Resolution No. 425-32 (COR)

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Relative to recognizing, honoring, and celebrating the life of the late Honorable Speaker vicente "ben" cabrera pangelinan for his dedication and selflessness to the people of Guam, and for his unwavering commitment to truly serve and stand up for the common person; and to further expressing deepest condolences and appreciation of his life to his family on his passing.

1 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES OF I MINA'TRENTAI DOS NA LIHESLATURANGUÅHAN:
2 WHEREAS, Speaker vicente "ben" cabrera pangelinan, affectionately known as "ben" to the people of Guam, was born on October 22, 1955 in Saipan,
WHEREAS, ben moved to Guam at the age of seven (7), and grew up in the village of Barrigada, where he attended San Vicente Catholic School; and

WHEREAS, ben was a deeply spiritual individual who carried his Catholic faith with him throughout his life, which was rooted in the upbringing by his parents who sacrificed to send him to a Catholic school, and emboldened him as a young man to assist the Church in maintaining the facilities of the Capuchin San Fidelis Friary in Agaña Heights on a regular basis for many years; and

WHEREAS, while volunteering his time to assist during his formative years, his faith was forged to render service not only to his Church, but to his fellow brethren; and

WHEREAS, ben took those values imparted by his parents and family when he undertook his studies at Father Duenas Memorial School (FDMS), where he graduated in 1974 and had the ambition to be a “champion of the innocent, poor, and the downtrodden, the seeker and the upholder of truth and justice”; and

WHEREAS, through the influence of the Capuchin priests of FDMS and the close friendships developed with the Jesuit priests who lived near the school, ben made the decision to further pursue post-secondary education at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., after having spent almost a year studying at the University of Guam; and

WHEREAS, ben’s decision to attend Georgetown University was described as “a match made in heaven,” as he was intrigued by both the academic offerings of the Jesuit order, as well as government and politics; and

WHEREAS, during his time at Georgetown University, ben worked as an intern and staff assistant to the late Congressman Antonio B. Won Pat; and as an
intern under Major General Carlos P. Romulo, former Philippine Ambassador to the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Georgetown University in 1981 with a Bachelor of Arts in government, *ben* worked as a delivery truck driver before he began to build his career in the private and public sectors; and

WHEREAS, beginning his career in the private sector, *ben* worked at the Family Health Plan/Health Maintenance Life Guam (FHP), a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) doing business in Guam, Saipan, and California, where he started out as a Member Relations Officer and eventually worked his way up in the company, holding various leadership positions, such as the Guam Director of Government and Public Affairs, the Associate Director of Operations, and the Regional General Manager at its corporate offices in Fountain Valley, California; and

WHEREAS, while *ben* was on the fast track to becoming a leading corporate executive, having served as the protégé for the Chief Executive Officer of FHP, he knew he could not ignore his calling to serve his island and people, and he eventually committed himself to public service after heeding a call by the late Governor Ricardo J. Bordallo to serve as Deputy Chief of Staff and Special Assistant for Economic Development in 1985; and

WHEREAS, with *ben’*s varying interests and inquisitive mind, he was a natural entrepreneur, and together with several fellow cabinet members formed the Fifth Wheel, Inc., dba IMAGES, which handled advertising, marketing, and public relations for thousands of clients. One of the company’s memorable projects was the “English the Chamorro Way” publication; and

WHEREAS, *ben* continued his work in various aspects of the private sector, including partnering with friends to form a graphic printing company, Graphic Center, which continues to serve businesses and consumers to this day; and

WHEREAS, inspired by the work he had done for the offices of Governor
Bordallo and Congressman Won Pat, **Ben** further ventured into elected politics by running for the United States Congress in 1988 and 1990; and

**WHEREAS**, although **Ben** lost the Congressional elections, he came close to victory in both races and earned the respect of the late Republican incumbent, Brigadier General and former Congressman Ben Blaz, who subsequently proclaimed **Ben** as “his favorite Democrat, hands down”; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1992, in a successful bid for Senator of the Guam Legislature, **Ben** was elected by the people of Guam to serve in the 22nd Guam Legislature; and thereafter, he continued to serve the people of Guam for the next two decades as a Senator in the 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32nd Guam Legislatures, serving as Speaker of the 27th Guam Legislature; and

**WHEREAS**, in the “Office of the People”, **Ben’s** unwavering, daily commitment to stand up for the common person, and his creativity in finding practical solutions for individuals, the government of Guam, and the island as a whole, unexpectedly grew to a lifetime of public service. **Ben** spent the majority of his life doing what he loved most - serving the people of Guam; and

**WHEREAS**, during his tenure in the Guam Legislature, **Ben** authored over two hundred (200) laws, encompassing a wide range of constituencies and issues important to him and to the people of Guam, and which have had positive and long-lasting effects on not just the island itself, but directly to thousands of individuals; and

**WHEREAS**, **Ben** will forever be remembered for his astute attention to the issue of land - how he revived the land and our connection to land by re-telling the early history of the Chamorro Land Trust so that people could remember what galvanized us as a people then and what should continue to incite us today; and he would stave off through legislation or testimony any competing attempts to put Chamorro homelands in jeopardy, or at risk of being devalued in any way; and

**WHEREAS**, **Ben** often stood alone in the fight to ensure funds generated from
the leasing of *Chamorro* Land Trust properties would go back to the Trust; and

further, he continued his pledge for the return of ancestral lands by actively participating in the Guam Ancestral Lands Commission, and by providing the necessary resources needed to expedite and facilitate the return of lands, deemed as excess by the U.S. federal government and the government of Guam, to its original landowners; and

**WHEREAS,** with unwavering support to our man’amko, ben fought against the executive branch’s refusal to pay man’amko their cost of living allowances, and he succeeded through a feat of combined legislation, constituent-led activism, and court proceedings accomplished in a fifteen (15)-year period; and

**WHEREAS,** with great eloquence and stride, ben was one of the true practitioners of the Chamorro language in his work with the Guam Legislature. ben’s use of the Chamorro language during debates on the Session Floor, and while presenting before distinguished audiences and in everyday conversation, exemplified his honest stewardship of Chamorro as one of the official languages of Guam; and

**WHEREAS,** ben sponsored several laws in support of young families, including the creation of the First-Time Homeowners Assistance Program within the Guam Housing Corporation (GHC) that has assisted hundreds of individuals realize their dreams of owning their own home, and the establishment of other programs and the expansion of authorities and opportunities within GHC, to allow more individuals and families access to home loan funding; and

**WHEREAS,** ben’s vibrant understanding of economics and business made him the perfect legislator to assist and enhance the business community. ben updated laws, rules, and regulations through legislation, creating the One-Stop Business License Center to assist businesses in their efforts to grow the economy; creating the Government of Guam Mitigation Program for Business Interruption, which was aimed at assisting businesses being negatively affected by road construction activity;
providing on-street, oceanside parking along Route 1 in East Agaña Bay to facilitate
ejet ski launching, and the expansion of swimming and other recreational activities and
facilities; adopting and updating the Uniform Commercial Code relative to dealing
with secured transactions; establishing the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage
Licensing Act; authorizing the licensing of service contracts sold on Guam;
establishing the Collective Investment Funds Act; establishing a new Guam Business
Corporation Act; providing funding to the Pacific Islands Development Bank for
extensions of loans to Guam-based small businesses; and numerous other public laws;
and
WHEREAS, having spent his formative years reading the majority of the
books at the library, and appreciating the value of education early on, ben advocated
for public education through his continuous, overwhelming support for funding and
prioritizing education in the annual budgets of the government of Guam, and through
legislation that resulted in: the creation of the Education Financial Supervisory
Commission, which has increased collaboration, transparency, and accountability in
the finances of the Guam Department of Education; the creation of the Territorial
Education Facilities Fund, which segregates the collection of Real Property Taxes for
the sole purpose of educational funding; the creation of the University of Guam
Endowment Fund and the Guam Community College Endowment Fund to assist in
the funding of higher education on Guam; and greater flexibility to the Guam
Community College Administration and Board of Trustees to access the GCC
Endowment Fund in order to support its educational mission and needed capital
improvement projects; and
WHEREAS, envisioning a green and viable future for the people and
environment of Guam, ben established the Renewable Portfolio Standards for the
Guam Power Authority that continue to lead Guam in the direction of a more self-
sustainable energy future; and he led the creation of policy that would assist in
promoting the use of renewable energy at the residential and consumer levels through
net metering; and

WHEREAS, in the face of years of unpaid tax refunds, ben created and
maintained, despite the objection of every Governor, the Income Tax Refund Efficient
Payment Trust Fund, which mandated that a certain percentage of income taxes
collected by the government of Guam be set aside for the sole purpose of ensuring the
government is able to pay income tax refunds in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, in a historic 2014 decision, the Supreme Court of Guam ruled in
favor of ben’s Declaratory Judgment request and upheld the intent and purpose of the
Income Tax Refund Efficient Payment Trust Fund, prohibiting any withdrawal of
funds for any other purpose, to ensure that the taxpayers of Guam are paid their
income tax refunds in a timely manner pursuant to Guam law and court order; and

WHEREAS, having an in-depth understanding of governmental structure, ben
worked towards streamlining funds received from the federal government by
establishing the Guam State Clearinghouse under the Lieutenant Governor’s Office as
the single centralized office within the government of Guam to oversee all federal aid
programs, grants, loans, contracts, contributions, appropriations, advances, direct
federal development, and other federal funding sources for Guam; and establishing
and re-establishing the Guam Community Police Review Commission as a way to
maintain professional standards among Guam Police Officers, while protecting their
rights and dignity, and to provide a uniform platform for island residents to process
official complaints against any Guam Police Officer and ensured the protection of
confidential Guam Crime Stoppers information without compromising its services;
and

WHEREAS, having faithfully served the people of Guam for decades and
recognizing the importance and value of supporting the community through service,
ben played an instrumental role in pushing for such public laws which created certain
protects for volunteers of governmental entities, non-profit organizations, and other entities in lawsuits; and he also sought to increase participation in non-profit and public and private organizations by amending the Guam Code Annotated to provide protection from liability abuses related to their service; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the needs of indigent off-island medical care, ben created the medical referral mileage bank account wherein all mileage from government-paid travel is deposited into said account for use by Guam’s medically indigent; and established the Guam Social Work Practice Act to promote, preserve and protect public health, safety, and welfare by and through the effective control and regulation of the practice of social work; the licensure of social workers; and the licensure control and regulation of persons in or out of Guam that practice social work within the island of Guam; and

WHEREAS, cognizant of consumer protection, ben required all petroleum companies to utilize a meter or device that compensates for temperature and thermo-expansion of petroleum, to ensure responsible sales of petroleum products to Guam consumers; and also required that all retail gasoline dispensing pumps implement temperature compensation calibration, which was deficient up until that point as the temperature of the petroleum product was not in sync with temperature compensation calibration by the time consumers paid for the gasoline at the pump; and

WHEREAS, recognizing a deficiency in our public system to protect the interests of the elderly and other individuals, ben created the Office of the Public Guardian within the Supreme Court of Guam to furnish guardianship services to the elderly, and those individuals who are mentally disabled, at no cost or reduced cost so as to promote their general welfare, and to allow participation as fully as possible in all decisions that affect them; and

WHEREAS, ben crafted public laws to increase transparency and accountability in government by reestablishing the Guam Ethics Commission;
requiring health insurance companies to submit data for the government of Guam
health insurance program, which has increased the government’s ability to negotiate
and has potentially helped save taxpayers and government of Guam employees and
retirees millions of dollars, requiring any public notice, advertisement, or message
issued by a government agency using government funds to include a disclosure
statement, and prohibiting the sealing of settlements of claims against the government;
and

WHEREAS, in honor of the brave men and women who have proudly served
in the U.S. military and who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of the
nation, and the protection of the pursuit of liberty and democracy, ben established an
award entitled, I Milåyan Mås Takhilo’ Na Sakrufisu, to further convey the unending
and never forgotten gratitude and great respect from the people of Guam to the
daughters and sons of Guam who, as members of the military, lost their lives in battle
while defending the island and nation we love and the freedom we hold so dearly,
with the presentation of a Legislative Resolution accompanied by the Guam Flag, and
their names listed in the I Milåyan Mås Takhilo’ Na Sakrufisu roll displayed at the
main building of I Liheslaturan Guåhan; and

WHEREAS, ben was committed over the duration of his career to maintaining
traditional and sustainable cultural practices and economic independence, providing
funding for both the Guam Fisherman’s Cooperative Association Facility and the
Guam Farmer’s Cooperative Association Facility, and designating lands for the
cultivation of traditional herbal medicinal plants and the establishment of the Hatdin
 âmot Chamorro; and

WHEREAS, ben ensured that Guam’s precious resources remain in the control
of the people of Guam and are protected from contamination, over-consumption and
invasive species by funding the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Eradication Program, and
declaring the use of all water, at any time, in a stream, river, or other surface source,
including water located beneath the ground and in the aquifer, vested in the
government of Guam; and

WHEREAS, ben sought recognition and remedy for the injustices suffered by
our people as a result of war and military contamination, including war claims
compensation; he fought alongside Mr. Robert Celestial of the Pacific Association of
Radiation Survivors (PARS), who petitioned the U.S. Congress to amend the
Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 to include several additional
graphic areas, including Guam; he authorized the lease of government of Guam
land to the Manenggon Memorial Foundation to establish a memorial remembering
those who were detained at the World War II Manenggon Retention camps; and he
authorized the Military Order of the Purple Heart to use a portion of Skinner’s Plaza
to establish a memorial monument to honor all of Guam’s wounded combat soldiers;
and

WHEREAS, an avid supporter of families, ben extended paternity leave;
encouraged the development of soccer as an integral and popular sport on Guam,
through the identification of a matching funds program and land area designation for
the development of soccer fields at the Northern and Southern Sports Complex
Facilities; and increased the membership of the Guam Wrestling and Boxing
Commission to meet quorum and allow the commission to better serve its respective
sports; provided creative funding solutions for public school sports facilities; and
mandated bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways on primary and secondary roads on
Guam, prioritizing the safety of cyclists on our roadways and encouraging the sport of
cycling; and

WHEREAS, ben was Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations for three
legislative terms, wherein his acumen for budgeting and finance allowed for one of the
most streamlined and efficient legislative budget processes in government of Guam
history; and
WHEREAS, ben was an advocate for the protection of the Chamorro culture, the preservation and return of ancestral lands, and the safeguarding of the way of life for the people of Guam, and he actively participated during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the military realignment to Guam, and other federal actions such as the Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT), providing oral comments during each scoping meeting and submitting numerous written comments, encompassing every impact that would directly and indirectly affect the people, wildlife and natural resources of Guam; and

WHEREAS, ben was committed to pushing for Chamorro Self-Determination and the Decolonization Registry, and he remained steadfast in the quest for political self-determination, courageously presenting testimony to the United Nations to advocate for Guam's inalienable right to self-determination; and his office was the only place, aside from the Guam Election Commission, to register eligible persons for the Decolonization Registry today; and

WHEREAS, ben, through public law, renamed the Adelup Complex after the second elected Governor of Guam, Ricardo J. Bordallo, who served as Governor for two terms; and renamed the Retirement Fund Building after Jesus R. Quinene, who was a Member of the 1st and 2nd Guam Legislatures, and whose work created the Government of Guam Retirement Fund; and

WHEREAS, gifted with words, in speech and script, ben wrote a column for the local newspaper, and was described by one senatorial colleague as one of the best orators of his generation; and he was often invited to deliver inspirational speeches to small and large gatherings, including being a keynote speaker for the graduating class of Fall 2011 at the University of Guam; and

WHEREAS, ben was known for cautious spending of the people’s money, and often spent the least among his colleagues from senatorial budgets; and he was so
practical in his election spending that in the term he became Speaker in the 27th Guam Legislature, ben ranked number seven (7) in the legislative race, having won twenty-three thousand four hundred forty-six (23,446) votes; and he was bestowed with the title of “lowest-spending winner,” paying out only $8,579 for campaign expenses, which equates to approximately $0.37 per vote; and

WHEREAS, without exception, everyone was welcome at “The Office of the People”; ben’s unwavering, daily commitment to stand up for the common person, and his creativity in finding practical solutions for individuals, the government of Guam, and the island as a whole, unexpectedly grew to a lifetime of public service. ben spent the majority of his life doing what he loved most—serving the People of Guam; and

WHEREAS, before being diagnosed with cancer, ben had an almost perfect attendance and voting record; he was diligent in reading everything relevant to the bills being discussed, and being fully prepared for public hearings and sessions; and he was a patient senatorial colleague with an extraordinary memory, often taking the time to explain to newer senators and younger members of the public, the undocumented history of various issues and efforts on Guam; and

WHEREAS, ben was diagnosed with cancer in 2010, and immediately underwent surgery to remove the tumors as a preventative measure. However, he was subsequently required to battle the aggressive cancer with chemotherapy and radiation treatment, but he ultimately continued to selflessly serve the people of Guam with courage and resolve claiming, “I do not live with cancer; cancer lives with me”; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Committee on Rules of I Mina’Trentai Dos Na Liheslaturan Guåhan does hereby, on behalf of the people of Guam, recognize, honor, and celebrate the life of the late Honorable Speaker vicente “ben” cabrera pangelinan; and does further extend its sincerest condolences to his family on his untimely
RESOLVED, that the Speaker and the Chairperson of the Committee on Rule certify, and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the adoption hereof, and that copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to the family of the late Vicente “ben” Cabrera Pangelinan, Senator and former Speaker; and to the Honorable Edward J.B. Calvo, I Maga’låhen Guåhan.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES OF I MINA’TRENTAI DOS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN ON THE 16TH DAY OF JULY 2014.

JUDITH T. WON PAT, Ed.D. THOMAS C. ADA
Speaker Acting Chairperson, Committee on Rules

TINA ROSE MUNA BARNES
Legislative Secretary