



HCR117

HR88

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO INCLUDE RESIDENT CITIZENS OF THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES AS "QUALIFIED ALIENS" UNDER THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR UNIQUE HISTORIC AND ONGOING SACRIFICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

March 27, 2013

8:30 a.m.

Room 312

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HCR117 and HR88, which urge the federal government to restore access to federal benefits, including Medicaid, for the indigenous peoples and citizens of the Freely Associated States (FAS) rightfully residing in the United States.

This resolution recognizes the United States' responsibility to provide equality, opportunity, and justice for our Pacific Islander community members, who have sacrificed and contributed their lands, culture, and people to the interests and welfare of the United States for over sixty years. As noted in these measures, the historic and ongoing contributions of the indigenous peoples of the FAS include, but are not limited to, substantial support for the U.S. military and the our country's strategic defense, the sacrifice of their 'āina and people for nuclear weapons testing and human radiological experiments, as well as cultural contributions that have given all Pacific islanders renewed pride in our shared cultural heritage and achievements – including the preservation of traditional and highly advanced ocean wayfaring techniques which greatly informed the modern Hawaiian renaissance movement. Given these sacrifices and contributions, restoring equal access to federal benefits to those citizens of the Freely Associated States residing, working, studying, and paying taxes in the United States would be a significant step towards equality, opportunity, and justice for our Pacific islander allies, and members of our community.

Additionally, extending eligibility for federal programs to FAS citizen residents may also result in a significant influx of federal monies to enhance Hawai'i's social and healthcare infrastructure. OHA's strategic priorities include Maui Ola (Health), which represents our commitment to improve the conditions of Native Hawaiians and quality of life by reducing the onset of chronic diseases. Providing access to federal programs for FAS citizen residents of Hawai'i may result in the increased availability of federal funds for local healthcare and other services. Such an influx of federal monies for our healthcare

and social infrastructure would benefit all the people of Hawai'i who may have a need for such fundamental societal services, including OHA's Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

These resolutions will encourage specific decisionmakers in our federal Congress to address these issues and more fully fulfill the United States' responsibilities to our Pacific islander allies.

Therefore, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HCR117 and HR88. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



HEALTHYPACIFIC.ORG
restoringjusticehi@gmail.com

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

HCR117 AND HR88

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO INCLUDE RESIDENT CITIZENS OF THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES AS "QUALIFIED ALIENS" UNDER THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR UNIQUE HISTORIC AND ONGOING SACRIFICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

House Committee on
Veterans, Military & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

March 27, 2013

8:30 A.M.

Capitol Room 312

Aloha Kākou e Committee Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts,

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HCR117** and **HR88**, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community.

As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for members of Hawai'i's community, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic

opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states.

This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

Therefore, HealthyPacific.Org respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HCR117 and HR88, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on these measures.

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2013 4:46 AM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: Kenakinaka@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/24/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kenneth Teruya Akinaka	Hepatitis Support Network of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments: To the Honorable Members of the Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of SCR108, SR74,HCR117, and HR88, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community. The former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. No one should have to choose between going to the doctor to save their life, or keeping food on their family's table, or a roof over their child's home. By denying healthcare eligibility for our Pacific Islander residents, the PRWORA may force the chronically ill to choose between saving their own lives, or ensuring that their families have the basic necessities of life in the U.S. Closing the PRWORA loophole and including COFA residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for federal healthcare protections acknowledges the contributions and sacrifices of our Pacific Islander neighbors, which will benefit not just our COFA residents, but our broader society as well. The PRWORA denies them the same opportunity as all other legal residents, including the ability to pursue adequate healthcare, social security, and other public safety nets intended to uphold our enlightened social contract. Closing the PRWORA loophole will ensure that America keeps its promise of opportunity to our Pacific Islander allies lawfully residing here under the Compacts of Free Association that was made with the in exchange for our military access to thousands of strategic nautical miles in the Pacific near Asia and using the home lands for Atomic bomb testing. We need to uphold America's vision of justice. America prides itself on its sense of justice, and despite its historic contradictions, has struggled to ensure that we do acknowledge and address the injustices of our past. The reparations given to the 110,000 Japanese and the American children, who were wrongfully interned in WWII, was an effort to make up for the wrong that was done to them. However, some of the darkest moments in our recent history have yet to be fully acknowledged and addressed, threatening to leave a long and ugly scar in our reputation as a land of justice, and freedom. Closing the PRWORA loophole and fulfilling the intent of the Compacts of Free Association will take America one step forward towards its vision of liberty and justice for all. Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking

necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states. Some of these Hawaii residents have been here as long as thirty years and many of their children are American citizens who vote in our Democratic Process, yet their parents are denied proper medical care for in some cases chronic diseases like cancers or kidney disease caused by our atomic bombing testing of their home countries due to our treaty agreements. This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association. Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committees to PASS SCR108 and SR74, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community. Sincerely, Ken Akinaka, MRA Cell 808-221-6204

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY
COFA COMMUNITY ADVOCACY NETWORK

for

HCR117/HR88

House Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

March 27, 2013

8:30 a.m.

Conference Room 312

Welina mai kākou Committee Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HCR117 and HR88. The support we have received from members of this body for equality for our COFA community members has been both inspiring and extremely heartening for the COFA Community Advocacy Network (COFA CAN), which has been working for several years to restore COFA residents' equal access to important federal programs, including Medicaid, that remain available for almost all other members of our community -- including both citizens and most legal permanent residents.

These resolutions will send a clear message to key federal policymakers that Hawai'i believes in equality and justice for members of our community, who are present under the Compacts of Free Association. As you may know, Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa has introduced a measure, H.R. 912, that would restore federal Medicaid benefits for some of our country's strongest and most loyal supporters. By passing these resolutions, our state legislature will provide Congresswoman Hanabusa and her allies with ample evidence and strong arguments of support for this progressive and life-saving measure.

COFA CAN believes that amending the PRWORA law of 1996, as urged in this resolution, will provide the following benefits to Hawai'i as well as the United States:

1. Closing the PRWORA loophole will benefit all in our state who seek medical treatment. Including our COFA residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for life-saving Medicaid funds under PRWORA will lead to the investment of substantial federal monies in our Hawai'i's medical infrastructure, which will boost our economy and bring a higher quality of care for anyone in our state who needs to go to the doctor.

2. A responsible adult cleans up their own mess. The United States has made a huge mess of the islands and lives of the indigenous peoples of the Freely Associated States, and it must take responsibility in cleaning up this mess. Reinstating federal benefits for U.S. resident taxpayers, workers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association will help the United States take ownership of this ongoing responsibility, just as a responsible adult would.

3. No one should have to choose between going to the doctor to save their life, or

keeping food on their family's table, or a roof over their child's home. By denying healthcare eligibility for our Pacific Islander residents, PRWORA may force the chronically ill and seriously injured to choose between saving their own lives, or ensuring that their families have the basic necessities of life. Aspiring nurses, doctors, or engineers may have to drop out of college just to pay off a relative's healthcare costs, impacting not just their families, but our economy and our society as a whole. Closing the PRWORA loophole and including COFA residents as “qualified aliens” eligible for federal healthcare protections acknowledges the contributions and sacrifices of our Pacific Islander neighbors, which will benefit not just our COFA residents, but our broader society as well.

4. We can affirm America as the land of opportunity, where individuals are given a fair shake to pursue the American Dream. America’s strength and pride come from its basic ideal as a land of opportunity, where all individuals should be given a fair shake in their pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. However, the exclusion of our Pacific Islander neighbors and allies under the PRWORA denies them the same opportunity as all other legal residents, including the ability to pursue adequate healthcare, social security, and other public safety nets intended to uphold our enlightened social contract. Closing the PRWORA loophole will ensure that America keeps its promise of opportunity to our Pacific Islander allies lawfully residing here under the Compacts of Free Association.

5. We can uphold America’s vision of justice. America prides itself on its sense of justice, and despite its historic contradictions, has struggled to ensure that we do acknowledge and address the injustices of our past. However, some of the darkest moments in our recent history have yet to be fully acknowledged and addressed, threatening to leave a long and ugly scar in our reputation as a land of justice, and freedom. Closing the PRWORA loophole and fulfilling the intent of the Compacts of Free Association will take America one step forward towards its vision of liberty and justice for all.

Therefore, COFA CAN urges the Committee to **PASS** HCR117 and HR88. Mahalo piha for the opportunity to testify on these important measures.



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 ·PHONE: 586-8636 FAX: 586-8655 TDD: 568-8692

March 27, 2013
Conference Room 312
8:30 a.m.

To: The Honorable K. Mark Takai, Chair
Members of the House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs,
& Culture and the Arts

From: Linda Hamilton Krieger, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: H.C.R. No. 117, H.R. No. 88

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (“HCRC”) has enforcement jurisdiction over state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state-funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that "no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights because of race, religion, sex or ancestry". Art. I, Sec. 5.

The HCRC supports H.C.R. No. 117 and H.R. No. 88, urging the United States Congress to include citizens of Compact of Free Association (“COFA”) nations who reside lawfully in Hawai‘i as “qualified aliens” under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (“PRWORA”, popularly known as “Welfare Reform Act”).

After WWII, these COFA nations (The Federated States of Micronesia (“FSM” - Yap, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Kosrae), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (“RMI”), and the Republic of Palau) were part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, with the Micronesian Trust Region

under U.S. trusteeship. From 1946-1958, the U.S. conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, with above-ground testing on Bikini and Enewetak islands, including detonation of the largest bomb (codenamed “Bravo”) ever tested by the U.S., with a magnitude of over 1,000 times that of the Hiroshima bombing. The U.S. has a significant and continuing military interest and presence in the region, and U.S. nuclear testing and military entrenchment have resulted in environmental degradation and economic dependency.

In the 1980s the FSM and RMI entered into compacts of free association with the U.S., followed by Palau in the 1990s. Under these treaties, citizens of COFA nations can travel freely to live and work in the U.S., and are eligible for some, but not all, benefits that U.S. citizens can receive. As “non-qualified” aliens, Hawai‘i residents from the COFA nations are ineligible for Medicaid and other federal welfare programs, and, unlike other legal immigrants, are not eligible for benefits even after residing in the U.S. for five years.

Driven by poor health conditions (including some due to the impact of nuclear testing and contamination) and insufficient health care, displacement due to nuclear testing and contamination, and weak economies in their homelands, the number of Hawai‘i residents from COFA nations has dramatically increased over the past decade.

As has historically been the case with most recent newcomers, these Hawai‘i residents from COFA nations have been scapegoated and described negatively as a burden and a drain on resources, particularly in health and human services. While much of the discussion is focused on the federal government’s responsibility to offset the impact of in-migration from COFA nations under the compacts, there has been a disturbing rise in the use of vitriolic rhetoric not unlike that historically used against other immigrants and minority groups. Seiji Yamada, an associate professor at the University of Hawai‘i John A. Burns School of Medicine, has described this

trend in these terms: "... discourse among the politically powerful is paralleled by popular discourse." Media reports and anecdotal accounts indicate that these kinds of negative attitudes are manifested in discrimination against these COFA citizens residing in Hawai'i, who report experiencing exclusion and discrimination in Hawai'i.

