

# Concon proposals to make casinos tougher to legalize

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AT LEAST four proposals for amendments have been introduced Tuesday at the Third Constitutional Convention seeking to block any legislation that would legalize casino gaming Commonwealth-wide.

Delegate Proposals No. 169, 105, 162 and 177, submitted by Delegates Bennet T. Seman, Herman T. Guerrero, Joaquin P. Villagomez, and Joey P. San Nicolas, respectively, differed in language but all had one purpose and intent.

They all seek to take away the Legislature's power to enact law legalizing casino gam-



Bennet T. Seman

ing on Rota and Saipan.

The proposals also endeavor to amend the Constitution so that the only way gambling can be allowed is through popular initia-



Joaquin P. Villagomez

tive approved by individual senatorial districts.

"My proposal provides that casino be decided through popu-

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# Guerrero names leadership



Herman T. Guerrero

THE PRESIDENT of the Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention, Herman T. Guerrero (Jun Pan), appointed three Vice Presidents from the islands of Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. Named were Rota Del. Justo S. Maitagua as First Vice President; Tinian Del. David Q. Maratita as Second Vice President; and Saipan Del. Frances LG. Borja as Third Vice President.

## Manglona hits Tenorio reapportion plan

Guerrero also appointed Saipan Del. John Oliver Gonzales as Secretary and Rota Del. Victor B. Hocog as Floor Leader.

The appointments of the Vice Presidents and Secretary were made during the Convention's third day of its 60 day session yesterday morning.

The Concon President also appointed Saipan Del. Jose R. Lifofoi as Chairman of the Committee on Land and Personal Rights, with Del. Marian Aldan Pierce as Vice Chairperson.

Saipan Del. Tomas B. Aldan also named Chairman of the Committee on Legislative Branch and Public Finance, with Del. Juan S. Tenorio as Vice Chairman.

Del. Felix R. Nogis will also be Chairman of the Committee on the Executive Branch and Local Government, with Tinian Del. James M. Mendiola as Vice Chairman and Tinian Del. Henry U. Hofschneider as Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary and Other Elected Offices, with Del. Donald B. Mendiola of

Saipan as Vice Chairman.

Just before the yesterday's session ended, Rota Del. Benjamin T. Manglona, in an emotional speech before the Convention, took issue with Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio's statement in one of the local newspapers suggesting that the islands of Tinian and Rota, and San Antonio Village at the southern end of Saipan, be represented in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth Legislature by a single member to be elected at large.

Manglona said the issue is "very sensitive" to the residents of the islands of Tinian and Rota. He also said it looks like the CNMI is "turning back the clock to the Trust Territory" government time.

It could be remembered that Manglona represented Rota, Tinian and parts of the southern end of Saipan as a member of the House of Representatives at the Congress of Micronesia.

He served as an elected member of that body for two terms, for a total of

four years. The former Lieutenant Governor urged the delegates to maintain the status quo in which Tinian and Rota are represented by one member from each island in the House of Representatives. He called upon the Governor to unite the people of the Northern Marianas.

"It has always been my dream that before I die," Del. Manglona explained, "that the residents of Saipan, Tinian and Rota unite as one people, one voice, and one Marianas."

He asked the delegates to assist him fulfill that dream.

On another topic, Rota Delegate Victor B. Hocog, said he has been labeled as the Governor's "strong man" at the Convention and that he will push for the Governor's agenda.

"The Governor has his own agenda," Hocog said. "I have my own agenda. We have our differences on issues. I need not agree with the Governor" on every issue.

"As to reference that he is the Governor's "strong man" at the Con-

Benjamin Manglona

vention, the Rota delegate simply said: "I didn't know that but thanks for the honor."

The Constitutional Convention is being held at the House Chamber on Capitol Hill. The Convention will meet for a total of 60 days, with 15 additional days authorized if necessary. The session usually starts at 10 in the morning. The general public is invited to attend all sessions and public hearings.

## Con Con . . .

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lar initiative in each senatorial district. This means the Legislature shall not impose Commonwealth-wide casino gambling," said Del. Seman in an interview with the Variety yesterday.

According to Seman, she believes the people want such a touchy issue as gambling decided on by themselves and not by the lawmaking body.

"I believe it's an issue that the people feel they should be empowered to do and not through elected officials as it is too much of a temptation," said Seman.

Currently, a legislation is pending before the Senate seeking to establish a gaming industry on Saipan and Rota, the only islands where casino gaming is still illegal.

There is already a flourishing casino operation on Tinian, Lone Star Casino, which is endeavoring a full-scale, major casino hotel resort complex in a few years time.

At present, Tinian is the only island allowed to venture into a casino industry, being the only senatorial district that has successfully enacted a casino initiative.

Under the present Constitution, Article XXI, Section 1, Gambling is prohibited in the CNMI, except as provided by Commonwealth law or established through initiative in the Commonwealth or in any senatorial district.

All four delegate proposals so far introduced in the Third ConCon seek to amend such provision so as to delete any reference to casino legalization by Commonwealth law.

In defending her proposal, Seman acknowledged that previous referenda had the people speaking against casino gaming CNMI-wide.

She lamented how the casino issue has come forth "over and over again."

"I believe I was elected to push that issue also in this convention," said Seman.

Seman's proposal has already garnered the signatures of at least 15 other delegate co-sponsors.

At least 18 votes are needed for it to get approved pursuant to the current two-thirds vote requirement under the ConCon Rules of Procedure.

Seman's Delegate Proposal No. 169 specifically reads as follows: "It is proposed that a constitutional amendment be prepared that does the following... 'Provides that casino gambling is prohibited, unless individual senatorial districts approve it. Casino gambling may not be imposed by the Legislature on a Commonwealth-wide basis... Provides that individual senatorial districts may approve gambling only by popular initiative.'"

Of the four delegate proposals introduced, Delegate Proposal No. 162, offered by Del. Villagomez, is the toughest against casino legalization as it pro-