

U.S. CONGRESSMAN ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA

REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE

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Samoans in Military Denied Right to Vote in American Samoa

For several years, I have been hearing from many Samoans in the military who believe they are deprived of their constitutional right to vote in American Samoa elections because of the unfair requirements imposed by our local election law on absentee voters. Under the current law, each potential voter who has met all the other requirements for voting must appear "in person" to register in order to vote. This requirement applies to everyone including those overseas - like many in the military. Such a requirement has caused an undue and unfair disadvantage to many Samoan families in the military or attending college outside of American Samoa. Furthermore, many Samoans in the military are now having their taxes paid to American Samoa government as a result of the urging of our government leaders. However, they are denied the right to register by mail to vote -- a right that is guaranteed to all active members of the military under Federal law. To them, this is like back in the old days of "taxation without representation."

Another aspect of our local election law that needs amending involves the timing for run-off elections. The current law mandates that run-off elections be held two weeks after the general election. That obviously makes it logistically impossible for absentee voters not living in American Samoa to cast votes in a run-off election.

Upon reviewing both federal and local laws, I remain convinced that American Samoa election law denies voting rights to absentee voters, especially our men and women and their families who are in the U.S. Armed Forces. The Federal law is very clear — for elections for federal office, qualified service members on active duty and other overseas voters are to be permitted to register to vote by mail and vote by absentee ballot based on that registration. I have written to Governor Tauese and members of the Fono to strongly suggest amending our election law so we can be consistent with Federal laws. Failing to do this will leave our government open to potential



Congressman Faleomavaega and other members of Congress were invited to the White House by President George W. Bush to discuss economic and social issues that are of importance to the country.

lawsuits by absentee voters based on denial of voting rights for legal residents of American Samoa who currently serve in the military.

I hope that by the end of this year, American Samoa will have passed legislation to ensure that our election law, including voter registration by mail, requests for absentee ballots by mail, and allowing adequate timing of elections, conform to federal law.

Le Mafai e Samoa i le Militeli ona Palota i Amerika Samoa

Ua tele ni tausaga o fa'a'iloa mai pea e alo ma fanau a Samoa o lo'o i totonu o le militeli lo latou lagona fa'anoanoa ona o le le aloa'ia e le tatou Malo o latou aia tatau i palotaga i Amerika Samoa, e mafua lea ona o se aiaiga o lo'o iai i le tulafono tau i palotaga. O ia aiaiga o lo'o mana'omia ai so'o se tagata e fia lisitala mo palotaga ina ia iai "i le tino" i le taimi e lisitala ai - i se tasi fa'aupuga, e le mafai ona lisitala se tasi e auala i le meli. Ua avea lenei aiaiga ma fa'afitauli tele ia i latou o lo'o i fafo - e pei la o i latou o lo'o i Vaega'au a le Malo Tele po'o le militeli, atoa fo'i ma i latou o lo'o a'o'oga i kolisi.

O le fa'anoanoaga ona e to'atele aiga Samoa o lo'o i le militeli ua liliu atu a latou tupe totogi fa'alafoga (taxes) i le tatou Malo i Amerika Samoa e

pei ona fa'atalosagaina ma u'una'ina e o tatou ta'ita'i i Samoa. Aepeita'i, o lo'o tineia o latou aia fa'a-tagata palota. O se fa'atusatusaga, o lo'o fa'atagaina ile tulafono a le Malo Tele tagata militeli uma e lisitala ma palota e auala i le meli, peita'i e le taliaina e Amerika Samoa. Ua manatu nei alo o Samoa, ua pei lenei tulaga o tausaga ua mavae, sa na'o na totogi lafoga ai tagata ae aunoa ma so latou leo i taalumaga o le Malo.

O se tasi vaega o le tatou tulafono tau palotaga e ao ina toe vaili'ili e iai palotaga toe fa'aauau pe a le maua se to'atasi e manumalo i le ulua'i palota. O aiaiga o le tulafono o lo'o iai nei fai mai e ao ina faia lea palota i le lua vaiaso

Fa'aauau i le Itulau 3

Congressman Faleomavaega is Senior Member on the House Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific

As it is with any new Congress, the 107th Congress began by swearing in its members and electing new leadership. Having a majority of House members, the Republicans reelected the Honorable Dennis J. Hastert, Republican from Illinois, to a second term as Speaker for the House of Representatives.

