



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
FIFTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE  
THIRD REGULAR SESSION, 2007

**PUBLIC LAW NO. 15-96**  
**H. B. NO. 15-229, HD1**

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AN ACT

To repeal and re-enact Chapter 2, Division 1, Title 3 of the Commonwealth Code pertaining to the Chamorro-Carolinian Language Policy Commission; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE FIFTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH  
LEGISLATURE:**

1           **Section 1. Findings.** The Legislature finds that Public Law 3-26, as set forth in 3  
2 CMC § 1201 et seq., which established the Chamorro/Carolinian Language Policy  
3 Commission (“Language Commission”), was enacted on October 13, 1982. More than 24  
4 years have elapsed since the establishment of the Language Commission and many diverse  
5 social and economic forces in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have  
6 influenced changes within the Chamorro and Carolinian cultures and languages. Some of  
7 these changes threatened to alter the traditional family values of the indigenous people.

8           The Legislature further finds that the Language Commission conducted a survey that  
9 determined that many Chamorro and Carolinian children do not speak their native language.  
10 This is largely due to the lack of understanding, appreciation, practice, and encouragement by  
11 parents, schools, and community leaders which resulted in children losing interest in their  
12 native language. The Language Commission previously attempted to implement language  
13 programs but was either unsuccessful or delayed due to a lack of quorum of the twelve  
14 members of the Language Commission during meetings. Moreover, there has been a  
15 systematic lack of interest and commitment among appointed members of the Language  
16 Commission throughout the past decade or so.

17           The Legislature finds that certain official documents randomly translated in Chamorro  
18 or Carolinian by certain individuals were found to be inconsistent with the adopted

1 Orthography and Dictionary of the Chamorro and Carolinian languages. This has created a  
2 division or difference of opinion among such translators. Therefore, there is a need to require  
3 Chamorro and Carolinian translators to become certified as competent and qualified  
4 translators using the adopted and official Orthography and Dictionary of the Chamorro and  
5 Carolinian languages. A Certification Committee on Chamorro and Carolinian Translators  
6 should be established to certify such translators who perform services for the public and  
7 private sectors in the Commonwealth.

8 The Legislature further finds that the annual budget of the Language Commission  
9 provides only for personnel and office supplies but does not fund any of the language  
10 programs. The Language Commission requires supplemental funding to implement its  
11 language programs. Moreover, there has been some ambiguity as to the status of the  
12 Language Commission within the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs and who is  
13 the proper expenditure authority of the Language Commission. Accordingly, the purpose of  
14 this legislation is repeal and re-enact Chapter 2, Division 1, Title 3 of the Commonwealth  
15 Code in order to clarify some ambiguous provisions and to change and add other provisions  
16 to streamline and improve the Language Commission.

17 **Section 2. Repealer and Re-enactment.** Chapter 2 of Division 1, Title 3 of the  
18 Commonwealth Code is repealed in its entirety and re-enacted to read as follows:

19 **“§ 1201. Short Title.**

20 This chapter may be cited as the Chamorro-Carolinian Language Policy  
21 Commission Act.

22 **§ 1202. Chamorro-Carolinian Language Policy Commission:**  
23 **Establishment.**

24 There is in the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs a Division of  
25 the Chamorro Carolinian Language Policy Commission having the authority and  
26 responsibility to perform the duties and functions set forth in this Act. As used in this  
27 Act, “Commission” shall mean the Chamorro and Carolinian Language Policy  
28 Commission and "Department" shall mean the Department of Community and  
29 Cultural Affairs.

1                   **§ 1203. Chamorro and Carolinian Language Policy Commission:**  
2                   **Composition and Tenure.**

3                   fa) The commission shall be composed of eight (8) members  
4                   appointed by the Governor pursuant to joint nominations submitted by the  
5                   Director of Chamorro/Carolinian Bilingual Program of the Public School  
6                   System, the Executive Assistant for Carolinian Affairs, and the Executive  
7                   Assistant for Indigenous Affairs as nominating agencies.

8                   (b) The members of the commission shall be of Charnorro or  
9                   Carolinian descent, proficient in either Charnorro or Carolinian, and residents  
10                  of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; provided that three (3)  
11                  members shall be Chamorro, three (3) members shall be Carolinian, one (1)  
12                  member shall be a resident of Tinian, and one (1) member shall be a resident  
13                  of Rota.

14                  (c) The members shall serve a term of four (4) years; provided, that of  
15                  the members first appointed, two members are to sewe for four years, two  
16                  members are to serve for three years, two members are to serve for two years,  
17                  and two members are to serve for one year.

18                  (d) The commission shall elect officers and adopt rules and  
19                  regulations necessary to ensure the proper performance of its duties and  
20                  functions.

