
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CREATE A COMPACT OF
FREE ASSOCIATION ADVISORY BODY.

1 WHEREAS, each immigrant group in Hawaii, such as the
2 Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, and Samoans, has
3 endured discrimination and inequity; and
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5 WHEREAS, individuals who have immigrated to Hawaii from the
6 independent nations of the Republic of the Marshall Islands,
7 Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of Palau are
8 referred to as the Compact of Free Association (COFA) residents,
9 who face the usual prejudices but additionally face special
10 challenges due to their unique immigration status; and
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12 WHEREAS, COFA residents' immigration status excludes them
13 from receiving essential benefits enjoyed by U.S. citizens and
14 legal permanent residents, and there have also been public
15 debates about the allocation of equitable resources for
16 education, housing, employment, and health care for COFA
17 residents – resources that for other groups are provided without
18 question; and
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20 WHEREAS, such inequity is contrary to the values of care
21 and aloha of the Native Hawaiian culture, which has historically
22 embraced newcomers; and
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24 WHEREAS, despite Native Hawaiians enduring profound trauma
25 and discrimination in their own right, this culture of aloha
26 continues to serve as the State's moral standard, thereby
27 promoting caring, community-oriented public policy; and
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29 WHEREAS, the unique immigration status of COFA islanders
30 stems from their close and historical relationship with the
31 United States; and
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1 WHEREAS, in 1947, shortly after World War II, the United
2 Nations granted the United States trusteeship over the Republic
3 of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and
4 Republic of Palau, also known as the Compact Nations or the
5 Freely Associated States; and

6
7 WHEREAS, the trusteeship between the United States and the
8 three Compact Nations is a sacred trust and agreement for the
9 mutual benefit of all four nations; and

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11 WHEREAS, COFA islanders have among the highest per capita
12 United States military service and service-related deaths; and

13
14 WHEREAS, from 1946 to 1958, COFA islanders endured the
15 testing and detonation of sixty-seven nuclear bombs, which
16 destroyed homelands and engendered a scourge of cancer that
17 continues to afflict COFA islanders today; and

18
19 WHEREAS, the Compact Nations provide the United States with
20 immeasurable benefits of national security, such as hosting the
21 U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile defense system and
22 granting the United States exclusive military strategic denial
23 to millions of square miles of the Pacific Ocean – a distance of
24 more than one and a half times the width of the continental
25 United States – at a time when global relations among
26 superpowers are increasingly fraught; and

27
28 WHEREAS, COFA residents have shared with Hawaii, through
29 their master navigator, "Papa" Mau Piailug, the gift of
30 traditional navigation that was utilized by the Hokulea,
31 enabling a Hawaiian cultural movement of immeasurable beauty and
32 pride; and

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34 WHEREAS, an estimated eighteen thousand COFA residents
35 legally reside in Hawaii, with an unknown proportion being U.S.
36 citizens who were born in the United States, and collectively
37 comprise just 1.3 percent of the State's population; and

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39 WHEREAS, COFA residents pay taxes and fully contribute to
40 Hawaii's economy; furthermore, they come from proud, rich,
41 vibrant, and ancient Pacific cultures that enrich Hawaii's
42 communities; and



1 WHEREAS, contrary to the mutually beneficial intent of the
2 trusteeship, COFA islanders are treated like bottom-tier
3 citizens, denied state-funded health care coverage, and thrown
4 into a maze of administrative and economic barriers that foster
5 shame, illness, suffering, and death; now, therefore,
6

7 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
8 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
9 2019, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Human
10 Services is urged to create a COFA Advisory that will:
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- 12 (1) Recommend the best approach for providing parity in
13 state-funded health coverage for otherwise eligible
14 COFA residents;
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- 16 (2) Provide an economic analysis of the financial impact
17 of the Advisory Body's recommendations;
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- 19 (3) Recommend steps for reducing or eliminating entirely
20 administrative burdens for program enrollment and re-
21 enrollment;
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- 23 (4) Recommend strategies for community outreach,
24 stakeholder education, and administration;
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- 26 (5) Provide an assessment of the implementation of the
27 recommendations at months six, twelve, and twenty-four
28 after implementation;
29
- 30 (6) Undertake an evaluation of current demographic and
31 other data collection and census activities relevant
32 to COFA residents, and make appropriate
33 recommendations for standardization and equity; and
34
- 35 (7) Evaluate the outcomes and status of recommendations
36 from the Compacts of Free Association Task Force
37 convened pursuant to Senate Resolution No. 142, S.D. 1
38 (Regular Session of 2007); and
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the evaluation criteria for the
41 COFA Advisory Body's recommendations are as follows:
42

- 43 (1) State-funded health coverage for COFA residents will
44 be equal to that available through Med-QUEST;



- 1
- 2 (2) When evaluating coverage options, the Advisory Body
- 3 will take into consideration health care access, cost,
- 4 and administrative burden for participants;
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- 6 (3) The Advisory Body will also take into account cost-
- 7 effectiveness for the State and administrative burden
- 8 for affected state agencies, insurers, and other
- 9 administering stakeholders; however, the Advisory Body
- 10 will prioritize paragraphs (1) and (2);
- 11
- 12 (4) Enrollees will not be required to pay copayments,
- 13 premiums, coinsurance, or other related fees upfront
- 14 and then seek reimbursement;
- 15
- 16 (5) Structural inequities will be eliminated, and program
- 17 eligibility requirements should align with other
- 18 related federal and state program requirements for
- 19 similar populations, including the requirements of
- 20 HealthCare.gov;
- 21
- 22 (6) Administrative barriers to participation, including
- 23 enrollment and re-enrollment, will be minimized or
- 24 eliminated entirely;
- 25
- 26 (7) Specific program requirements will allow agency
- 27 flexibility; and
- 28
- 29 (8) Clear evidence of the best approaches and practices
- 30 from other states and communities; and
- 31

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
33 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human
34 Services.

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