Elections for committee membership was next for the House. As usual, each member has to choose two committees to serve on. I opted to continue in the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Resources. I then was unanimously elected by my Democratic peers to the position of Senior or Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific at an organizational meeting of the Democratic members of the Committee on International Relations. The Subcommittee's jurisdiction covers legislation and oversight of all foreign policy matters pertaining to East Asia and the Pacific — including China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia/Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

I am extremely pleased to have been elected to this leadership position by my Party colleagues on the International Relations Committee. The East Asia-Pacific Subcommittee oversees a vast and dynamic region of the world that is of enormous importance to U.S. national interests as well as our territory. With over half of the world's population living here, the Asia-Pacific region has become the center of global trade. The region's stability is crucial to America and American Samoa both politically and economically, as underscored by the presence of over 100,000 U.S. military personnel.

I also was named a member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee.



Congressman Faleomavaega and Secretary of State Colin Powell discussed issues relating to global warming after the secretary gave members of the International Committee a top level security briefing.

Faleomavaega Brings Fire Trucks for American Samoa

Our Department of Public Safety - Fire Department already has received two Model 41 fire-trucks that I secured with the assistance of the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region for Fire and Aviation Management and the Department of Interior. These 1-ton trucks, completely equipped with new hoses, nozzles, hand tools and brand new tires to handle the fire needs of our territory also will make excellent support vehicles for our outlying villages.

An additional fire truck with a 750 gallon capacity also has been secured and will soon be delivered to American Samoa. Once again, this was made possible with the tremendous assistance by the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region and the Department of Interior. This will now make a total of three fire trucks worth well over \$400,000 for American Samoa at no cost to our government.

Late last year, I was informed that the entire Western District of Tutuila was without a fire truck. I also heard from the Department of Interior that the LBJ hospital had been cited for fire-code violations and it would support our efforts to secure emergency funding for the purchase of critically needed fire trucks.

I immediately contacted the U.S. Forest Service and they agreed to help through its Pacific Southwest Region which includes California, Hawaii, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, CNMI, Guam, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. This agency has a Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement with its regional partners and part of the agreement includes loaning equipment to regional partners. In our case, the Pacific Southwest Region has agreed to loan American Samoa the fire trucks at no cost to our government. Although we will never own the vehicles, they are ours to use for the life of the vehicles.

I thank the Department of Interior for responding favorably to my request for emergency funding to address our fire protection needs and the U.S. Forest Service for its tremendous assistance that made all possible for the people of American Samoa and at no cost to our government.



Speaker Dennis Hastert administering the oath of office for Congressman Faleomavaega. Also pictured are Faleomavaega's daughter Leonne Hunkin and staff member Solomona Aoelua.

It's Time for Military Academy

I am now accepting applications for students interested in being nominated to the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York and the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Interested students must meet the following requirements:

- an applicant must be 17 years of age and must not have passed his or her 23rd birthday on July 1 of the year of admission;
- unmarried, not pregnant and have no legal obligations to support a child, children or other individual;
- a United States citizen (U.S. Nationals can be nominated but must obtain U.S. citizenship before graduating); and
- of good moral character.

Contact my office in Utulei at 633-1372 for more information.

Aumai e Faleomavaega Ta'avale Tineiafi mo Amerika Samoa

Ua taunu'u atu i le tatou ofisa o Tineiafi i lalo lea o le va'aiga a le Ofisa o Puipuiga Tau Saogalemu Lautele (Department of Public Safety) ni ta'avale tineiafi e lua e ta'ua o Model 41 ua mae'a ona fa'aauppegaina lelei mo galuega fuafuaina. O ia ta'avale o le a vea fo'i ma fesoasoani tele i o tatou nu'u tu mauga po'o vaega o lo'o tu fa'aletonu ai tulaga o auala.

O lo'o iai fo'i se isi ta'avale tineiafi e sili atu lona tele, pe tusa ma le 750 kalone lona tane vai, o lo'o fa'amoemoe e taunu'u atu i Amerika Samoa i se aso lata mai. Ua atoa ai nei le tolu (3) o ta'avale tineiafi, pe tusa ma le \$400,000 lo latou tau aofa'i, ua tatou maua mai i le Feterale e aunoa ma se sene e alu ai a le tatou Malo.

