

Chair, Representative Greenlick, Vice Chairs. Representative Hayden and Representative Nosse and Committee members. My name is Loyd Henion, member of the COFA Alliance National Network or CANN. With me today is the current President of CANN, Jo Enlet from the FSM Island of Chuuk. Jo will introduce the other speakers and explain a little more about the mission of CANN, as soon as I finish my brief remarks.

Let me quickly mention how I came to be involved with the Oregon residents of these three COFA Nations. I retired from the position of Chief Economist for ODOT. In the process of looking after my aging mother's healthcare needs, we hired Camilla Tarkwon, a Marshallese woman who became the live-in caregiver for my mother. Through her, I was introduced to the unique needs of the COFA people in Oregon. This led me to a deeper understanding of the United States' unique relationship with the three island nations. Before you is information pertaining to the background about this relationship and relevant facts pertinent to HB 2522.

Suffice it to say that I became alarmed about some oversights of the obligations that the US has under our Treaty with them, and the social injustices that have resulted from those oversights. One such oversight resulted in the States' treating our legal COFA residents like undocumented aliens and issuing only temporary Driver's License cards. Having worked with the legislature for many years, I was ready and felt positioned to assist this community with navigating the pathway for passing a bill. On behalf of the COFA Islanders I want to once again express our appreciation to Representative Brian Clem and former Representative Vicki Berger for sponsoring HB 2517 and the 2013 Oregon legislature for "righting" this Driver's License injustice by passing HB 2517 with no negative votes. Because the Oregon Legislature took action our COFA residents now can live a bit more freely among us as they now find it a bit easier to get apartments, bank loans, and even jobs.

Our CANN group has long known that a huge issue has been the removal from Medicaid in 1996 of our COFA neighbors who are living legally among us. But we also recognized that nothing was going to change due to the gridlock at the national level, and, just like the Driver's License issue, it is up to each of the states to correct this dreadful oversight. However, we believe passing HB 2522 once again allows Oregon to begin on the path of doing the right thing for these people's health care needs-and in this case doing the right thing is by far the cheapest thing. By creating an office within the Oregon Health Authority that is charged with examining the intended population, promoting enrollment in continuing health care, and discerning eligibility, Oregon will take important steps in correcting another important oversight that has been allowed to continue for far too long to these people to whom we owe so much.

I now turn this over to my colleague, and President of CANN Jo Enlet.

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