

March 4, 2024

FSM Office of the President – Public Information

The Office of the President is pleased to inform the public that significant progress has been made regarding the COFA Amendments Act, which has been included in the six-bill FY24 appropriations package recently released by the House of Representatives.

As Congress prepares to vote on this package to avert a potential partial government shutdown on Friday, March 8, we are informed that Speaker Johnson intends to present the appropriations bills collectively, as a single legislative package also known as a “minibus”, streamlining the legislative process for swifter passage, contingent upon sufficient support from both chambers.

The COFA Amendments Act, remains identical as the version previously approved by the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction in November 2023, with minor adjustments related to Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. The new language in the VA provisions mainly stipulates the necessity of government-to-government agreements between the United States and each of the three Freely Associated States (FAS) countries to facilitate expanded veterans care and services. More information on this will be shared in due course.

The bill ultimately retains all core elements, including mandatory funding, education provisions, and the inclusion of CIFA (Compact Impact Fairness Act) without alterations.

In terms of next steps, should the package pass in the House this week, it would then proceed to the Senate for final approval, before it would go to President Biden to be signed into law.

This turning point is the result of months of collective efforts of many people and the engagement and collaboration between our governments, demonstrating our shared commitment to advancing our mutual interests and the strong and enduring partnership between the FSM and the United States.

The FSM government is optimistic about the forward movement of the legislation. President Simina stated, “This development reinforces our confidence in the strength of our partnership with the United States. We are committed to working

together to ensure the successful implementation of the Compact, which is vital for the well-being of our citizens and the stability of our region.”

The PDF version can also be viewed at: https://drive.google.com/.../1vrZZzJc-x89vyc_3uc.../view...

The full text of the 6-bill package can be viewed at: <https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20240304/HMS31169.PDF>