I le tau fa'ai'ui'u o le tausaga fa'ato'a mavae atu sa ou maua ai se fa'aaliga mai le ofisa o Puipuiga Tau Saogalemu Lautele ua fia maua tele se fesoasoani ona ua leai se ta'avale tineiafi e fa'atatau mo le itu i sisifo o Tutuila. I lea fo'i lava vaitaimi sa fa'a'iloa mai ai e le ofisa o le Initeria e fa'apea ua molia le maota gasagase i Utulei (LBJ Hospital) ona ua le pasia ni tulaga saisaitia i le tulafono tau i le saogalemu lautele. Sa fa'a'iloa mai fo'i lo latou fiafia e sapaapaia so'o

se auala ou te taumafaia e maua ai ni tupe e fo'ia ai lenei fa'aletonu.

Sa ou fa'afeso'ota'i vave loa le ofisa o le Malo Tele e ta'ua o le U.S. Forest Service - Pacific Southwest Region for Fire and Aviation Management mo sa latou fesoasoani. O lea ofisa e va'aia setete o Kalefonia ma Hauai'i, fa'apea atumotu o Amerika Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, CNMI, Guam ma le Republic of Marshall Islands. I lalo o se tasi polokalame a le Feterale e mafai ai e lenei ofisa ona tu'uina atu i se tulaga fa'a-nono pe fa'aaitalafu ni a'upega tineiafi i setete po'o atumotu o lo'o i lalo o le latou va'aiga. Sa ioe lea ofisa e tu'uina mai fa'a-nono nei ta'avale tineiafi e tolu (3) mo Amerika Samoa e aunoa ma se tupe e totogiina e le tatou Malo.

Ou te fa'afetai tele ai i le ofisa o le Initeria ona ua latou talisapaia e aunoa ma se fa'atua'i sa'u talosaga fa'atele'a'i mo se vaegatupe mai ia latou lava tupe e fofo ai lenei fa'afitauli sa tula'i mai. E fa'apea fo'i ona ou fa'afetai tele i le ofisa o le U.S. Forest Service - Pacific Southwest Region for Fire and Aviation Management ona o le taliaina vave o la'u'aioiga mo se fesoasoani ma tatou maua ai nei ta'avale tineiafi e aunoa ma se tupe na alu ai.

Avea Faleomavaega ma Temokarati Sinia i le Soa-Komiti Tau ia Asia i Sasa'e ma le Pasefika i le Maota o Sui

E pei o tulaga masani i so'o se Konekeresi fou, sa tatala aloa'ia le nofoaiga 107 a le Konekeresi a le Malo Tele i le fa'atautoina lea o ali'i faipule uma ma le filifilia lea o ta'ita'i fou. Ona o le to'atele o ali'i faipule i le Maota



Faleomavaega and the CloseUp group from American Samoa on the Capitol steps. They met and discussed a variety of topics ranging from the role of Congress to federal agencies in relation to American Samoa. Also pictured are Dr. Salei'a Fa'amuli (standing-far left), staff member Sina Solomona (standing-5th from Left) and Leonne Hunkin (sitting-far left on 2nd row).

o Sui mai le vaega fa'apolokiki e ta'ua o le Ripapilikana (Republican), sa latou toe filifilia ai le susuga a Dennis J. Hastert, faipule Ripapilikana mai le setete o Illinois e toe nofoia le nofoa o le Fofoga Fetalai i le Maota o Sui.

I le filifilina o sui mo komiti 'ese'ese e fa'atapula'a'i le ta'i lua (2) komiti e mafai ona galue ai se ali'i faipule. Sa ou manatu e toe tumau pea i komiti sa ou iai i le tausaga ua mavae - Komiti tau i le va fealoga'i ma Malo i fafo atoa ma le Komiti tau i Ala Manuia (Resources). Sa filifilia laugatasia loa a'u e sui Temokarati uma i le komiti tau i le va fealoga'i ma Malo i fafo e ave ma sui Temokarati Sinia i le Soa-Komiti e feagai ma Asia i Sasa'e ma le Pasefika atoa. O lenei soa-komiti e va'aia tulaga i tulafono tau i le va ma Malo i fafo fa'apea le va'aia o fuafuaga uma a le Malo Tele e fa'atatau mo Asia i Sasa'e ma le Pasefika atoa - e aofia ai malo o Saina, Iapani, Korea, Asia i Saute-Sasa'e (Indonesia), Ausetalia, Niu Sila ma Malo uma po'o atumotu i le Pasefika.

