
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES NATIONALS CURRENTLY RESIDING IN HAWAII AND TO REVIEW THE INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTS THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THIS POPULATION UNDER THE COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION.

WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii needs to determine a reliable number of Freely Associated States citizens, which includes individuals from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau, that have resettled in the State; and

WHEREAS, due to the lack of current and credible census numbers, social service agencies and health providers are unable to plan and adapt budgets to fit the needs of this population; and

WHEREAS, state emergency homeless shelters are reporting as much as ninety per cent Freely Associated States families utilizing shelter services without ample budgets with which to serve this population's varied needs that are substantially different from those of locally residing homeless populations; and

WHEREAS, rates of tuberculosis, Hansen's disease, and Hepatitis B are reported to be high among Freely Associated States citizens according to the Department of Health, with no mandatory screening upon entry into the State; and

WHEREAS, this gap in screening places communities at risk and makes outreach and treatment services prohibitive and time consuming; and

WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii has no centralized plan for the

provision of services for this population, upon their arrival, and many citizens arrive lacking language and job skills and are in need of various types of medical services that tend to be chronic in nature; and

WHEREAS, there is little knowledge amongst providers about standard services and benefits for which Freely Associated States citizens are eligible under the guidelines of the Compact of Free Association; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2007, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Human Services is requested to convene a task force to determine the number of Freely Associated States nationals currently residing in Hawaii and to review the infrastructure supports that are available to this population, under the Compact of Free Association; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to study the needs of the Freely Associated States population, including the necessity of mandatory testing for communicable diseases upon entry, and necessary services for establishing a comprehensive infrastructure of support for members of this population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to identify and examine any regulations or guidelines within the Compact of Free Association as they apply to the State of Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human Services is requested to report to the Legislature on the findings and recommendations of the task force no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2008; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human Services.