Resolution No: 56-BOD-03

"Respectfully requesting the Government of the United States of America to extend the full complement of veteran benefits and privileges to the U.S. military veterans who are citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau and who are residing within their own countries of citizenship rather than the United States of America."

WHEREAS, as the focus of many of the fiercest battles and most grueling occupations in the theater of the Pacific during World War II, the peoples of the islands of Micronesia were confronted with some of the most terrifying and destructive ravages of that armed conflict; and

WHEREAS, the memories of the devastation that was inflicted on the islanders in their own homes and villages will never be forgotten; and

WHEREAS, throughout Micronesia, the day that each of our islands were freed from the ravages of the war which was made possible by the coming of the American planes, ships and troops is accorded a special place of great honor and deep gratitude in the historical archives of our communities and is celebrated each year in song and parade as an official holiday, known throughout Micronesia as Liberation Day; and

WHEREAS, in the aftermath of World War II, the Armed Forces of the United States of America quickly responded to urgent needs of the Micronesian peoples; providing much needed help in the form of emergency food supplies, medical aide and community rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, the beneficial presence of the U.S. Armed Forces remained within the liberated islands of Micronesia all the way up to, and into the post-war era when the United States Government began administering our islands under a United Nations Strategic Trusteeship Agreement; and
WHEREAS, through the Compacts of Free Association which brought the Strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to a conclusion for the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau, the United States Government and the governments of the Freely Associated States entered into a new era of close cooperation formed under a common bond of shared interests and mutual defense for the United States and the Freely Associated States; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the principles of mutual defense, the terms of the Compacts of Free Association of the three Freely Associated States enable and encourage Micronesians to join the Armed Forces of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, because of the ravages that World War II inflicted on the Micronesian islands and the through the memories of their parents and grandparents who lived through this terrible period of our history, Micronesia’s emerging youth who choose to enlist in the Armed Forces of the United States of America bring with them a very real and very deep understanding of the importance of the military in ensuring peace for the peoples of the Pacific and the peoples of the world; and

WHEREAS, since the conclusion of the Trusteeship, the number of FAS citizens joining the Armed Forces of United States have been increasing every year; and

WHEREAS, Micronesians serving in the United States Armed Forces have fought in Afghanistan, in Iraq and in many other areas of conflict around the world and have joined their American comrades in confronting the forces of terrorism wherever they appear; and

WHEREAS, FAS citizens serving in the U.S. Armed Forces not only represent our countries in the forefront of war against terrorism, but they also represent the special relationship we have with the United States; and
WHEREAS, in these battles and conflicts, Micronesians have sacrificed their lives, their
limbs and their health in disproportionate numbers in their pursuit, with their American comrades, to
guard the peace and security of the world; and

WHEREAS, the willingness of our veterans to give freely and unselfishly of themselves,
even their lives, in defense of our democratic principles has given both the United States and our
island countries the security we enjoy today; and

WHEREAS, tribute and support to all those brave men and women who left their families
and loved ones to serve in the fight for world peace and humanity is of paramount importance to
those of us who call Micronesia our home; and

WHEREAS, military veterans returning to their home islands of Guam, the Commonwealth
of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa and even the State of Hawaii, bring with them not only
the stories and memories of their efforts to protect the security of the United States and the peace of
the world, they also bring back with them the full support of the U.S. Department of Veterans
Affairs and the privileges and benefits accorded to veterans through that federal governmental
organization; and

WHEREAS, it is the sense of the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific Island
Legislatures that these privileges and benefits not only help veterans of the U.S. flag island
jurisdictions restore their health and ensure their wellbeing as they return to island life, these
beneficial services also provide needed support for the public health efforts of the island
governments that are not experienced in coping with the medical and psychological requirements of
veterans as they attempt to re-assimilate into island societies; and

WHEREAS, it is the further sense of the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific
Island Legislatures that the presence, efforts and services of the U.S. Department of Veterans
Affairs in these U.S. flag island jurisdictions not only help returning veterans re-adjust to civilian
life and help public health agencies address their needs, the presence and services of this federal agency also help promote local community appreciation for the work of the Armed Forces and help garner local community respect for those who have served in the ranks of the military to keep our islands secure; and

WHEREAS, local veterans associations are being created throughout the islands of the Freely Associated States where returning Micronesian veterans are joining together to help each other readjust to island life and to provide a positive influence in their island communities, but unfortunately, unlike veterans residing in the U.S. flag islands and the organizations established there to address their continuing needs, the returning veterans of the of the Freely Associated States usually lose the privileges and benefits received by American veterans because these Micronesian veterans have chosen to return to their island homes and families in the Freely Associated States; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures is of the mind that the gap in the entitlement of veteran privileges and benefits which distinguish between which veteran services will be provided based on place of residency is discriminatory in nature, especially in consideration of the equivalent risks and endangerment shared in combat and in life and death situations; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the board of Directors of the Association of the Pacific Island Legislatures, 56th Board of Directors Meeting, State of Kosrae, December 2-3, 2015, that the Board of Directors, on behalf of the Association of the Pacific Island Legislatures, hereby requests the United States Government, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs and other the appropriate authorities, to ascertain and secure the provision of the full complement of benefits and privileges for the U.S. military veterans who are citizens of the Freely Associated States residing in their respective countries; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that APIL President shall certify, and the APIL Secretary shall attest to the adoption hereof and that copies of the same shall be transmitted to Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense, to the U.S. Commander, Pacific Command, to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, to the U.S. Ambassadors to the FAS countries, to the Chief Executives and Legislative Presiding Officers of each member jurisdiction of the Association of the Pacific Island Legislatures, to the presiding officer of each of the local veterans associations of the APIL member jurisdictions, and to such other officials and entities as the APIL President deems appropriate.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 3RD DAY OF DECEMBER, 2015

KENNETH A. KEDi
PRESIDENT

FERNANDO SCALIEI
SECRETARY