

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 14-38

RE: C.B. NO. 14-11/JGO

SUBJECT: PASSPORT REVOLVING FUND

SEPTEMBER 19, 2005

The Honorable Peter M. Christian
Speaker, Fourteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Second Regular Session, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations ("J&GO"), to which was referred C.B. No. 14-11 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT TO FURTHER AMEND TITLE 50 OF THE CODE OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, AS AMENDED, BY AMENDING SECTION 204 TO ELIMINATE THE REQUIREMENT THAT APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FEES BE UNIFORM, BY AMENDING SECTION 205 TO ALLOW FOR A SHORTER PERIOD OF VALIDITY OF PASSPORTS FOR CERTAIN PERSONS TO BE ESTABLISHED BY THE REGULATIONS, BY AMENDING SECTION 207 TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS IN THE PASSPORT REVOLVING FUND, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of the bill are expressed in its title.

The subject bill is intended to improve passport security and to reduce the possibility of passport fraud. First, the subject bill would enable Immigration to issue passports that are valid for a shorter period to individuals such as children, whose appearance changes quickly, and the elderly who may pass on and whose passports are more susceptible to fraudulent use after their death.

Second, amendments to the passport revolving fund would enable the Division of Immigration and Labor ("Immigration") to absorb the cost of switching to machine-readable passports with enhanced security features. Grant money has already been provided to the FSM to purchase the necessary machinery and software. However, the machine-readable passport booklets are more expensive than those currently used by Immigration and there will be a significant outlay to purchase an initial supply of passport booklets, which can then be topped up as needed.

Your Committee is advised that the FSM is under increasing international pressure to make the change to machine-readable passports. In particular, section 104(2) of the Compact provides that

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the favorable immigration treatment afforded to FSM citizens travelling in the US may be contingent on those citizens holding machine-readable passports.

Thus, your Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.B. No. 14-11 and recommends its passage on First Reading, and that it be placed on the Calendar for Second and Final Reading.

Respectfully submitted,

Dohsis Halbert, chairman

Roosevelt D. Kansou, vice
chairman

Alik L. Alik, member

Tiwiter Aritos, member

Peter M. Christian, member

Moses A. Nelson

Ramon Peyal, member