



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. 59-BOD-07

“Respectfully, yet urgently, requesting the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its USCIS agency to work in close coordination with the government officials of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands with respect to the possible exemption of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands from their recent departmental and agency decisions affecting the ability of the CNMI to recruit highly skilled Filipino workers to help the people of the Commonwealth recover from the ravages of Super Typhoon Yutu.”

1 **WHEREAS**, it is the sense of the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific
2 Island Legislatures that the full use of labor forces that are highly skilled in construction
3 trades and other specialties is essential for the development of the islands of the Pacific,
4 especially in times of emergency when our island homes, businesses and island
5 infrastructures are ravaged by typhoons and other natural disasters; and

6 **WHEREAS**, shortages of skilled labor among island communities have often led
7 our governments to seek to obtain these skilled workers from abroad; and

8 **WHEREAS**, a ready source of skilled labor can be found in our neighboring
9 islands in the Republic of the Philippines; unfortunately

10 **WHEREAS**, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, (UCSIS), of the
11 U.S. Department of Homeland Security has recently removed the Philippines from the H-
12 2A and H-2B visa programs and this removal decision is dramatically affecting the
13 capabilities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to maintain a skilled
14 labor force; and

15 **WHEREAS**, the ban on the ability of Filipinos to work in the USA took effect
16 on Jan. 19, 2019 and ends on Jan. 18, 2020; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the USCIS claims that it removed the Philippines from the visa
2 worker program due to the potential for abuse, overstay rates, fraud, human trafficking
3 concerns, and other forms of non-compliance; and

4 **WHEREAS**, this decision of the USCIS was made just a few weeks after the
5 agency also ended the categorical CNMI humanitarian parole program; and

6 **WHEREAS**, these ill-timed decisions have come at a very unfortunate time when
7 the people of the Northern Mariana Islands are trying to recover from the ravages of
8 Super Typhoon Yutu, and as reconstruction efforts begin, requiring the assistance of
9 highly skilled, natural disaster recovery workers; and

10 **WHEREAS**, despite the presence of disaster relief monies made available to the
11 Commonwealth through the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, (FEMA),
12 and other humanitarian sources, the inability of the Northern Mariana Islands to obtain
13 the sufficient numbers of requisite skilled laborers, both within the Commonwealth and
14 from abroad, is seriously affecting its recovery efforts and the health and welfare of the
15 Northern Mariana Islands people; now, therefore,

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific
17 Island Legislatures, 59th Board Meeting, January 30 to February 2, 2019, FSM State of
18 Yap, that the Board of Directors, on behalf of the Association of Pacific Island
19 Legislatures, hereby respectfully, yet urgently, requests that the U.S. Department of
20 Homeland Security and its USCIS agency work in close coordination with the
21 government officials of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands with respect
22 to the possible exemption of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands from
23 their recent departmental and agency decisions affecting the ability of the CNMI to
24 recruit highly skilled Filipino workers to help the people of the Commonwealth recover
25 from the ravages of Super Typhoon Yutu; and

1 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that APIL President shall certify and the APIL
2 Secretary shall attest to the adoption hereof and that copies of the same shall be
3 transmitted to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to the Director
4 of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and to the Chief Executives and the
5 Presiding Legislative Officers of the member jurisdictions of the Association of the
6 Pacific Island Legislatures.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 1ST DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2019.



**FERNANDO SCALIEM
PRESIDENT**



**IVAN A. BLANCO
SECRETARY**