Ua matua fa'agae'etia lava a'u i le fa'aaloalo a'o'u o komiti ma lo latou filifilia o a'u i lenei tulaga fa'a-Ta'ita'i. E taua tele lenei soa-komiti i fuafuaga tatau a le Lunaite Setete mo Malo i fafo. O se vaega lenei o le lalolagi e silia ma le 'afa o le aofa'iga atoa o tagata o le lalolagi o lo'o nonofo ai, ua ave ai lenei itu lalolagi (Asia ma le Pasefika) ma totonugalemu o fefa'ataua'iga a le lalolagi atoa. Ua matua taua tele le fa'ato'afilemuina o ni tulaga vevesi e ono ali'i mai i lenei itu o le lalolagi, e fa'amaonia lea i le ova ma le 100,000 fitafita tau a le Lunaite Setete o lo'o tiute i le vaega o le lalolagi.

Sa tofia fo'i a'u e ave ma se tasi o sui Temokarati i le tasi Soa-Komiti e feagai ma mata'upu tau i le Afa o le Kelope i le itu i Sisifo, o se tasi o Soa-Komiti i lalo o le Komiti lava lenei tau i le va fealoga'i ma Malo i fafo.

Tatau Ona Si'i Totogi o Tagata Faigaluega i Amerika Samoa

(E maua kopi o la'u ta'utinoga atoa i le fa'asamoa pe fa'apalagi pe a fa'afeso'ota'i mai lo'u ofisa)

O se fiafiaga tele i a te'a'u lo'u tula'i e molimau i iloilogaga o le tapula'a o totogi aupito i maualalo i Amerika Samoa i a Juni 3 - 8 fa'ato'a mavae atu E momoli la'u fa'afetai tele i le Matagaluega o Leipa a le Malo Tele i le fa'ama'itega o iloilogaga. Ave fo'i la'u fa'amalo i le afioga ia Papali'i David Cohen ma lana komiti ona o le galuega fita na feagai ai i le va'ilili o molimau ma fa'amaumauga uma sa fa'aofi.

O le fa'ai'uga a lenei Komiti ua fa'aopoopoina ai le 6 sene i totogi maualalalo uma e le gata i 'aufaigaluega i kamupani i'a atoa ma isi kamupani ese'ese, ae fa'apea fo'i i le Malo. O lea fa'aopoopoga fa'atulagaina e le Komiti ua fa'alua ai le aofa'i na i ai i tausaga e lua talu ai. E ui la ina ua si'itia le tapula'a o totogi aupito i maualalalo i Amerika Samoa (\$3.26 i le itula mo kamupani i'a ae \$2.73 i le itula mo le Malo e amata i a Oketopa 2001, ae toe si'i i le \$2.77 i a Oketopa o le 2002), o lo'o vava mamao pea lava ma le \$8.15 i le itula lea e i ai le tapula'a mo totogi aupito maualalalo i Amerika.

O le tau o le kalone kesolini i Hawaii e tali tutusa lava ma Amerika Samoa, ma e fa'apea fo'i ma le tau o le tele o meataumafa. Ou te tusisi lava a'u e tatau ona maua e tagata faigaluega i Amerika Samoa ni totogi e mafai ai ona soifua lelei leatunu'u i se tapula'a maualalo ae talafeagai ma le tulaga o le soifuaga.

E pei ona ou fa'amamafaina i iloilogaga sa fai, o le Tulafono o Totogi Talafeagai na agava'a ai Amerika Samoa mai lava i le tausaga e 1938 lea na pasia ai e le Konekeresi mo tagata Amerika uma. Ae paga lea, fa'ato'a fa'amalosia lea tulafono i Amerika Samoa i le 1950, ma e na o se fa'atulagana fa'apitoa mo galuega fa'apitoa na aloa'ia ai. I se isi fa'aupuga, na agava'a lava Amerika Samoa i lalo o Tulafono o Totogi Talafeagai o le 1938 i le taimi tonu na pasia ai e le Konekeresi, ae taluai ona o le pulega a le Neivi sa fa'atautaia le Malo i lea vai taimi, sa le fa'amamafaina ai pe fa'amalosia lea tulafono i le tatou Malo.

