

FEB 22 2017

SENATE 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
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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
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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
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16 WHEREAS, the United States has vigorously recruited Pacific
17 Islanders from the COFA nations into the United States military;
18 and
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20 WHEREAS, Pacific Islanders from COFA nations have served
21 with honor in the recent Global War on Terrorism; and
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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,
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31 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth
32 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017,
33 that the United States Department of Veteran Affairs is
34 requested to propose amendments to existing laws or amend any



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1 relevant regulations to provide COFA veterans from Palau,
 2 Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands the same access and quality
 3 of health care as their counterparts in Guam and the
 4 Commonwealth of Northern Marianas; and
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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if COFA veterans from Palau,
 7 Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands are not provided the same
 8 access of health care benefits by the end of fiscal year 2017,
 9 the Department of Defense recruiters in COFA nations are
 10 requested to inform recruits of the lack of health care benefits
 11 after service through a signed waiver confirming informed
 12 consent; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Department of
 15 State, United States Department of Defense, United States
 16 Department of Health and Human Services, United States Agency
 17 for International Development, United States Department of the
 18 Interior's Office of Insular Affairs, and other relevant
 19 departments and agencies are requested to develop, fund, and
 20 implement a health care plan for Pacific Island veterans that
 21 continues beyond the end of COFA funding in 2023 until fiscal
 22 year 2066 or when the United States military relationship with
 23 COFA nations expires, whichever is later; and
 24

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 26 Resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of State, Secretary
 27 of Defense, Secretary of Health and Human Services,
 28 Administrator for the United States Agency for International
 29 Development, and Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas.
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OFFERED BY: *[Signature]*
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