

THE SENATE
NINTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

OFFICIAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

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OFFICIAL RULES OF THE SENATE
NINTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

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OFFICIAL RULES OF THE SENATE
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RULE 1. OFFICERS

Section 1. Election of Permanent Officers.

a. The person who called the Senate to order shall thereupon entertain a motion for the election of the President of the Senate. Upon his election, the President shall assume the Chair as presiding officer.

b. At the first session of each new Legislature, the President shall thereupon entertain a motion for the election of the Vice President of the Senate. Upon the election of the Vice President, the President shall entertain a motion for the election of the Floor Leader. Upon the election of the Floor Leader, the President shall entertain a motion for the election of the Legislative Secretary of the Senate. The President shall appoint nonmembers as Clerk of the Senate and Sergeant-at-Arms, respectively.

Section 2. Terms of Office. The President, Vice President, Floor Leader, and Senate Legislative Secretary, shall hold office until the next Legislature is called to order, until noon on the second Monday in January following the next general election unless such tenure be terminated at an earlier date by death or resignation. The Sergeant-at-Arms and the Senate Clerk shall hold office during the session in which appointed, unless their tenure be terminated at an earlier date by death, resignation or by action of the President. Vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the procedure provided in Rule 1, Section 1(b). This rule shall not be suspended without a unanimous vote of the total membership of the Senate and shall not be amended without the unanimous vote of the total membership of the Senate.

Section 3. President. It shall be the duty of the President:

a. To open the sitting of the Senate at the appointed hour by taking the Chair and calling upon the visiting member of the clergy or one of the members to offer the opening prayer or upon the members to observe a moment of silent prayer;

b. To assign to each member a seat on the floor of the Senate;

c. To maintain order and proper decorum in debate;

d. To announce the business before the Senate in the order prescribed by the rules;

e. To receive and submit all matters properly brought before the Senate by the members, to call for vote upon the same, and announce the results;

f. To receive all communications from the House of Representatives and other branches of the Commonwealth Government and present them to the Senate, and to direct the different committees of the Senate to consider subjects in such messages;

g. To calendar any bill or resolution he deems to be an urgent matter after consultation with and approval of the majority of the Senate Leadership; and the concurrence of the Committee Chairman;

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h. To authenticate by his signature all official acts and papers of the Senate and to transmit such papers as required;

i. To make known the Rules of the Senate and interpret such rules when so requested, and to decide point of order;

j. To direct the activities of the Office of Senate Legal Counsel, Sergeant-at-Arms and Senate Clerk with the assistance of the Legislative Secretary; appoint an Acting Senate Clerk in the absence of the Clerk; appoint an Acting Sergeant-at-Arms in the absence of the Sergeant-at-Arms; direct the activities of the other administrative officers and employees of the Senate; and oversee the administration of the business of the Senate;

k. To name, if he so desires, a member to perform the duties of the Chair when the Vice President, Floor Leader and Legislative Secretary are not available to perform such duties, which member shall be known as President Pro Tempore while so serving, but such substitution shall not extend beyond an adjournment;

l. To designate a temporary Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a committee in the absence of both or reassign all bills, resolutions and other matters assigned to that committee to another committee for prompt action.

m. To designate a Chaplain to close the last day of the session with prayer; and

n. To do and perform such duties as may be required by law, by these rules, and any other matter that appertains to the office of the President.

Section 4. Vice President. It shall be the duty of the Vice President to exercise all the duties and powers of the President in his absence and to serve as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

Section 5. Floor Leader. It shall be the duty of the Floor Leader:

a. To propose routine motions which contribute to the orderly and speedy conduct of the business of the Senate;

b. To perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President and the Vice President; and

c. To perform such other duties as the President may designate.

Section 6. Senate Legislative Secretary. It shall be the duty of the Senate Legislative Secretary:

a. To attest by his signature all bills, resolutions, orders, proceedings, contracts or other documents issued by order of the Senate;

b. To certify and transmit to the Governor all bills, resolutions, or other matters of the Legislature required to be transmitted to the Governor immediately after their passage or adoption by the Senate. Transmittal shall be accomplished by delivering such bills, resolutions or other matters to the Governor or any other official so designated by the Legislature to receive such bills, resolutions or other matters;

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c. To perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President, the Vice President and Floor Leader; and

d. To perform such other duties as the President may designate.

Section 7. Senate Clerk. It shall be the duty of the Senate Clerk:

a. To attend all scheduled Senate Sessions, unless excused by the President; to keep records of attendance of all members at sessions and to prepare each quarter a compilation of the attendance of the members at sessions at the Senate and a compilation of the voting record of each member of the Senate on the passage of all bills and other important matters considered by roll call vote. Such quarterly reports shall be appended to the Journal of the Day on which it is submitted to the Senate;

b. To have charge of all the records of the Senate and be responsible for the same, and never permit original documents to be withdrawn from his/her keeping unless ordered by the President;

c. To make a concise and complete memorandum of all petitions, motions, resolutions, amendments, and other matters brought before the Senate and their disposition; such memorandum to state the nature of the matter, give the name of the introducer and be dated each day; and such memoranda together with other matters ordered to be placed therein shall constitute the Journal of the Day;

d. To read all bills, resolutions and other matters to the Senate, if so required by the President or any of the Senate members;

e. To immediately forward all letters, messages, communications or other matters to the President, Senator or Committee as the case may be;

f. To deliver immediately to the chairman of the appropriate committee all petitions, resolutions, bills or other matters duly referred to such committee;

g. To prepare for the respective committees to which have been referred subjects contained in the messages of the Governor, a memorandum of the subjects so referred;

h. To attach a statement to any bill or instrument which in the absence of the President, Vice President and Floor Leader has been signed by the President Pro Tempore, a certificate setting forth that such President Pro Tempore was duly serving;

i. To maintain a record of all urgent bills and to report the current status daily to the Senate;

j. To certify, in the absence of the Legislative Secretary from the island of Saipan, commemorative resolutions and transmit same to the Governor or any other person so designated by the Legislature to receive such commemorative resolutions

k. To do and perform all other clerical and office duties pertaining to the position of the Clerk of the Senate as the Senate shall from time to time direct and as shall by law or these rules, or rules hereafter adopted, be assigned to him.

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Section 8. Sergeant-at-Arms. it shall be the duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms:

- a. To attend all scheduled Senate Sessions, unless excused by he President;
- b. To maintain order among those present as spectators;
- c. To give notice to the presiding officer of the attendance of any person with communications or otherwise;
- d. To attend upon committees if so requested;
- e. To serve all orders or process directed by the Senate;
- f. To make all required arrests of members or other persons and to restrain the same in custody;
- g. To have charge of and responsibility for the postal requirements of the Senate;
- h. To have custody of all property of the Senate, except those items provided for in Rule 1, §7;
- i. To execute all other requirements of his office; and
- j. To keep anyone from the floor of the Senate except members of the Senate, authorized employees of the Senate and guests of the Senate.

The Sergeant-at-Arms shall wear an identification or badge to symbolize the authority of the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Section 9: Office of the Senate Legal Counsel. It shall be the duty of the Office of the Senate Legal Counsel:

- a. To act as Counsel for the Senate and its committees;
- b. To act as Counsel and adviser to the President on all legislative matters and matters of parliamentary procedure;
- c. To prepare bills or resolutions at the request of any Senator;
- d. To undertake such legal research and render legal opinions at the request of a Senator;
- e. To advise the Senate of laws and regulations of the Northern Mariana Islands which are archaic, obsolete, or in conflict with other laws, or which do not conform with decisions of the courts;
- f. To represent the Senate in lawsuits to which the Senate is a party as directed by the President or in matters of Senate and public interest as directed by resolution; and
- g. To perform such other duties pertaining to his position as the Senate shall prescribe.

RULE 2. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

Section 1. Time of Meetings. The Senate shall meet for the transaction of business in accordance with Article II, Section 13 of the Constitution. Except for legal holidays, the Senate may meet on such other days and at such other times as the President may designate at a meeting of the Senate, subject to appeal to the Senate.

Section 2. Place of Meetings.. The Senate shall meet at a place on Saipan, Mariana Islands, or in such senatorial district as the President shall determine. The Senate shall meet in special session at the call of the Governor or the President, at such place and at such time as he shall determine. In a special session called by the Governor, only subjects contained in the call may be acted upon.

RULE 3. QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE

Section 1. Quorum and Attendance. A majority of the members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. For the opening day of any session, at least one member from each of the three senatorial districts shall be included in the initial quorum unless sufficient notice was given to permit the attendance of the members absent and they do not answer to the quorum count. A majority of less than a quorum shall have the power to compel the attendance of absent members and to adjourn from day to day. The President may declare the Senate adjourned if no quorum is present at the hour of opening. For purposes of ascertaining whether a quorum exists, the President shall count the members present. During a meeting of the Senate, any member may call upon the President to determine whether a quorum exists or not, and the President shall so determine and announce his findings.

RULE 4. PROCEDURE FOR SESSIONS

Section 1. Public Sessions. Regular and Special sessions of the Senate, and joint sessions of the Senate and House of Representatives, shall be opened to the public.

Section 2. Joint Sessions. The President and the Speaker shall together call a joint session when they deem it necessary. Joint sessions shall be held at the time and place designated by the joint call of the two presiding officers. The Speaker shall preside at joint sessions but the President shall sit beside him.

Section 3. Language of Proceedings. All legislative proceedings shall be conducted in English. However, if a member wishes to speak in Chamorro or Carolinian, such statement shall be recorded in that language for the Journal, unless the member requests that it be translated into the English language.

Section 4. Sitting in or Entering the Chambers. No member may sit at the desk of the President or of another member or of the Senate Clerk, except by permission of the President. A person who is not a member of the Senate or an employee of the Senate may not enter upon the floor of the Senate where members are seated during a session except at the invitation or with the permission of the President, or during a public hearing or meeting without the invitation or permission of the presiding Senate officer or committee chairman.

Section 5. Communications Media. Members of the press and other representatives of the public communications media desiring to report the proceedings of the Senate to the public may be admitted to the Senate by the President. The President may assign such persons a place and facilities which will not interfere with the operation of the Senate.

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Section 6. Recognition. When a member desires recognition, he shall address the Chair, "Mr. President". When recognized, he shall confine himself to the purpose for which he sought recognition. The President shall not recognize a member for the purpose of speaking in support of or opposition to a motion for a second time until every member wishing to speak to the question has had an opportunity to be heard, and no member may speak more than two times to the same question.

Section 7. Holding the Floor and Manner of Address.

a. A member shall continue to hold the floor until such time as he ceases to speak to the question or otherwise yields the floor, except that he may yield for the raising of a point of information or order by another member and still retain the floor and except that no member may speak for more than fifteen minutes each time he is recognized.

b. A member shall address or refer to his fellow members either as "Senator " or the "The Senior (or Junior) Senator from _____."

Section 8. Closing Debate and Voting on the Question. The President may close debate and call for a vote on the question before the Senate at any time he is satisfied that every member desiring to speak to the question has spoken or has had an opportunity to do so, subject to the appeal to the Senate. If the previous question is moved and adopted, debate shall be closed, provided that the mover of the motion before the Senate on which debate is being closed may make a closing statement of five minutes or less in support of his motion, or delegate the right to close to another member of the Senate.

Section 9. Ruling of the Chair. The President shall decide all questions of order whether or not specified in these rules, subject to appeal to the Senate, which decisions shall be considered overruled if a majority of the members present vote not to sustain the ruling of the President.

Section 10. Dress. Members, officers and employees appearing on the floor of the Senate shall be suitably attired. The President may prescribe the required dress, subject to appeal to the Senate, and make such exceptions as he sees fit.

Section 11. Interruptions. No member may engage in private discourse when the President or a member is speaking, nor leave the chamber nor walk about the floor when the President is speaking, nor walk between a member who is speaking and the President.

Section 12. Disorderly Manner of Members If any member shall conduct himself in a disorderly manner during any session of the Senate, the President shall order such member to keep his seat and preserve the peace. If the member shall persist in his disorderly conduct, the President shall order the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove the member from the Senate. The member shall not be permitted to take his seat during the remainder of that day's session unless the President shall so permit.

Section 13. Discipline of Members. The Senate may discipline its members by censure for disorderly behavior, neglect of duty, or violation of the oath of office. The Senate may also suspend or otherwise discipline a member by a majority vote of the total membership of the Senate and may expell a member by a three-fourths affirmative vote of the total membership of the Senate, in accordance with Article II, Section 14 of the Constitution.

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Section 14. Disturbance/Demonstration. In case of disturbance or disorderly conduct, the President may have the Senate cleared of all persons, except members and officers, in order to abate the disturbance or disorderly conduct. Demonstrators of any type shall take place in an orderly fashion outside of the Senate Legislative buildings. Under no circumstances shall demonstrators, signs or placard carriers be allowed in the Senate chamber, offices, hallways or any parts of the Legislative buildings.

Section 15. Who May Address the Senate. Only members may address the Senate while in session. When legal advice is requested the Senate shall resolve into the Committee of the Whole.

RULE 5. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Section 1. Order of Business. After prayer or a moment of silence, the daily order of business in the Senate shall be as follows:

- a. Roll Call;
- b. Adoption of the Journal of the Day unless the Senate by motion suspends such adoption;
- c. Messages from the Governor;
- d. Communications from the heads of executive departments;
- e. House Communications;
- f. Washington Representative's Communications;
- g. Standing Committee Reports;
- h. Reports of special and conference committees;
- i. Unfinished business;
- j. Prefiled Bills and Resolutions
- k. Introduction of Bills and Resolutions
- l. Bill Calendar;
- m. Resolution Calendar;
- n. Petitions, memorials and communications;
- o. Miscellaneous business;
- p. Announcements;
- q. Adjournment.

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Section 2. Placement of Bills and Resolutions on the Order of Business. After a session has been called for by the Senate President, the Leadership shall meet to determine by a majority vote what bills and resolutions shall be placed on the Order of Business under item l, Bill Calendar for either First or Second Reading or item m, Resolution Calendar. No other matters may be placed on the Bill Calendar or Resolution Calendar during a session. This section cannot be suspended or waived except by an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) vote of the membership of the Senate.

RULE 6. COMMITTEES GENERALLY

Section 1. Types of Senate Committee. There shall be standing committees created by the rules. Special committees shall be established by the President as required to consider and report on such special or temporary matters as are referred to them. Conference committees shall be established by the President to consider differences between the Senate and the House of Representatives on any matter requiring agreement between the houses. Special and conference committees shall be temporary committees which shall remain in existence until discharged by the President, subject to appeal to the Senate. The Senate may resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole, consisting of the entire membership of the Senate, whenever it decides to consider a matter as a committee. The Committee of the Whole shall remain in being until such time as it dissolves itself and reports back to the Senate. The Vice President shall chair the Committee of the Whole.

Section 2. Order of the Senate. All committees of the Senate shall be subject to the orders of the Senate and shall faithfully carry out such orders.

Section 3. Powers and Authority of Committees. Each committee of the Senate is hereby authorized to study and analyze all facts relating to the subjects which would fall within its jurisdiction as indicated by Rule 1, Section 1 or Rule 8, Section 1 to 5, including, but not limited to a needed revision of the laws or needed legislation relating to that subject, and for such purpose shall constitute an investigation committee. Witnesses may be summoned and examined, documents and records searched and examined in accordance with Section 14 (b), Article II, or the Constitution, and everything shall be done to bring all facts pertaining to the matter before the Senate.

Section 4. Duties of Committees. It shall be the duty of a committee to make diligent and careful inquiry and investigation into all of the facts and circumstances connected with any bill, resolution or matter referred to it, or any needed revision of the laws or needed legislation relating to a subject within its jurisdiction.

Section 5. Meetings.

a. Meetings of the committees, including the Committee of the Whole, shall be open to the public unless a majority of the members thereof determine otherwise. No committee shall sit at a time when the Senate is in session without permission of the Senate.

b. The Chairman of any standing or special committee may arrange for the joint meeting of his committee with another committee of the Senate or the House, and to conduct their business jointly. Final action shall be taken by each committee separately.

Section 6. Appointment of Members.

a. Members of standing, special and conference committees shall be appointed by the President, subject to appeal to the Senate. Each standing, special or conference committee shall have at least one member from Saipan, Rota and Tinian.

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b. Members of standing committees shall be appointed by the President, after consultation with the leadership members of the Senate as to the committee or committees on which each prefers to serve, subject to appeal to the Senate.

Section 7. Chairman and Vice Chairman.

a. The chairman of each standing committee, special committee or conference committee shall be appointed by the President, subject to appeal to the Senate. Each chairman shall appoint a vice chairman, subject to appeal of the Senate. The appointment of Acting chairman by the chairman of standing, special or conference committee must be approved by the President. Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the standing committees shall hold office until noon on the second Monday of January following the next general election unless such tenure is terminated at an earlier date by death or resignation. The President may not be chairman or vice chairman of standing committees, special committees or conference committees. The President however, shall have the option to sit in any of the above committees. This subsection shall not be suspended or amended without the affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the total members of the Senate.

b. The chairman of each committee shall call meetings, preside at committee meetings, prepare and post necessary agenda, invite witnesses to appear before the committee, issue subpoenas requiring the attendance of witnesses or production of documents upon a majority vote of the members of the committee, prepare committee reports subject to the requirements of the Rules, and keep and maintain permanent files of all testimony, correspondence, legal opinions and other supporting documents concerning all bills and resolutions considered by the committee. Such files shall be property of the Senate. The vice chairman shall perform the duties of the chairman in his absence.

Section 8. Committee Reports.

a. Special committees shall report within the time allowed by the President or by vote of the Senate. Upon the direction of the Chairman or a majority vote of the members, standing and special and conference committee shall submit their reports in writing to the President who shall cause such reports to be reproduced and a copy of each furnished to each member. A Committee report shall state findings of facts and conclusions based thereon together with a specific recommendation as to the manner in which the bill, resolution or other matter referred to the committee should be passed and shall clearly state the purpose of the bill and intent of the Legislature. A report upon a bill proposed to be amended by the committee shall have the amended bill attached thereto. All written testimonies from witnesses who testify on a bill, resolution, or other matter referred to a committee shall be attached to and made part of the report.

b. A report shall be considered adopted by a committee when a majority of the members of the committee have signed the report concurring therein. Provided, however, that the members must be given at least twenty-four (24) hours to consider the report prior to adoption and provided, further, this requirement may be waived by a majority vote of the Committee. A member or members not concurring the report of the majority may so indicate by signing the report "I do not concur" or by submitting a separate minority report.

c. A committee shall report all actions taken on any matter referred to it to the Senate.

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d. The President shall cause committee reports submitted to him pursuant to this Rule to be placed on the order of business pursuant to Rule 5. Upon consideration of a committee report the Senate shall adopt the report, or return the report to the Committee. The action on a committee report shall be by a majority vote of members present, a quorum being present and may be by voice vote except that committee reports confirming or rejecting an appointment to public office shall be by roll call. If the Senate votes to return a report to committee, the bill, resolution or other matter subject of the report shall be stricken from the order of business and shall not be considered.

Section 9. Rights of Members. A majority of the members of a committee may require the chairman to place any bill, resolution, or other matter referred to the committee on the agenda for committee consideration and submit such bill, resolution, or other matter to the committee for its decision.

Section 10. Withdrawal of Bills, Resolutions and other matters from Committee. Any bill, resolution, or other matter referred to a committee at a regular session may be withdrawn from such committee by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Senate present, a quorum being present, provided that the bill, resolution, or other matter shall have been referred to the committee eight or more days prior to recall. Any bill, resolution, or other matter referred to a committee at a special session may be withdrawn by affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Senate present, a quorum being present, after half of the period for which the session was called has elapsed.

Section 11. Joint Committees. Joint committees may be created by joint resolution or statute, and shall have such members, powers, and procedures as provided therein. Any Joint Committee created by Joint Resolution or statute, shall have at least one member each from Rota and Tinian.

Section 12. Individual Statements and Actions. No member of the Senate, or group of members shall in any way represent itself as speaking for or being a part of the Senate by holding hearings, or releasing public statements or in any other way unless constituted as a special or standing committee pursuant to these rules. The word "Senate" shall not be used by individual members or groups thereof without official sanction.

RULE 7. STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees of the Senate shall be as specified herein.

Section 1. Committee on Fiscal Affairs. The Committee on Fiscal Affairs shall consist of not more than six or less than three members, at least one from each senatorial district. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and report on all bills, resolutions, or other matter referred to it by the Senate pertaining to the finances and financial administration of the Northern Marianas or any of the municipalities thereof, such subjects to include but not be limited to tax and non-tax revenues, budgets, expenditures, appropriations, loans, debts, claims funding arrangements, accounting and audits, proposed, present or past, and related subjects. Bills, resolutions or other matters referred to the Committee on Fiscal Affairs pertaining to the subject matter of another standing committee and to financial matters may be referred by the Committee on Fiscal Affairs to such other committee for preliminary examination and report to the Committee on Fiscal Affairs. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and investigate any needed revision of the laws or needed legislation relating to any subject within its jurisdiction.

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Section 2. Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs. The Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs shall consist of not more than six nor less than three members, at least one from each senatorial district. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and report on all bills, resolutions, and other matters referred to it by the Senate pertaining to the economy of the Commonwealth and the resources thereof, development loans, private savings and indebtedness, commerce and trade, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mineral resources, land management, industries, electric power, communications, land, sea, air transportation, and related subjects. The Committee shall consider and report on all federal programs of the United States Government related to any subject within its jurisdiction for which the Commonwealth is eligible. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and investigate any needed revision of the laws or needed legislation relating to any subject within its jurisdiction.

Section 3. Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law. The Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law shall consist of not more than six or less than three members, at least one from each senatorial district. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and report on all bills, resolutions and other matters referred to it by the Senate pertaining to civil and criminal law, judicial administration and organization, land law, traditional rights, suffrage and elections, revision of statutes, governmental organization and functions, civil service, senatorial district-municipal relations and related subject. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and investigate any needed revision of the laws or needed legislation relating to any subject within its jurisdiction.

Section 4. Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations The Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigation shall consist of not more than six or less than three members, at least one from each senatorial district. It shall be the duty of this Committee to consider and report on all bills, resolutions and other matters referred to it by the Senate pertaining to the advice and consent of the Senate on executive appointments; legislative appointments; investigations on alleged criminal acts of government corruption and related subjects. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and investigate any needed revision of the laws or needed legislation relating to any subject within its jurisdiction.

Section 5. Committee on Rules and Procedure.

a. The Committee on Rules and Procedure shall consist of not less than five members. The members of this committee shall include the President, Vice President, Floor Leader, Senate Legislative Secretary, Chairman of each of the Standing Committees, and the Minority Leader. This committee shall be policy-making body of the Senate and shall have the following duties:

1. To consider and report on all proposed amendments to these rules;
2. To determine the priority of all matters and the order in which all bills, resolutions, reports, communications, or correspondence shall be placed on the session agenda for debate or discussion on the Senate floor;
3. To consider all proposed legislation requiring referral to the committee of the Senate and to make appropriate referral of all bills, resolutions and other matters before the Senate for final determination, or as referred by the President;
4. To consider all communications that comes from the House of Representatives through the President's Office requiring referral to the Committee of the Senate and to make appropriate assignment of them;

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5. To commend to the President and the Senate Leadership policies governing the administration and operation of the Senate including staff organization, functions, personnel policies and rates of compensation for Senate employees, or as determined by the individual Senators due to the decentralization of accounts and expenditure authority of those accounts.

6. To consider all matters concerning the properties, inventory and use of physical space and premises of the Senate and recommend appropriate action to the President.

b. The Rules Committee shall continue in existence during any recess of the Senate, and after final adjournment until the convening of the next Legislature. The President, Vice President, Floor Leader, Legislative Secretary and Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Procedures shall constitute the executive committee for this committee. The executive committee shall be responsible for preparing the agenda prior to each Senate session, and shall perform such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned to it by the Committee on Rules and Procedures.

c. In performing its duties under paragraph 1, 4, and 5 of Subsection (1) of this section, action by the Rules Committee shall require a majority vote of the entire membership of the Committee. On matters of concern to the people of any senatorial district no action shall be taken by the Committee without the attendance of the Committee members from that senatorial district unless sufficient notice was given to permit the attendance of the members absent.

Section 6. Committee on Health, Education, Welfare and Programs. The Committee on health, Education, Welfare and Programs shall consist of not more than six nor less than three members, at least one from each senatorial district. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider any report on all bills, resolutions and other matters referred to it by the Senate pertaining to education, housing, consumer protection, protection of the environment, the conditions of labor, physical and mental health, youth, and the general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Committee shall also consider and report on all federal programs of the United States Government related to any subject within its jurisdiction for which the Commonwealth is eligible. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider and investigate any needed revision of the laws or needed legislation relating to any subject within its jurisdiction.

Section 7. Committee on Federal Relations & Independent Agencies. The Committee on Federal Relations & Independent Agencies shall consist of not more than seven or less than three members, at least one from each Senatorial District. It shall be the duty of this Committee to consider and report on all bills, resolutions and other matters referred to it by the Senate pertaining to relations between the federal government, including the United Nations and the Commonwealth Government. It shall also be the duty of the Committee to consider and report on all bills, resolutions and other matters referred to it by the Senate pertaining to an agency, authority, or public or quasi-public corporation. To review the implementation, operation and function of those programs and the extent to which their objectives are being accomplished and legislative policies executed.

Section 8. Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications. The Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications shall consist of not more than six nor less than three members. It shall be the duty of this Committee to consider and report on all bills, resolutions and other matters referred to it by the Senate pertaining to public utilities; public works; communications; roads; ports; transportation; and related matters.

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RULE 8. BILLS RESOLUTIONS, AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Property of the Senate. All bills or resolutions prefiled or introduced in the Senate and Committee reports thereon shall be deemed the property of the Senate, and under its control. Bills or resolutions may be prefiled with the Clerk of the Senate and numbered by the Clerk pursuant to Section 4 of this Rule. Such prefiled measures may be referred to one or more committees. No member may prefile, or introduce a bill, resolution or any other measure unless the same has been first reviewed and approved for introduction or prefiling by the President, or the Chairman of the Rules Committee.

Section 2. Types of Bills and Resolutions. The following types of bills and resolutions may be considered in the Senate:

- a. Senate bill (S.B.) which shall be a bill introduced in the Senate;
- b. House (H.B.) which shall be a bill introduced in the House unless the House determines to designate such bill by a different title;
- c. Concurrent Resolution of the House (HCR) or Senate (SCR);
- d. Senate Joint Resolution (S.J.R.) which shall be a joint resolution introduced in the Senate;
- e. House Joint Resolution (H.J.R.) which shall be a joint resolution introduced in the House, unless the House designates such a resolution by a different title; and
- f. Senate Resolution (S.R.) which shall be a resolution introduced in the Senate.
- g. Commemorative Resolution (S.R.) which shall be a type of Senate Resolution commemorating events of public interest, and which may be enacted temporarily outside of a regular session pursuant to Section 13 herein.

Section 3. Format of Bills and Resolutions.

- a. All bills and resolutions shall be typewritten with black ribbon in double space upon paper which is traditional letter size, leaving a left margin on 1-1/2 inches and with the number of the line appearing on each line at the left margin.
- b. Bills and resolutions for introduction or prefiling shall be submitted in an original and three copies. Each original copy of a bill or resolution shall be dated and signed by the member introducing the measure, at the last page thereof. The introducer may permit other members to affix their signatures to the measures. When a member wishes to indicate that he is introducing a measure by specific request without necessarily sponsoring it, he may affix the words "By request" after his signature.

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Section 4. Numbering of Bills and Resolutions. Senate bills and resolutions and measures prefiled with the Senate Clerk pursuant to Section 1 of this Rule shall be numbered by type of measure with the numerical designation of the Legislature followed by consecutive numerical order, corresponding with the respective order of prefilng or introduction. The first time a Senate bill, House bill, or resolution is amended in the Senate, the designation "S.D.1" shall be appended after the number designation of the bill or resolution to indicate "Senate Draft 1". Each time the bill or resolution is subsequently amended in the Senate, the number designation shall be increased by one. The first time a Senate bill, House bill or resolution is substituted in its entirety for one of the Senate committees, the designation of "S.C.S.1" shall be appended after the number designation of the bill or resolution to indicate "Senate Committee Substitute 1". Each time the bill or resolution is subsequently amended in the Senate committee or the Senate, the designation "S.D.1" shall be appended after the "S.C.S.1" designation to indicate "Senate Committee Substitute 1, Senate Draft 1".

Section 5. Forms of Bills. To pass First and Second, each bill shall:

- a. Contain an enacting clause reading "Be it Enacted by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature";
- b. Embrace but one subject and matters properly connected therewith, which subject shall be expressed in the title; and
- c. Not amend or revise an existing law by reference to its title only, but the law as revised, or section or subsection as amended, shall be set forth at length in the bill.

Section 6. Duplication and Distribution of Bills, Resolutions, and Committee Reports.

- a. The Senate Clerk shall duplicate twelve copies of bills and resolutions when introduced and/or prefiled; at such time as the appropriate committee takes action on the bill or resolution, additional duplication shall be done by the Clerk upon request by the Committee Chairman. Committee reports shall be duplicated in such quantities as shall be determined by the Clerk, but sufficient to assure distribution to all members of the Senate.
- b. The Senate Clerk shall provide each member with a copy of each bill and each resolution and each amended copy thereof, at the time of introduction and/or prefiled, transmittal from the House or amendment on the floor, as required by Rule 8, Section 10. The Senate Clerk shall provide each member with a copy of each report of each committee at the time that the report is placed on the Order of the Day.
- c. A bill or resolution shall not be placed on the Bill or Resolution Calendar unless a copy thereof and the pertinent records have been duplicated and distributed to each member.

Section 7. Referral and Reading of Bills.

- a. A bill shall be considered introduced once it is prefiled with the Senate Clerk by a member or at his/her direction. A bill is not required to again be introduced during a session unless the member wishes do so.
- b. A bill shall be placed on the Bill Calendar for First Reading following introduction. The First Reading of a bill shall be by its title.

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c. Bills which pass First Reading and short form bills shall be referred to one or more committees of the Senate by the President or the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Procedure unless the President orders the bill placed on the Bill Calendar for Second and Final Reading without referral to committee, such referrals or orders subject to the action of the Senate. Bills which have been prefiled may be referred to one or more committees of the Senate for consideration by the President or the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Procedure. The President shall announce each referral and such order not to refer to committee at the time it is made.

c. Committee reports shall first be delivered to the Senate Clerk who shall place a number on them in consecutive order and cause the same to be printed and distributed to members of the Senate.

d. The reports of the committee of the Senate reporting on a bill shall be separated from the bill and acted on separately. Such reports may recommend that the bill, in its original or in amended form (i) be favorably considered and passed to the next committee to which it was initially referred for further consideration, or (ii) pass Second Reading, or (iii) be filed.

e. The same procedure shall be followed in consideration of short-form bills provided that the first committee which has amended the short-form bill so that it is in a form for adoption as law may (i) recommend the passage by the committee if the bill has been so referred, or (ii) recommitment, or (iii) pass on Second Reading. A committee considering a short-form bill may recommend the filing of the bill.

f. A copy of each bill as proposed for passage on Second Reading shall be submitted to the Office of the Senate Legal Counsel for review as to form prior to being placed on the Bill Calendar. The Counsel shall, if necessary, make a report on the bill to the President without delay.

g. The Senate Clerk shall place the bills on the Bill Calendar in compliance with Rule 5, Section 2 herein.

h. Upon Second Reading a bill shall be read by title, provided that the Senate Clerk shall read the bill at length if requested to do so by the President.

i. No bill which has passed First Reading can be placed on for consideration on Second and Final Reading, regardless of the recommendation of the standing committee to which it has been referred before the lapse of a minimum of forty-eight (48) hours. This subsection shall not be suspended or amended without the affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the total members of the Senate.

Section 8. Consideration of a Bill modified by the House of Representatives, or by a Conference Committee. If a bill passed in the Senate is returned by the House in a form other than in which it was passed on Second Reading by the Senate, then the Senate shall consider whether to agree or disagree to the changes proposed by the House. If the Senate disagrees, the President may appoint a conference committee as provided in Rule 6, Section 1, which committee shall be required to report to the Senate at a time specified by the President. In the event the conference committee reports that they are unable to reach agreement on the changes proposed by the House, the President or the Senate may appoint new conferees who shall be required to report to the Senate at a time specified by the President or the Senate. The Senate shall accept the changes proposed by the House or by the conference committee only by call of the roll and a recording of the "Ayes' and Noes" in the Journal. Provided, however, the Senate may decide to amend the House amendments to a Senate bill and return same to the House for further consideration. The House may then decide to accept such newly added Senate amendments and return the bill to the Senate for transmission to the Governor. In the case of

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House amendments to Senate amendments of a House bill, the Senate shall either agree or disagree to the changes proposed by the House by call of the roll and a recording of the "Ayes' and Noes" in the Journal. No further Senate amendments may be made at that juncture. Upon disagreement, the President may appoint a conference committee as provided within this section and Rule 6, Section 1.

Section 9. Consideration of Resolution.

a. The President shall refer each resolution to one or more committees of the Senate or direct that it be placed on the Resolution Calendar without referral, subject to the action of the Senate. The President shall announce each referral and each such order not to refer at the time it is made.

b. The reports of the committees of the Senate reporting on a resolution shall be separated from the resolution and acted on separately. Such report may recommend that the resolution, in its original or in an amended form (i) be favorably considered and passed to the next committee to which it was initially referred for further consideration, or (ii) be adopted, or (iii) be filed.

c. A resolution shall be read by title, provided that the Senate Clerk shall read the resolution at length if requested to do so by the President.

d. If a Senate Joint Resolution is returned by the House in a form other than that in which it was adopted in the Senate, then the Senate shall consider whether to agree or disagree to the changes proposed by the House. If the Senate disagrees, the President may appoint a conference committee as provided in Rule 7, Section 1. If the Senate accepts the changes proposed by the House or by a conference committee, the resolution shall be considered adopted.

Section 10. Amendments. Amendments to bills or resolutions may be offered on the floor of the Senate by any member, provided that the proposed amendment is in writing. Such amendment shall be read by the Senate Clerk. If the amendment is adopted and changes ten or more lines of the bill or resolution, the entire bill or resolution or the page or pages affected, as the President shall direct, shall be reduplicated and distributed to the members prior to final passage of the bill or adoption of the resolution.

Section 11. Certifying and Transmitting of Bills and Resolutions. When a bill or resolution passes, it shall be certified by the President and attested to by the Senate Legislative Secretary, except as provided in Rule 1, Section 7(j) herein, noting the day of its passage.

a. The Senate Clerk shall transmit the following to the House of Representatives without delay:

1. A Senate or House Bill which has passed Second Reading in the Senate.
2. A Senate or House Joint Resolution which has been adopted in the Senate.

b. The Senate Clerk shall cause the following to be prepared in final form and after certification by the Senate Legislative Secretary and the Senate President; authenticating by said signatures the accuracy of the bill, shall transmit the original to the Governor without delay.

1. A Senate bill which has passed Second and Final Reading in the House and the Senate has agreed to the bill as amended by the House.

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2. A Senate Bill as proposed by a conference committee which has been passed in the Senate and the House.

c. The Senate Clerk shall cause the following to be prepared in final form and after certification by the Senate Legislative Secretary or Senate Clerk as provided in Rule 1, Section 7(j) herein and the Senate President; authenticating by said signatures the accuracy of the resolution, shall transmit the originals to the addressed without delay.

1. A Senate Joint Resolution which has been adopted in the House in the form in which it was adopted in the Senate.

2. A Senate Joint Resolution which has been amended by the House and the Senate has agreed to the resolution as amended by the House.

3. A Senate Joint Resolution as proposed by a conference committee which has been adopted in the Senate and the House.

4. A Senate Resolution in the form in which it was adopted in the Senate.

d. The Senate Clerk shall notify in writing the House of the following actions without delay:

1. The Senate has disagreed to a Senate bill or Senate Joint Resolution as amended by the House and has appointed members to a conference committee.

2. The Senate agrees to a House Bill or House Joint Resolution as proposed by a conference committee.

Section 12. Repassage following disapproval by the Governor. Whenever a bill passed by the Legislature is disapproved by the Governor, the President will refer the bill and the Governor's reasons for disapproval to the committee to which the measure was originally referred. The Committee then reports on the measures and recommends that the measures either be repassed or not be repassed. Repassage will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the entire membership of the Senate. Only one reading is required for repassage in the Senate.

The Senate Clerk shall immediately notify the House if a bill disapproved by the Governor is repassed by the Senate. If a bill that was introduced in the Senate and disapproved by the Governor is repassed by the Legislature, the Senate Clerk shall transmit the bill to the Governor as provided in Rule 8, Section 11(b).

Section 13. Commemorative Resolutions.

a. **Defined.** Commemorative resolutions are hereby defined as resolutions expressing the praise, approval, congratulations, or condolences of the Senate upon incidents or occasions of particular public interest, such as state funerals, outstanding individual achievement by Commonwealth athletes, scholars, or artists, days of national celebration or mourning, etc..

b. **Enactment.** Commemorative resolutions may be temporarily enacted by the signature of the President and one other officer. Such a temporary enactment shall be valid and in force until the next Senate session. If the commemorative resolution shall be duly approved by a majority of a quorum, then it shall be permanently enacted and shall be entered into the Senate record. If the commemorative resolution is not approved in session, the resolution will be canceled and will lose all validity and effect.

RULE 9. MOTION

Section 1. Seconding. No motion may be considered by the Senate until it has been seconded. This requirement shall not apply to points of privilege, information, or order, and to request to withdraw a motion.

Section 2. Property of the Senate. After a motion is stated by the President or read by the Senate Clerk, it shall be the property of the Senate and shall be disposed of by the Senate unless withdrawn as provided in this rule.

