
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

STRONGLY URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR TO RESTORE FEDERAL HEALTHCARE FUNDING FOR U.S. RESIDENTS PRESENT UNDER THE COMPACTS OF FREE ASSOCIATION, IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR UNIQUE HISTORIC AND ONGOING SACRIFICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND TO THE WORLD.

1 WHEREAS, the Freely Associated States of Palau, the
2 Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of
3 Micronesia comprise a multitude of islands, languages, and
4 cultures throughout the Micronesian region of the Pacific Ocean;
5 and

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7 WHEREAS, the Freely Associated States were former Trust
8 Territories of the United States and, as sovereign nations,
9 continue to place their trust in the United States through the
10 Compacts of Free Association; and

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12 WHEREAS, the Compacts of Free Association between the
13 Freely Associated States and the United States of America
14 recognize the historic sacrifices and contributions of the
15 citizens of the Freely Associated States to the interests of the
16 United States, including the use of their islands and atolls for
17 sixty-seven nuclear tests from 1946 to 1958, subjecting the
18 Marshallese people to human radiation experiments without their
19 knowledge or their consent, and the United States military's
20 occupation of their islands and waters to ensure United States'
21 control of the Pacific; and

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23 WHEREAS, under the Compacts of Free Association, the United
24 States continues to exercise exclusive military jurisdiction
25 over the lands and waters of the Freely Associated States and
26 continues to use their sovereign territories for military
27 weapons testing, including the use of their atolls as part of



1 the United States National Missile Defense Program's long-range
2 intercontinental ballistic missile defense system; and

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4 WHEREAS, decades of United States administration has failed
5 to establish economic independence within the Freely Associated
6 States, leading to a lack of adequate agricultural, educational,
7 and health infrastructure necessary for a self-sufficient
8 society; and

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10 WHEREAS, in addition to these contributions and sacrifices,
11 the sons and daughters of the Freely Associated States continue
12 to lay down their lives in the interests of the United States,
13 representing some of the highest per-capita military recruitment
14 levels to the United States military compared to any other
15 jurisdiction, including each of the fifty states of the United
16 States of America; and

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18 WHEREAS, United States residents present under the Compacts
19 of Free Association invariably contribute substantially to their
20 communities and local economies, through both skilled and
21 unskilled labor, and by paying all taxes and fees applicable to
22 any other citizen and resident of the United States; and

23
24 WHEREAS, the achievements and contributions of the people
25 of the Freely Associated States have and continue to greatly
26 inform our nation's understanding of the common heritage of
27 Pacific Islanders and of humankind, including but not limited to
28 the awe-inspiring world wonder of Pohnpei's Nan Madol, the
29 "Venice of the Pacific"; the ocean conservation and management
30 leadership of Palau, which continues to boast teeming and
31 abundant reefs and waters despite decades of modernization; the
32 traditional ocean navigation techniques kept alive and
33 rejuvenated by the late Pius "Papa Mau" Piailug, which are now
34 leading a worldwide voyage for global sustainability by the
35 canoes Hōkūle'a and Hikianalia; and the internationally-
36 recognized advocacy of government leaders and youth alike for
37 nuclear disarmament and awareness of climate change's global
38 impacts; and

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40 WHEREAS, despite the limited rights to travel, reside, and
41 work, seek educational opportunity, and seek medical treatment
42 in the United States, citizens of the Freely Associated States
43 who find themselves in the United States continue to encounter



1 substantial and varied forms of discrimination, including
2 cultural, economic, linguistic, and social barriers; and
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4 WHEREAS, despite the rights of citizens of the Freely
5 Associated States to reside and seek economic opportunity in the
6 United States, the federal Personal Responsibility and Work
7 Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 removed United States
8 residents present under the Compacts of Free Association from
9 their previous eligibility for numerous federal benefits,
10 including Medicaid, which their taxes continue to fund, and
11 which all other citizens and most resident legal immigrants
12 enjoy; and
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14 WHEREAS, Hawaii had until March 1, 2015, to continue
15 funding to provide indigent community members with equal access
16 to the state-administered Medicaid program, known as Med-QUEST,
17 to mitigate the widespread economic, public health, societal,
18 and moral impacts of categorically denying healthcare safety
19 nets to these residents; and
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21 WHEREAS, citing fiscal concerns, Hawaii has discontinued
22 Med-QUEST eligibility for most indigent Compact of Free
23 Association residents, requiring that they instead enroll in a
24 health insurance plan through the Hawaii Health Connector; and
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26 WHEREAS, notwithstanding limited state and federal premium
27 subsidies, the relatively high cost of maintaining such health
28 insurance plans, including cost sharing and co-pay requirements,
29 will likely make healthcare coverage unaffordable to the most
30 indigent members of our community, potentially resulting in
31 significant and long-term detrimental impacts to our local
32 social fabric, public health, and healthcare infrastructure, and
33 to our nation's ongoing relationships with the Freely Associated
34 States; and
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36 WHEREAS, justice, fairness, human decency, and sound
37 national policy demand equal access to federal healthcare safety
38 net funding for all United States residents and taxpayers
39 present under the Compacts of Free Association; now, therefore,
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41 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
42 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
43 Session of 2015, the Senate concurring, that the United States
44 Congress and the United States Department of the Interior are



1 strongly urged to work to restore Medicaid eligibility or other
2 federal healthcare funding for United States residents and
3 taxpayers present under the Compacts of Free Association,
4 through amendments to the Personal Responsibility and Work
5 Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 or by other means; and
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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Insular Affairs
8 of the United States Department of the Interior is strongly
9 urged to review the funding of the Compact Impact Assistance
10 grant and to make every effort to increase the amount of direct
11 assistance available to the State of Hawaii to enable greater
12 state support of Hawaii's indigent Compact of Free Association
13 residents' healthcare needs; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Congress is
16 strongly urged to support federal legislation to amend the
17 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
18 of 1996 to render Compact of Free Association migrants eligible
19 to receive federally funded financial and medical assistance;
20 and
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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
23 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the
24 United States, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate,
25 the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the
26 members of Hawaii's congressional delegation, the United States
27 Secretary of the Interior, the Director of the Office of Insular
28 Affairs, the Commander of the United States Pacific Command, the
29 Director of Human Services, the Director of Health, and the
30 Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court.