Ua 45 nei tausaga o selesele pea e kaamupani i'a e aunoa ma se fa'afitauli, le manuia i tulaga tau i tupe maua i Amerika Samoa ona o ni totogi maualalalo na iai, ma ua ta'i miliona ma miliona tupe ua maua e le malo mai i kamupani i'a i le itu tau lafoga. Ou te talitonu ua o'o nei i le taimi e tatau ai i le Matagaluega o Leipa a le Malo Tele ona fa'atulaga lelei se tapula'a talafeagai e gata ai le maualalalo o totogi o tagata faigaluega o le atunu'u, ona o lo'o tele le manuia o lo'o tafili ai pea kamupani ma le malo. O le vai taimi lenei, e leai lava se tulaga ma'oti e tatau ona gata ai le maualalo o le soifuaga talafeagai, i totonu o Amerika Samoa.

O le itu o lo'o o'u popo'e ai, o le tupe maua a le tagata e to'atasi i Amerika Samoa i le sefulu tausaga taluai pe tusa o le \$6,500. O le vai taimi lenei, ua pa'u lea fa'ainumera i le \$3,500, aepeita'i o lo'o si'isi'i pea le tau o le soifuaga. Ua tatau lava ona fai se auala e fo'ia ai lea fa'atifaui.

E le faigofie ona talia le fa'atulagana o lo'o i ai totogi o kamupani, ae maise ai i latou o lo'o pulea ma fa'auluulu iai kamupani; ua o'o lava i le \$65 miliona i le tausaga le totogi o le isi ali'i pule, ae na o le ta'i \$3 ma sene i le itula a latou tagata faigaluega.

O lo'o tau fa'apea fo'i le tulaga o lo'o i ai le valavala o totogi o le tatou Malo, i le maualuluga o totogi o fa'auluuluga o matagaluega ma ta'ita'i, ae matua pa'u lava totogi o e pito i maualalalo. Ou te le fa'asea i le maualuluga o totogi, po'o ai lava. Aepeita'i, a fa'apea ua si'i ma maualuluga totogi o e fa'auluulu i ai kamupani ma le malo, e tatau fo'i la ona si'i totogi o e pito i totogi maualalalo i se tulaga e talafeagai ma le tau o le soifuaga ua i ai.

E fai si faigata ma lavelave le toe fa'avasegaina o tulaga o totogi pito i maualalalo ina ia talafeagai lelei, ae maise lava i le malo, ona o le utiuti o le seleni i lenei vai taimi. Ae o se galuega e tatau ona tatou faia fa'atasi, i le toe fa'afetaui ma toe fa'alelei atili a tatou lafoga fa'apea ma tulafono fa'asinoala mo lafoga uma. E tatau fo'i ona tatou tausisia le totogiina e kamupani i'a o le latou tusaga talafeagai o lafoga i tausaga ta'itasi.

O se talitonuga maumaututu na fa'avae ai e le Konekeresi le tulafono o totogi talafeagai i le 1938. Ou te talitonu fo'i i le maua o lea fa'avae e o'o mai lava i le aso nei, ma o le mafua'aga fo'i lea na ou molimau ai taluai nei,



As the Ranking Member on the International Relations Sub-Committee on East Asia and the Pacific, Faleomavaega and Honorable Arthur Anae, Member of New Zealand Parliament, met and discussed a number of issues that are of mutual interest between New Zealand and the United States.

fa'apea fo'i ma tausaga uma e fa na tuana'i atu.

Ona o le leai o ni iuni e puipuia aia ma mana'omiaga a tagata faigaluega i Amerika Samoa i le 40 tausaga taluai, ua matele lava le mamafa o totogi maualuluga i pulega o kamupani ma fa'auluuluga o le malo. Ou te talitonu ua tatau nei ona fa'atulaga se faiga ia feololo ai le faigata o le tausiga o aiga aemaise le soifuaga, o e maualalalo totogi. Na ou molimau ina ia fa'amauiina lo'u talitonuga, ia si'itia le tulaga talafeagai o totogi maualalalo mo tagata faigaluega o Amerika Samoa. O le talitonuga fa'avae lea ma le agaga o sui o le Konekeresi i le 1937 na fausia ai le tulafono a le Malo Tele, ma ou te talitonu o le tulaga talafeagai lea e tatau fo'i ona i ai ma Amerika Samoa.