Section 3. Main and Subsidiary Motions. A member of the Senate may be the mover of a main motion at the time provided for in the order of business, which main motion shall have as its purpose the carrying out of the business of the Senate. Whenever any main motion shall be under discussion, the only subsidiary motions relative thereto which shall be entertained are:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| First: | To lay on the table; |
| Second: | To defer to the end of the calendar; |
| Third: | To commit (send the bill or resolution or other matter to one or more committees with out without instructions); |
| Fourth: | To amend; |

which motions shall have precedence in the order named. The first and second motions shall be decided without debate and shall be put to vote as soon as made and seconded. The third and fourth motions and the main motion shall be subject to debate and shall be put to vote in accordance with the provisions of the rules. If a motion to amend in a specific manner is defeated, it shall not be revived on the same calendar day. No more than one motion to amend an amendatory motion shall be in order at the same time. If a motion to amend an amendment is defeated, another amendment to the amendatory motion is in order.

Section 4. Privilege Motions.

a. A member of the Senate may be the mover of a privileged motion at any time such a motion is appropriate to the order of business. A privileged motion shall take precedence over main and subsidiary motions.

b. A member may raise a point of privilege concerning a matter which relates to him as a member of the Senate or which relates to the privileges or welfare of the Senate. When a member raises a point of privilege, the President shall interrupt the proceedings of the Senate and ask the member to state his point. The point shall not be debatable.

c. A member may move to recess for or to a specific time, or at the call of the Chair. The motion to recess shall be decided without debate and shall be put to vote as soon as made. The President may recess the Senate for or to a specific time or at the call of the Chair, subject to appeal to the Senate.

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d. A member may move to adjourn to a specific time only and such a motion shall take precedence over all other motions. The motion shall be decided without debate and shall be put to vote as soon as made, provided that the motion to sine die shall be subject to debate and amendment. The Session before the Senate adjourns sine die, the Senate shall adopt a simple resolution informing the Governor and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, that the Senate is ready to sine die at a specific date. A sample resolution is attached as "Appendix B". If the motion to adjourn is adopted, action on the question before the Senate shall be discontinued and shall be considered on the next meeting during the regular order of business. If the motion to adjourn is defeated, such a motion shall not again be in order until the disposal of the new question before the Senate. The Presiding Officer may adjourn the Senate to a specific time subject to appeal to the Senate. This subsection shall not be suspended or amended without the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Senate.

Section 5. Incidental Motions.

a. A member of the Senate may be the mover of an incidental motion at any time such a motion is appropriate to the order of business.

b. A member may raise a *point of information* at any time on any subject, including the procedure governing the disposal of a matter or motion before the Senate. When a member raises a point of information, the President shall ask the member to state his point. The point shall not be debatable. The President shall respond to the point of information as soon as raised or request another member of the Senate to respond. The President may consider the question improper and choose not to consider the point.

c. A member may raise a *point of order* at any time such a point is appropriate to the order of business. The subject of such a point shall be whether the rules and applicable laws govern the conduct of business in the Senate are being observed. When a member raises a point of order, the President shall interrupt the proceedings and ask the member to state his point. The point of order shall not be debatable and shall be ruled upon by the President as soon as raised, subject to appeal to the Senate. If the ruling of the President is appealed, the member raising the point of order and the President shall each be allowed five minutes to explain their positions or ruling to the Senate.

d. A member may move to *withdraw his motion*. When a member moves to withdraw his motion, the President shall interrupt the proceedings and permit the motion to be withdrawn if there has been no decision on or amendment to the motion as of the time the member requests withdrawal of his motion.

e. A member may move for *division of a question* when he finds two or more specific subjects within the same general subject of a bill or resolution before the Senate and desires that each such specific subject be considered and voted on separately. When a member moves for division of the question, the motion shall specify the specific subjects to be considered and voted on separately. The motion shall be decided without debate and shall be put to vote as soon as made. If the motion for division of the question is adopted, for final passage, the bill or resolution, as amended, shall be considered and voted on as a single entity as provided in these rules.

f. A member may move for a *call of the Senate* at any time that he desires all present members to remain on the floor and all absent members to be required to attend the session. When a member moved for a call of the Senate, the President shall interrupt the proceedings and permit the mover to make his motion. The motion shall be decided without debate and be put to vote as soon as made. The motion, if adopted, shall remain in effect until adjournment or the call of the Senate is removed by action of the President, subject to appeal to the Senate.

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g. A member may move to *remove a bill or resolution from the table* at an appropriate time in the order of business of the Senate. The motion shall be decided without debate and shall be put to vote as soon as made.

h. A member may move to *suspend one or more sections or paragraphs of the Rules*. Such motion shall state the specific purpose to be accomplished by suspension of the Rules and the specific sections of paragraphs of the Rule which shall be suspended. When a member moves for suspension of the Rules, the President shall permit the mover to make his motion. The motion shall be decided without debate, shall be put to vote as soon as made, and shall require an affirmative vote by two-thirds (2/3) of the total members of the Senate for adoption. Any suspension of the Rules shall terminate when the specific purpose to be accomplished by suspension of the Rules has been disposed of by the Senate. This subsection shall not be suspended or amended without the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the total members of the Senate.

Section 6. Motion to Reconsider. When a motion has been made once and carried in the affirmative or negative, it shall be in order for any member of the Senate to move to reconsider it on the same or succeeding day of the session. Such motion shall take precedence over all other motions except a motion to adjourn or to recess or a motion to recall. The motion shall be decided without debate and shall be put to vote as soon as made. The motion to reconsider shall be deemed to have passed if the number of affirmative votes equals or exceeds the number required for passage of the main motion being reconsidered. When a motion for reconsideration has been decided, a second motion for reconsideration of the same question shall not be in order.

Section 7. Motion to Recall.

a. When a bill, resolution, or other matter upon which a vote has been taken has passed out of the possession of the Senate, and has been transmitted to the House or the Governor it shall be in order for any member of the Senate to move for recall of the bill, resolution, or other matter by requesting the House or the Senate, and such motion shall take precedence over all other motions except a motion to adjourn or to recess. The motion shall be decided without debate and shall be put to vote as soon as made. When a motion for recall has been decided, a second motion for recall of the same matter shall not be in order. If the motion for recall is adopted and the bill, resolution, or other matter returned as requested, it shall then be before the Senate for reconsideration in the regular order of business.

b. If a like motion to recall shall be passed by the House, and such request be made of the Senate, the bill, resolution, or other matter shall be returned to the House if the total membership of the Senate unanimously consents to such action or if such action is approved by a Senate Resolution at the next session of the Senate following such House action.

Section 8. Previous Question. A member may move for the previous question, subject to the provisions of Rule 4, Section 8, which motion when adopted shall close debate and require the President to put the question to the Senate for vote. The motion for the previous question shall be decided without debate.

RULE 10. VOTING

Section 1. Methods of Voting. There shall be five methods of voting:

- First : By voice;
- Second : By raising hand;
- Third : By rising;
- Fourth : By secret ballot; and
- Fifth : By call of the roll of the members and in a recording of the vote of each member by the Senate Clerk.

Section 2. Choice of Method of Voting. The President may designate the method of voting to be followed by the Senate in determining a question, subject to the provisions of this Rule.

Section 3. Voice Vote. Voice Vote shall be the usual and ordinary method of voting in the Senate. Whenever the Senate shall be read to vote on any question, the President shall state the question. He shall then request all those in favor of the motion to vote "Aye" in a clear, loud voice. The President shall then request all those opposed to the motion to vote "No" in a clear, loud voice. The President shall then announce the results of the vote to the Senate.

Section 4. Raising Hands. If the President so determines, the vote shall be by the raising hands. The President shall state the question. He shall then call upon those in favor of the motion to raise their right hands. The Senate Clerk shall count the number of hands raised and report to the President. The President shall then call upon those oppose to the motion to raise their right hands. The Senate Clerk shall count the number of hands raised and report to the President.

Section 5. Rising Vote. If any member shall doubt the results of the voice vote as announced by the President, he may request a rising vote. The President shall again state the question. he shall then call upon those in favor of the motion to rise and be counted by the Senate Clerk who shall report the number standing to the President. He shall then call upon those against the motion to rise and be counted by the Senate who shall report the number standing to the President. The President shall announce the result of the vote to the Senate.

