

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42)
Title II: Amending Compacts of Free Association

SEC. 209. UNITED STATES POLICY REGARDING THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

(i) Establishment of a Unit for the Freely Associated States in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Department of State and Increasing Personnel Focused on Oceania.--

(1) **Definition of appropriate congressional committees.--**In this subsection, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) **Requirements.--**The Secretary of State shall--

(A) assign additional full-time equivalent personnel to the Office of Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Affairs of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Department of State, including to the unit established under subparagraph (B), as the Secretary of State determines to be appropriate, in accordance with paragraph (4)(A); and

(B) establish a unit in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Department of State to carry out the functions described in paragraph (3).

(3) **Functions of unit.--**The unit established under paragraph (2)(B) shall be responsible for the following:

(A) Managing the bilateral and regional relations with the Freely Associated States.

(B) Supporting the Secretary of State in leading negotiations relating to the Compacts of Free Association with the Freely Associated States.

(C) Coordinating, in consultation with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Defense, and other interagency partners as appropriate, implementation of the Compacts of Free Association with the Freely Associated States.

(4) **Full-time equivalent employees.--**The Secretary of State shall--

(A) not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, assign to the Office of Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Affairs of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, including to the unit established under paragraph (2)(B), not less than 4 additional full-time equivalent staff, who shall not be dual-hatted, including by considering--

(i) the use of existing flexible hiring authorities, including Domestic Employees Teleworking Overseas (DETOs); and

(ii) the realignment of existing personnel, including from the United States Mission in Australia, as appropriate;

(B) reduce the number of vacant foreign service positions in the Pacific Island region by establishing an incentive program within the Foreign Service for overseas positions related to the Pacific Island region; and

(C) report to the appropriate congressional committees on progress toward objective outlined in this subsection beginning 1 year from the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter for 5 years.

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