

CONSTITUTION OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Approved On Final Reading

By The

NORTHERN MARIANAS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

December 2, 1976

Adopted by Plenary Session November 30, 1976

PREAMBLE

We the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, ordain and establish this Constitution as the embodiment of our traditions and hopes for our Commonwealth in political union with the United States of America.

ARTICLE I: PERSONAL RIGHTS

Section 1: Laws Prohibited. No law shall be made that is a bill of attainder, an ex post facto law, a law impairing the obligation of contracts, or a law prohibiting the traditional art of healing.

Section 2: Freedom of Religion, Speech, Press and Assembly. No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Section 3: Search and Seizure. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and belongings against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated.

a) No warrants shall issue except upon probable cause supported by oath or affirmation and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

b) No wiretapping, electronic eavesdropping or other comparable means of surveillance shall be used except pursuant to a warrant.

c) Any person adversely affected by an illegal search or seizure has a cause of action against the government within limits provided by law.

Section 4: Criminal Prosecutions. In all criminal prosecutions certain fundamental rights shall obtain.

a) The accused has the right to assistance of counsel and, if convicted, has the right to counsel in all appeals.

b) The accused has the right to be confronted with adverse witnesses and to have compulsory process for obtaining favorable witnesses.

c) No person shall be compelled to give self-incriminating testimony.

d) There shall be a speedy and public trial.

e) No person shall be put twice in jeopardy for the same offense regardless of the governmental entity that first institutes prosecution.

f) Excessive bail shall not be required.

- g) Excessive fines shall not be imposed.
- h) Cruel and unusual punishment shall not be inflicted.
- i) Capital punishment is prohibited.
- j) Persons who are under eighteen years of age shall be protected in criminal judicial proceedings and in conditions of imprisonment.

Section 5: Due Process. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.

Section 6: Equal Protection. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws. No person shall be denied the enjoyment of civil rights or be discriminated against in the exercise thereof on account of race, color, religion, ancestry or sex.

Section 7: Quartering Soldiers. No soldier in time of peace may be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war except as provided by law.

Section 8: Trial by Jury. The legislature may provide for trial by jury in criminal or civil cases.

Section 9: Clean and Healthful Environment. Each person has the right to a clean and healthful public environment.

Section 10: Privacy. The right of individual privacy shall not be infringed except upon a showing of compelling interest.