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TO: The Honorable J. Kalani English, Chair, and Members  
Senate Committee on Transportation International Affairs

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair, and Members  
Senate Committee on Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

DATE: March 17, 2008  
TIME: 1:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Conference Room 224  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

THROUGH: Darwin L. D. Ching, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

FROM: Sam Aiona, Executive Director  
Office of Community Services

SUBJECT: SCR 78 and SR 43

**Testimony Supporting the Intent  
for****SCR 78/SR 43- Supporting Federal Financial Assistance For Persons Present in the United  
States Under the Compacts of the Free Association (COFA)****I. Overview of Current Proposed Legislation**

SCR 78 and SR 43 supports the bills currently in Congress, S. 1676 and H.R. 4000, which would extend eligibility for certain federal benefits to COFA migrants legally residing in the U.S. "The State Senate urges that these bills be heard and moved out of Committee, to receive the consideration of the full Senate and the full House of Representatives, and further to encourage Congress and the President to enact the bills into law, which would benefit COFA migrants in the U.S. regardless of the states intent of Congress that the relationship created by the Compacts not cause adverse consequences to the states."

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## II. Senate Resolution

The Department supports the intent of SCR 78 and SR 43 for the following reasons:

1. The submittal of SCR 78/SR 43 is recognition of the increasing population of COFA migrants in the State.
2. COFA migrants often arrive in the State with serious social service needs. For example, a significant number of COFA migrants may need financial or food assistance, because of the lack of available resources to them.
3. The Department, as well as the COFA Task Force, acknowledges the challenges COFA migrants face, as do other residents of the state, and is aware that these challenges are especially difficult due to the fact of being non-citizens in a foreign country.
4. The department understands that the task force is continuing to work on solutions to assist COFA migrants. As a member of the task force, the Department is waiting to see what solutions the COFA task force agrees on and will make comments as these resolutions progress throughout the session.
5. The Department thanks the committees for their acknowledgement of the growing concern within our community. We will continue to work with the legislature and the COFA Task Force to help with the needs of the COFA migrants.

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## Testimony In Support of SCR 78 SR43

To:

The Committee on Transportation and International Affairs; Chair Senator J. Kalani English., Vice-Chair Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee

The Committee on Intergovernmental and Military Affairs, Chair Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice-Chair Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee

March 17, 2008 1:30pm

Conference room 224, State Capitol

Support of SCR 78 SR 43

The Nations of Micronesia Committee (NOM), a community committee composed of over 100 members from private non-profit agencies to government agencies, was started back in 1997 and has evolved into a diverse working committee of partners who come together monthly to discuss issues and problems related to the Peoples of the Freely Associated States (PFAS) population. Members attend the meetings to pool resources and network with other agencies to find solutions for the families that they service from these areas.

Identified areas of concern from NOM members as well as the PFAS communities include, the need for help with access to resources in the community for; health, housing, education and financial support including employment. The release of the Federal funding for financial assistance to this population will result in a resource to the State, which spent approximately 91 million in state funds to provide services to this community in the year 2006. It will also provide support to families that are coming to Hawaii in search of better education for their children, jobs and much needed health care. The challenges faced by these families are immense, and this funding will help to improve their health state as well as living situation.

Therefore, as Chair of this committee, I am in support of this Resolution to release the Federal funding for the Compact of Free Association migrants.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Tom, Chair of Nations of Micronesia Committee

