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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

STRONGLY URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AID AND SUPPORT TO THE STATE OF HAWAII FOR FINANCIAL, MEDICAL, AND OTHER FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR MIGRANTS COVERED BY THE COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION.

1           WHEREAS, the United States entered into a Compact of Free  
2 Association (COFA) with the Federated States of Micronesia, the  
3 Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau in  
4 1983, which granted citizens of these nations the ability to  
5 freely enter the United States and have access to domestic  
6 social welfare programs; and

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8           WHEREAS, under this Compact, COFA migrants are allowed to  
9 freely enter the State of Hawaii and are granted access to  
10 certain state services, such as education and health care; and

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12           WHEREAS, the United States Congress passed the Personal  
13 Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996  
14 (PRWORA), that makes needy persons from COFA nations ineligible  
15 from receiving federally funded financial and medical  
16 assistance; and

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18           WHEREAS, when the PRWORA went into effect in 1997, Hawaii  
19 continued to provide equivalent services for COFA migrants using  
20 State funds; and

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22           WHEREAS, the cost to the State to provide various services  
23 to COFA migrants continues to increase every year and strains  
24 the State's resources; and

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26           WHEREAS, in 2014, it was estimated that the State spent  
27 \$163 million on COFA migrants, and of that amount, 53 percent



1 was spent on education and 44 percent was spent on health and  
2 social services; and

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4 WHEREAS, in 2017, Hawaii spent between \$30 and \$40 million  
5 on healthcare costs alone, more than twice the approximately \$12  
6 million the State receives in federal Compact Impact Assistance  
7 funding; and

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9 WHEREAS, if the PRWORA is amended to allow COFA migrants to  
10 receive federally funded financial and medical assistance, the  
11 State would not have to expend state funds to provide the  
12 equivalent services, thus allowing more of the State's general  
13 funds to be used for services and programs for which federal  
14 funding is not available; and

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16 WHEREAS, in addition to amending the PRWORA, the State  
17 would likely see a decrease in cost if the United States  
18 government provided much needed dialysis and chemotherapy  
19 centers in Micronesia and all areas covered by the Compact; and

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21 WHEREAS, the United States government must address the  
22 issue of additional federal support for the State to continue  
23 providing state services to COFA migrants arising from the  
24 unique federally created relationship between the United States  
25 and the COFA nations; now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
28 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of  
29 2019, the Senate concurring, that the United States Department  
30 of the Interior and the Congress of the United States are  
31 strongly urged to provide additional federal aid and support to  
32 the State of Hawaii for financial, medical, and other federal  
33 assistance for the migrants covered by the Compact of Free  
34 Association; and

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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Department of  
37 the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, is strongly urged to  
38 review the funding of the Compact Impact Assistance grant and to  
39 make every effort to increase the amount of direct assistance  
40 available to Hawaii to offset costs incurred by the State; and



