

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2011

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Edward Markey
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member Markey,

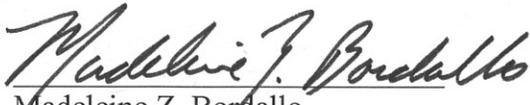
We write to respectfully request a hearing within the Natural Resources Committee regarding the findings of the recently release GAO report titled Compact of Free Association: Improvements Needed to Assess and Address Growing Migration (GAO-12-64). The report was initiated during the 111th Congress as a result of a joint request made by bipartisan members of Congress from Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Arkansas, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands in order to assess the true impacts of Compact migration and to guide policy discussion on improvements to the implementation of Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-188).

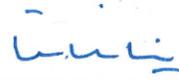
As you know, under the Compacts, citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Republic of the Marshal Islands, known collectively as the Freely Associated States (FAS), may live and work in the United States without a visa as lawful non-immigrants or habitual residents. While the Compacts are critical to our national security, and protecting US interests in the Pacific region, the rising costs of providing social services to Compact migrants in affected jurisdictions must be addressed. For example, the GAO found that between 2004 and 2010, the governments of Hawaii, Guam, and the CNMI reported and estimated \$1 billion in costs associated with providing education, health, and social services to Compact migrants.

The GAO findings provide the most thorough and accurate assessment to-date of the costs and impacts of Compact migrants in affected jurisdictions. Further, it addresses the adequacy of federal funds associated with providing services to Compact migrants. The GAO outlines several policy recommendations which could improve the Administration's implementation of P.L. 108-188, and ease the burden currently placed on our state and territorial governments. In these difficult budgetary times, it is important that we thoroughly consider each of these recommendations to ease the financial impacts of Compact migration.

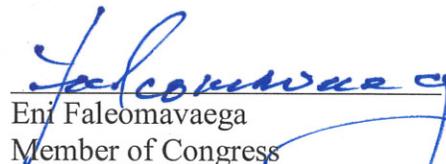
We strongly urge you to convene a hearing on this matter so that Congress can further explore the finding and recommendations found in the GAO report. It is our hope that a hearing on this issue will serve to guide congressional decision making moving forward, and provide greater clarity on what actions can be taken by the Administration, state, and territorial governments to improve the implementation of P.L. 108-188 in affected jurisdictions. We appreciate your kind consideration of this request, and look forward to working with you to address this issue.

Sincerely,


Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress


Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress


Mazie K. Hirono
Member of Congress


Eni Faleomavaega
Member of Congress