

**STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY****House Committee On Health Care****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 04/20/15**Action:** Do Pass And Be Referred To Ways And Means By Prior Reference**Meeting Dates:** 02/09, 04/17, 04/20**Vote:**

Yeas: 7 - Buehler, Clem, Greenlick, Kennemer, Keny-Guyer, Lively, Nosse

Nays: 2 - Hayden, Weidner

**Prepared By:** Sandy Thiele-Cirka, Committee Administrator

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Creates the Islander Health Coverage Gap Assessment Office in the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to promote access to health care for island citizens residing in the United States under the Compact of Free Association (COFA). Defines islander and directs OHA to report to the Legislative Assembly. Establishes January 1, 2016 as the operative date. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Current barriers for COFA citizens
- COFA citizens that are Oregonians
- United States occupation during World War II
- Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
- Nuclear atmospheric bomb testing
- Proposed amendment
- Concerns about the fiscal impact

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

After World War II, the United States assumed administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The Trust controlled the development of the island economies and international relations. In 1986, the island nations under the Trust Territory were given the option of choosing between becoming a commonwealth of the U.S. or independent nations with special agreements with the U.S. Three Island territories chose independence, and that independence came attached with a unique treaty, known as "Compact of Free Association" (COFA). COFA agreements were made between the U.S. and The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), The Republic of Palau (Palau) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

The Compact agreements allow the citizens from each of these nations to freely migrate, without work permits or visas, to study, live and work in the U.S. It also allows the U.S. to have a military presence in the COFA islands in perpetuity.