



The Senate
SEN. COMM. 10-11
(HOUSE)
NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
P.O. Box 129
Saipan, MP 96950

February 20, 1996

The Honorable Diego T. Benavente
Speaker
House of Representatives
Tenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I have the honor to transmit for your action Senate Legislative Initiative No. 10-1, entitled, "A Senate Legislative Initiative to propose a constitutional amendment to update the legislative budget ceiling to provide sufficient funding for an effective and independent legislative branch supported by professional and technical staff and appropriate resources, and guarantee an equitable distribution of funds for the personal staff and offices of each member of the legislature, so that each can function properly as an independent representative elected by the people." The legislative initiative was passed by the Senate on Second and Final Reading on February 16, 1996, with the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting.

Sincerely,

Nicolaj B. Borja
Senate Clerk

Attachment

Hc

DATE 2-20-96
10:48 AM

TENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE S. L. I. NO. 10-1

First Reg. SESSION, 1996

Passed Senate And Rdy. April

A LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE

To propose a constitutional amendment to update the legislative budget ceiling to provide sufficient funding for an effective and independent legislative branch supported by professional and technical staff and appropriate resources, and guarantee an equitable distribution of funds for the personal staff and offices of each member of the legislature, so that each can function properly as an independent representative elected by the people.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE TENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1 Section 1. Legislative Initiative. The Ninth Northern Marianas Commonwealth
2 Legislature, by the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of each house present
3 and voting, hereby proposes the following amendment to the Constitution to be placed
4 before the people for ratification:

"A PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

5
6
7 To amend Article II, Section 16 of the Commonwealth
8 Constitution to update the legislative budget ceiling to provide
9 sufficient funding for an effective and independent legislative
10 branch supported by professional and technical staff and
11 appropriate resources, and guarantee an equitable distribution of
12 funds for the personal staff and offices of each member of the
13 legislature, so that each can function properly as an independent
14 representative elected by the people.

15 I. Article II, Section 16 is amended to read:

16 Section 16. Budget Ceiling. There shall be a ceiling on the budget of the
17 legislature.

18 a) Appropriations, or obligations and expenditures, ~~exclusive of the~~
19 ~~salaries of the members of the legislature,~~ for the operations and activities
20 of the legislature, other than the salaries of members of the legislature, any
21 payments required by law to be made as an employer contribution to any
22 Commonwealth government retirement fund, and major equipment or
23 capital improvement projects, may not exceed two million eight hundred
24 thousand dollars in any fiscal year the budget ceiling computed as

Sen Leg. Ini. NO.

10-1

1 provided by this section.

2 b) Each member shall receive as a part of this ceiling one hundred
3 thousand dollars annually for office expenses including the expense of
4 travel outside the Commonwealth. Members may voluntarily pool all or
5 any part of these funds.

6 c) The presiding officer in each house shall receive as a part of this
7 ceiling an additional four hundred thousand dollars a year to support the
8 operations and activities of that house, including the expense of travel
9 outside the Commonwealth.

10 d) The legislative bureau shall have a budget of not more than two
11 million dollars, for the purposes specified in section 17.

12 e) Beginning the second Monday of January 1998, the amount of
13 the ceiling and all other dollar amounts stated in this section shall be
14 adjusted every two years by the same percentage as the percentage change
15 in the United States Department of Commerce composite price index
16 during the two preceding fiscal years using the beginning of fiscal year
17 1996 as the base.

18 f) No part of the legislature's budget other than a member's salary
19 and benefits may be used for personal or political activities.

20 g) Obligations and expenditures for the operations and activities of
21 the legislature for the period October 1 through the second Monday in
22 January of a fiscal year in which there is a regular general election may not
23 exceed seven hundred thousand dollars or twenty five percent of the
24 annual spending authority otherwise available provided by law consistent
25 with this section. This ceiling shall apply to the various offices and
26 activities in the same proportions as the annual spending authority
27 provided by law consistent with this section.

28 II. Repealer.

29 Subsection (f) of Section 17 of Article II of the Commonwealth
30 Constitution is repealed."

31 Section 2. Adoption and Transmittal. The President of the Senate and the
32 Speaker of the House shall certify, and the Clerks of the Senate and House shall attest to
33 the adoption of this Legislative Initiative. The Senate Clerk shall then cause the Initiative

Sen. Leg. Ini. NO. 10-1

- 1 to be transmitted to the Governor and the Board of Elections with instructions that the
- 2 Board place it before the people of the Commonwealth for a ratification vote, in
- 3 conformance with Article XVIII, Section 5 of the Commonwealth Constitution and
- 4 1 CMC § 6432.

prefiled

Date: 2/6/96

Introduced By: *[Signature]*

Approved for Introduction on 2-7-96

[Signature] *St. FA*
Chairman, Rules and Procedure