

HB 2517 Testimony
Oregon State Capitol
Judiciary Committee
January 25, 2013 @ 1pm in HR 343


Good afternoon Chairman ~~Baker~~ and Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Crispin Ogo, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Micronesian Islander Community (M.I.C. in short), a nonprofit organization in the State of Oregon. The organization was established on February 1, 2011 to educate Oregonians about Micronesian people through an annual festival celebration called "Taste of Micronesian Festival" and to advocate for social and racial justice. There are eight communities involved with M.I.C. and six of those communities are from the Freely Associated States (FAS) of Micronesia. They are the Republic of the Marshall Island, Republic of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) which consists of the Islands of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae. The other two communities involve in this organization are from the U.S. Territory, the Island of Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Island.

On November 19, 2011, M.I.C conducted a forum to listen on issues affecting Micronesians. One of the issues brought to our attention was the annual renewal of driver's license. The comment was employers were hesitant to hire Compact of Free Association or COFA citizens because of the words "limited term" embedded on their driver's license or identification card making them unreliable to work indefinitely. Employers rely on long term employees for their benefit. Another comment was financial institutions were reluctant to offer loans because of the limited term on their driver's license and I.D card. Many of these experiences occurred after the enactment of the Real ID Act of 2005.

House Bill 2517 would alleviate these barriers for COFA citizens and effectuate Title One Article IV of the Compact of Free Association agreement between the three Island Nations and the United States of America. I am not only here on behalf of the Board of Directors of M.I.C. but as U.S. citizen from the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Island. This great nation is built with diverse ethnic background and I want to recognize those COFA citizens working in nursing homes, seasonal farmers and factory workers, retail stores, warehouses and other professions throughout this great state we've adopted as our home.

Many U.S. born children of COFA citizens graduated from High Schools in Multnomah, Clackamas, Marion and other counties in the state and they are registered voters. These young Americans barely speak their parent's native language and majority doesn't speak them at all. Therefore, on behalf of the COFA citizens living in the state of Oregon, I am kindly asking the Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee to vote for the passage of House Bill 2517 so the minimal populations of Micronesians or COFA citizens will no longer face anymore economic barriers in this great state.

Lastly, I would like to recognize Mr. Lloyd Henion and Wayne Baum for their untiring support on this matter and most importantly, Representative Vicky Berger and Bryan Clem for co-sponsoring HB 2517. Thank you and God Bless the wonderful State of Oregon and the United States of America.