

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/27/2019 9:30:04 AM

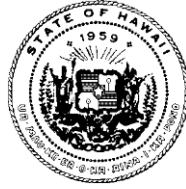
Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2019 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ryan Kusumoto	Testifying for Parents And Children Together	Support	No

Comments:

Parents And Children Together supports SCR 201 which seeks to support the many COFA individuals and families who are residents of Hawaii.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention, community building and economic development programs.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 27, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 201/SR 161 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CREATE
A COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION ADVISORY BODY**

Hearing: March 28, 2019, 10:20 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports SCR 201 and SR 161.

PURPOSE: The purpose of SCR 201 and SR 161 is to urge DHS to create a Compact of Free Association (COFA) Advisory Board to make recommendations on different aspects of health care coverage for COFA residents.

DHS recognizes the unique circumstances our community members from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau face while navigating their way through systems of care that can struggle to meet their needs, particularly in the areas of health insurance and health care. Beginning in 2015, DHS's Med-QUEST Division (MQD) has facilitated a COFA Stakeholder meeting to provide a forum for ongoing dialog between health providers, COFA community leaders, outreach workers called "kokua," health insurers and members of Hawaii's congressional delegation. We believe that this informal group may serve as a foundation for the establishment of the more formal advisory body that is called for in these resolutions. We look forward to the continued dialog and co-created solution building that will come from this body.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/27/2019 12:26:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2019 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Epp	Testifying for Kokua Kalihi Valley	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Michael Epp. For seven years, I was Executive Director of the Pacific Island Health Officers Association, the health leadership body of the US-Affiliated Pacific Islands, including the FSM, Palau and the Marshalls. I now work in management at Kokua Kalihi Valley, a community health center serving a large population of Hawaii's COFA residents – a third of our 10,000 patients are COFA residents.

So I've had the privilege of working with COFA islanders both in their nations of origin and in Kalihi. They are a gifted and resilient and resourceful people. SCR201 and SR161, which Kokua Kalihi Valley fully supports, describe in their preambles the significant contributions of COFA islanders to our State economy, culture and security. I will, in the interest of time, not repeat these contributions here.

Having been raised in Hawaii, I understand how each wave of newcomers faces discrimination. But Hawaii's COFA residents—despite their significant contributions to our state community—face a particularly difficult form of structural (and unintended) discrimination unlike other comparable immigrant groups: In the State's well-meaning effort to address the policy, funding and social complexities facing this population, COFA islanders have been excluded from Medicaid (at both the Federal and State levels) and, in the last few years, have been shifted from one comparatively inadequate health plan to another, in a confusing ever-changing maze of administrative and documentation requirements and financial copays.

The result, while surely unintentional, has been devastating. For many of our COFA families in Kalihi, the outcome has been preventable and debilitating illness and death. This is not overstatement. At Kokua Kalihi Valley, we are completing an assessment of the impact of these economic and administrative barriers among our COFA patients, and the results are deeply discouraging. We look forward to sharing our findings with you soon.

We often hear that the COFA Medicaid issue is primarily a federal problem. And I commend the leadership in my State, for allocating resources for the health benefits that do exist. But federal recalcitrance should not be an excuse in a State that often serves as an example to the nation, of justice, care and aloha—values that are at the core of

our host culture identity and that undergird our success as a community. In the current national political climate about immigration, taking a more welcoming and caring stance is more critical than ever. Please pass SCR201 and SR161, as a key step towards restoring health equity to our COFA families, friends and neighbors.

Finally, I encourage the Senate Ways & Means Committee to provide DHS adequate funding for administering the Advisory Group proposed in these resolutions and supporting the advisory group's responsibilities for evaluation and assessment, including conducting financial impact analyses and providing more refined COFA census and demographic data.

Thank you

Michael Epp

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Comprehensive Family Services

2239 North School Street,

Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

808 382-1231

LATE

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/27/2019 11:53:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2019 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Democrats Legislative Priorities Committee	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2019 at 10:20 am

Re: Testimony of Save Medicaid Hawaii in strong support of SCR 201 and SR 161 "Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body."

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Aragan, and Members of the Committee

Save Medicaid Hawaii writes in strong support of SCR 201 and SR 161 "Urging the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body."

COFA citizens residing in Hawaii and their Hawaii-born families are actively contributing to Hawaii's economy and culture, just as all immigrant groups before them have done. However, the unique immigration status of COFA residents stems from their close and historical relationship between the United States and their homeland of origin.

The ill-conceived experiment to dis-enroll COFA migrants in Hawaii from MedQUEST and onto the ACA instead has been of questionable economic value to the state and has caused enormous loss and burdens upon these families and upon our health care system as a whole.

Hawaii is one health insurance risk pool and when a large group of residents goes uninsured or underinsured, as many COFA migrants are, this raises the costs of health care for the entire system, which then get passed on to all of us in increased health insurance premiums.

Take for example the health of pregnant women and their children. Hawaii wisely continues to cover pregnant low- income COFA women under MedQUEST. However, just 2 months after giving birth, such a COFA woman is now considered an "adult" and loses MedQUEST coverage, even though she is still low-income, often under 100% of the FPL. While ACA insurance can be applied for, there are higher copays, and differing confusing rules, resulting in gaps in coverage for many new COFA mothers. The 6 months after a baby is born is considered the most critical time: to prevent health problems in the next pregnancy, to help babies breastfeed longer, to assist families to decide upon appropriate family planning methods, etc. The result of this sudden bureaucratically-induced loss of MedQUEST by post-partum COFA women is that a vulnerable population is falling off and on various insurance coverage during critical times in their life and health care. The end-result, experience shows, is increased hospitalizations and NICU babies - painful and expensive situations that good continuity of care can help prevent.

Save Medicaid members serve on the front lines of our communities and health care system and see in our practices examples of such compromised care and lives. We welcome the collection of quality data to determine the extent of the problems and the best solutions.

We fully support the SCR 201 and SR 161 calling on the Department of Human Services to Create a Compact of Free Association Advisory Body, which will recommend the best approach for providing

parity in state-funded health coverage for otherwise eligible COFA residents; and provide an economic analysis of the financial impact of the Advisory Body's recommendations.

We also encourage the Senate Ways & Means Committee to provide DHS adequate funding for administering the advisory group and supporting its responsibilities for evaluation and assessment, including conducting financial impact analyses and providing more refined COFA census and demographic data.

Sincerely,

Doris Segal Matsunaga, MPH
On behalf of ***Save Medicaid Hawaii***

Save Medicaid Hawaii, a network of people advocating for NO CUTS in Medicaid and working towards a stronger health care system in Hawaii that provides high quality universal health care for all.

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveMedicaidHawaii/>

LATE

SCR-201

Submitted on: 3/27/2019 5:28:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2019 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
chelsea pang	Individual	Support	No

Comments: