



# 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. 60-BOD-01, CD 1

**“Strongly supporting the enactment of U.S. Senate Bill 2218 and U.S. House Resolution 4821, collectively entitled “To amend title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to restore Medicaid coverage for citizens of the Freely Associated States lawfully residing in the United States under the Compacts of Free Association between Government of the United States and the Governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.”**

1           **WHEREAS**, commencing in 1986, three treaty agreements, known as the  
2       Compacts of Free Association, have defined the relationship between the United States of  
3       America and the independent governments of the Freely Associated States, namely the  
4       Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of  
5       Palau; and

6           **WHEREAS**, inherent in these Compacts are the rights of the citizens of the three  
7       Compact of Free Association Countries, (COFA), to freely enter, study and work in the  
8       United States, which rights were granted in return for the United States’ exclusive use  
9       and military strategic positioning in these countries whose territories cover vast expanses  
10      of the Pacific Ocean; and

11          **WHEREAS**, initially the COFA citizens who entered the United States under the  
12      terms of the Compacts of Free Association were treated with genuine respect and  
13      provided with the same academic advantages, economic opportunities and safety net  
14      protections as American citizens; but

1           **WHEREAS**, in 1996, the United States Congress inadvertently excluded COFA  
2 individuals from the list of legally present non-citizens eligible to qualify for certain  
3 federal benefits and since then, COFA individuals have been excluded from qualifying  
4 for Medicaid; and

5           **WHEREAS**, despite that unfortunate exclusion, the COFA citizens have  
6 continued to willingly contribute their time, their skills and their efforts to help drive  
7 America's economy by filling unpopular employment positions, paying federal, state and  
8 local taxes and joining in community improvement activities; and

9           **WHEREAS**, while the irradiation and displacement of Micronesians, most  
10 especially the Marshallese islanders, due to the testing of nuclear weapons in our islands  
11 by the U.S. Military in the early years of the Trust Territory Administration remains as a  
12 stain on the legacy of the United States' presence in Micronesia, COFA citizens willing  
13 join the Armed Forces of the U.S.A., have been fighting side-by-side with their fellow  
14 American combatants, and some valiant souls have even made the ultimate sacrifice in  
15 the service of our shared values of preserving peace and security in a troubled world; and

16           **WHEREAS**, despite their willing efforts and their sincere contributions to the  
17 military and the many communities and societies that make up the face and form the  
18 heart of America, COFA citizens still remain ineligible for many of the federal programs  
19 that their tax dollars support; and

20           **WHEREAS**, the denial of Medicaid, in particular, has led to poor health  
21 consequences for COFA citizens, many of whom suffer from serious chronic conditions  
22 and health disparities, and, in the absence of federal support, the U.S. jurisdictions with  
23 large and emerging COFA populations have been burdened with the costs of providing  
24 even the most basic medical care for those in need and deserving COFA citizens; and

1           **WHEREAS**, while the Compacts of Free Association between the United States  
2   of America and the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands,  
3   and the Republic of Palau are of critical importance to all of our countries, the burdens of  
4   the financial impacts of the Compacts fall disproportionately on a very few Pacific  
5   jurisdictions, most especially Hawaii, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern  
6   Mariana Islands; and

7           **WHEREAS**, in an effort to rectify the unfortunate exclusionary action of 1996,  
8   U.S. Senate Bill 2218 and U.S. House Resolution 4821 have recently been introduced  
9   into the 116<sup>th</sup> United States Congress, both of which would restore Medicaid coverage  
10   for citizens of the Freely Associated States lawfully residing in the United States; and

11          **WHEREAS**, it is the sense of the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific  
12   Island Legislatures that the enactment of these legislative measures will not only restore  
13   the essential safety net of health care for our COFA citizens residing in the United States,  
14   they will also greatly enhance the relationships of closeness, affiliation and cooperation  
15   among all of the countries who are parties to the Compacts of Free Association; now,  
16   therefore,

17          **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, 60<sup>th</sup> Board  
18   of Directors Meeting, Island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands,  
19   December 4-6, 2019, that the Board of Directors, on behalf of the Association of Pacific  
20   Island Legislatures, hereby issues its strong support for the enactment of U.S. Senate Bill  
21   2218 and U.S. House Resolution 4821, collectively entitled “To amend title IV of the  
22   Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to restore  
23   Medicaid coverage for citizens of the Freely Associated States lawfully residing in the  
24   United States under the Compacts of Free Association between Government of the

1 United States and the Governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic  
2 of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.”; and

3 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that APIL President shall certify and the APIL  
4 Secretary attest to the adoption hereof and that copies of the same shall be transmitted,  
5 with our sincerest gratitude, to the sponsors of U.S. Senate Bill 2218 and U.S. House  
6 Resolution 4821, and to the Chief Executives and the Presiding Legislative Officers of  
7 the member jurisdictions of the Association of the Pacific Island Legislatures.

**DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 5<sup>th</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 2019.**

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**EDGAR LICKANETH**  
**PRESIDENT**

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**IVAN A. BLANCO**  
**SECRETARY**

