

October 22, 1976

REPORT TO THE CONVENTION BY THE COMMITTEE
ON FINANCE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER MATTERS

Subject: Committee Recommendation No. 2: Education

The Committee recommends that the Convention sitting as a Committee of the Whole adopt in principle the attached constitutional provisions with respect to education.

The Committee has considered what provisions, if any, respecting the vital subject of education should be contained in the Constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands.

It was the unanimous view of the Committee that education is an extremely important function of the government. The Commonwealth is embarking upon a new era of self-government. In order to ensure the continued vitality and capability for self-government in the Commonwealth, the educational needs of young people must be met by a system that operates efficiently and provides service of high quality.

After careful review of provisions of the Mariana Islands District Code, the constitutions of the various states, and the constitution of the Commonwealth Puerto Rico, the Committee concluded that the Constitution should provide for free, compulsory, and public education and should endorse the provision of higher and adult education within the Mariana Islands. The Committee considered whether the provisions for compulsory education and higher education should include details

as to age levels and number of years of schooling. The Committee decided to leave these matters to the legislature so that these standards could be upgraded as promptly as the resources of the Commonwealth permit.

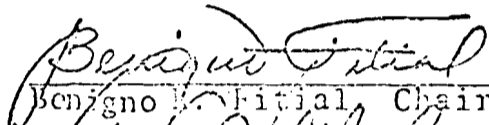
The Committee considered further whether it would be appropriate to include in the Constitution special requirements on equal opportunity for education, the structure of the educational system, financing, and aid to parochial schools.

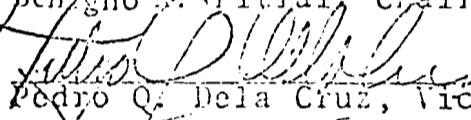
The Committee recognizes that these subjects are of paramount importance and concern to the parents of school-age children, as well as to other residents. It is the judgment of the Committee that the Constitution should not contain language either of a permissive or restrictive nature in a separate article on education on these subjects. Each raises very difficult and often controversial matters. Some also raise complicated legal issues resulting from recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court. For these reasons, the Committee believes that these educational questions should be left to the Commonwealth legislature. This will preserve needed flexibility with regard to the educational policy of the Commonwealth and the special educational requirements of Rota, Saipan, and Tinian, and the residents of the northern islands.

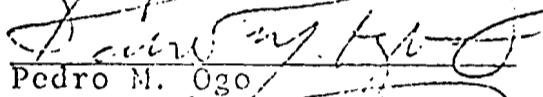
The Committee recognizes that the terms "elementary" and "secondary" education are sufficiently well understood to withstand modern developments of school organization and consequential modification of terminology.

The Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters urges that the Convention adopt in principle this recommendation.

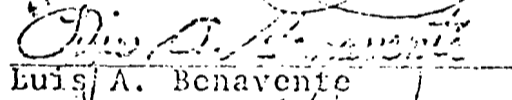
Respectfully submitted,

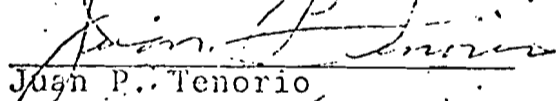

Benigno R. Pitillal, Chairman

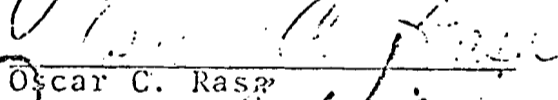

Pedro Q. Dela Cruz, Vice Chairman


Pedro M. Ogo


Esteven M. King

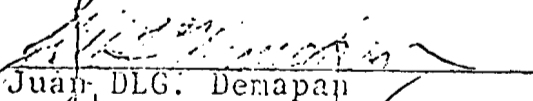

Luis A. Benavente

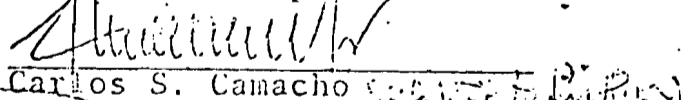

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