

HAWAII STATE HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATIVE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Chair: Rida Cabanilla Vice Chair: Pono Chong
Members of Housing Committee

DATE: Wednesday, March 10, 2010

TIME: 9:00 am

PLACE: Conference Room 325
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawaii

In Support of
H.C.R. 148 and HR 87
Relating to
PUBLIC HOUSING

Aloha my name is Flor Martinez a radio broadcaster for 35 years and a retired employee from Department of Foreign Affairs; I strongly support the intent of H.C.R. 148, HR 87. This bill will allow the government to charge Federated States of Micronesia for services being rendered to its people residing in Hawaii. The Compact of Free Association Act of 1985, Public Law 99-239, has given the Federated States of Micronesia and its people sovereignty and financial settlement and entitlement to migrate to USA freely without difficulty of securing immigration and travel documents, Hawaii being the closest in proximity to Micronesia has been the chosen destination. The Micronesians in Hawaii encountered many challenges in several areas, such as language barriers, culture differences and many social aspects causing them difficulties in assimilating with the mainstream and unable to be self sufficient. As a result, 30% of the homeless population comprises the Micronesians and other related groups from the Federated States. Aside from housing privileges provided for them, they are also able to access other welfare benefits from the government and have become public charge. This brings tremendous impact in our community and burden on our government and the tax payers especially, in this time of budget constraint. Urging U.S. government to seek reimbursement from the Federated States of Micronesia for homeless services provided by State of Hawaii to migrants under COFA through this bill is warranted and necessary. Thank you for the opportunity to testify

Testimony Supporting HCR 148
House of Representatives
House Committee
State Capitol
Room 325

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Dear Chairwoman Cabanilla and members of the Housing Committee,

I believe there is a need to express to you my opinion on the need for HCR 148.

Hawaii has very limited resources, especially when it comes to housing the homeless. For years now more and more street people are popping up all over our islands, especially in high tourist areas. Public housing was insufficient before this inflex and is totally inadequate now.

A matter that sincerely compounds this problem is the dramatic increase in Hawaii's Micronesian population. Since the Federation of Micronesia has become a territory of the United States, tens of thousands of Micronesians have come to Hawaii in search of a better life.

I don't begrudge them a successful life, but before they come to Hawaii they should have the means to support themselves. Some of them can and are no burden to our state's resources. Many of them cannot and therefore strain our already over burden public housing system.

This resolution is designed to have the government of Micronesia become more responsible for the citizens they allow to travel to Hawaii. I believe it is fair and long overdue.

Please pass HCR 148.

Thank you for giving me your time.

Gary Benjamin