Congressional approval and enactment of H.R. 912, "Restoring Medicaid for Compact of Free Association Migrants Act of 2013", introduced by Hawai'i Representative Colleen Hanabusa, will include COFA citizens who lawfully reside in the United States as "qualified aliens" under the PRWORA, providing federal relief from the burdens imposed on the State of Hawai'i by the combination of COFA migration and PRWORA restrictions, and promoting fairness and an end to discriminatory attacks and exclusion faced by Hawai'i residents from COFA nations.

The HCRC supports H.C.R. No. 117 and H.R. No. 88.

**Board of Directors**

David Derauf, M.D.
Naomi C. Fujimoto, Esq.
Patrick Gardner, Esq.
John H. Johnson
David J. Reber, Esq.

Executive Director

Victor Geminiani, Esq.

Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Supporting HCR 117 and HR 88
House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
Scheduled for Hearing Wednesday, March 27, 8:30 AM, Room 312

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) law firm created to advocate on behalf of low income individuals and families in Hawai'i on civil legal issues of statewide importance. Our core mission is to help our clients gain access to the resources, services, and fair treatment that they need to realize their opportunities for self-achievement and economic security.

Thank you for an opportunity to testify in **strong support** of House Concurrent Resolution 117 and House Resolution 88, which seeks to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association.

The former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have made sacrifices and great contributions to our state and country. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. However, in 1996 Congress overlooked the ongoing contributions and sacrifices of the FAS when it failed to include FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, Social Security, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance, and others.

By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i. Many of these residents are heavily disenfranchised, facing significant cultural, economic, language, and social barriers to opportunity and achievement.

Hawai'i should lead the way in advocating on the national level for our FAS community members and seek to restore access to basic federal programs. Equal opportunity is not only a question of justice—denying residents basic medical care will ultimately contribute to our state's overall health expenditures. However, federal program funds will help boost our economy and health care infrastructure. Moreover, the provision of medical services through federal assistance will allow FAS residents here to spend their income on other life necessities. Hawai'i has the highest cost of living in the United States, so access to necessary benefits is particularly critical here. No one should have to decide between life-saving medical care and providing basic necessities for their families.

FAS residents face enough barriers to advancing in our community; restoring access to federal programs will remove one of the biggest. Our country made a promise to the FAS, and we must honor it. We also must take responsibility by making amends for the harms imposed by the U.S. on the FAS. This resolution will help address current and past injustices and provide equal opportunity to our FAS community members.

hscadv



HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

To: Rep. K. Mark Takai, Chair
Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS, & CULTURE AND THE ARTS

From: Veronika Geronimo, Executive Director
Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Hearing Date and Time: Wednesday, March 27, 2013; 8:30 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 312

RE: HCR 117 / HR 88 - SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a statewide coalition of domestic violence service providers, our mission is to engage communities and organizations to end domestic violence through education, advocacy, and action for social justice. The Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence writes in support of HCR 117 / HR 88.

HCR 117 / HR 88 seeks to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community.

A lack of access to basic federal programs such as financial supports and healthcare can be devastating to domestic violence survivors who face dire personal and economic hardship. These debilitating constraints may possibly place them in the unconscionable position of having to return to violent homes. In fact, domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women, as abusers are often the ones in control of financial resources. This issue is compounded for migrant survivors who may not be eligible for financial supports or other resources to assist them; and are economically dependent on abusers if they are ineligible for public assistance.

The profound ripple effects of the inability to achieve self-sufficiency or access social safety-net supports can subject victims of crime to additional risks of violence, exploitation, and manipulation, including the loss of custody of their children.

Furthermore, this resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committees to pass HCR 117 / HR 88, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
810 Richards Street, Suite 960
Honolulu, HI 96813
vgeronimo@hscadv.org | www.hscadv.org
Tel: 808-832-9316 ext. 104 | Fax: 808-841-6028

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, & CULTURE AND
THE ARTS

Rep. K. Mark Takai, Chair
Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair

Measure: HCR 117

Date: Wed, March 27th, 2013

Time: 8:30 AM

Place: Conference Room 312

From: David Derauf, Executive Director, Kokua Kalihi Valley Health Center

Re: In Strong Support of HCR 117

Aloha Kākou e Committee Chair Takai, and Committee Vice Chair Dela Cruz,
Committee Vice Chair Ito

Kokua Kalihi Valley wishes to offer **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HCR 117**, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community.

The former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. These contributions date back to WWII and strongly continue to the present. In our own community we see FAS residents working hard to make a better life for themselves, and their extended families just as countless others coming to the shores of Hawaii have done before them. We see them serving in the United States Military in Iraq and Afghanistan. We see them finding ways to keep their own cultures alive, whilst becoming part of their new home here in Hawaii.

The 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for not only for FAS residents here in the United States and Hawaii, (particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic

opportunity) but for all residents of Hawaii who have been asked to bear the full brunt of this Federal Decision that it had no say in. It has created a perverse situation in which FAS residents though “freely associated” are not eligible for the same consideration given to immigrant groups coming to our shores. Our health center has seen the terrible impact of that for our patients who face huge barriers to getting good health services as well as increased discrimination, and the impact on our ability to serve the larger Kalihi community due to diminished resources.

This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committees to **PASS** HCR 117, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community.

