



Association of Pacific Island Legislatures

American Samoa
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
FSM, State of Chuuk
FSM, State of Kosrae
FSM, State of Pohnpei
FSM, State of Yap
Island of Guam
Republic of Kiribati
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Republic of Nauru
Republic of Palau
State of Hawaii

A RESOLUTION

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.”

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

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

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

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

14 **WHEREAS**, the beneficial presence of the U.S. Armed Forces remained within the
15 liberated islands of Micronesia all the way up to, and into the post-war era when the United States
16 Government began administering our islands under a United Nations Strategic Trusteeship
17 Agreement; and

1 **WHEREAS**, through the Compacts of Free Association which brought the Strategic Trust
2 Territory of the Pacific Islands to a conclusion for the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the
3 Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau, the United States Government and the
4 governments of the Freely Associated States entered into a new era of close cooperation formed
5 under a common bond of shared interests and mutual defense for the United States and the Freely
6 Associated States; and

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

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

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

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

21 **WHEREAS**, FAS citizens serving in the U.S. Armed Forces not only represent our
22 countries in the forefront of war against terrorism, but they also represent the special relationship we
23 have with the United States; and

1 **WHEREAS**, in these battles and conflicts, Micronesians have sacrificed their lives, their
2 limbs and their health in disproportionate numbers in their pursuit, with their American comrades, to
3 guard the peace and security of the world; and

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

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

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

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

22 **WHEREAS**, it is the further sense of the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific
23 Island Legislatures that the presence, efforts and services of the U.S. Department of Veterans
24 Affairs in these U.S. flag island jurisdictions not only help returning veterans re-adjust to civilian

1 life and help public health agencies address their needs, the presence and services of this federal
2 agency also help promote local community appreciation for the work of the Armed Forces and help
3 garner local community respect for those who have served in the ranks of the military to keep our
4 islands secure; and

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

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

18 **BE IT RESOLVED**, by the board of Directors of the Association of the Pacific Island
19 Legislatures, 56th Board of Directors Meeting, State of Kosrae, December 2-3, 2015, that the Board
20 of Directors, on behalf of the Association of the Pacific Island Legislatures, hereby requests the
21 United States Government, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs and other the appropriate
22 authorities, to ascertain and secure the provision of the full complement of benefits and privileges
23 for the U.S. military veterans who are citizens of the Freely Associated States residing in their
24 respective countries; and

1 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that APIL President shall certify, and the APIL Secretary
2 shall attest to the adoption hereof and that copies of the same shall be transmitted to Secretary of the
3 U.S. Department of Defense, to the U.S. Commander, Pacific Command, to the Secretary of the
4 U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, to the U.S. Ambassadors to the FAS countries, to the Chief
5 Executives and Legislative Presiding Officers of each member jurisdiction of the Association of the
6 Pacific Island Legislatures, to the presiding officer of each of the local veterans associations of the
7 APIL member jurisdictions, and to such other officials and entities as the APIL President deems
8 appropriate.

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



KENNETH A. KEDI
PRESIDENT



FERNANDO SCALIEM
SECRETARY

