



(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To expand access to health care for veterans in the Freely Associated States,  
and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BERA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee  
on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To expand access to health care for veterans in the Freely  
Associated States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Care for COFA Vet-  
5 erans Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF EXISTING AUTHORITIES TO PRO-**  
2 **VIDE HEALTH CARE TO VETERANS IN THE**  
3 **FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES.**

4 (a) HEALTH CARE ABROAD.—Section 1724 of title  
5 38, United States Code, is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a), by striking “subsections  
7 (b) and (c)” and inserting “subsections (b), (c), and  
8 (f)”; and

9 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-  
10 section:

11 “(f)(1) The Secretary may furnish hospital care and  
12 medical services in the Freely Associated States for any  
13 service-connected disability or non-service-connected dis-  
14 ability.

15 “(2) In furnishing care and services under paragraph  
16 (1), the Secretary may furnish such care and services  
17 through contracts or other agreements, through reim-  
18 bursement, or through the direct provision of care by  
19 health care personnel of the Department.

20 “(3) In this subsection, the term ‘Freely Associated  
21 States’ means the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the  
22 Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia,  
23 which have each entered into a Compact of Free Associa-  
24 tion with the United States.”.

25 (b) BENEFICIARY TRAVEL FOR TREATMENT OF  
26 SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.—Section 111 of

1 such title is amended by adding at the end the following  
2 new subsection:

3 “(h)(1) The Secretary may make payments provided  
4 for in this section to or for any person specified in sub-  
5 section (b)(1)(A) for travel specified in that subsection to,  
6 from, or within the Freely Associated States.

7 “(2) In this subsection, the term ‘Freely Associated  
8 States’ means the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the  
9 Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia,  
10 which have each entered into a Compact of Free Associa-  
11 tion with the United States.”.

12 (c) LEGAL ISSUES.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-  
13 fairs, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall  
14 work with the governments of the Freely Associated States  
15 to facilitate the furnishing of health services, including  
16 telehealth, under the laws administered by the Secretary  
17 of Veterans Affairs to veterans in the Freely Associated  
18 States, such as by addressing—

19 (1) licensure, certification, registration, and tort  
20 issues relating to health care personnel; and

21 (2) matters relating to deliveries of pharma-  
22 ceutical products and medical surgical products, in-  
23 cluding deliveries of such products through the phar-  
24 macy of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to the  
25 Freely Associated States.

1 (d) OUTREACH AND ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS.—

2 During the one-year period beginning on the date of the  
3 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
4 shall—

5 (1) conduct robust outreach to and engage with  
6 each government of the Freely Associated States;  
7 and

8 (2) assess options about the best way to furnish  
9 care under section 1724(f) of title 38, United States  
10 Code, as added by subsection (a).

11 (e) REPORT ON PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE TO

12 VETERANS IN THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES.—Not

13 later than one year after the date of the enactment of this

14 Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Con-

15 gress a report on the implementation of the authorities

16 provided pursuant to the amendments made by this sec-

17 tion and any additional authorities and resources needed

18 by the Secretary to carry out those authorities, including

19 to carry out the following:

20 (1) Reimbursement of care for non-service-con-

21 nected disabilities in the Freely Associated States

22 under section 1724(f) of title 38, United States

23 Code, as added by subsection (a).

24 (2) Contracts with local clinics and federally

25 qualified health centers (as defined in section

1 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.  
2 1396d(l)(2)(B))) in the Freely Associated States to  
3 provide care and services such section 1724(f), as so  
4 added.

5 (3) Furnishing of telehealth services and tech-  
6 nologies to veterans in the Freely Associated States  
7 by providers of the Department under such section  
8 1724(f), as so added.

9 (4) Payment under section 111(h) of title 38,  
10 United States Code, as added by subsection (b), for  
11 travel to, from, or within the Freely Associated  
12 States for veterans seeking health care for service-  
13 connected disabilities.

14 (5) Construction of clinics in the Freely Associ-  
15 ated States or leasing of space at military installa-  
16 tions, embassy compounds, or consulate facilities to  
17 provide care under section 1724(f) of title 38,  
18 United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

19 (6) Such other matters as the Secretary con-  
20 siders appropriate.

21 (f) FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES DEFINED.—In this  
22 section, the term “Freely Associated States” means the  
23 Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands,  
24 and the Federated States of Micronesia, which have each

1 entered into a Compact of Free Association with the  
2 United States.