Respectfully submitted,

David Derauf, MD
Executive Director
Kokua Kalihi Valley Health Center

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 10:06 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: Kenakinaka@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/25/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ken Akinaka, MRA	Hepatitis Support Network of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of This.resolution, which seeks to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community. The former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. No one should have to choose between going to the doctor to save their life, or keeping food on their family's table, or a roof over their child's home. By denying healthcare eligibility for our Pacific Islander residents, the PRWORA may force the chronically ill to choose between saving their own lives, or ensuring that their families have the basic necessities of life in the U.S. Closing the PRWORA loophole and including COFA residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for federal healthcare protections acknowledges the contributions and sacrifices of our Pacific Islander neighbors, which will benefit not just our COFA residents, but our broader society as well. The PRWORA denies them the same opportunity as all other legal residents, including the ability to pursue adequate healthcare, social security, and other public safety nets intended to uphold our enlightened social contract. Closing the PRWORA loophole will ensure that America keeps its promise of opportunity to our Pacific Islander allies lawfully residing here under the Compacts of Free Association that was made with the in exchange for our military access to thousands of strategic nautical miles in the Pacific near Asia and using the home lands for Atomic bomb testing. We need to uphold America's vision of justice. America prides itself on its sense of justice, and despite its historic contradictions, has struggled to ensure that we do acknowledge and address the injustices of our past. The reparations given to the 110,000 Japanese and the American children, who were wrongfully interned in WWII, was an effort to make up for the wrong that was done to them. However, some of the darkest moments in our recent history have yet to be fully acknowledged and addressed, threatening to leave a long and ugly scar in our reputation as a land of justice, and freedom. Closing the PRWORA loophole and fulfilling the intent of the Compacts of Free Association will take America one step forward towards its vision of liberty and justice for all. Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and

Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states. Some of these Hawaii residents have been here as long as thirty years and many of their children are American citizens who vote in our Democratic Process, yet their parents are denied proper medical care for in some cases chronic diseases like cancers or kidney disease caused by our atomic bombing testing of their home countries due to our treaty agreements. This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association. Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committees to PASS SCR108 and SR74, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community. Sincerely, Ken Akinaka, MRA Cell 808-221-6204

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: Louis Erteschik [Louis@hawaiidisabilityrights.org]
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 9:16 PM
To: vmitestimony
Subject: HCR 117/HR 88

The Hawaii Disability Rights Center is in support of these measures scheduled to be heard on March 27, 2013 at 8:30 AM

Louis Erteschik
Executive Director

UNITE HERE!

LOCAL  HAWAII

Eric Gill, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Hernando Ramos Tan, President

Godfrey Maeshiro, Senior Vice-President

Tuesday, March 26, 2013

Chairs and Committee Members
Committee on Veterans, Military, International Affairs & Culture and Arts
Hawaii State Legislature
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street

RE: HR88 & HR117 resolution urging US Congress to

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, and Committee members:

UNITE HERE Local 5, a local labor organization representing nearly 10,000 hotel, health care and food service workers employed throughout the State, hereby registers our **support of HR88 & HR117 to urge the United States Congress to include residents of COFA states to be recognized as “Qualified Aliens” under the PROWR act of 1996**”.

Local 5 supports all efforts to include U.S. residents present under the Compacts of Free Association as "qualified aliens" under the PRWORA, which would reinstate their eligibility for federal benefits including federal Medicaid funds. Resolution SCR108 is a step in the right direction to address one of the many injustices committed by the United States government in relation to the broken promises and impact on our communities and health related to our sister islands of the COFA islands.

Many of our members and our communities are affected by our Federal policies governing COFA states. Our people are being pushed off our islands while so many of us can't afford homes. More and more of our local jobs go to mainland companies while locals struggle to earn a living wage. Our sick and elderly continue to be denied access to the care they need. Alongside other community leaders we have launched a new movement called Aikea. It is aimed at encouraging participation in our political system and encapsulates a growing need of putting power back into the hands of the people to reclaim Hawaii for our future. A movement that promotes justice, embraces our diversity and reject politicians that break their word.

SCR108 would improve the lives and health of our communities and workers by allowing them access to many benefits, which were removed as a result of the Federal Personal Responsibility Act of 1996, which removed their previous eligibility for many Federal benefits including Medicaid, Social Security, Food stamps, housing and other social safety nets provided for many communities.

We applaud your effort to hear HR 88 & HR 117 and urge you to support this resolution and seek justice.

Thank you.

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2013 11:51 AM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: tinatakashy@hotmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/24/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Augustina Takashy	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I urge the Hawaii Legislature to pass these two resolutions on good faith. I add my signature to the letter of petition being circulated (can't upload it from Chuuk). Sign: Augustina Takashy

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2013 11:37 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: giambay_olter@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/23/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cinzia Olter	Healthy Pacific Organization	Support	No

Comments: To the Honorable Members of the Committee, Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of SCR108, SR74,HCR117, and HR88, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community. As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states. This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association. Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS these resolutions, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community. Sincerely, Cinzia Olter

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2013 11:16 AM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: edwin.d.herry@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/24/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Edwin Herry	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha and Good Morning, Honorable Chairman, members of this committee and members of the Hawaii State Legislature. I want to present myself by way of email as a Brother and a member of our Pacific Ohana. I fully support those Bills and Amendments that will help and have tremendous positive impact on the Health and Welfare of the COFA citizens here in the Aloha State of Hawaii. As a COFA citizen, Retired US Army, Recruited in Hawaii and Former member of the HARNG 29th Infantry Brigade from 1989-1998, Now Retired after 22 years, OIF Veteran from the NVARNG 1/221 Cavalry and 1864th Transportation Company, Activated Three Times under Title 10 Order By The President of the United States, I am really proud of my Services to The Aloha State of Hawaii, The Battle Born State of Nevada and of course The United States of America Armed Forces. I put my life on the line for our Country in defending Freedom and our Way of Life. Being a devoted and patriotic COFA citizen to our two Great States and our Great Country I now ask for your Compassions and Blessings in passing these very momentous Bills for my fellow COFA Brothers and Sisters. We All One Hawaii Ohana. Mahalo and God Bless.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2013 7:36 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: eva.washburn@chaminade.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/24/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eva Rose B. Washburn-Repollo	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: To the Honorable Members of the Committee, Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of SCR108, SR74,HCR117, and HR88, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community. As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states. This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association. Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS these resolutions, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community. Sincerely, Eva Rose B. Washburn-Repollo

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

Dina Shek
737 Olokele Avenue, #803
Honolulu, HI 96816
(808) 734-6316

March 24, 2013

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, & CULTURE
AND THE ARTS

Rep. K. Mark Takai, Chair

Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT FOR HCR117 and HR88

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO INCLUDE RESIDENT CITIZENS OF THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES AS "QUALIFIED ALIENS" UNDER THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR UNIQUE HISTORIC AND ONGOING SACRIFICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Dear Committee members,

I write to express my **strong support for HCR117 and HR88** which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community.

As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Unfortunately, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states.

This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committees to **PASS** HCR117 and HR88, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dina Shek". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dina Shek

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 12:23 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: grace.amaraich@pi.mofa.go.jp
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/25/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Grace Roby	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Please pass this measure.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2013 9:30 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: wctanaka@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/23/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wayne Tanaka	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Thank you very much for hearing this important measure, and for your support of our struggle for justice and equality in Hawai'i and the Pacific.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2013 11:09 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: Skmfreitas@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM*

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/23/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sharde Mersberg Freitas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

To the Honorable Members of the Committee,

Fakkun Kilisou Chapeur for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SCR108, SR74, HCR117, and HR88**, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community.

As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as “qualified aliens” eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states.

This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** these resolutions, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community.

Sincerely,

Kind K. Kanto

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 8:50 AM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: pbsana@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/25/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Peter Boone Sana	Individual	Support	No

Comments: To the Honorable Members of the Committee, Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of SCR108, SR74,HCR117 , and HR88, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community. As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states. This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association. Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS these resolutions, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community. Sincerely, Peter Boone Sana

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

To the Honorable Members of the
Committee,

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify
in **STRONG**
SUPPORT of **SCR108**, **SR74**, **HCR117**, and
HR88, which seek to restore access to
important and fundamental federal programs
for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers,
students, and community members present
under the Compacts of Free Association,
many of whom are also members of
Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community.

As a social anthropologist and researcher
specializing in Micronesian societies since
1979, and working through their Community
Action Agencies to support their health, I am
disturbed that one of the results of current
budget cuts is a law which to my
understanding breaks the Compact of Free
Association between the United States and
the Freely Associates States (FAS) of the
Micronesian nations. This appears legally
questionable.

However the more important issue is that
this abridges the rights of workers who

reside, work (thus paying tax) and seek education and healthcare in the US) which is within their rights! Is this law in alignment with American's vision of Justice? I sincerely hope that you will reconsider passing this resolution.

Closing the PRWORA loophole will benefit ALL in our state who seek medical treatment. No one should have to choose between going to the doctor to save their life, or keeping food on their family's table, or a roof over their child's home.

As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions

and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as “qualified aliens” eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others . By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai‘i’s community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai‘i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states.

This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** these resolutions, and help Hawai‘i

make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community.

Sincerely,

Professor Karen L. Nero

PhD, University of California, Berkeley 1987

Micronesian specialist

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 7:59 AM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: asitan@zagmail.gonzaga.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
alicia sitan	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support this bill.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 312
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

RE: HCR117/HR88 URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO INCLUDE RESIDENT CITIZENS OF THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES AS "QUALIFIED ALIENS" UNDER THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR UNIQUE HISTORIC AND ONGOING SACRIFICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Position: **In Strong Support**

Dear Members of the Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts:

I am writing to testify **in strong support** of HCR 117/HR 88.

As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states.

This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** these resolutions, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community. America prides itself on its sense of justice, and despite its historic contradictions, has struggled to ensure that we do acknowledge and address the injustices of our past. However, some

of the darkest moments in our recent history have yet to be fully acknowledged and addressed, threatening to leave a long and ugly scar in our reputation as a land of justice, and freedom. Closing the PRWORA loophole and fulfilling the intent of the Compacts of Free Association will take America one step forward towards its vision of liberty and justice for all.

Sincerely,
Amy Sojot
Mililani, HI

The Honorable Representative Mark Takai, Chairman House committee on Veterans,
Military and International Affairs and Culture and the Arts
House of Representatives, Hawaii State Legislature
Honolulu, Hawaii.

Aloha Kākou e Committee Chair Takai,

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HCR117 and HR88, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community.

As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as “qualified aliens” eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states.

This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committees to **PASS** SCR108 and SR74, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community.

Sincerely,

Joakim Jojo Peter

I am writing in support of HCR 117. As a Micronesian who had lived in Hawaii for twenty-four years, I have seen many types of discrimination and stereotypes. I went from being mistaken for being a Samoan, Tongan, or Tahitian because at that time, people didn't really know what and where Micronesia is, to being called a dirty roach, because there is too many Micronesians in Hawaii and we are described to be dirty people.