21                   **§ 1204. Charnorro and Carolinian Language Policy Commission:**  
22                   **Compensation.**

23                   (a) Members of the commission shall serve without pay, but shall be  
24                   reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with  
25                   performance of official duties and functions. The commission shall establish  
26                   procedures for reimbursement of members who have incurred such expenses.

27                   (b) Members traveling on approved official business shall receive  
28                   travel and per diem compensation at the rates and guidelines established for  
29                   executive branch employees.

1                   **§ 1205. Chamorro and Carolinian Language Policy Commission: Duties**  
2                   **and Functions.**

3                   (a) Study antecedents, describe the grammar, and prescribe good  
4                   usages for the Chamorro and Carolinian language;

5                   (b) Prepare a modern and up-to-date Chamorro-Carolinian-English  
6                   dictionary;

7                   (c) Represent the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in  
8                   meetings and conferences on matters dealing with the Chamorro and  
9                   Carolinian language;

10                  (d) Make recommendations to the Board of Education on standard  
11                  orthography to be used in the public school system;

12                  (e) Research the Chamorro and Carolinian languages and the people,  
13                  and provide such resources to the Joeten Kiyu Public Library;

14                  (f) Establish, formulate, and enforce policies for government and  
15                  private sectors regarding Chamorro and Carolinian translations, and to certify  
16                  all Chamorro and Carolinian translators;

17                  (g) Promulgate rules and regulations for Chamorro and Carolinian  
18                  languages used on all government or public documents and public places  
19                  including public buildings, roads, places, street naming, and private business  
20                  signs;

21                  (h) Make recommendations to the Legislature on policies governing  
22                  the usage of Chamorro and Carolinian language in the government sector; and

23                  (i) Establish and support local initiatives to carryout policies in  
24                  support of the Chamorro and Carolinian languages and cultures.

25                   **§ 1206. Committee on Certification of Chamorro and Carolinian**  
26                   **Translators.**

27                   There is established within the Chamorro and Carolinian Language Policy  
28                   Commission a Committee on Certification of Chamorro and Carolinian Translators  
29                   comprised of four members of the commission; provided that two (2) members shall

1 be Chamorro and two (2) members shall be Carolinian. The commission shall adopt  
2 rules and regulations regarding the criteria, qualifications, and certification process of  
3 Chamorro and Carolinian translators.

4 **§ 1207. Director: Appointment and Duties.**

5 (a) The chair of the commission shall, with commission approval,  
6 appoint a director academically qualified or by training and experience to  
7 perform the duties set forth in this Act. The director shall be exempt from the  
8 civil service.

9 (b) The executive director may, with commission approval, hire such  
10 professional, clerical, and other staff as may be deemed necessary to assist the  
11 commission in performing its duties and functions.

12 **§ 1208. Budget.**

13 (a) The commission's budget shall be considered part of the budget of  
14 the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, with expenditure  
15 authority vested in the Director of the commission.

16 (b) **Any** supplemental appropriation for the commission shall be  
17 placed in a separate account within the account of the Department solely for  
18 the use of the commission.

19 (c) The commission may solicit additional funds from other public  
20 and private sources, which shall be placed in a separate account within the  
21 account of the Department solely for the use of the commission.”

22 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such  
23 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent  
24 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or  
25 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

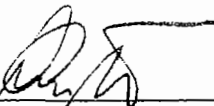
26 **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be  
27 construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes  
28 repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers  
29 contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law.

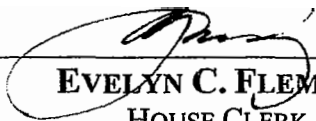
1 The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying,  
2 any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on the date this Act  
3 becomes effective.

4 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the  
5 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

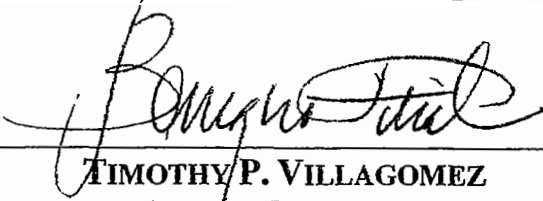
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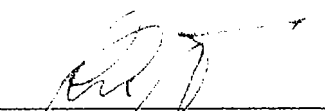
  
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**OSCAR M. BABAUTA**  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

  
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**EVELYN C. FLEMING**  
HOUSE CLERK

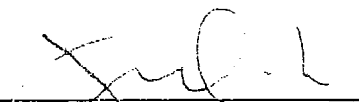
DISAPPROVED on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of SEPTEMBER, 2007

  
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**TIMOTHY P. VILLAGOMEZ**  
ACTING GOVERNOR  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Overridden by the House of Representatives on October 3, 2007, and by the Senate on October 4, 2007, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members in each house.

  
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**OSCAR M. BABAUTA**  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

10/10/07  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**JOSEPH M. MENDIOLA**  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

10/10/07  
DATE