

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
May 8-9, 2019
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Resolution No. 9: Support for the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau

Origin: National Security Commission

Submitted by: National Security Commission

WHEREAS, These three nations, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) , and Republic of Palau were created from the U.S. administered U.N. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; and

WHEREAS, By 1994, they became independent countries in free association with the United States; and

WHEREAS, Under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA), with these nations, the U.S. provides economic and programmatic assistance and has basing rights and plenary defense authority that translates into the right to exclude third-party military access to the islands; and

WHEREAS, Citizens of these freely associated states (FAS) may serve in America's armed forces, and there is a high level of military enlistment by FAS citizens; and

WHEREAS, The FAS are geographically remote in the Mid-Pacific, and suffer from high levels of unemployment and lack economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS, Satisfactory solutions will require building partnerships among federal, public and private organizations, establishing mechanisms and incentives to foster increased information sharing on the benefits available to veterans in the FAS to include the VA home loan program, VA health care, and educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, The COFA economic assistance and other programmatic provisions to the Freely Associated States (FAS) will expire in 2023 unless the U.S. takes an affirmative step to renew and extend these agreements; and

WHEREAS, The free association relationship embodied in the COFA was negotiated in the 1980's and it has passed the test of time to the benefit of the development of self-government and democracy in the FAS and has served U.S. strategic interests well; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. strategic interests in this vast Pacific domain are increasingly being challenged by other powers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 8-9, 2019, That the United States federal government continue to develop and refine processes and policies that enhance information sharing to develop programs, initiatives, and other activities that educate citizens and grow the veteran workforce to support the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau in building resilient networks through information sharing and promulgation of best practices and standards to ensure Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, resources and eligibility criteria are applied and fulfilled; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion calls on the United States federal government to take actions to extend and renew the Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau.