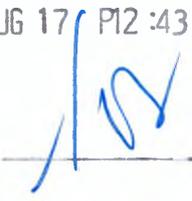


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

23 AUG 17 P12 :43

RECEIVED BY: 

SENATE
S. No. 2414

Introduced by Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" T. Go

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING HOSPITAL WARDS DEDICATED TO OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS TO BE KNOWN AS THE "OFW WARD"
IN EVERY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH-RETAINED HOSPITAL,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are hailed as "modern-day heroes" not only for their invaluable contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but also for their unparalleled dedication and selflessness of having to leave their families behind just to uplift the quality of lives of their loved ones.

They toil away in distant lands to become not only providers but also beacons of inspiration for every hardworking Filipino. Worthy to note, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BPS) reported that the personal remittances from OFWs grew by 3.8 percent in April 2023. The increase in personal remittances was due to higher remittances sent by land-based workers with work contracts of one year or more and sea- and land-based workers with work contracts of less than one year.

However, despite being the huge contributor to the country's economy, their journey often entails enduring countless challenges and personal sacrifices. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc not only to their profession, livelihood, health and safety, but also to their family. Hence, the cost of hospitalization, access to health care services, and immediate treatment remain an integral issue.

In light of these unpleasant circumstances faced by our OFWs and their families, we must take necessary steps to ensure their safety and well-being. This bill seeks to establish an OFW ward in every Department of Health-retained hospital. This OFW Ward shall be for the exclusive use of OFWs and their dependents who are in need of hospital confinement by reason of their health conditions. Through the establishment of wards dedicated to OFWs, they will be guaranteed of immediate and efficient health care services.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is most earnestly sought.



SENATOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" T. GO

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as "*OFW Ward Act*".

2
3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 protect and promote the health of the people. Furthermore, the health of the Overseas
5 Filipino Workers (OFWs) who are considered as our nation's modern-day heroes shall
6 be protected, upheld and promoted. Undeniably contributing much to our country, the
7 State shall endeavor to maintain their good health and well-being.

8
9 Sec. 3. *Establishment.* - Throughout the country, there shall be established an
10 OFW ward in every Department of Health-retained hospital. The OFW Ward shall be
11 for the exclusive use of OFWs and their dependents who are in need of hospital
12 confinement by reason of their health conditions. However, when urgency of public
13 necessity purposes so requires, such OFW Ward may be used for emergency purposes,
14 after which, it shall be reverted to its nature as OFW ward.

15
16 The DOH shall determine the number of beds in these OFW Wards based on
17 the distribution of OFWs in their respective catchment areas. The DOH-retained

1 Hospitals shall establish their patient flow and shall identify their respective units or
2 focal persons to ensure positive patient experience.

3
4 Sec. 4. *Eligibility.* - This Act shall cover all OFWs and their dependents,
5 including, but not limited to the following: land-based OFWs, seafarers and other sea-
6 based workers: *Provided,* That dependents shall refer to their parents, legal spouse,
7 legitimate, illegitimate, legitimated, and legally adopted child, who is unmarried, not
8 gainfully employed, and not over 18 years old, or is over 18 years old but incapacitated
9 and incapable of self-support due to a mental or physical defect.

10
11 Sec. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within six (6) months from the
12 effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health (DOH) shall, in coordination with the
13 Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and other concerned government
14 departments and agencies, with the participation of the Local Government Units
15 (LGUs), promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

16
17 Sec. 6. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the immediate
18 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

19
20 Sec. 7. *Separability Clause.* - If for any reason, any provision of this Act is
21 declared unconstitutional or invalid, parts of provisions of this Act that are not affected
22 shall continue to be in full force and effect.

23
24 Sec. 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
25 Implementing Rules and Regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
26 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

27
28 Sec. 9. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
29 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

30 *Approved,*