



SENATE
PS Res. No. 638

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Introduced by SENATOR SONNY ANGARA RECEIVED BY: 

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT TO CONDUCT A RE-EXAMINATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MIGRATION POLICIES IN THE WAKE OF CONTINUED ABUSES AND EXPLOITATION SUFFERED BY OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs), WITH AN END-IN-VIEW OF PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF EVERY FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKER, OUR MODERN DAY HEROES

WHEREAS, Article II, Sec. 18 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides, "[T]he State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare.";

WHEREAS, Article XIII, Sec. 1 of the Constitution also provides, "[T]he State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all.";

WHEREAS, based on the 2016 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) survey on overseas Filipinos, there are 2.2 million Filipinos working abroad, with total remittance estimated at P203 billion;

WHEREAS, one in every four OFWs (23.8%) work in Saudi Arabia while the other preferred destinations were United Arab Emirates (15.9%), Europe (6.6%), Kuwait (6.4%), and Qatar (6.2%);

WHEREAS, in the wake of the Flor Contemplacion incident, President Fidel V. Ramos signed the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 or Republic Act No. 9042 which seeks to overhaul and manage the overseas employment sector by applying a protective framework that takes into account the plight of Filipino overseas who are in distress, including those who are undocumented;

WHEREAS, despite the various laws and policies that aim to promote the welfare of OFWs, alarming figures on OFW abuse and exploitation persist:

1. Victims of human trafficking totaled 1,135 in 2013 (DFA data);
2. From 2009-2013, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) handled more than 50,000 cases on-site annually;
3. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) handled an average of 1,600 illegal recruitment cases from 2007-2011; and,
4. The National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) received over 6,000 overseas employment cases in 2013;

WHEREAS, the Duterte administration ordered a complete ban on the deployment of migrant workers to Kuwait after the body of a Filipina was found in a freezer at an abandoned apartment in Kuwait City. There were also reports that abuse by employers had driven several migrants to suicide;

WHEREAS, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) estimates that more than 250,000 Filipinos work in Kuwait, mostly as domestic helpers;

WHEREAS, data from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) show that in Kuwait alone, a total of 1,447 cases of maltreatment, 227 sexual abuses and 63 cases of rape of Filipino workers were reported in 2016;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 10801 declared OWWA as a national government agency and an attached agency of DOLE, and would receive government funding instead of relying solely from the contributions of its OFW members. The law boosts the government's capacity to assist OFWs who lost their jobs or those who decided to return by making reintegration one of the core programs of OWWA;

WHEREAS, under OWWA's Balik Pilipinas, Balik Hanapbuhay Program, beneficiaries can get P20,000 cash grants, and P100,000 to P2 million loan with collateral requirement for those who want to establish businesses;

WHEREAS, OWWA, in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), offers free skills training to returning OFWs to assist them in finding employment here and abroad;

WHEREAS, amid incidents of abuse and inhumane treatment against OFWs, there is an urgent need to reassess and strengthen labor programs and policies that would provide them opportunities and access to gainful employment in the country instead of exporting cheap labor;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines to direct the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development to conduct a re-examination, in aid of legislation, of the government's migration policies in the wake of continued abuses and exploitation suffered by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), with an end-in-view of promoting the welfare of every Filipino migrant worker , our modern day heroes.

Adopted.


SONNY ANGARA