However, these types of discrimination and stereotypes became a real life threat in 1996, when the United States Congress passed a Welfare reform, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliations Act (PROWA). Under this act, As I was no longer eligible for Medicaid because of my Compact of Free Association citizenship. In 2009, the State of Hawaii Department of Human Services discontinued COFA citizen's eligibility for the Med-Quest and introduced a plan, Basic Hawaii Health, specifically for only COFA citizens. Experts called this plan a "formula to kill" because it did not cover dialysis services for the two hundred some Micronesians on dialysis including my only sister, chemotherapy for the many affected by the Nuclear Testing, like my best friends relatives, as well as affecting the many Micronesians with diabetes type II, like my mother.

The irony of all these discrimination and stereotypes against Micronesians is the fact that Micronesia like the rest of the Pacific islands and Third World countries had been victims to colonialism. For example, my people and families had struggled under four colonial powers, Spain, Germany, Japan, and United States of America, who had ruled our islands for more than 400 years. When the United States drafted the first health Policy of Micronesia in 1950, they failed to include the affect of the Nuclear Testing, which was far more damaging to Micronesia's health. About twenty years later, the United States introduced USDA food such as spam, corn beef, rice etc, which today had become Micronesia's stable food and formula for diabetes type II and other chronic diseases.

I can live with being mistaken for being a Samoan because Micronesia is too small, and with being called a dirty roach because I know I am not. But I know that without adequate health care for my people, families, and I, I will not be able to live the normal life span that every American has, I will not enjoy the freedom and "American Dream" like any American will enjoy, and fully practice my rights and responsibility as a Citizen of the Compact of Free Association Nations. If policy changes in United States could affect my rights under the Compact of Free Association Treaty, like what happened in the case of PROWA, then I believe that Micronesia is still under colonial control of the United States of America and the claim that we are Independent Nations is not true at all. And this is why I am supporting HCR 117.

Samuel John
MC/Creator, *Peace of Mind Crew*

Re: Support HCR117 please.

To All Involved:

Please support this measure to help those who desperately need it, especially indigenous and displaced peoples. It is very important as well as the right thing to do, and your support and leadership in this regard are greatly appreciated.

Mahab.

- Sam

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 6:58 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: ceciliachipen@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/25/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cecilia Chipen	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: I Cecilia Chipen fully supports the restoration of the federal benefits and services presents under the compact of free association.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 6:42 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: xlipat@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christine Lipat	Individual	Support	No

Comments: To the Honorable Members of the Committee, Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of SCR108, SR74, HCR117, and HR88, which seek to restore access to important and fundamental federal programs for U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association, many of whom are also members of Hawai'i's Pacific Islander community. As these resolutions remind us, the former trust territories of the Freely Associated States (FAS) have over sixty years of history of sacrifices and contributions to the United States, and to Hawai'i. As a result, FAS citizens have earned the right to reside, work, and seek educational and healthcare opportunities in the United States, much like any other U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. Unfortunately, the 1996 PRWORA law overlooked these ongoing contributions and sacrifices when it neglected to include our FAS residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for such basic federal programs as Medicaid, SSI, nutritional supplements, and others. By effectively revoking their previous eligibility for these programs, this law has resulted in harsh consequences for Hawai'i's community members, particularly for those seeking necessary medical treatment or basic educational or economic opportunity here in the U.S. and Hawai'i, and especially for those who continue to face significant cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers to equal opportunity here in the states. This resolution seeks to address this injustice and restore access to basic federal programs for FAS members of our Pacific Islander community, so that they may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our society and pursue the American Dream as promised under the Compacts of Free Association. Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS these resolutions, and help Hawai'i make a strong statement about justice and equality for these U.S. resident workers, taxpayers, students, and members of our island community. Sincerely, Dr. Christine T. Lipat, DC

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmtestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 1:35 PM
To: vmtestimony
Cc: clarkfsm@hotmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Clark Graham	SHIHP-HOOPS	Support	No

Comments: First with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and now with the Compacts of Free Association between the US and Micronesia, Federated States of and also the RMI and Palau, the people of Miornesia have had a positive relationship based on "trust, friendship & mutual support" for one another. The Compacts with the Micronesian countries provides for benefits to each country, but especially to the United States. In return, the USA has agreed to permit FAS citizens the right to live, work and seek an education in the USA. Along with the right to live and work in the USA should go the right to benefits extended to others who live on US soil. The casulty rate among Micronesians serving in the US military is the highest in the world. Some say the aid given to Micronesians is the highest per capita of any foreign country. Of course, there are very few people in Micronesia., so this should NOT be a point of argument for the United States. Looking at aid provided to educate student per year: Washington DC - \$16,000+ USA \$11,000+ Chuuk, Micronesia \$1,000 - per student This is an excellent example of why people leave their island homes: to get a good education for their children. They travel to the USA for opportunities to work, for education, healthcare & a better standard of living. In Chuuk people work for 65¢ to 85¢ per hour. A Chuukes working road constuction makes about \$1.50/hr. Teachers may as little as \$4,000, some \$8,000 per annum. When I taught Civics at Xavier High School years ago I pointed out that it will be very difficult for Palau, RMI and Micronesia to become independent. When students felt this was incorrect, I asked them, "How many of you have a relative living in the USA?" Most of the hands went up. The US did not simply give Micronesians the right to live in the USA or join the US military without a good reason. That reason is that bu giving Micronesians these opportunities, they woud for strong times to America. Therefore. it is in the best interest of the United State (and of course Micronesians) that the US government extend to Micronesians health care, right to work benefits, and all other rights that others receive. Micronesians are friends to Americans, and we should treat our friends well.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing , improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 5:50 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: dawnmahi@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/25/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dawn Mahi	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha mai kakou, I am writing to strongly support of HCR117 and HR88. I work with the community of COFA migrants here in Hawai'i at a community health center. My friends and colleagues from the Pacific have much in common with our own Hawaiian culture and are hardworking, productive citizens with a lot to contribute to Hawai'i. However, they have suffered due to the discrimination that exists in our society that is based in a paradigm of lack and economic competition. Micronesians are our cousins and we have much to learn e ach other, especially if we are to perpetuate all of our cultures. However, since none of us seem to have enough resources, we always fight against other groups and finds ways to denigrate and hold each other down despite the strengths we have in common. With the legislation of the Basic Health Plan that was briefly implemented a few years ago, my friends in the Micronesian community saw an increase in discrimination and violence targeting them. It was as if the state's legislation of restricted health care based on citizenship status gave tacit permission for racism and acts of hatred to increase in our larger society. In the media and in society people began to speak of the strain that COFA migrants place on our resources as a state. No one examined the many benefits that COFA migrants have made, including Papa Mau who taught us how to voyage again. His family and other navigators live on O'ahu now and are hardworking contributors to our economy. Why doesn't that count? Not only did the racism increase exponentially during that time, but during the brief period that the Basic Health Plan was implemented several family members of my coworkers died due to lack of health care access. Being turned away from doctors and expensive ER's, having medication rationed by well-meaning providers who were trying to protect their patient's health caused terror in the community. At the same time, the state legislature said that it wasn't your problem, it was simply an economic matter. We went to many funerals during that time, and as we sat there mourning loved ones it was hard to reconcile the economics of death! The state government has a responsibility to protect all of Hawaii's citizens. I know that the state doesn't feel that they can find the resources to cover the health and other impact costs of the COFA migrant community, who do not have the same citizenship status as the rest of us. But I strongly urge you to find other solutions for our economic woes than legislating discrimination. This resolution would match the o ne that has already cleared the Senate. In this action you could help to put the responsibility where it is due and urge the federal government to fulfill their obligations to the COFA migrant population who are working hard to contribute to the success of Hawai'i the same way our grandparents and ancestors did before us. This is ultimately the best solution and also more long term, permanent "fix" for the economic challenges that we face. Federal eligibility for Medicaid and other programs would lift the burden of the state and keep people out of the ER. Not only that, but we would be treating our cousins with the same respect and rights that we give to the rest of our family here in Hawai'i. Mahalo nui loa for this

opportunity to submit my testimony and I hope that you pass this resolution. Me ka ha'aha'a, Dawn Mahi

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

vmitestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 8:08 PM
To: vmitestimony
Cc: beautifulmindsets@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR117 on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM

HCR117

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for VMI on Mar 27, 2013 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Mariano	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Fair justice and equal opportunity. Kwajalein Atoll in Micronesia becomes a great source with respect to United States of America National Security Defense.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

March 27, 2013

Representative K. Mark Takai, Chair
Representative Ken Ito, Vice-Chair
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, &
CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Sharon E. Har, Vice Chair
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

House Resolution 88 / House Concurrent Resolution 117

Urging the United States Congress to include resident citizens of the Freely Associated States as "Qualified Aliens" under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in recognition of their unique historic and ongoing sacrifices and contributions to the United States of America.

DATE: Wednesday, March 27, 2013

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 312, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Honorable Representatives Takai, Ito, Rhoads, and Har:

My name is Richard Salvador. I am originally from the Republic of Belau (Palau). I came here to attend graduate school at UH-Manoa, eventually deciding to live here. I have been a teacher for the past 8 years at McKinley Community School, teaching English and working as a Test Proctor in our school's Testing Center.

I served as the first president of the Micronesian Community Network and, beginning in 2004, we have appeared here and in various venues seeking assistance of one sort or another to help empower our Compact of Free Association communities in Hawaii. In that capacity, I served as a member of the Attorney-General's COFA Task Force which the legislature requested in 2007 to study the issues and challenges facing COFA communities in Hawaii. The Task Force produced its report and presented it to the 2008 legislative session.

That COFA Task Force studied carefully all COFA related expenses in Hawaii and all available funding mechanisms under State and Federal programs and made a few recommendations including hinting at some possible federal programs that, if expanded, could go a long way to supplement current State funding for COFA residents' health care, etc. Specifically, the COFA Task Force recommended that inclusion of COFA residents in Medicaid and other public assistance benefits that they were previously eligible for, but from which they were cut off during President Clinton's welfare reforms, and enforced in the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act of 1996, could possibly address the problem.

I would like to quote from the relevant passage of that COFA Task Force Report:

In 1997, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility [and] Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), a groundbreaking piece of legislation that reformed the welfare system... With the enactment of PRWORA, most non-citizens in the United States, with some limited exceptions, became ineligible for federally funded welfare programs including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families..., Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Supplemental Security Income... COFA migrants were among the non-citizen groups excluded, and not included as one of the exceptions, despite the fact that they are legal residents in the United States, and are more like citizens than any immigrants or other legally resident non-citizens, in terms of their ability to reside, work and attend school in the United States. The State has continued to make the services available through equivalent State-funded services.

