

MAR 11 2022

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO DESIGNATE TWO FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES TO ASSIST COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION MIGRANTS TO ENROLL IN MEDICAID.

1 WHEREAS, the United States has international treaty
2 agreements, known as the Compacts of Free Association, with
3 three island nations in the Pacific--the Republic of the
4 Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the
5 Republic of Palau--collectively known as the Freely Associated
6 States; and
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8 WHEREAS, under the Compacts, the United States grants the
9 Freely Associated States funds for education, health care, and
10 infrastructure, in exchange for the exclusive right to use their
11 territories for the United States' military strategic
12 positioning in the Pacific; and
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14 WHEREAS, the Compacts provide citizens of the Freely
15 Associated States broad migration privileges to the United
16 States and its jurisdictions as "COFA migrants"; and
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18 WHEREAS, when COFA migrants enter the United States, they
19 are given a "non-immigrant" immigration status without an
20 expiration date and can therefore freely enter, exit, reside,
21 and work indefinitely in the United States and its
22 jurisdictions; and
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24 WHEREAS, COFA migrants, despite having the status of "non-
25 immigrants", share many of the difficulties faced by immigrants
26 in the United States, including access to health insurance; and
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28 WHEREAS, many COFA migrants suffer from chronic diseases
29 and health conditions related to radiation exposure from the
30 nuclear testing performed by the United States in or above the
31 Freely Associated States from 1946 to 1958; and
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33 WHEREAS, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity
34 Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L. 104-193, which reformed the
35 nation's welfare system, changed the definition of "qualified



1 non-citizens" to exclude COFA migrants, and thereby stripped
2 most adult COFA migrants of their eligibility for Medicaid
3 coverage, except for services that are necessary to treat an
4 emergency medical condition; and
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6 WHEREAS, in Hawai'i, non-Hawaiian Pacific Islanders make up
7 more than a quarter of coronavirus disease 2019 cases despite
8 comprising just four percent of the population, making health
9 insurance coverage even more essential for these residents; and
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11 WHEREAS, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, P.L.
12 116-260, restored Medicaid eligibility to COFA migrants, and as
13 of December 27, 2020, all states and the District of Columbia
14 are required to provide coverage for all Medicaid benefits,
15 including benefits under the state plan, to COFA migrants who
16 otherwise meet all of the eligibility requirements in the state
17 plan; and
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19 WHEREAS, COFA migrants may now enroll in Medicaid at any
20 time by completing an application online on the Health Insurance
21 Marketplace website or by contacting their State Medicaid
22 Agency; and
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24 WHEREAS, the State Medicaid Agency for Hawai'i is the
25 Department of Human Services' Med-Quest Division; and
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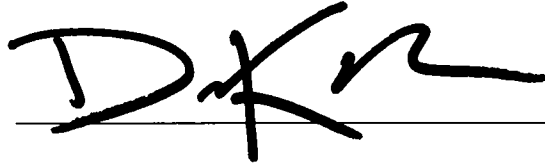
27 WHEREAS, many COFA migrants in Hawai'i, many of whom have
28 felt disadvantaged by the State's medical system, have not taken
29 the initiative to enroll in Medicaid, which can be a lengthy and
30 complicated process; now, therefore,
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32 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
33 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022,
34 that the Department of Human Services is urged to designate two
35 full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) employees to assist COFA migrants
36 to enroll in Medicaid, including establishing and implementing
37 an outreach program to inform the COFA community in Hawai'i of
38 the eligibility criteria and enrollment process; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human Services.
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OFFERED BY: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DKR', is written over a horizontal line.