Section 6. Secret Ballot. If at least four members shall request a vote by secret ballot, the President shall conduct such a vote, provided that at the time of such request, a roll call vote is not required or has not been requested. The Senate Clerk shall distribute ballots to the members, restate the question, and instruct those in favor of the motion to write "Yes" on their ballots and those opposed to write "No.". If a member writes "Abstain" or makes any other mark on his ballot other than "Yes" or "No", it shall not be recorded. The Senate Clerk shall collect and tally the ballots and report the results thereof to the President who shall announce the result of the vote to the Senate. The ballots shall be available during the remainder of that day's session for inspection by any member.

Section 7. Call of the Roll. If at least four members shall request a call of the roll or if such a call is required by these Rules or the applicable provisions of law, then the President shall announce a call of the roll. The President shall state the question calling upon those in favor of the motion to respond "Aye" when their name is called and those opposed to respond "No" when their name is called. The Senate Clerk shall call the roll, recording the vote of each member in the journal. He shall inform the President of the results of the call of the roll who shall, in turn, announce the results of the vote to the Senate.

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Section 8. Nonvoting. No member present in the Senate may refrain from voting unless excused in accordance with Section 9 of this Rule. A member who is present who fails to respond to the call of his name upon a call of the roll shall be individually instructed by the President to respond "Aye" or "No" and if he still fails to vote, the President shall order the Senate Clerk not to record any vote.

Section 9. Conflict of Interest. No member may be permitted to vote upon any matter in which he has a distinct, individual, pecuniary interest or which will affect his right to a seat in the Senate or in matter in which his individual conduct is involved. When any member has a distinct, individual, pecuniary interest which he believes might disqualify him from voting on a question, he shall state and disclose such interest to the Senate. The President shall thereupon rule as to whether the member shall or shall not be disqualified from voting on the question, subject to an appeal to the Senate.

Section 10. Required Calls of the Roll. The roll must be called upon Final Reading of a bill, which bill shall pass Final Reading if a quorum is present and a majority of the members of the Senate vote in favor thereof. If a bill has been returned by a conference committee and the Senate accepts the recommendations of the conference committee or if the Senate accepts changes proposed by the House, the acceptance and passage of the bill constitutes Final Reading, and the roll must be called for such action. The roll must be called upon the question of passing over the veto of the Governor, which bill shall be considered passed over his veto if two-thirds of the total members of the Senate vote in favor of passing the bill over this veto.

Section 11. Change of Vote. A member may not be allowed to vote or change his vote after the announcement of the result of the vote by the President or after the collection of ballots if the vote is a secret ballot.

Section 12. Action of the Senate. Any action of the Senate shall require a majority vote of the members present, a quorum being present, unless otherwise provided by these Rules.

Section 13. Actions of the Senate Requiring Votes as Specified in these Rules.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Required majority or Number</u>	<u>Rule</u>
1.	Removal of an Officer	Majority of membership	1 Sec. 2
2.	Quorum	Majority of membership	3 Sec. 1
3.	Closing committee meeting members	Majority of committee	6 Sec. 5(a)
4.	Removal of Chairman and vice chairman of committees	Dismissal by Majority of Leadership	6 Sec. 7(a)
5.	Suspend or discipline a member	Majority of membership	4 Sec. 13
6.	Expel a member	Three-Fourths of membership	4 Sec. 13

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7.	Adoption of Committee Report	Majority of committee members	6 Sec. 8(b)
8.	Requiring committee consideration of matter referred to committee	Majority of committee members	6 Sec. 9
9.	Second and Final Reading of bill	Majority of membership	10 Sec. 10
10.	Passing a bill over Governor's Veto	Two-thirds of members	10 Sec. 10
11.	Voting by secret ballot	Four members	10 Sec. 6
12.	Voting by call of roll	Four members	10 Sec. 7
13.	Reading of bill at length	President	8 Sec. 7(h)
14.	Reading of resolution at length	President	8 Sec. 9
15.	Suspension of Rules (General)	Majority of membership	9 Sec. 5(h)
16.	Motion to reconsider a main motion	Same majority as required for passage of main motion being reconsidered	9 Sec. 6
17.	Amending the Rules	Majority of membership	15 Sec. 1
18.	Removal of item before Committee for placing on Agenda	Majority of Leadership with Concurrence of Chairman	1 Sec. 3(g)
19.	All other actions	Majority of members present, a quorum being present	10 Sec. 12

RULE 11. WARRANTS, SUBPOENAS, OATHS, AND CONTEMPT

Section 1. Warrants, Subpoenas and Oaths. The President, Committee Chairman, and other authorized persons may issue warrants, subpoenas, or other processes and administer oaths in accordance with Section 14(b), Article II of the Constitution. Any witness neglecting or refusing to attend a session of the Senate or a committee meeting after being properly subpoenaed may be arrested by the Sergeant-at-Arms or any police officer of the Commonwealth or any senatorial district and brought before the Senate or a committee thereof, as the case may be. The President may issue a warrant to carry into effect the orders of the Senate, or any committee thereof, in the arrest of an offender.

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Section 2. Contempt. Any person who shall be guilty of disrespect of the Senate by any disorderly or contemptuous behavior in its presence or before any of its committees, or who shall assault or detain any witness of the Senate or its committees, or who shall violate Rule 13, Section 8, shall be in contempt of the Senate. The President may issue a warrant of arrest to the Sergeant-at-Arms or any police officer of the Commonwealth or any senatorial district for the arrest of a person found to be in contempt of the Senate.

RULE 12. ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Management. The administrative affairs of the Senate, including fiscal affairs, shall be jointly managed by the Leadership, composed of the President, Vice President, Floor Leader, Legislative Secretary and Chairmen of all the Standing Committees. The Leadership shall meet at least quarterly to attend to the administrative affairs of the Senate and to receive a quarterly report on the expenditure of all Senate funds from the President and a quarterly report on the expenditure of all Legislative Bureau funds from the Director of the Legislative Bureau.

Section 2. Finance. Operation accounts shall be established for the members of the Senate Leadership and for the Senate President; the total allotment to the President's Official Representative Account and the total allotment to the Leadership Account, shall be divided as the President and the Leadership, respectively, allocate. The remaining balance shall be further divided into a Majority Account and a Minority Account, which accounts shall then be allocated to the individual Majority and Minority senators as determined by the majority of the senators. Upon determination of the specific amount to be allotted to each senator, the Leadership shall provide such information directly and promptly to the Senate President for transmittal to the Director of Finance. Each of the Senate Accounts established pursuant to this section shall be further identified by account numbers to be established by the Director of Finance and no other Senate accounts may be established in any manner.

a. Obligation and expenditure authority. In order to insure accurate accounting procedures, audit availability, and use of appropriate public funds for public purposes related to the lawful responsibilities of the Senate, no Senator, designee, Committee or staff shall obligate, authorize disbursement or in any way encumber funds appropriated to the Senate or its members except pursuant to these Rules.

b. Obligation and expenditure procedure. All obligations, expenditures, disbursements and uses of funds appropriated to the Senate or its members shall conform to the following procedures:

1. Obligations, expenditures, authorizations and disbursements shall be initiated by the individual Senator whose account is established pursuant to these rules or in the case of general Senate accounts, by the Senate Leadership. Provided, further, that funds cannot be reprogrammed from one account to another without the express written consent of the individual Senator whose account is established pursuant to these rules. Whenever appropriate, standard procurement, purchase, travel, per diem and contract format shall be observed. Each document pertinent to this part shall include the relevant account number issued by the Director of Finance.

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2. Copies of all financial transactions of the Senate and its members shall be maintained by the Director of Finance and by the office of the President of the Senate and shall become the permanent part of the Senate financial records.

3. Obligations, expenditures, disbursements and all other uses of funds established by law or by the Senate Leadership for the members, shall carry the signature of that member in addition to such other procedures as may be required under this Rule. A member who overspends his budget shall be personally responsible for such over expenditures so as not to burden all or other members of the Senate. Obligations, expenditures, disbursements and all other uses of funds appropriated to the Senate for its general operations shall carry the signature of the President or his designee, in addition to such other procedures as may be required under this Rule. Any unspent funds shall revert to the Commonwealth General Fund at the close of each fiscal year and shall not be available for reprogramming except as provided under this Rule.

c. Reports and Inventory. Upon request by the President, the Director of Finance shall issue an annual report on the finances and property of the Senate and its members no later than November 1 of each year. Because the expenditure authority of funds lies with each member, the member shall have full custodial responsibility of finances and properties of the Senate for their particular office. The annual report conform to such format and standards as may be recommended by the Public Auditor.

d. Committee Accounts. Operation accounts for special and standing committees may be created on authorization by the Rules Committee in compliance with Senate Rules. Such accounts shall be funded by assessments against the individual Senatorial Accounts of all the members of the Committee except the chairman and, at the discretion of the President, by the Senate Administration Account.

Section 3. Personnel and Employees.

a. Senate Clerk. There shall be a Senate Clerk of the Senate who shall keep the records of the Senate, transmit official Senate communications, and carry out such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the President.

b. Sergeant-at-Arms. There shall be a Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate who shall serve the Senate and may be assisted by police officers assigned by the Director of Public Safety.

c. Committee Staff. Special and Standing Committee shall utilize Legislative Bureau staff. A Legislative Bureau staff shall be assigned to each Standing Committee by the Legislative Bureau Director with the approval of the Leadership. A Legislative Bureau staff person may be assigned to more than one Standing Committee at the discretion of the Director and Leadership. Upon the approval of the Leadership and the President, a Committee chairman may obtain professional services as may be necessary. Provided, however, that any expense for such professional service will be assessed by the Director against the individual accounts of each of the members of the Committee.

d. Journal Clerk. There shall be a Journal Clerk of the Senate who shall prepare the journal of the Senate, and carry out such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the President.

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e. Legislative Bureau. Legislative Bureau funds and staffing shall be administered by the Executive Director of the Legislative Bureau (Director), as provided by the Commonwealth Constitution or law. Provided, however, that the Executive Director shall prepare a quarterly operations and personnel budget for adoption by the majority of the Leadership. All employment contracts of Legislative Bureau staff assigned to the Senate or Senate Standing Committees shall be reviewed by the Senate Legal Counsel and the Leadership. At no time shall employment contracts for Senate support staff be entered into by the Director for positions other than those provided for in these Rules or after the review and the written consent of the Leadership. The Director shall attend the quarterly Leadership administrative meetings to deliver a report on the financial and staffing status of the Legislative Bureau.

f. Assessments for centralized. Senatorial Accounts, and Committee Accounts established pursuant to part (e) of Section 1 of this Rule may be from time-to-time be assessed for reasonable contributions to the expense of central staff and professional services. Such assessments shall be initiated by the Executive Director and shall be processed and reviewed pursuant to part (c)(1) of Section 1 of this Rule.

Section 4. Offices, public availability. All Senators shall maintain offices at the Senate facilities in the central legislative complex located in Capitol Hill, Saipan. Senators shall maintain such office hours as may be individually determined but shall provide the public reasonable opportunity to contact their Senator. Members from Tinian and Rota may maintain such offices and services on their respective islands as they may deem reasonable. Funding for Tinian and Rota offices and services shall be the responsibility of the Tinian and Rota Delegations. The Tinian and Rota Delegations may upon agreement with the Rules Committee rent space and utilize the central staff and professional services of the Senate at Capitol Hill, but the Senatorial Accounts may be assessed for the expenses of operating and maintaining the Senate facilities at the central legislative complex. Such assessments shall be made pursuant to part (d) of Section 2 of this Rule.

Section 5. Property of the Senate. Buildings, vehicles, equipment, furniture and supplies purchased with funds appropriated to the Senate or its members shall be the property of the Senate and shall not be sold, traded, mortgaged or otherwise encumbered in any way nor in any way be used for the personal or private gain of any member or employee of the Senate. All such property in the custody of a member shall be returned immediately upon such member leaving office.

RULE 13. THE JOURNAL

Section 1. The Journal.

a. The Senate shall keep a journal of its proceedings in English and shall compile and publish the journal for each session of the Legislature, unless otherwise required, pursuant to Rule 4, Section 3. The journal of the session shall include the journals of the day compiled by the Journal Clerk as defined in Rule 12, Section 3(d), the Rules of the Senate, and the statements of members appended to the journals of the day and may include such other matters as the Senate or the President, subject to the action of the Senate, may direct. The Journal Clerk shall keep note of all question of order not specified in these rules and decided under Rule 4, Section 9, and append them for publication in the Senate Journal.

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b. The journal of each Senate Session shall be delivered to each member for the next scheduled session and shall be corrected or approved by vote of the Senate, provided that the President shall correct and approve the journal of the last day of a session. The Senate, by majority vote of the members present, may dispense with such reading. Subsequent to the approval of the journal of the day, the Journal Clerk, with the permission of the President, may make nonsubstantive corrections therein, include such matters as spelling of words and grammatical construction of sentences.

c. Each member shall have the right to append to the journal of the day a statement explaining his vote on any bill, resolution, or other matter being voted upon by the Senate on that day. Such a statement or statements shall not exceed in total three hundred words in a single day and shall be submitted to the Clerk on the day in which the action occurs. The statement shall be in English, or in any of the three official languages of the Commonwealth, pursuant to Rule 4, Section 3.

RULE 14. SPECIAL SESSIONS

Section 1. Special Sessions. For the purposes of Rule 9 of these Rules, special sessions of the Legislature shall be treated as a regular sessions, except insofar as they may be limited by the proclamation of the Governor in calling the same. Bills and resolutions introduced during a special session shall be numbered consecutively, starting with the number following the last number used in the next preceding session of the Senate for such bills or resolutions. At any session, including a special session, all measures shall retain the status which they had at the close of the next preceding session of a Legislature, until acted upon during such session. It shall not be necessary to repeat any step in the legislative procedure already accomplished in any previous sessions of the same legislature.

RULE 15. AMENDMENT OF THE RULES

Section 1. Amendment of the Rules. The official Rules of Procedure of the Senate shall not be amended in any way or manner without one day's notice being given of the motion to amend the Rules by the member proposing to do so. The giving of notice shall consist of:

- a. Submitting a written copy of the proposed amendment to the President; and
- b. Distributing a copy of the proposed amendment to the members in session.

An amendment to the Rules shall be deemed adopted when approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the total membership of the Senate. Suspension of the Rules shall not constitute an amendment of the Rules. This section and rule shall not be suspended or amended without the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the total membership of the Senate.

RULE 16. CONSTRUCTION AND INTERPRETATION

These Rules shall be construed according to their plain meaning. In the event that any ambiguity or conflict should arise regarding these Rules, or in the event that these Rules do not address a question or situation which may arise, then such controversy shall be resolved according to the rules and principles set forth in Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure.

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RULE 17.

Any matter deemed to be a local matter by a majority vote of the Leadership shall be referred to the Senatorial District Delegation affected thereby. A determination of the proper action on a matter so referred shall override any standing, special, or conference committee recommendation for action and the Senate shall take such action on the matter as recommended by the respective Senatorial District Delegation. Provided, however, that such recommendation shall be provided to the members as a Delegation Report prior to any Senate action on such a local matter. For the purposes of this Rule, local matters may include but are not limited to consideration of proposed leases of public land within one Senatorial District. This Rule shall not be suspended or amended without the affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the total membership of the Senate.
