

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1233

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 29 2017

RE: S.R. No. 16

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2017  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, to which was referred S.R. No. 16 entitled:

"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,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to request 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.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the State Office of Veterans Affairs.

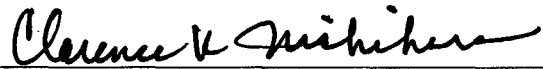
Your Committee finds that it is important to take care of all veterans in order to promote the public well-being. The United States entered into the Compact of Free Associations (COFA) with the Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of the Marshall Islands for the purpose of protecting the territorial integrity of those islands. However, unlike Pacific Islanders from the United States territories of Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands, those Pacific Islanders from the COFA islands who serve the United States Department of Defense do not receive full health benefits from the Department of Defense. The



lack of health benefits for veterans of the COFA nations is a glaring inequity that should not continue. Therefore, your Committee requests that the Department of Veterans Affairs provide Pacific Islander veterans of the COFA nations full health benefits. If the Department of Veterans Affairs chooses not to provide health benefits to COFA veterans, then Department of Defense recruiters are requested to inform recruits of the lack of health care benefits after service through a signed waiver.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.R. No. 16 and recommends that it be referred to your Committees on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health and Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Public Safety,  
Intergovernmental, and Military  
Affairs,



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CLARENCE K. NISHIHARA, Chair



