



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FOURTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
FOURTH REGULAR SESSION, 2005

PUBLIC LAW NO. 14-97
H. B. NO. 14-374

AN ACT

To appropriate Forty-Nine Thousand Dollars (\$49,000.00) from the Saipan Trust Fund to assist Connecting Families, Incorporated, with the establishment of a Child Visitation Center.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE FOURTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH
LEGISLATURE:

1 **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that Connecting Families,
2 Incorporated, is a private non-profit organization whose goal is to develop a Child Visitation
3 Center (CVC) to reduce violence in homes and to promote healing within families affected by
4 domestic violence. The Family Court initially took an interest in establishing a CVC in 1999
5 and then between 2000 to 2001, the Family Violence Task Force (FVTF) determined the
6 CVC to be a long-term priority. The FVTF began fundraising activities in 2002, contracted
7 for the establishment of a non-profit agency, and established a coordinating council for the
8 CVC. Thus, Connecting Families, Incorporated (CFI) was chartered in 2003 and achieved
9 non-profit status and full board membership by 2004.

10 The CFI, through the Criminal Justice Planning Agency, is in receipt of a grant that
11 will allow it to hire a full-time executive director who will work to finalize all planning for
12 the implementation of the CVC next year. The CFI has already been assigned two
13 government buildings - #1262 and #1263, with a contract being routed to resume the
14 renovation work of building #1262. All renovation work thus far has been paid through
15 fundraising efforts by dedicated individuals who have worked on a voluntary basis over the
16 last three years. However, the funds raised is only enough to cover the renovation of the first
17 building and is not enough to cover renovations for the second building or staff and
18 equipment. Building #1262 will be the actual CVC site and building #1263 will serve as a

1 thrift source and community resource room. The purpose of the second building is to
2 generate revenue for CFI operations to enable it to be self-sufficient.

3 The CVC will be utilized as a safe, neutral location where families can seek support in
4 periods of transition and serve as a location where the exchange of children or actual visits
5 can take place. In addition, CFI also has plans to offer counseling services and parenting
6 classes. The Legislature thus finds that like Karidat or the Ayuda Network, the CFI will
7 serve an important function in the Commonwealth in reducing the incidence of violence in
8 homes. Finally, the Legislature finds that an appropriation will assist the CFI with its initial
9 operation costs and in renovating the second building, thereby enabling the organization to
10 begin generating its own revenue to sustain its operations.

11 **Section 2. Appropriation.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the
12 contrary, there is hereby appropriated from the Saipan Trust Fund, the amount of Forty-Nine
13 Thousand Dollars (\$49,000.00) for Connecting Families, Incorporated.

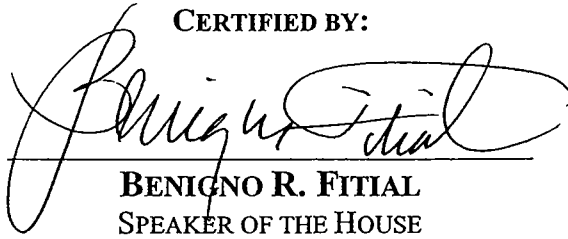
14 **Section 3. Expenditure Authority.** The Chairperson of the Board of Connecting
15 Families, Inc. shall be the expenditure authority of funds appropriated herein.

16 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
17 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent
18 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
19 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.

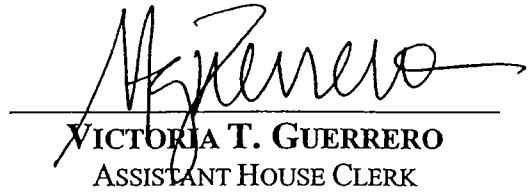
20 **Section 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be
21 construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes
22 repealed or under any rule, regulation or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers
23 contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law.
24 The enactment of this Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying,
25 any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence at the date this Act,
26 becomes effective.

27 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
28 Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

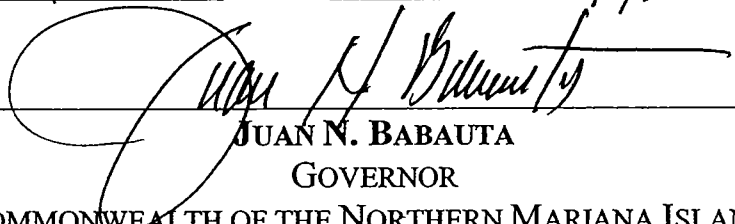
CERTIFIED BY:


BENIGNO R. FITIAL
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

ATTESTED TO BY:


VICTORIA T. GUERRERO
ASSISTANT HOUSE CLERK

Approved _____ on this 8th day of November, 2005


JUAN N. BABAUTA
GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS