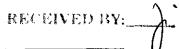
SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session



15 MAY 25 P2:37

SENATE P. S. R. No. 1372



	F. S. R. No
	Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago
1	RESOLUTION
2	DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INCLUDY, BLAID OF LEGISLATION
3 4	TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE NEED TO PROVIDE FOR A STANDBY FUND
5	FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS'
6 7	ASSISTANCE TO NATIONALS SECTION TO ENABLE THEM TO IMMEDIATELY RESPOND TO URGENT CONCERNS
8	OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS
9	WHEREAS, the 1987 Constitution, Article 13, Section 3 provides: "The State shall
10	afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full
11	employment and equality of employment opportunities for all";
12	WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 8042, also known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas
13	Filipinos Act, Section 2 (b) mandates: "The State shall provide adequate and timely social,
14	economic and legal services to Filipino migrant workers";
15	WHEREAS, the Assistance to Nationals (ATN) section of Philippine embassies and
16	consulates coordinates consular efforts in responding to urgent requests for assistance made by
17	Filipino individuals or groups, mainly involving the police, immigration and local authorities;
18	WHEREAS, the ATN Fund exists to cover assistance costs to help distressed Filipino
19	migrants with repatriation, shipment of remains, hospitalization, temporary accommodation,
20	food and basic supplies and other similar expenses;
21	WHEREAS, the utilization and disbursement of the ATN Fund under the General
22	Appropriations Act shall be governed by Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Memorandum
23	Circular No. 01-08, titled "General Guidelines on the Utilization and Disbursement of the ATN
24	Fund";
25	WHEREAS, based on the 2013 Commission on Audit (COA) report, there were a
26	number of instances where the financial assistance to nationals could not be readily extended due

WHEREAS, based on the 2013 Commission on Audit (COA) report, there were a number of instances where the financial assistance to nationals could not be readily extended due to the DFA policy that any disbursement chargeable against the ATN is subject to the approval of the DFA Home Office;

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1	WHEREAS, state auditors revealed that for assistance for shipment of human remains
2	financial assistance was not readily available due to the funding requirements thus, it took some
3	time to finally transport the remains back to the Philippines;
4	WHEREAS, the COA cited the case of the late Reynaldo Masillones, wherein the Pos
5	was informed of his death on 15 December 2012 but the remains were finally shipped to the
6	Philippines only last 22 March 2013;
7	WHEREAS, this deplorable situation does not mirror the urgency of the need for
8	financial assistance and negates the humanitarian aspect of the purpose of the ATN fund;
9	WHEREAS, in the case of Masillones, the COA claimed that Philippine Embassy was
10	authorized to disburse ATN Funds totaling \$32,859.13 or ₱1,379,874.21, of which only
11	\$12,426.07 was utilized;
12	WHEREAS, ATN disbursements totaling \$6,642.39 or 53 percent of total expenditures
13	were on reimbursement basis;
14	WHEREAS, due to the urgent need for the disbursement of the ATN funds, it has
15	become the practice that the ATN officers usually advance the payment of these expenses since
16	there was not enough time to wait for the approval of the request for authority from the DFA
17	но;
18	WHEREAS, there is a need to improve the system of disbursing the ATN funds so that
19	the Philippine embassies and consulates can respond to the emergency needs of our overseas
20	Filipino workers;
21	WHEREAS, it is imperative that the DFA Home Office should provide for a standby
22	ATN Fund of at least \$5,000 to enable the ATN officers to immediately respond to urgent cases;
23	WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper
24	Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the need to provide for a
25	standby fund for the Department of Foreign Affairs' (DFA) Assistance to Nationals Section to
26	enable them to immediately respond to urgent concerns of Overseas Filipino Workers.

Adopted,

MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/dpmMay2015