Dear Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law Senate Bill No. 21-67, SD1, entitled, “To allow a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission to appear, attend, participate, and vote in an official meeting using a telephone, video, or other electronic means,” which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

This bill becomes Public Law No. 21-33. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,

RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

cc: Lt. Governor; Press Secretary; Secretary of Finance; Commonwealth Election Commission; Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation; Homeland Security Emergency Management; Law Revision Commission; Public Auditor; Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review
September 17, 2020

The Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Capital Hill
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Torres:

I have the honor of transmitting herewith for your action Senate Bill No. 21-67, SD1, entitled: “To allow a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission to appear, attend, participate, and vote in an official meeting using a telephone, video, or other electronic means,” which was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Twenty-First Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

Sincerely,

Dolores S. Bermudes
Senate Clerk

Attachments
AN ACT

To allow a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission to appear, attend, participate, and vote in an official meeting using a telephone, video, or other electronic means.

SENATE ACTION

Offered by Senator(s): Sixto K. Igisomar
Date: July 28, 2020
Referred to: Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law & Federal Relations
Standing Committee Report No.: None
Final Reading: August 28, 2020

HOUSE ACTION

Referred to: None
Standing Committee Report No.: None
First and Final Reading: September 08, 2020
AN ACT

To allow a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission to appear, attend, participate, and vote in an official meeting using a telephone, video, or other electronic means.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FIRST NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that with the continued implementation of the safety measures in response to the global pandemic resulting from COVID-19 that there has been a shift to a new normal of day to day activities. More importantly, the end of this pandemic is still far out of reach as many states and countries are seeing a surge in positive cases. Furthermore, as the COVID-19 has affected the world on a global scale, the loss of the Commonwealth’s tourist industry has detrimentally affected revenue source causing additional hardships on government services and private businesses further impacting the livelihood of our residents in the Commonwealth.

The Legislature further finds that with the midterm elections fast approaching, that the Commonwealth Election Commission has been unable to conduct an official meeting within a safe and cost effective setting during these difficult times. It is imperative that alternative measures be considered to allow election commission members physically present in the Commonwealth to fulfill their fiduciary duties when the governor declares the Commonwealth to be under a State of Significant Emergency or a State of Public Health_Emergency. Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to allow a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission to appear, participate, and vote in an official meeting using a telephone, video, or other electronic means.
Section 2. Amendment. 1 CMC § 6106 is hereby amended to read as follows:

§ 6106. Election Commission: Quorum and Attendance.

(a) Five (5) members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum to conduct official business; provided, however, that at least one member from each senatorial district is present. All decisions of the Commission shall be made by three-fourths (3/4's) vote of the members.

(b) A member of the Commission may appear, attend, participate, and vote in an official meeting electronically using a telephone, video, or other electronic means provided that the member is physically present in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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

Section 4. Savings Clause. This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation or order adopted under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of this Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence at the date this Act becomes effective.
Section 5. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

CERTIFIED BY:  

VICTOR B. HOCOG  
PRESENTE OF THE SENATE

ATTESTED BY:  

SIXTO K. IGISOMAR  
SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY

Approval this 22nd day of September, 2020

RALPH DLG. TORRES  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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