

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
*First Regular Session*

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SENATE

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S. No. 637

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INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is the world's top supplier of seafarers with more than 160,000 Filipinos employed on board vessels of various nationalities making the seafaring industry the Philippines' fourth major dollar earner.

With the implementation of the revised Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) 1995 Convention for Seafarers, it is incumbent for signatory countries including the Philippines, the world's major source of seafarers, to fully comply with the Convention's standards on training and competency for maximum safety of the vessel, its cargo and passengers, and for the protection of the marine environment.

The seafaring industry has played a major role in the economy of the country by generating badly needed dollars as well as employment for Filipinos, particularly seamen and staff/employees of manning companies and related sectors. In fact, this US\$1.7 billion industry is still growing at a fast rate. To keep this industry a viable component of the Philippine economy, there is a need for all sectors of both government and the private sectors of the maritime industry to bond themselves together to enhance the duality of Filipino seafarers by complying strictly to the STCW standards on training and competency through information technology, especially on the use of computers and other modern shipboard communication equipment/facilities.

This bill, therefore, seeks to "Enhance the Quality of Filipino Seafarers Through Information Technology" to ensure the required training and competency of Filipino shipboard personnel to keep them more competitive in the global seamen market and to maintain the Philippines' position as the leading provider of seafarers in the international shipping community

In view of the above, the urgent passage of the bill is hereby recommended.

  
MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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**AN ACT ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS THROUGH  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

SECTION 1. Title.-This act shall be known as "Enhancing the Quality of Filipino Seafarers Through Information Technology."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.-It is hereby the policy of the State to afford full protection of labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all.

Pursuant to the foregoing state policy, the Philippines, through this Act, shall coordinate and institutionalize the existing government efforts in effecting meaningful programs on the education and training, deployment and the promotion of welfare of Filipino seafarers.

SEC. 3. Revision of the Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) 1978 Convention for Seafarers of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). As a maritime nation, the Philippines with a dynamic shipping industry has to keep abreast with the constantly changing technology of the international maritime industry.

To ensure the continued growth and development of the seamen industry as a consistent top dollar earner of the Philippines, there is a need to enhance the skills and competency of Filipino seafarers to keep them in equal footing with their foreign counterparts in terms of

advanced technical knowledge in the operation of high technology or automated ships and to maintain the country's position as the world's number one provider of seafarers.

SEC. 4. Implementing Guidelines.-To fully accomplish the objectives of this Act, the following must be implemented to ensure Philippine compliance to the required standards of the STCW 1995 on the skills and competency of Filipino seafarers:

- 1) The Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) should make mandatory for all marine officers to undertake basic computer training prior to taking their licensure examinations;
- 2) Seafarers, particularly deck and engine officers, must be required to attend enhancement or upgrading programs/seminars necessary in the discharge of their functions on board and in the augmentation of the STCW 1995 Convention requirements;
- 3) The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) as the designated "Administration" as far as seafarers regulation and promotion are concerned especially those related with the STCW Convention should:
  - a) Classify the training needs of seafarer's according to positions; and
  - b) Prepare a listing of training requirements for each seafarer for each type of vessel with emphasis on information technology.
- 4) In line with the computer literacy program for seafarers the following programs must be implemented:
  - a) Appreciation of basic disciplines such as Math, Science, and Technology in basic education;
  - b) Offering of computer courses in maritime schools;
  - c) Offering of computer-based instruction in maritime training centers; and
  - d) Familiarization of seafarers on the latest technology in shipping operations.

- 5) The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and/or manning agencies be required to allocate the needed budget for computer-literacy courses for seafarers;
- 6) The government and private manning companies should work hand-in-hand to meet the requirements of the STCW 1995;
- 7) The national government should conduct an intensive information campaign on the requirements of STCW 1995 which includes the publication of journal/letters to be sent to manning companies for distribution to their principal's vessels; and
- 8) A networking system be established among the different maritime related agencies to boost their exchange of information technology.

SEC. 5. Penal Provisions.-Any person, association, corporation or entity who violates any provision of this Act, or the rules and regulations made thereof shall upon conviction be punished or fined according to the degree of offenses as the court or adjudication, administration may impose in accordance with existing civil or penal laws of the Philippines: Provided, That in case the violation is committed by an association, corporation or entity, the prescribed penalty shall be imposed on the responsible officers, directors, and/or owner of said entities.

SEC. 6. Appropriation. - The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. Effectivity. --This Act shall take effect after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,