

February 3, 2020

Hello Members of the House Committee On Education:

My name is Dale Nabu from the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I'm an COFA island student and a senior at Eastern Oregon University majoring in Political Science. Today I will be the reminding voice of forgotten warriors of Micronesia as I am a veteran of the US Army and part of the next generation of educated COFA college students in support of House Bill 4099, a bill to give instate tuition to COFA island students attending Oregon colleges and universities.

In June of 2010, before leaving my island to tour in the US Army - Operation New Dawn and Operation Iraq Freedom, a wise man told me *"Ne ej wor b̄udej, en iij wor pata"* which means *"as long as there is land, there will always be war"*. As an alumnus of the 25th Regiment HHC 1-27 Wolfhounds and 101st 1-187 Rakkasan Bulldogs, 5 years of service has strengthened my ethical values from 2 main tedious quotes from the United States Army; "never leave a fallen comrade" and "do the right thing, when no one is looking".

*"For the Good of Mankind"*, replied the first human warrior to nuclear testing, *"MORIBA, everything is in God's Hands"*. This is what was said by the US to the Marshallese when they asked them to make the sacrifice and allow for nuclear testing in our islands. Little did King Juda know that 73 years later his choice had a historical ripple effect, not only the Bikinians, the Marshallese, the Micronesians, and the world; but the generations of our past, the present and future. For over 60 years, the U.S. has performed atomic nuclear testing and ballistic missile exercises, displacing families and damaging the economy. This comradery generated opportunities to Micronesians of Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and Federated States of Micronesia to obtain indefinite U.S. residency, Medicaid, Employment Eligibility, Military Provisions and Educational Programs – at least it was promised.

*'Skipper Soram, a Pohnpeian, was killed by a car bomb in September 2004. Within days of his death, a Palauan Marine, Ngirmidol Meluat, lost his life in a roadside bombing. Some months later Steven Bayow from Yap, the most celebrated of the injured is probably Hilario Bermanis, Jr, who lost both legs and an arm in a grenade attack in June 2003. Within the last twelve months, three islanders have been killed in Iraq. An article in USA Today on war casualties, headlined "From tiny Pacific islands comes outsized sacrifice," shows the comparatively high death rate suffered by troops from these islands. While the average death rate in Iraq for individual states in the US is 5 per million, the figure for Micronesia is 25 per million, or five times the US rate' (Hezel, 2005).*

I address you today as a veteran, COFA resident, a comrade, a strong believer in self-less service, and a bi-partisan patriot for Micronesia and America to consider granting us -the reminding voice- the opportunity for passing House Bill 4099 to honor those who've served these great nation "for the good of mankind"; the "Broken Promise" is still there and many Micronesians have served in the U.S. military to protect the United States of America and our Compact of Free Association agreement without hesitation.

By supporting House Bill 4099 Oregon state will be the first state to honor the "broken promise" of education and soldiers who've paid the ultimate price for COFA community members in Eastern to pursue education, return home to face environmental challenges of sea level rise and prevent future nations from becoming nuclear victims. You will be blazing the trail to advancing equity to a community of people who have been waiting for small promises to be made so that we can access

resources that will help us achieve the goals we have, the knowledge we need and the education that will help us grow and thrive.

Today is symbolic, after five 5 generations, ancestry of King Juda and Micronesian protectors of peace still seeks your leadership. “Never leave a fallen comrade behind and do the right thing, when no one is looking.” God Bless America.