



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. 50-BOD-02, CD1

“The Association of Pacific Island Legislatures extends its full support of the efforts of American Samoa and its delegate to the United States Congress, the Honorable Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, in advancing the *American Samoa Protection of Industry, Resources and Employment* proposal now before the Congress and further advocates for the passage of the general tenets of this important legislation as it will provide great stability to the fragile economic state of American Samoa.”

1 **WHEREAS**, since its inception, the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL) has
2 closely monitored the economic stability of its members, particularly the successes and shortcomings of the
3 tuna canning industry in American Samoa; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the model set by American Samoa in successfully operating tuna canning plants
5 is one which APIL member countries have shown great interest in possibly adopting and providing assistance
6 so that the industry continues to survive and thrive in the region is important those hoping to develop similar
7 operations; and

8 **WHEREAS**, there exists a clear economic interconnectivity between island nations of the
9 Pacific and the successes of one island nation benefits from another as travel and trade is more frequent and
10 the sharing of resources becomes common. The same effects are felt when an island nation’s economy
11 struggles. Exoduses are seen as families move to neighboring nations in search of jobs. Economies are
12 strained and a dangerous cycle begins where more and more people move in masses to places where they can
13 survive, often times making an immediate move to the U.S. This was the case shortly after World War II
14 when military installations were closed and large portions of the island populations moved to Hawaii and the
15 West Coast; and

16 **WHEREAS**, like all Pacific island jurisdictions, American Samoa has struggled through these
17 hard economic times and coupled with the mandate for them and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana
18 Islands to comply with the raising of minimum wage levels, the global economic downturn has already forced
19 the closure of one of its tuna canning plants. The remaining plant has already indicated that any further strains
20 on its operations would leave them little choice but to also close its doors. With the tuna canning industry
21 being the second largest employer in the Territory, the devastation of both plants closing would surely leave
22 the economy of this U.S. Territory lifeless. Recovery, if at all possible, would take years, possibly even
23 decades; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the American Samoa Congressional Delegate, the Honorable Eni F.H.
2 Faleomavaega, introduced in Congress the *American Samoa Protection of Industry, Resources and*
3 *Employment* (ASPIRE) which proposes to encourage its tuna industry to increase its production capacity
4 which will undoubtedly stimulate growth in the Territory's economy. The legislation also proposes to foster
5 growth by garnering the participation of both public and private sectors of the economy who will develop and
6 formulate various incentives intended to allow the industry to survive and thrive; and

7 **WHEREAS**, American Samoa's canning operations need to remain competitive. The goal of
8 ASPIRE is to help level the playing field for this U.S. Territory which has to meet federal minimum wage
9 mandates while its competitors exploit cheap labor and pay their workers \$0.75 or less per hour; and

10 **WHEREAS**, the APIL Board of Directors support the passage of ASPIRE by the Congress
11 and hopes for its approval by the President. The benefits from its implementation will surely encompass and
12 reach all of the Pacific Island jurisdictions, particularly those who have close economic, social, and cultural
13 ties with American Samoa; now, therefore,

14 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the Association of Pacific Island
15 Legislatures, 50th Board Meeting, December 2-3, 2009, State of Hawaii, that the Board of Directors on behalf
16 of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures hereby requests the United States Congress, to approve and
17 pass H.R. 3583, the *American Samoa Protection of Industry, Resources and Employment* or *ASPIRE* Act and
18 that APIL extends its full support of this important legislation and applauds the tireless efforts of American
19 Samoa and its leaders in getting this bill passed and signed into law; and

20 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the APIL President shall certify, and the APIL
21 Secretary shall attest to the adoption hereof and that copies of the same shall be thereafter transmitted to the
22 Honorable Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, American Samoa Delegate; the Honorable Nick Rahall, Chairman, House
23 Committee on Natural Resources; the Honorable Daniel K. Inouye , U.S. Senator; the Honorable Daniel
24 Akaka, U.S. Senator; the Honorable Ken Salazar, U.S. Secretary of the Department of the Interior; the
25 Honorable Togiola Tulafono, Governor of American Samoa; to the Honorable Gregorio Kilili Sablan,
26 CNMI Delegate; to the Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Guam Delegate; to the Honorable Donna M.
27 Christensen, U.S. Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress; and to the Presiding Legislative Officers and Chief
28 Executives of each of the APIL member jurisdictions.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 3RD DAY OF DECEMBER 2009



J. KALANI ENGLISH
PRESIDENT



JUDITH T. WON PAT, ED.D.
SECRETARY

