

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 164

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands should provide for a plebiscite on the question of compliance with United States immigration and wage laws or independence from the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 1, 1997

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands should provide for a plebiscite on the question of compliance with United States immigration and wage laws or independence from the United States.

Whereas the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands entered into a political union with the United States pursuant to the covenant ratified by the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and approved by the Congress in Public Law 94-241;

Whereas section 503 of the covenant authorized the Congress to extend to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certain immigration and wage laws of the United States;

Whereas the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has used its interim control of immigration and wages to develop an economy in which over 90 percent of its private-sector workforce consists of temporary, alien workers, who are reportedly, under-paid and ill-treated;

Whereas the exploitation of alien workers is inconsistent with the covenant and United States labor, civil rights, and human rights laws;

Whereas inconsistent immigration and wage policies undermine the ability of the United States to achieve a more fair and equitable society;

Whereas pursuant to section 701 of the covenant, the United States Government has invested about \$500,000,000 to promote economic development in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;

Whereas the United States has the right to expect that the economic development which it underwrites will be undertaken in compliance with United States laws;

Whereas the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands ships products duty-free and without regard to quotas to the United States even though many such products contain an amount of foreign materials, or were produced with an amount of foreign labor, which exceeds the amount permissible under General Note (3)(a)(iv) of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States;

Whereas the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and other local leaders, have stated their preference for independence over the extension of the United States laws as contemplated by section 503 of the covenant; and

Whereas the United States Government believes the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands should have the right to affirm or reject our assertions: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved in the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that the Gov-
3 ernment of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana
4 Islands should provide for a plebiscite of the people of the
5 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on the
6 question:

7 Shall the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana
8 Islands be governed under the United States immi-
9 gration and wage laws; Or, shall the Commonwealth
10 of the Northern Mariana Islands seek to terminate
11 its current relationship with the United States and
12 seek independence?

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