

HB 2594

COFA Law Enforcement Eligibility

Good afternoon Chair Barker and Co-Vice Chairs Williamson and Olson and committee members.

My name is Loyd Henion and I represent a Non Profit organization called CANN which stands for the COFA Alliance National Network. Let me first quickly give some definitions of acronyms.

COFA=Compact Of Free Association (A unique treaty established since 1986)
COFA nations=Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei, Yap, Kosrae, Chuuk)
COFA residents=people from any of these nations legally residing in the US

HB 2594 allows COFA residents legally residing in Oregon to be eligible for law enforcement jobs at the State, County and Local levels of government. They are **not** eligible to have law enforcement jobs in Oregon because they are legally here as a result of the COFA treaty. Under COFA the United States has total jurisdiction over all military operations of these Island nations, including the Ronald Regan Anti-Ballistic Missile Base on Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Indeed, this relationship is unique and is critical to the mutual defense of all the Pacific Island nations as well as all of the defense interests of the United States. To underscore the uniqueness of the US relationship with the COFA nations, COFA people join the US military regularly at rates that are higher than for any state in the Union

Many people were surprised to learn that even though young COFA men and women are highly trained by the military to defend our nation they were not eligible to defend us locally, including their own legal residents who reside among us. I would like to stress that the patriotism of our COFA neighbors can not be questioned.

It is gratifying to know that this bill has the support of National Association of Atomic Veterans, and law enforcement agencies, including the State and County Chiefs of Police.

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