

Republic of the Philippines  
SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES  
Pasay City



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

14 FEB -5 P5:46

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

RECEIVED BY

S. B. No. 2108

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Introduced by SENATOR JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Filipino is a sports-loving nation with a distinct affection for basketball. The robust professional basketball league in the Philippines, the PBA, is the oldest running professional basketball league in Asia and is the second oldest in the world, next to the NBA. Along with several semi-professional, collegiate and recreational leagues all around the country, it is safe to say basketball is the country's premier sport.

The recent modest ascent in FIBA standings is indicative of the development of Philippine basketball in the international scene, which ought to be sustained. The Philippine basketball stakeholders including the Filipino cagers have contributed to such positive trajectory of Philippine basketball in the Asian and world arenas.

International tournaments allow countries to be represented by naturalized players subject to certain conditions, i.e. number of naturalized players in a team. Other countries, while ranking higher than the Philippines, have opted to take advantage of this naturalized-player rule, meant to equalize the world basketball landscape historically ruled by American and European countries, with great benefit.

This will not be the first time the Philippines will naturalize athletes in order to represent our country in international tournaments. In 1985, with three naturalized players, Dennis Still, Jeff Moore and Chip Engelland, the Philippines, represented by the RP-Northern Consolidated Corporation, won the William Jones Cup and the ABC Championships (now known as the FIBA Asia Championship). Other naturalized athletes have likewise brought honor to the country like 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> SEA Games gold medalist for swimming, Akiko Thompson; and SEA games medalist and swimming champion, Christine Jacob-Sandejas.

The International Basketball Federation or FIBA, the governing body in international basketball competitions, allows one (1) naturalized player to play per tournament per country. In 2010, the Philippines' naturalized citizen Marcus Eugene Douthit brought honor to the Philippines through his key contributions, leading to the Philippine team's winning the 2010 Philippine Invitational Cup, 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 2010 William Jones Cup, and the 2012 William Jones Cup.

Known as the FIBA World Championship from 1950 until 2010, the FIBA Basketball World Cup is the flagship event of the International Basketball Federation. In August 2013, the Philippines, represented by the Smart Gilas, placed 2<sup>nd</sup> with a 7-2 win-loss record in the 27<sup>th</sup> FIBA Asia Championship held at the Mall of Asia Arena, Pasay

City, Philippines, and clinched a ticket to the coveted FIBA World Cup for the first time in 35 years.

The Philippines is now ranked 34<sup>th</sup> after the 2013 Continental Championships. With the 2014 FIBA Basketball World Cup set on August 30 to September 14 of this year, there is an urgent need to have a pool of naturalized players along with Marcus Douthit, to increase the team's over-all capability and as back up in case of injuries.

Andray Blatche, an American 6-11 power forward/center with the Brooklyn Nets of the National Basketball Association (NBA) with career averages of 9.9 points and 5.4 rebounds per game, has openly expressed his desire to play for the Philippines. He is in a position, at age 28, to make significant contributions to Philippine basketball and, accordingly, eligible for the conferment of the honor of being a Philippine citizen.

In consideration of all of the above, approval of this measure is respectfully sought.



**JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA**

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'14 FEB -5 P7 02

S. B. No. 2108

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Introduced by Senator JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

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AN ACT  
GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO ANDRAY BLATCHE

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

3  
4 SECTION 1. Andray Blatche is hereby granted Philippine citizenship with  
5 all the rights, privileges and prerogatives appurtenant thereto.  
6

7 SECTION 2. Upon taking and registration of the oath of allegiance to the  
8 Republic of the Philippines, Andray Blatche shall enter upon the full enjoyment of  
9 Philippine citizenship.  
10

11 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its complete  
12 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.  
13

14 Approved,