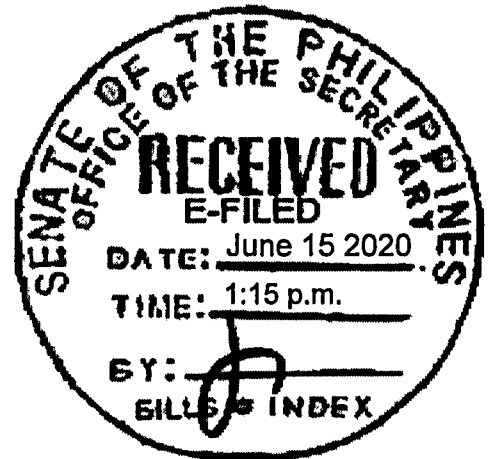


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*Second Regular Session* )



SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 448

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Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT'S REPATRIATION EFFORTS FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS WHO WERE AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF IMPLEMENTING IT EFFICIENTLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY**

1 WHEREAS, the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease referred to as "COVID-  
2 19" which struck the international community was declared by the World Health  
3 Organization as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 2020  
4 and was eventually characterized as a pandemic on March 2020;

5 WHEREAS, in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, many countries and  
6 territories in the world implemented travel restrictions which left many people  
7 stranded in a foreign land;

8 WHEREAS, such travel restrictions, including those implemented by the  
9 Philippine government, prevented Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in different  
10 countries from returning home;

11 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the  
12 Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) in forty (40) foreign posts reported 98,615  
13 stranded workers in the different parts of the world as of May 29, 2020;

14 WHEREAS, this number is composed of OFWs in various situations including  
15 those who are distressed, those who are affected by lockdowns in their host countries,

1 and those who are scheduled to return to the Philippines because their work contracts  
2 has already expired;

3 WHEREAS, of the total number of stranded OFWs, 83,483 who are mostly land-  
4 based are in the Middle East, 12,050 who are mostly sea-based are in Europe and  
5 American region, and 3,082 who are mostly land-based are in nearby Asian countries;

6 WHEREAS, as of May 31, POLOs have recorded 36,625 OFWs who were already  
7 repatriated since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic;

8 WHEREAS, the Interagency Task Force for the Management of Emerging  
9 Infectious Diseases (IATF) estimated that 44,724 OFWs are expected to return to the  
10 country from May to June of this year;

11 WHEREAS, DOLE, however, stated in early June that only around 16,000 of  
12 these OFWs will be able to be repatriated because most of them failed to fulfil the  
13 documentary requirements;

14 WHEREAS, DOLE further reports that some 341,161 OFWs lost their jobs due  
15 to the pandemic and around 200,000 of them are expected to be repatriated for the  
16 months of June, July and August this year;

17 WHEREAS, given the significant number of OFWs who need to be repatriated,  
18 the government, particularly the DOLE and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)  
19 initiated efforts and offered programs and various forms of assistance to stranded  
20 OFWs;

21 WHEREAS, DOLE's COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) *Abot-*  
22 *Kamay ang Pagtulog* (AKAP) seeks to provide assistance for displaced OFWs which  
23 will benefit 250,000 OFWs

24 WHEREAS, according to the 11<sup>th</sup> Report of the President to the Congress,  
25 142,039 (56.81%) beneficiaries of CAMP AKAP were already paid, with a total amount  
26 of P1.452 billion;

27 WHEREAS, in the first week of June, international airports outside Metro Manila  
28 were reopened to receive international flights of repatriated OFWs;

29 WHEREAS, however, despite these efforts of the government, the strategy and  
30 actions for the repatriation of stranded OFWs are still insufficient and disorganized;

1           WHEREAS, from the end of the OFWs, the documentary requirements that has  
2 to be submitted to be able to go home to the Philippines is very tedious to complete  
3 especially during the time of lockdowns;

4           WHEREAS, last May, the repatriation of OFWs were temporarily suspended  
5 because of the suspension of inbound flights in nine (9) airports imposed by the Civil  
6 Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) in compliance to the directive of the IATF  
7 to "ramp up the capacity of our systems to properly process the growing number of  
8 Filipino repatriates coming back to the Philippines on a daily basis";

9           WHEREAS, the country's capacity to test is considered as the main cause of the  
10 problem because it resulted to the long wait for the scheduling of swabbing of  
11 repatriated OFWs in Metro Manila and the slow release of test results which  
12 contributed to the crowding of quarantine facilities. This, in turn, prompted the  
13 government to limit the number of Filipinos who will be repatriated;

14           WHEREAS, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana stated on June 5 that the  
15 repatriation of OFWs will be limited between 1,200 to 2,000 per day and that they will  
16 stay in quarantine facilities in Manila for a maximum of five (5) days only;

17           WHEREAS, the effectivity and actual implementation of this new strategy is yet  
18 to be seen;

19           WHEREAS, most of the OFWs stranded abroad who are no longer receiving  
20 their salaries and do not have a definite source of income upon their arrival in the  
21 Philippines;

22           WHEREAS, the anguish of waiting, the torment of being away from their  
23 families, the financial and employment anxieties, the uncertainty of events and of the  
24 future, among many other considerations, affect their health not only physically but  
25 also mentally and emotionally;

26           WHEREAS, in fact, a 28-year old female mariner identified by the DFA as Mariah  
27 Jocson committed suicide last June 11 in her cabin in the ship docked in Barbados as  
28 she waits for her flight back home which is repeatedly cancelled;

29           WHEREAS, this is in addition to the previously reported cases of suicide among  
30 OFWs in April by a 42-year old woman who was under quarantine in a lodging house  
31 provided by OWWA, and in May by a household help who jumped out of the room of  
32 the shelter of the POLO in Lebanon where she stays;

1           WHEREAS, there is a pressing need to accelerate and expedite the repatriation  
2 process and maximize all available resources and systems to bring home all the  
3 stranded OFWs abroad;

4           WHEREAS, the repatriation process must be systematic and holistic that it will  
5 bring the OFWs right in front of the doorsteps of their homes without undue delay and  
6 unnecessary difficulties;

7           WHEREAS, with the expected surge of displaced OFWs who will be returning  
8 home, the concerned government agencies should immediately address the loopholes  
9 in the system and strengthen their efforts for efficient repatriation of our countrymen;

10          Now, therefore, be it

11          RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby resolved, To direct the Senate  
12 Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resource Development, and Foreign  
13 Relations, to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the status of the Philippine  
14 government's repatriation efforts for Overseas Filipino Workers who were affected by  
15 the COVID-19 pandemic, with the end in view of implementing it effectively and  
16 expeditiously.

17          *Adopted,*

  
**RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.**