March 19, 2020
Serial No. 20-1643

The Honorable Hokkons Baules
Senate President
10th Olbiil Era Kelula
Ngerulmud, Palau National Capitol
Republic of Palau 96939

Re: Signing Statement for SB 10-126, SD1, HD3, CD1, PD1

Dear Senate President Baules:

I am pleased to sign into law SB 10-126, SD1, HD3, CD1, PD1, a bill that will require the development of a comprehensive National Policy on Care for the Aging, and that will facilitate the coordination of services for Palau’s older citizens. As the percentage of Palau’s older population continues to grow, this new law will ensure that we are prepared to provide the necessary services they require. I also want to thank you for taking my suggested revisions to the legislation; with this PD1 version we accomplish our original goals more efficiently, and without unnecessary expenditures.

This bill works by creating a new Chapter 10 in Title 21 of the Palau National Code. The new Chapter imposes four requirements on the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs. First, it directs her to designate an office or bureau to oversee the development and implementation of a new National Policy on Care for the Aging. The bill specifies that the National Policy will account for a variety of factors, including Palauan traditions and values, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and active participation in one’s own care, required health and social services, economic factors, and environmental issues.

Second, in order to assist with the development of this policy and facilitate the coordination of the many services involved with care for the aging, the bill directs the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs to convene a coordinating committee. The committee will have representatives from the different government ministries and offices that are responsible for elements of care for the aging, as well as from Palau’s Senior Citizens Council.

Third, the bill requires the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, together with the coordinating committee, to regularly review and report on the National Policy, identifying the
challenges faced and needs of the elderly population that may be going unmet. By mandating this regular review and reporting, you have ensured that the National Policy will not just be a forgotten document on a shelf and that its goals will not just be ephemeral.

Finally, the bill directs the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs to create and recommend a plan for the construction of a Social Service and Care Center for the Aging. The goal of this Center will be to act as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for the needs of the elderly: it should provide housing, medical services, and opportunities for interaction between residents and the community, as well as be the location for administration, planning, and coordination of necessary resources and services through Palau. The elderly, who often face mobility challenges, will no longer need to visit multiple different offices for medical, social, and government services.

I am proud to be able to sign this bill into law today and begin the process of ensuring that Palau is able to take care of its aging population. Thank you again for your hard work on this bill and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau

CC: Speaker of the House of Delegates Sabino Anastacio
March 19, 2020
Serial No. 20-1643

The Honorable Sabino Anastacio
Speaker of the House of Delegates
10\textsuperscript{th} Olibil Era Kelulau
Ngerulumud, Palau National Capitol
Republic of Palau 96939

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Sincerely,

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau

CC: Speaker of the House of Delegates Sabino Anastacio
The Senate
TENTH OLBII ERA KELULAU
P.O. Box 8, Ngerulmud
Republic of Palau 96939

Thirteenth Regular Session
January 2020

INTRODUCED AS SENATE BILL NO. 10-126, SD1, HD3, CD1, PD1

AN ACT

SEE TITLE INSIDE

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR(S) Stevenson J. Kuartei ET, AL.,

DATE INTRODUCED July 17, 2018

SENATE ACTION

FIRST READING: July 17, 2018
REFERRED TO: Health and Education/Culture & Tradition
STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO.: 10-199
DATE ADOPTED: May 2, 2019
SECOND READING: May 2, 2019
LEGAL FORMAT: Proper
REVIEW: May 28, 2019
THIRD READING: May 28, 2019
FINAL READING: February 6, 2020 / March 3, 2020

HOUSE ACTION

FIRST READING: June 6, 2019
REFERRED TO: Health, Social and Cultural Affairs
STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO.: 10-94
DATE ADOPTED: October 28, 2019
SECOND READING: October 28, 2019
LEGAL FORMAT: Proper
REVIEW: October 19, 2019
THIRD READING: October 19, 2019
FINAL READING: February 6, 2020 / March 6, 2020

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ACTION

DATE: January 21, 2020
COMMITTEE REPORT NO.: 10-10
DATE PASSED: February 6, 2020
FINAL READING: February 6, 2020

Ann L. Pedro
CLERK OF THE SENATE

Marcello Ngirkelau
CLERK, HOUSE OF DELEGATES
AN ACT

To require the development of a comprehensive National Policy on Care for the Aging, to provide for the coordination of services for aging Palauans, and for other related purposes.

THE PEOPLE OF PALAU REPRESENTED IN THE OLBIIIL ERA KELULAU DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Legislative Findings. The Olbiil Era Kelulau finds that the Republic of Palau needs a national policy on care for the aging to provide essential support, create opportunities for the aging population, and help ensure that the aging in Palau are given the recognition and support needed to live their lives with the utmost dignity. The Olbiil Era Kelulau further finds that the impact of aging on the population of Palau over the next several decades will be profound, with the proportion of Palauan citizens over the age of 60 estimated to rise from the current 9.9% to 24.6% by the year 2050. This demographic shift will be exacerbated by the increased outmigration of younger Palauans in the workforce. The well-being of our citizens is a top priority for the national government, which is firmly committed to providing equitable care for all Palauans, especially the aging, who represent one of the most vulnerable demographics. An integral part of providing for our aging population involves acknowledging the unique challenges faced by the aging, such as access to social services, financial support, economic opportunities, and security. However, the current approach to handling these challenges is fragmented across many government agencies. Therefore, a cohesive, comprehensive policy on aging care and the designation of an office to oversee the implementation of the policy will help achieve the well-being goals of the national government.

Section 2. Amendment. Title 21 of the Palau National Code is hereby amended to add a new chapter as follows:

“Chapter 10

Aging Care

§1001. Designation of Office to Oversee National Aging Care.

(a) The Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs shall designate an office or bureau to oversee the development and implementation of the National Policy on
Care for the Aging. The designated office or bureau shall be responsible for coordinating and reporting on all services relating to care for the elderly, including the responsibilities established in Sections 1002, 1003, and 1004 of this Chapter.

(b) The Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs shall convene a coordinating committee on Care for the Aging. The membership of the coordinating committee shall be as follows:

1. the Minister of Health or his designee;
2. the Minister of Justice or his designee;
3. the Social Security Administrator or his designee;
4. a representative from the National Healthcare Financing Governing Committee;
5. a representative from the Board of Trustees of the Republic of Palau Civil Service Pension Plan and Trust;
6. a representative from the Republic of Palau's Senior Citizens Council, designated by the Chairman, and in the event the Senior Citizens Council ceases to exist, a representative from the Republic’s senior citizen population, appointed by the President of the Republic;
7. the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs or his designee;
8. the Minister of Finance or his designee; and
9. the Director of the Bureau of Aging, Disability, and Gender, or other agency as designated by the President of the Republic of Palau.

(c) The coordinating committee shall have its first meeting no later than 30 days following the effective date of this Act. The coordinating committee shall adopt by-laws, procedures, and meeting schedules as necessary and appropriate to effectuate the provisions of this Chapter.

(d) The Chairperson of the coordinating committee shall be the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs or the Minister’s designee.

§1002. National Policy on Care for the Aging.
(a) The Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, with input from the coordinating committee established pursuant to Section 1001(b) of this Chapter, shall develop a National Policy on Care for the Aging in accordance with this Section.

(b) The National Policy on Care for the Aging shall be responsive to the needs and address the challenges of the aging population, and shall consider the following as they relate to and effect the aging population:

(1) Palauan values and traditions;

(2) gender roles;

(3) behavioral factors and ability to adopt healthy lifestyles and actively participate in one's own care;

(4) health and social services;

(5) income and economic factors; and

(6) environmental factors.

§1003. Reporting; coordination; review of National Policy on Care for the Aging.

(a) The Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs shall provide a written National Policy on Care for the Aging to the President of the Republic of Palau and to the Olbiil Era Kelulau no later than one (1) year following the effective date of this Act.

(b) The Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, in consultation with the coordinating committee established pursuant to Section 1001(b) of this Chapter, shall coordinate and monitor the implementation of the National Policy on Care for the Aging and any subsequent amendments thereto.

(c) The Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, together with the coordinating committee established pursuant to Section 1001(b) of this Chapter, shall convene and conduct a review of the National Policy on Care for the Aging, its implementation, and the needs and challenges of the aging population in the Republic of Palau, at a minimum of every two (2) years following the provision of the report pursuant to Subsection (a). The Minister shall provide a written report of relevant findings and the National Policy, with any necessary amendments, to the President of
the Republic of Palau and to the Olbiil Era Kelulau no later than six (6) months following the commencement of the review.

§ 1004. Creation and recommendation of plan for a Social Service and Care Center for the Aging.

The Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, with input from the coordinating committee established pursuant Section 1001(b) of this Chapter, shall create and recommend a plan for the construction of a Social Service and Care Center for the Aging ("Center") that shall, at a minimum, provide permanent and temporary housing, medical services, adequate care, sustained interaction between the residents and the community through partnership with relevant civil society organizations and the public, and other necessary resources and services to support and improve the quality of life for the aging. The Center shall be the location for the administration, planning, and coordination of necessary resources and services throughout the Republic. The Minister shall partner with relevant government agencies, including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Industries and Commerce, to conduct studies on all aspects of the construction of the Center. These aspects shall include, but not be limited to, the design of the Center, its construction, all costs to be incurred in construction, and the projected timetable for construction. The Minister shall create a report on its studies and plan for construction of the Center and shall submit its report and plan no later than one (1) year after the effective date of this Act to the President of the Republic and to the Olbiil Era Kelulau for approval.”

Section 3. Effective date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the President of the Republic of Palau, or upon becoming law without such approval.

Passed on: March 06, 2020

Approved this 19th day of March, 2020.