The federal government created the relationship with these nations that allows their citizens to freely reside in the U.S. with few limitations. The Task Force believes that extending eligibility for federal assistance to the COFA migrants would better support the purposes underlying the COFA. *Providing federal assistance for COFA migrants additionally would alleviate much of the burden on the State's budget*

while still maintaining the same level of services for the COFA migrants (See 2007 COFA Task Force Report, pp. 6-7, italics mine).

We come here today to request Hawaii State's support for that COFA Task Force recommendation because a unified statement of support from this Legislature would provide strong backing in support of US Representative Colleen Hanabusa's current bill in the US Congress (*H.R. 912: Restoring Medicaid for Compact of Free Association Migrants Act of 2013*).

Both former Senator Akaka and the late Senator Inouye supported similar bills aimed at changing the 1996 PRWORA, as did Governor Abercrombie when he served in the US Congress then! So, we are here seeking to ensure continuity of support in forging ahead with Hawaii's effort to seek justice for COFA Sisters and Brothers in the US.

Part of our efforts here today is to ensure that the State as a whole has not wavered in its determination to push forward these policies at the federal level and to build the case for strong support behind Hanabusa's bill. US Representative Tulsi Gabbard is a co-sponsor of Hanabusa's bill as are Representatives Madeleine Bordallo of Guam, Gregorio Sablan of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Eni Faleomavaega of American Samoa.

Hanabusa's bill has wide support. The Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) in San Francisco, CA has declared its strong support. Their president and CEO Kathy Ko Chin had this to say about the bill: "This bill is sorely needed to fulfill our diplomatic and strategic military commitments and to restore safety net health care coverage for COFA migrants who contribute to the American economy, yet are unfairly denied access to quality health care programs."

The texts of HR88 and HCR117 describe what I strongly believe are historical obligations of the United States Government for the lingering environmental and human health effects of its nuclear testings in the Marshall Islands specifically and, generally, with the impacts of its colonial legacy on the capacities of the COFA nation-states. As a result of inadequate nation-building initiatives, COFA populations have taken advantage of their visa-free travel entry into the US and dispersed into various cities, territories, and States of the USA. Their experience of transitioning into and integration within the American system has been difficult. This is one, though vital, attempt to help ease the transition.

I conclude with the last statement of our "Talking Points" that we distributed to you all as we made our rounds in the State Capitol a couple of weeks ago seeking support for the resolutions from legislators. It describes what is at the core of all our efforts to close the PRWORA loophole for COFA people in the US.

We...uphold America's vision of justice. America prides itself on its sense of justice, and despite its historic contradictions, has struggled to ensure that we do acknowledge and address the injustices of our past. However, some of the darkest moments in our recent history have yet to be fully acknowledged and addressed, threatening to leave a long and ugly scar in our reputation as a land of justice, and freedom. Closing the PRWORA loophole and fulfilling the intent of the Compacts of Free Association will take America one step forward towards its vision of liberty and justice for all.

Please pass these resolutions! Mahalo Nui Loa for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Richard N Salvador
Member - COFA Community Advocacy Network of Hawaii

3419 East Manoa Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

(See attachment: *COFA Community Advocacy Network, COFA Resolution Talking Points*)

[COFA Community Advocacy Network, COFA Resolution Talking Points, March 2013]

Other Talking Points:

1. Closing the PRWORA loophole will benefit all in our state who seek medical treatment.

Including our COFA residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for life-saving Medicaid funds under PRWORA will lead to the investment of substantial federal monies in our Hawai'i's medical infrastructure, which will boost our economy and bring a higher quality of care for anyone in our state who needs to go to the doctor.

2. A responsible adult cleans up their own mess. The United States has made a huge mess of the islands and lives of the indigenous peoples of the Freely Associated States, and it must take responsibility in cleaning up this mess. Reinstating federal benefits for U.S. resident taxpayers, workers, students, and community members present under the Compacts of Free Association will help the United States take ownership of this ongoing responsibility, just as a responsible adult would.

3. No one should have to choose between going to the doctor to save their life, or keeping food on their family's table, or a roof over their child's home. By denying healthcare eligibility for our Pacific Islander residents, the PRWORA may force the chronically ill and seriously injured to choose between saving their own lives, or ensuring that their families have the basic necessities of life in the U.S. Aspiring nurses, doctors, or engineers may have to drop out of college just to pay off a relative's healthcare costs, impacting not just their families, but our economy and our society as a whole. Closing the PRWORA loophole and including COFA residents as "qualified aliens" eligible for federal healthcare protections acknowledges the contributions and sacrifices of our Pacific Islander neighbors, which will benefit not just our COFA residents, but our broader society as well.

4. We can affirm America as the land of opportunity, where individuals are given a fair shake to pursue the American Dream. America's strength and pride come from its basic ideal as a land of opportunity, where all individuals should be given a fair shake in their pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. However, the exclusion of our Pacific Islander neighbors and allies under the PRWORA denies them the same opportunity as all other legal residents, including the ability to pursue adequate healthcare, social security, and other public safety nets intended to uphold our enlightened social contract. Closing the PRWORA loophole will ensure that America keeps its promise of opportunity to our Pacific Islander allies lawfully residing here under the Compacts of Free Association.

5. We can uphold America's vision of justice. America prides itself on its sense of justice, and despite its historic contradictions, has struggled to ensure that we do acknowledge and address the injustices of our past. However, some of the darkest moments in our recent history have yet to be fully acknowledged and addressed, threatening to leave a long and ugly scar in our reputation as a land of justice, and freedom. Closing the PRWORA loophole and fulfilling the intent of the Compacts of Free Association will take America one step forward towards its vision of liberty and justice for all