel and telephone bills. Apparently a memo went out. I do not know if any member got a copy of that memo. Most members were not informed so I wanted to ask the Chairman of Ways and Means to please bring that to the attention of the Secretary of Finance. Had we been aware ahead of time we would of processed all the necessary payment request, but I would like to see if we can get consideration for that. Anything else? Anything under announcements?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Let me announce that the Chair will be sending out a notice for session on Monday and possibly other days after Monday if need be to begin trying to get back into our work. Any questions before we turn it over to our Floor Leader? Ready?

ADJOURNMENT

Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero: Floor Leader for the motion to adjourn.

Floor Leader George N. Camacho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to go ahead and make a motion subject to your call.

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

The House adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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

Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during the House Session 8/25/15:

H. B. NO. 19-93: To amend 4 CMC §8539(c) replace the word “monetary” with the word “kilowatt” in order to give the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) a chance to improve their financial status; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. FRANCIS S. TAIMANAO of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself*) on August 25, 2015; referred to the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications.

H. B. NO. 19-94: To establish a drug court within the Commonwealth Superior Court; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH P. DELEON GUERRERO, of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Edwin P. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Anthony T. Benavente, Roman C. Benavente, George N. Camacho, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Rafael S. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Glenn L. Maratita, Felicidad T. Ogumoro, Edwin K. Propst, Antonio P. Sablan, John Paul P. Sablan, Francis S. Taimanao, Edmund S. Villagomez, Ralph N. Yumul) on August 25, 2015; placed on the Bill Calendar.

H. B. NO. 19-95: To clarify the powers of the Commonwealth Casino Commission and to make needed changes to the Commonwealth Code given the unique regulatory oversight of the Casino Industry in the Commonwealth; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. RAFAEL S. DEMAPAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself*) on August 25, 2015; referred to the Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

H. L. B. NO. 19-32: To appropriate \$58,400.00 from the local license fees collected for pachinko slot machines and poker machines in the Second Senatorial District; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. EDWIN P. ALDAN of Tinian, Precinct 6 (*for himself*) on August 25, 2015.

H. RES. NO. 19-27: To honor Misako Kamata for her extraordinary service and contributions to our great Commonwealth and her continuous efforts to improve and maintain the economic relationship between the CNMI and Japan. Introduced by REP. ROMAN C. BENAVENTE of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Edwin P. Aldan, Anthony T. Benavente, George N. Camacho, Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Rafael S. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, Glenn L. Maratita, Felicidad T. Ogumoro, Edwin K. Propst, Antonio P. Sablan, John Paul P. Sablan, Francis S. Taimanao, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) on August 25, 2015; placed on the Resolution Calendar.

H. RES. NO. 19-28: To respectfully urge the Governor to expeditiously approve Docomo Pacific’s permits to allow them to repair and upgrade the Fiber Optic Network which will improve services throughout the CNMI. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEE PAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Edwin P. Aldan, Anthony T. Benavente, Roman C. Benavente, George N. Camacho, Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Rafael S. Demapan, Glenn L. Maratita, Felicidad T. Ogumoro, Edwin K. Propst,

Antonio P. Sablan, John Paul P. Sablan, Francis S. Taimanao, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) on August 25, 2015; placed on the Resolution Calendar.

H. RES. NO. 19-29: To honor and commemorate Dr. Tan Siu Lin and his reputable establishment Luen Thai Holdings Ltd. For their 50th anniversary of outstanding service, dedication, and contributions to the CNMI's economy. Introduced by REP. JOSEPH LEE PAN T. GUERRERO of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself*, Representatives Edwin P. Aldan, Anthony T. Benavente, Roman C. Benavente, George N. Camacho, Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Angel A. Demapan, Rafael S. Demapan, Glenn L. Maratita, Felicidad T. Ogumoro, Edwin K. Propst, Antonio P. Sablan, John Paul P. Sablan, Francis S. Taimanao, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Ralph N. Yumul) on August 25, 2015; placed on the Resolution Calendar.

House information on deadlines for override: