



GOVERNMENT OF KOSRAE

Office of the Governor

Post Office Box 158

Kosrae Federated States of Micronesia 96944

Telephone: 691-370-3002/3003. Facsimile: 691-370-3162

September 1, 2023

*Governor's Mess.
No. 13-87
CW*

The Honorable Semeon J. Phillip
Speaker, Thirteenth Kosrae State Legislature
Tofol, Kosrae FM 96944

Dear Speaker Phillip:

I regret to inform you that based on the reasons explained hereinafter, I am compelled to veto this below-referenced bill.

L. B. No. 13-30 entitled: "To amend the Kosrae State Code, by amending Section 13.517(1) of Title 13, to prohibit the consumption of Alcoholic drinks during the Good Friday holiday; and for other purposes."

We must cease the practice of enacting laws that apply to some, but not all Kosraens or residents. This is especially true with faith-based laws, particularly in jurisdictions where numerous religious denominations exist. Kosrae is no different today as it has become the host State for numerous different religions that do not have parallel credence. All people must be equal in the eyes of the law and treated fairly accordingly. This is the impetus of the Constitutional Principle of Equal Protection of the Law which is enshrined under Section 1(b) of Article II of the Kosrae Constitution and Section 3 of Article IV of the FSM Constitution. Any laws that propose to have different legal consequences for majority and minority groups due to their beliefs or credence would amount to discrimination. Discrimination is prohibited by Section 1(d) of Article II of the Kosrae State Constitution and Section 4 of Article IV of the FSM Constitution.

From an economic perspective, Kosrae State has opened its doors to visitors, investors, and others that frequent our island and we must pave the way forward to improve our tourism and other industries if we want to expand the base of our economic development. Sentiments received by participants of the recent 2023 Exposition, Joint Committee Meeting between FSM and US Defense and the Presidential Visit to Kosrae are testaments to the need for a major paradigm shift to a friendly business and investor environment. As stated in our numerous speeches during these nationally sponsored events in Kosrae, it is unprecedented for Kosrae to host back-to-back national major meetings and activities. While the sentiments are extremely pleasing, there is room for improvement. One of which is our legal system and laws that cater to all Kosraens, residents, investors, and visitors.

Armed with the above reasons, I have decided to return L.B. No. 13-30 vetoed. I hope you and our esteemed members of the 13 Kosrae State Legislature understand my position and I continue to seek cooperation and collaboration from your branch to change Kosrae for the best.

Kulo Malulap


Tulensa W. Palik
Governor

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