



## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**Eloy S. Inos**  
Governor

**Jude U. Hofschneider**  
Lieutenant Governor

**MAY 31 2013**

Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres  
Senate President, The Senate  
Eighteenth Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan. MP 96950

Honorable Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Eighteenth Northern Marianas  
Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan. MP 96950

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

This is to inform you that I have signed into law, Senate Bill 18-24, entitled, "To repeal Section V, Requirement of Attendance at NMC, in its entirety; and for other purposes," which was passed by the Eighteenth Northern Mariana Commonwealth Legislature.

This legislation removes an attendance at the Northern Mariana College (NMC) requirement found in the Scholarship Advisory Board's Rules and Regulations Governing the Educational Assistance Program (EAP). This regulatory requirement means that without this legislation, new applicants for EAP funding could only receive financial assistance if they attend NMC (or, request and are granted a discretionary waiver from this requirement upon a showing of good cause).

Although I fully support NMC's mission to meet the postsecondary, vocational and adult educational needs of the people of the Commonwealth, and this Administration will continue to do everything it can to ensure NMC's growth and success, I cannot support this restriction on the use of CNMI scholarship funding which in essence means that in order to be eligible for EAP funding, applicants have to attend NMC.

For so many high school graduates and new CNMI college students, the chance to study at a university off-island is a once in a life-time opportunity I believe this government should support. Section V in the Scholarship Advisory Board's Rules and Regulations Governing the Educational Assistance Program hinders that support and therefore this legislation is necessary.

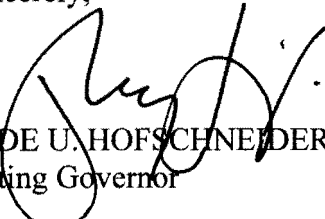
Further, given the fact that funding is no longer available for the CNMI Honors Scholarship program, this Administration believes it must do all it can to expand – not restrict – educational opportunities for our recent high school graduates and new college students to attend colleges and universities, regardless of location.

For example, the CNMI late-last year joined and is now a full member of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) organization. Membership in WICHE allows CNMI students with the opportunity to participate in (among others) an undergraduate, graduate and professional student exchange programs. For those that qualify, membership in WICHE will allow these students to pay greatly reduced tuition rates. Therefore, a second reason to enact this legislation is to allow CNMI scholarship funding to be available to those students who qualify in order to take advantage of our WICHE membership.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to remind the members of our Legislature that all of the CNMI scholarship programs are in need of further attention. With the passing of this Senate bill and the recent end of our Honors Scholarships noted above, now is in fact the perfect time to revisit our government's postsecondary education assistance, address the issues plaguing the current system and create an improved program to better assist our citizens pursuing a post-secondary education. This Administration is prepared to work with the Legislature on additional legislation to further clarify and ensure a fair policy governing the scholarship program. A small first step is removing the restriction contained in Section V of the Scholarship Advisory Board's Rules and Regulations Governing the Educational Assistance Program.

This bill becomes Public Law No. 18-06. Copies bearing my signature are forwarded for your reference.

Sincerely,



JUDE U. HOFSCHEIDER  
Acting Governor

cc: Governor; Attorney General's Office; CNMI Scholarship Office; Press Secretary; Special Assistant for Administration; Special Assistant for Programs and Legislative Review



**THE SENATE**  
**EIGHTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 18-24**

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**AN ACT**

TO REPEAL SECTION V, REQUIREMENT OF ATTENDANCE AT  
NMC, IN ITS ENTIRETY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

**SENATE ACTION**

**Offered by Senator(s):** Pete P. Reyes

**Date:** April 19, 2013

**Referred to:** Committee on Education and Youth Affairs

**Standing Committee Report No.:** None

**Final Reading:** May 03, 2013

**HOUSE ACTION**

**Referred to:** Unassigned

**Standing Committee Report No.:** None

**First and Final Reading:** May 09, 2013

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**Dolores S. Bermudes**  
**Senate Clerk**

## EIGHTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SPECIAL SESSION, 2013

S. B. NO. 18-24

## AN ACT

TO REPEAL SECTION V, REQUIREMENT OF ATTENDANCE AT NMC, IN ITS ENTIRETY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE EIGHTEENTH NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1           **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature acknowledges that the CNMI  
2 Scholarship Board promulgated regulations requiring that a new applicant beginning the Fall  
3 of 2012 will only receive financial assistance if the applicant is either enrolled at the  
4 Northern Marianas College or if the applicant is enrolled at another accredited institution  
5 and such applicant has already obtained an associate's degree.

6           The Legislature finds that this regulation is restrictive. It discourages a student who  
7 aspires to pursue his or her education off-island at an institution that offers multiple degrees  
8 such as engineering, biology, chemistry, physics, etc. The Legislature also finds that  
9 students must be allowed to make their own decisions as to what major to pursue and where  
10 to attend from the time they become interested in pursuing a postsecondary education.

11           The intent of this Act is to repeal Section V of the CNMI Scholarship Regulations in  
12 its entirety so that scholarships are available for new applicants regardless whether they are  
13 enrolled at NMC or any other accredited institution.

14           **Section 2. Repealer.** Section V, Requirement of Attendance at NMC, of the CNMI  
15 Scholarship Regulation which provides as follows is hereby repealed in its entirety:

16           "V. REQUIREMENT OF ATTENDANCE AT NMC

17           a. All new applicants beginning Fall 2012 will only receive financial assistance if  
18 they are either enrolled at NMC or if they are enrolled at another accredited

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1 institution and have already obtained an associate's degree. However, this  
2 requirement will be waived if:

- 3 i. The applicant resides in the CNMI at the time of application; and  
4 ii. The applicant's qualification for the residency requirement is based on  
5 residence on an island other than Saipan; and  
6 iii. The island on which the applicant resides does not have an NMC satellite  
7 campus which offers associate's degree programs, either in person or online.

8 b. Any applicant may request a waiver from this requirement, which the Board may  
9 grant on a case-by-case basis upon a showing of good cause and in accordance with  
10 its written policy and guidelines."


11 **Section 3. Regulation.** The CNMI Scholarship Board of Directors shall  
12 promulgate regulations consistent with the intent of this Act.

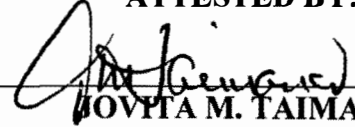
13 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such  
14 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent  
15 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or  
16 circumstances other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

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

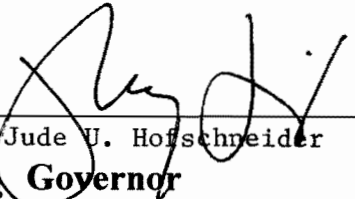
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1        **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the  
2 Governor or its becoming law without such approval.

**CERTIFIED BY:**  
  
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**RALPH D.L.G. TORRES**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

**ATTESTED BY:**  
  
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**NOVITA M. TAIMANAO**  
**SENATE LEGISLATIVE SECRETARY**

Approved this 31<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2013

  
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Jude U. Hofschneider  
Acting **Governor**  
**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**