

SIXTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

SESSION, 2008

H. B. NO. 16-93

A BILL FOR AN ACT

TO AMEND TITLE 1, DIVISION 1 BY ADDING A NEW CHAPTER 6 TO
CODIFY THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE II, SECTION 17, REGARDING
THE LEGISLATIVE BUREAU; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE SIXTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

1 **Section 1. Findings and purpose.** The Commonwealth Legislature finds that
2 the Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) recently completed an evaluation of the
3 operations of the Legislative Bureau as requested by the presiding officers of the 15th
4 Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

5 The Legislature further finds that one of the challenges experienced by the OPA
6 in evaluating the Bureau was in determining what expenditures were appropriate and
7 within the purview of the Bureau to provide. Under Article II, Section 17(c), of the
8 Constitution of the Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands, it states that “The bureau
9 shall provide all required services to the legislature in connection with duties and
10 responsibilities during sessions and committee meetings. It shall maintain all records,
11 files, library and other documents of the legislature.” The OPA evaluation revealed that
12 the Bureau has paid for various other legislator-requested services and as such, a detailed
13 description of the Bureau’s duties and responsibilities will ensure that future expenditures
14 made by the Bureau are appropriate and within the Bureau’s mandate to provide.

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1 **Section 2. Amendment.** Title 1, Division 1 of the Commonwealth Code is
2 hereby amended adding a new Chapter 6, with subsequent chapters and sections
3 renumbered accordingly, to read as follows:

4 **“Chapter 6. Legislative Bureau.**

5 **§1601. Establishment.**

6 **§1602. Political coercion.**

7 **§1603. Director: appointment and removal.**

8 **§1604. Director: qualifications.**

9 **§1605. Director: duties and responsibilities.**

10 **§1606. Legislative Bureau: services.**

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12 **§1601. Establishment.** There is hereby established a Legislative Bureau in the
13 Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

14 **§1602. Political coercion.** The Bureau shall be free from any political
15 harassment or pressure.

16 **§1603. Director: appointment and removal.**

17 (a) The Bureau shall be headed by a director to be appointed by the joint
18 leadership of the legislature consisting of the presiding officers, vice presiding
19 officers, floor leaders, and the chairmen of the standing committees.

20 (b) The contract of the director shall comply with this chapter and shall provide
21 that the director shall serve for the same term as the legislature that appointed
22 him.

23 (c) The director may be removed by three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members of each
24 house of the legislature present and voting with or without cause.

25 **§1604. Director: qualifications.** At a minimum, the director shall have a
26 bachelor’s degree from a U.S. accredited college or university. In addition, the director
27 shall have knowledge of: supervisory principles and practices, general administrative
28 principles and procedures applicable to large and complex organizations, general office

1 practices and procedures, and the operation and maintenance of various office appliances
2 and equipment. The director shall be able to supervise, plan, and organize a broad range
3 of secretarial and office functions, develop a working knowledge of responsibilities and
4 practices of the Legislature, implement the policies of the agency or office served, work
5 effectively under pressure and meet deadlines, proof and edit complex correspondence
6 requiring judgment as to appropriate format and conformance with the rules of grammar
7 and style, communicate clearly, concisely, and effectively, exercise considerable tact and
8 judgment, and maintain confidentiality.

9 **§1605. Director: duties and responsibilities.**

10 (a) The director shall employ all necessary staff, other than personal staff of the
11 members of the legislature, pursuant to budgetary allocations. The staff
12 members shall include legal counsels and other administrative staff.

13 (b) Within 90 days after the enactment of this chapter, the director shall develop
14 personnel rules and regulations, develop job classifications and guidelines
15 with salary schedules mandated by law, and develop procurement rules and
16 regulations or adopt CNMI Procurement Rules and Regulations. The
17 developed personnel rules and regulations, job classifications, and guidelines
18 with salary schedule, and the procurement rules and regulations or adoption of
19 CNMI Procurement Rules and Regulations shall be approved by Joint
20 Resolution of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members of the Legislature present and
21 voting. Any changes to these rules and regulations shall be made in the same
22 manner as the initial approval process.

23 **§1606. Legislative Bureau: services.**

24 (a) The Bureau shall provide all required services to the Legislature in connection
25 with duties and responsibilities during sessions and committee meetings.

26 (b) The Bureau shall maintain all records, files, a library, and other documents of
27 the Legislature.

28 (c) The Bureau shall be responsible for maintaining all facilities and grounds of

1 the Legislature.

2 (d) The Bureau shall provide each members' office with basic office furniture.

3 (e) The Bureau shall be responsible in providing professional personnel such as
4 legal counsels, legal assistants, and other key personnel to effectively carry
5 out its obligations in assisting elected officials.

6 (f) The Bureau shall be responsible for utilities expenses of the Legislature
7 including telephone lines and services, but not cable television lines and
8 services. Payments for utilities shall be made from an account established by
9 legislative appropriation.

10 (g) The Bureau shall be responsible for and coordinate the centralization of all
11 shipment and mail pick-ups and deliveries directly relating to the elected
12 members' performance of official duties.

13 (h) The Bureau shall be responsible for the operations of the copying room and
14 shall provide such services to the elected members.

15 (i) The Bureau shall not be responsible for providing the elected members'
16 offices funding for staff, official ground transportation, POL, travel, office and
17 operational supplies, or office equipment.”

18 **Section 3. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any
19 such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of
20 competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to
21 persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected
22 thereby.

23 **Section 4. Savings clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
24 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under
25 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation or order adopted under the statutes.
26 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or
27 pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have the effect of terminating,
28 or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in

1 existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

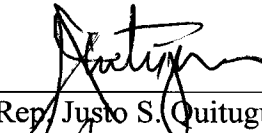
2 **Section 5. Effective date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the

3 Governor or becoming law without such approval.

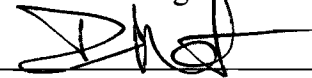
Prefiled: 5-14-08

Date: _____

Introduced By: _____


Rep. Justo S. Quitugua

Reviewed for legal sufficiency:



House Legal Counsel

