

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 19-192

RE: C.R. NO. 19-318/EX AFF

SUBJECT: TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MR.
AKILLINO SUSAIA TO SERVE AS THE
AMBASSADOR PLENIPOTENTIARY TO THE
UNITED STATES.

DECEMBER 17, 2016

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Nineteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Seventh Special Session, 2016

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on External Affairs, to which was referred
C.R. No. 19-318, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF
MR. AKILLINO SUSAIA TO SERVE AS THE FSM
AMBASSADOR PLENIPOTENTIARY TO THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA IN WASHINGTON, D.C.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of this resolution are expressed
in its title.

On November 25, 2016, the President transmitted the said
resolution to Congress through Presidential Communication
No. 19-504. Attached with the communication is the
nominee's resume.

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Your Committee reviewed the qualifications of the nominee extensively. The nominee is currently an advisor to the President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and was the Chairman of the Committee in charge of the preparation of the Pacific Island Forum. He previously served in several positions, as the FSM Ambassador to the People's Republic of China; as the Consul General at the FSM Consulate in Honolulu, Hawaii; as the Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, which is now the Department of Resources and Development; as the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure; as the General Manager of the Pohnpei Port Authority; as the Budget Officer of the Pohnpei State Legislature; and as a Legislative Aide of the Pohnpei State Legislature.

The nominee received a Master of Arts in Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

Your Committee conducted a public hearing on the said resolution on December 15, 2016, with the witnesses. At the initial stage of the hearing, Chairman Welly gave the other members of the Committee the opportunity to comment on the said nominee. Senator Robson U. Romolow commented that he prefers that the nominee be present because he can ask questions directly to him. Senator Victor V. Gouland asked what is the difference between the Ambassador to the Government of the People's of Republic of China and the Ambassador to the United States of America. Secretary Lorin Robert commented that there is no written policy regarding the matter. It is just the experience or seniority of the position to be considered. As the Secretary of Foreign Affairs he understands Government the United States often works closely with the FSM Government given our special relationship. Having an

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empty seat at our FSM Embassy in the United States of America does not look good regarding this relationship.

Secretary Joses Gallen also echoed the same sentiment shared by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs that the Ambassador position to our FSM Embassy in Washington, D.C. is very important at this stage. The filling of the Ambassador position should be given priority consideration because of the new administration of the United States soon to be in place. For the Department of Justice, there is no legal impediment regarding the resolution and hope Congress can favorably confirm him.

Your Committee wanted to know the performance of the current staff at the FSM Embassy in Washington, D.C. Are they performing at the level we anticipated or are they not? Is the coordination between the home office and the overseas missions lacking so that filling the Ambassador's position now an urgent matter? Secretary Lorin Robert explained that there is a chain of command between the home office and the respective embassies and this has been exercised throughout all the embassies or overseas missions. Given that the Ambassador position has been vacant for quite sometime, it does not look good for the FSM. Also, considering our relationship between the FSM and the United States, there is a need now to fill up the position so both governments secure smooth coordination considering our unique relationship with the United States.

Your Committee also inquired of the nominee's work experience when he was in Beijing, China, whether he performed exemplary, which is a positive attribute toward him being an Ambassador to the United States. One of the witnesses commented that it is very difficult to itemize what sort of activities the nominee had excelled in when he was an ambassador stationed in the People's Republic

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of China. However, the Committee should note that the nominee was a Consulate General at the Consulate Office in Hawaii, which is a plus for him because of his previous consular service.

Your Committee had recalled that the nominee was no longer interested in working for the National Government. So the question should be directed at the nominee tomorrow.

Your Committee inquired of the witnesses, what is the rush now? One of the witnesses commented that due to the fact that there will be a new United States administration in place around January 2017, it is a positive thing to fill the position at this time.

On December 16, 2016, your Committee held another hearing with the nominee. Your Committee inquired of the nominee about working relationship with him and the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The nominee commented that in terms of a working relationship between him and the Secretary, he has no problem. In fact, they were classmates at Xavier High School and he sees no problem working with the Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

Your Committee appreciated the candid answer of the nominee and hope that, if confirmed, he should strengthen the working relationship between the home office and the overseas missions because it has been a problem in the past. At this juncture, nurturing our diplomatic relationships with other countries is a thing that should not be taken lightly. Your Committee further requested the nominee to look into an incident in the past where "reverse protocol" occurred during the inauguration of President Peter M. Christian, particularly when such reverse protocol happened between diplomats from the Government of the People's Republic of China and the

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Government of Japan. The nominee expressed that in his view, his nomination to be the Ambassador to the United States, is a very important selection considering that he was a former Ambassador at the FSM Embassy in Beijing, China. Therefore, his nomination will be a challenge for him considering the new administration to be in placed under President Donald Trump's administration. So this is not an easy job for him, however, he is willing to work with the President as well as the FSM Congress. Our collaborative effort in fulfilling the FSM obligations under the amended Compact is needed.

Your Committee fully supports the nomination of Mr. Akillino Susaia to serve as the Ambassador to the FSM Embassy in the United States of America. Your Committee has not received any subsequent communication that would cast doubt on the performance or integrity of the nominee.

Absent any contrary indication, your Committee believes that the nominee should be confirmed, and so recommends Mr. Akillino Susaia be confirmed to serve as the FSM Ambassador Plenipotentiary to Embassy in the United States.

Your Committee on External Affairs is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 19-318, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto.

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Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Paliknoa K. Welly
Paliknoa K. Welly, chairman

Robson U. Romolow, vice chairman

Isaac V. Figir, member

/s/ Victor V. Gouland
Victor V. Gouland, member

Berney Martin, member

/s/ Bonsiano F. Nethon
Bonsiano F. Nethon, member

/s/ David W. Panuelo
David W. Panuelo, member