

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 268

WHEREAS, The United States has enjoyed strong relationships with the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia; and

WHEREAS, The Compact of Free Association Act of 1985 terminated U.S. trusteeship over the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and established the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands as independent nations in 1986; in 1994, the U.S. established another Compact of Free Association with the Republic of Palau; the agreements also outline how economic assistance is administered to the nations by the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs; and

WHEREAS, The COFA agreements are perpetual with a periodic review of financial provisions; the most recent amendments to the agreements were passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by former President Joe Biden on March 9, 2024, and they went into effect on March 18, 2024; the amendments ensured that veterans living in the COFA islands could access VA medical services, and they restored and extended federal domestic services such as SNAP, TANF, FEMA, and in-state tuition; the amendments also strengthened U.S. Indo-Pacific influence by enhancing U.S. military presence in the COFA nations; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 94,000 non-immigrant legal permanent residents from COFA nations currently live in the U.S. and its territories; of that population, approximately 5,000 live in and contribute to the State of Texas and the United States as a whole through various employment sectors, including technical and professional fields; in addition, many COFA islanders serve in

the U.S. military and are stationed at bases in Texas; in 2019, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature adopted resolutions acknowledging the historical significance of the COFA agreements; and

WHEREAS, Texas and the United States have benefited immeasurably through decades of unwavering friendship with the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia, and it is a pleasure to join in recognizing the many contributions of Texas residents who trace their heritage to the COFA nations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 89th Legislature, hereby express support for the protection of COFA islanders residing in Texas and affirm their rights afforded under the Compact of Free Association agreements; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the 89th Texas Legislature, hereby recognize March 18, 2025, as COFA Day in Texas.

Johnson, Eckhardt, West

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on March 18, 2025.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate