



## NEWS RELEASE

CONGRESSMAN

**ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA**

TERRITORY OF AMERICAN SAMOA

**U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

2422 Rayburn Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

(202) 225-8577

Fax: (202) 225-8757

August 26, 1998

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. ---- LEGISLATION PENDING FOR VETS TO FLY ON MAC  
FLIGHTS TO HAWAII FOR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that legislation has passed the U.S. Senate which will authorize veterans residing in American Samoa to fly on a space available basis on military flights to Hawaii.

"In my meetings with Samoa's veterans, one of the many problems raised has been the expense of getting to Honolulu for VA medical appointments," said Faleomavaega. "In response to hearing of this problem, I suggested to Senator Inouye that he consider adding a provision to the Defense Department Appropriations bill authorizing veterans to travel from American Samoa to Hawaii on military flights. Given the internal rules of the two bodies, legislative changes of this nature are easier to add in the Senate than in the House."

"I am pleased to report today that Senator Inouye was able to add such a provision to the FY99 Defense Department Appropriations bill while it was in the Senate, and that the bill has passed the Senate. A different version of the bill has passed the House, so the bill will go to a conference committee early in September where this difference, and many others, will get resolved," continued the Congressman.

"At this juncture, I am asking the veterans' associations and veterans individually to send Senator Inouye and myself letters of support providing details of why it is important to them to get transportation to their medical appointments. This will give the Senator and I additional information to support this provision should anyone challenge it in the House or Senate," said Faleomavaega.

If enacted into law, this provision will authorize veterans to travel on a space available basis on military flights, commonly known as "MAC flights", for medical appointments in Hawaii. Each veteran would have to obtain a certification to travel from the Department of Veterans Affairs to be eligible. The veteran would not need to be a retiree or otherwise eligible for Defense Department transportation.