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Jonathan Grayson

IN THE  
SUPREME COURT  
OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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IN RE PROPOSED COMMONWEALTH RULE OF APPELLATE PROCEDURE 60  
(ESTABLISHING THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS JUDICIAL COUNCIL)

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SUPREME COURT NO. 2009-ADM-0004-RUL

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**ORDER ADOPTING PROPOSED RULE OF APPELLATE PROCEDURE 60**

¶ 1 WHEREAS, in September 1997, the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature passed House Legislative Initiative 10-3, leading to a constitutional amendment establishing the Commonwealth judiciary as a separate and co-equal branch of the Northern Mariana Islands government;

¶ 2 WHEREAS, Legislative Initiative 10-3 was based on a 1991 study by the National Center for State Courts recommending that the judicial branch, which at the time consisted of statutory courts, should be reestablished as a fully constitutional branch, thereby ensuring its independence and better equipping it to fulfill its role within our self-governing Commonwealth;

¶ 3 WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts has continued to help the judicial branch improve its delivery of legal services by conducting a strategic planning workshop in 2007 and, in furtherance of the goals agreed upon by court leaders during the strategic planning workshop, by conducting a review of the judiciary's internal administration;

¶ 4 WHEREAS, in August 2009, the National Center for State Courts completed its review of judicial branch administration and provided court leaders a report that evaluates the judiciary's organizational structure, examines the responsibilities and functions of judicial branch managers, and concludes that the Supreme and Superior Courts should combine many of their non-judicial functions into a unified administration headed by a judicial council; and

¶ 4 WHEREAS, the justices, judges, and court managers from both the Supreme and Superior Courts have carefully considered establishing a body to oversee judicial branch administration as recommended by the National Center of State Courts;

¶ 5 NOW, THEREFORE, the Supreme Court hereby adopts the proposed Rule of Appellate Procedure 60 establishing a judicial council and respectfully requests the Northern Marianas

Commonwealth Legislature to join the judiciary in its continuing effort to provide fair, accountable, and efficient administration of justice in Commonwealth.

ORDERED this 29th day of September, 2009.

/s/  
MIGUEL S. DEMAPAN  
Chief Justice

/s/  
ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO  
Associate Justice

/s/  
JOHN A. MANGLONA  
Associate Justice