VA Medical Clinic for American Samoa's Veterans

With the growing number of military retirees returning to American Samoa, I feel there should be a full-time physician established in American Samoa to look after the medical needs of our veterans. Simply put, our veterans deserve to be able to take full advantage of the programs and benefits offered by the Veterans Affairs administration.

I am pleased to report that I have submitted an application to the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a VA medical clinic in American Samoa. I was encouraged to proceed with the submission of this application when the American Samoa Senate passed a Senate Concurrent Resolution requesting the same. Without a doubt, we are in full agreement - locally and nationally, that this clinic is urgently and critically needed.

In a joint letter that I and senators Daniel Inouye and Daniel Akaka sent to Secretary Anthony Principi of Veterans Affairs, we made clear that American Samoa is a targeted area of need. That more than 3,000 veterans live in American Samoa but many needing assistance are not able to obtain proper medical care and treatment because of the limitation in available medical facilities and resources.

In addition, I have secured the support of two key members of Congress in the House Committee on Veterans Affairs on this matter. Republican Chairman Congressman Christopher Smith, and Democratic Ranking Member Congressman Lane Evans signed with me on another letter to Secretary Principi also requesting a favorable outcome on our application.

I have received a firm assurance from Mr. Dave Burge, Regional Director of Veterans Affairs for our area of his support for our application. I appreciate the support of the VA and their willingness to provide additional funds for the health and well-being of our veterans.

I will continue to do all I can to ensure that our application is treated fairly and equitably in the process. I will also continue to work with my friends in Congress to see that the needs of our people are met.

Tulafono tau i Palotaga... Mai le Itulau 1

pe a mavae le ulua'i palota. O lona uiga, e matua leai lava se taimi e mafai ai ona auina atu ma toe maua mai pepa palota a i latou uma o lo'o palota mai fafo.

I sa'u sa'ililiga la i le tatou tulafono atoa fo'i ma le tulafono a le Malo Tele, ua saga fa'amautu atili ai lo'u lagona o lo'o tineia aia tau palota o tatou alo ma fanau o lo'o i fafo i lalo o le tatou tulafono o lo'o iai nei, aemaise ai lava alo ma fanau a Samoa o lo'o tautua i le militeli. O lo'o manino lava le tulafono a le Malo Tele - mo palotaga mo ofisa o le Federale, e mafai e i latou uma i le militeli ona lisitala ma palota e auala i le meli.

Ua ou fa'aailoa la i le Kovana fa'apea Sui o le Fono sa'u fautuaga ina ia suia le tatou tulafono ina ia o tutusa ma le tulafono a le Malo Tele. A le togafitia lea tulaga, ou te talitonu e i'u ina tatou afaina ai ona o lo'o 'ese'ese ma le tulafono a le Malo Tele. Talosia ia o'o atu i le fa'ai'uga o lenei tausaga ua mafai ona fa'amautuina lenei tulaga ina ia tatou o tutusa ai ma le tulafono a le Malo Tele.



Congressman Faleomavaega met with Command Sergeant Major Ioakimo Falaniko to discuss several issues of concern to Samoans in the military including the current election law in American Samoa and paying of taxes to American Samoa Government. Also pictured is Mrs. Maliana Falaniko.

American Samoa's Minimum Wages Should Be Increased

(You may contact my office to obtain a complete copy of my statement in English or Samoan)

It was indeed a pleasure for me to testify at the Minimum Wage Hearing held in American Samoa on June 3 - 8. I thank the U.S. Department of Labor for holding the hearing, and a big fa'amalo to Committee Chairman High Chief Papaali'i David Cohen and his committee for their hard work in conducting and analyzing the testimonies presented.

The outcome of the hearing has resulted in the increase of .6 cents to the wages of our cannery and government workers. This is twice the amount mandated two years ago by the committee. While this has raised the minimum wage levels in American Samoa to \$3.26 for canneries and \$2.65 for American Samoa Government, it is still far behind the \$5.15 an hour minimum wage in the United States.

It has been reported that the cost of fuel in American Samoa is as high as the cost of fuel in Hawaii, and this is also true of most food items. I still maintain that the working people of American Samoa deserve to be paid a minimum standard of decent living.

