

Delegates approves 1st Concon proposal

DELEGATES to the Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention yesterday passed on Second and Final Reading Article 1, Personal Rights, by a unanimous vote of 23-0, with four absences.

As Concon President Herman T. Guerrero (Jun Pan) announced the results, delegates broke out in a round of applause.

Action by the delegates came shortly after 5 p.m., which follows a long discussion on the controversial issue of Article 6, relating to local government. The session started at around 1:30 p.m., the fiftieth day of the 60-day convention.

The Committee on Land and Personal Rights, chaired by Del. Jose R. Lifofoi of Saipan, recommended that a new section be added, Section 11, with respect to the right to life.

The language reads: "The right to life for every individual during the entire span from conception through old age is respected, honored, and protected in the Commonwealth. The right is subject to definition and regulation by the Legislature."

The Committee also made amendments to Section 7, "Quartering Armed Forces" instead of the word "soldiers".

This section provides: "No member of the armed force in time of peace may be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor time of war except as provided by law."

Section 9, regarding "Clean and Healthful Environment" provides that each person has that right and that the Legislature shall pass no law infringing this right or permit the storage or dumping of any nuclear waste or radioactive material in the lands or waters of the Commonwealth.

The Delegates rejected by a vote of 12-10 an attempt to change the Preamble of the Constitution. The original Preamble adopted during the 1976 Constitutional Convention remains the same.

According to Convention President Guerrero, because there are four absences, 16 affirmative votes are needed to approve a propose amendment. If all 27 delegates are present, 18 members voting in the affirmative are needed to pass a proposal on second and final reading.

July 25, 1995 - Marianas Variety