

FEB 22 2017

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS TO
TAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS TO PROVIDE COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION
VETERANS EQUAL QUALITY AND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AS
VETERANS IN UNITED STATES TERRITORIES.

1 WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islanders have a long and
2 distinguished history of military service stretching back to
3 World War II; and
4

5 WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islanders have often faced
6 discrimination in terms of recognition and veteran services upon
7 returning home from war; and
8

9 WHEREAS, the United States entered into a Compact of Free
10 Association (COFA) agreement with the United States Affiliated
11 Pacific Islands of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia
12 (Micronesia), and Republic of the Marshall Islands (the Marshall
13 Islands) that took responsibility for protecting the territorial
14 integrity of those nations; and
15

16 WHEREAS, the United States has vigorously recruited Pacific
17 Islanders from the COFA nations into the United States military;
18 and
19

20 WHEREAS, Pacific Islanders from COFA nations have served
21 with honor in the recent Global War on Terrorism; and
22

23 WHEREAS, Pacific Islanders from United States territories
24 like Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands
25 receive full health benefits from the United States Department
26 of Veteran Affairs after serving in the United States Department
27 of Defense on their native islands, while Pacific Islanders from
28 the COFA nations of Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands
29 do not receive such benefits; now, therefore,
30



S.C.R. NO. 54

1 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth
 2 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017, the
 3 House of Representatives concurring, that the United States
 4 Department of Veteran Affairs is requested to propose amendments
 5 to existing laws or amend any relevant regulations to provide
 6 COFA veterans from Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands
 7 the same access and quality of health care as their counterparts
 8 in Guam and the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas; and
 9

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if COFA veterans from Palau,
 11 Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands are not provided the same
 12 access of health care benefits by the end of fiscal year 2017,
 13 the Department of Defense recruiters in COFA nations are
 14 requested to inform recruits of the lack of health care benefits
 15 after service through a signed waiver confirming informed
 16 consent; and
 17

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Department of
 19 State, United States Department of Defense, United States
 20 Department of Health and Human Services, United States Agency
 21 for International Development, United States Department of the
 22 Interior's Office of Insular Affairs, and other relevant
 23 departments and agencies are requested to develop, fund, and
 24 implement a health care plan for Pacific Island veterans that
 25 continues beyond the end of COFA funding in 2023 until fiscal
 26 year 2066 or when the United States military relationship with
 27 COFA nations expires, whichever is later; and
 28

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 30 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of State,
 31 Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Health and Human Services,
 32 Administrator for the United States Agency for International
 33 Development, and Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas.
 34
 35
 36

OFFERED BY:

Michelle Lideni

J. L. M.

Kal Rhoad

Will Egan

[Signature]

