



LATE Testimony

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HR 38: RELATING TO COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION MIGRANTS

TO: Representative John Mizuno, Chair, Representative Jo Jordan, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Human Services

FROM: Max Gray, Hawaii Helping the Hungry Have Hope (H-5)

Hearing: Thursday, 3/10, 10:45 am, Room 329

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Jordan and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HR 38 which urges the U.S. Department of the Interior and Congress to provide additional federal aid to Hawaii for various state services to COFA migrants. H-5 strongly supports this resolution.

This bill includes specific dollar amounts that have been spent by various state agencies in addressing issues posed by COFA migration and requests compensation. While we believe it is unrealistic to expect remuneration for past expenses, the legislature makes a valid point by highlighting the magnitude and complexity of mass migration and related costs to the state.

More importantly, the resolution requests the U.S. Department of the Interior to re-examine funding for the Compact Impact Assistance grant, amend legislation to make migrants eligible for federally-subsidized health care and to provide dialysis and chemotherapy services in COFA nations. These points represent the crux of the recent budget problems. It is important to emphasize that essential services be provided by COFA nations as well as the United States. Only by cooperation and coordination can we meet the needs of all nations and individuals.

H-5 is a non-profit agency that has provided housing and vital services to homeless men, women and children since 1996. As managing agency of the Next Step emergency shelter and EVANS bus shelter in Kaka'ako, H-5 has helped to transition more than 600 individuals into permanent housing. We continue to use every available resource to assist COFA clients in achieving self-sufficiency. The legislature's efforts in this area have been indispensable. We support HR 38 and look forward to advocating for migrants' rights in the future.

Thank you for your time and your support.