

SENATE

9 MAY -6 12:05

Ps. Res. No 1052

RECEIVED BY



Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO REVIEW IN AID OF LEGISLATION THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON LABOR PARTICULARLY OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT WITH THE END-IN-VIEW OF CRAFTING LONG-TERM PLANS AND STRATEGIES THAT ARE FLEXIBLE IN ANY GIVEN NATIONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION

WHEREAS, Article II Section 18 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that *"The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare"*;

WHEREAS, this was further amplified by Article XIII Section 3 which partially states that *"The 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, in response to the above quoted Constitutional provisions, Republic Act No. 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 was enacted and serves as the enabling law that protects and promotes the rights of Filipinos living and working abroad;

WHEREAS, government's policy to promote labor export or overseas employment began with the promulgation of Presidential Decree (PD) No. 442 otherwise known as the Labor Code of 1974 and was given further impetus by virtue of PD No. 1412;

WHEREAS, since then, several Executive Orders pertaining to labor migration policies have been promulgated that either amended or repealed previous Presidential issuances until the enactment of RA 8042;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is reputed to be one of the world's leading remittance recipient countries after India, China, and Mexico and with over one million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) remitting more than US\$10 billion to the country each year, the Philippines is touted as a "global model" in labor migration.

WHEREAS, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) reported that 1.38 million OFWs have been deployed last year and for the first two (2) months of this year alone, total remittances have already reached US\$2.6 billion;

WHEREAS, the surge in OFW remittances made our government dependent on overseas labor market and veered away from the agriculture and manufacturing sectors of which employment is largely tied to the latter sectors' performance;

WHEREAS, the country's faltering economy brought about by local and international crisis resulted into the displacement of around 120,000 local workers and about 12,000 overseas notwithstanding the recently reported possible retrenchment of the 40,000 Filipino seafarers based in Japan;

WHEREAS, while it is true that remittances seem to have greatly benefited the macro-economy in terms of its external current account, debt service, and some unemployment relief, it is equally true that the remittance bonanza appears to have made it convenient for the government to shirk difficult policy reforms thus, making it imperative and urgent to review and reform our labor export policy;

WHEREAS, leading Filipino economists opined that the government must refrain from looking into the good effects of labor migration and should start to revisit the current policies and craft a long-term but sustainable employment strategy to solve or ease our unemployment problems;

WHEREAS, it was also opined that our government should focus more on diversifying its exports and veer away from the electronics industry and look for domestic areas with strong employment potentials like the business process outsourcing (BPO), tourism and manufacturing sectors;

WHEREAS, amid numerous calls from the country's labor experts and leading economists to rethink the country's labor strategy, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) announced it will still support the current labor export policy and no changes will be made in terms of strategy due to the demand for Filipino workers abroad;

WHEREAS, this NEDA pronouncement is at odds with RA 8042 particularly Section 2(c) which explicitly states that "*The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development.*";

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED to urge the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development and other appropriate Senate Committees to review in aid of legislation the government's current policies and strategies on labor export with the end-in-view of crafting a more sustainable labor export policy that is flexible in any given economic situation and more beneficial in the long term.

Adopted.


MANNY VILLAR