

HB 2522

Relating health care for Pacific Islanders legally residing in the United States under a Compact of Free Association treaty

Citizens who legally entered the United States under the Compact of Free Association from the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federal States of Micronesia have a unique immigration relationship with the United States. In 1986, these island nations entered a treaty with the United States which allows the United States to have a military presence in the islands in perpetuity. The treaty also allows citizens from each of these nations to freely migrate, without work permits or visas, to study, live, work, and pay taxes in the United State. However, these citizens are barred from receiving medical assistance while in the United States.

HB 2522 requires the Department of Consumer and Business Services to develop recommendations for the creation of a premium assistance program for low-income Compact of Free Association islanders to enable these Oregon residents to purchase health benefit plans through the health insurance exchange. The bill directs the department to convene an advisory group that includes affected islanders to counsel the department in developing these recommendations.

The Department of Consumer and Business Services will use existing staff and resources to convene the advisory group; and to explore avenues for financing this premium assistance program, including seeking federal approval for health care subsidies and tax credits.

The Human Services Subcommittee recommends HB 2522 be amended by the -9 amendment, and be reported out do pass as amended.