The federal Fair Labor Standards Act has been applied to American Samoa since 1938 when Congress first passed legislation for the whole nation. However, it was not enforced in the territory until the late 1950's and only then through a special industry committee structure.

In other words, under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, American Samoans were entitled to receive the federal minimum wage established by Congress as soon as it became effective. But under U.S. Naval rule then, the law was never enforced.

Now, after more than 45 years of rapid, uninterrupted and unsurpassed return of prosperity to the tuna industry, and the millions of dollars in revenues and funding ASG receives, it is time for the U.S. Department of Labor to support a scheduled movement of minimum wages that is commensurate with today's costs and standard of living which still has not been properly determined. What is more aggravating is that about 10 years ago, the per capita income in American Samoa was about \$6,500. Now it is about \$3,500 or less, yet consumer prices have increased. These trends must be immediately addressed.

In the pay ranks of the American Samoa Government, there is currently a wage disparity between government officials and the lower echelons of government workers. That is why it is incumbent upon the Committee to narrow the disparity by increasing wages for the 41-percent of government employees who are making less than the U.S. minimum wage. Surely if we can find the funds to increase the salaries of our public officials or government leaders, we should certainly be able to fund increases in wages for our government employees.

But we must work together to bring about this change by re-adjusting and re-defining our tax policies. And we must insist that our canneries pay fairer wages and corporate taxes.

I believe that the right to live is higher than the right to own a business. I welcome business and businesses should be able to make a reasonable profit. Government leaders also should get fair compensation. But it is not right for the chief executives and leaders to receive exorbitant compensations while the rest of the working class live below decent standards because of low wages.

It is understood that reorganization and change to accommodate a higher minimum wage scale is not going to be easy. But the principle of minimum wage is sound. The U.S. Congress believed the principle was sound in 1938 and I

believe the principle is just as sound today. There are many very serious issues that need to be brought out for public discussion and review. This is why I testified before the committee this year just as I did two years ago and two years before that.

For the past 40 years, and in the absence of any established labor unions to look after the needs and rights of the working men and women of American Samoa, the wage rates have always tilted in favor of corporations and management. It is time for the wage rates to tilt in favor of the working people of American Samoa who are struggling to support their families.

The working men and women of American Samoa deserve and are entitled to a fair increase in minimum wage rate. That is what I believe in, and like those brave members of Congress in 1938 who established the minimum wage act, it is the only way it should be.



Faleomavaega and former NFL player Manu Tuiaosopo (far left) and his children (l-r) Zach, Marques and Leslie met and discussed ideas Samoans can consider to succeed in this society. Their success and experiences in the areas of education and competitive sports make them a model family for many Samoans. Manu played for both Seahawks and 49ers while Marques, as quarterback, led the Washington Huskies to victory in the 2001 Rose Bowl. He now plays for the Oakland Raiders.

Internet Access to Government Resources Available at <http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Access to the thousands of federal and state government Internet sites is now available online at <http://www.firstgov.gov/>. This is made possible through FedSearch, a very powerful search engine capable of screening 500 million Web pages in less than one-quarter second. The FirstGov website will allow Internet users to browse millions of pages of data available at the electronically linked government sites for research and other information -- everything from researching at the Library of Congress to searching for government grants to planning a family vacation. The site is managed by the General Services Administration on behalf of the federal government. It is open 24 hours, seven days a week.

This will be an invaluable resource to our people, especially students who wish to do research, government agencies and businesses as well with information available at their finger tips. Because the Internet is free, there will be tremendous cost savings realized in the reduction of long distance/overseas telephone calls to the Mainland just to request information.

FA'AALIGA

Afai e te le'i mauaina se pepa fesili mai ia te a'u, fa'amolemole fa'afeso'ota'i lo'u ofisa i Utulei po'o Uosigitone e maua atu ai se kopi. Fa'a'ailoa mai sou taofi i ni isi o mata'upu oute manatu e taua tele mo le lumana'i o le tatou Malo. O le a ou fa'atali atu mo sou taofi.

NOTICE

If you did not receive a survey from me, please contact either of my offices in Utulei or in DC. I would appreciate your opinion on a few topics that are of importance to our government. I look forward to hearing from you.



**Congress of the United States
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House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515**

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