

# House Concurrent Resolution 21

Sponsored by Representative SPRENGER; Representatives BENTZ, ESQUIVEL, HACK, NEARMAN, STARK, WHISNANT

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Expresses support for and gratitude to citizens of Compact of Free Association nations residing in United States.

## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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2       Whereas shortly after World War II the United States assumed administration of the Trust  
3 Territory of the Pacific Islands under a United Nations strategic trusteeship that provided for  
4 United States control over development of the islands' economies and international relations and for  
5 United States military access to territory within the islands; and

6       Whereas the United States was allowed by the United Nations to treat the Pacific Islands as a  
7 strategic trust territory, and the United States Atomic Energy Commission established the Pacific  
8 Proving Grounds in the Marshall Islands, where 67 atmospheric nuclear weapons were tested be-  
9 tween 1946 and 1958; and

10       Whereas nuclear tests were conducted on a number of islands that were inhabited and even on  
11 some that had not been evacuated; and

12       Whereas many residents of islands that were in the vicinity of the nuclear weapons test proving  
13 grounds and their descendants continue to exhibit medical conditions that may have resulted from  
14 exposure to the nuclear fallout that occurred and is still measurable on some islands; and

15       Whereas the area formerly known as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands now includes  
16 three groups of islands that became the independent sovereign nations of the Republic of Palau, the  
17 Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, and are known as the  
18 Compact of Free Association (COFA) islands; and

19       Whereas notwithstanding their status as independent nations, the COFA islands are heavily  
20 dependent on United States government grants and are subjected to United States military presence  
21 under the COFA treaty; and

22       Whereas because of the unique relationship that has existed between the three COFA nations  
23 and the United States, the COFA treaties allow island citizens to enter the United States without  
24 visas to study, live and work and to have access to available services such as driver licenses and  
25 health care; and

26       Whereas since the COFA treaties came into effect, citizens of the COFA islands have moved to  
27 the United States for education and work opportunities because stagnant island economies have  
28 made it difficult for residents to find jobs or obtain good education; and

29       Whereas COFA island citizens volunteer to serve in the United States Armed Forces at a higher  
30 per capita rate than United States citizens; and

31       Whereas while the United States retains a strong military and economic presence in the COFA

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 islands, Congress and some state governments have reduced some benefits, including access to  
2 medical coverage and driver licenses, for which COFA islanders residing in the United States have  
3 historically been eligible; and

4       Whereas COFA islanders and their children who are residing legally in the United States should  
5 be fairly treated in recognition of the unique relationship between the United States and the COFA  
6 islands and because of the continued need of the United States to maintain a strong military and  
7 economic presence in the COFA islands; and

8       Whereas Eastern Oregon University has had a program for students from the Federated States  
9 of Micronesia since 1977 that provides services to COFA students in recognition of the challenges  
10 these students will face in achieving their academic goals and in their everyday lives in the United  
11 States; now, therefore,

12 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

13       That we, the members of the Seventy-eighth Legislative Assembly, support the rights of Compact  
14 of Free Association islanders residing in Oregon to live freely among us; and be it further

15       Resolved, That we express our deepest appreciation for their extraordinary commitment to the  
16 service and defense of our nation.

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