

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First regular Session )

5 MAY 19 19:40

SENATE  
S. B. No. 2020

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Section 1 Article 15 provides:

The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.

Statistics from the Department of Labor and Employment show that 800,000 Filipinos are leaving the country annually to work abroad. In 2004, the total remittances of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) amounted to US\$8.5 billion. Despite the economic benefits brought by overseas employment, there are attendant costs in terms of family displacement.

Reports from cases handled by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Non-Government Organizations link social problems, such as broken marriages, drug addiction, sexual immorality, crime, suicide or psychological breakdowns to the long separations between spouses and children.

The bill seeks to protect and strengthen the Filipino family by establishing OFW Family Centers that shall provide welfare assistance and counseling services to the families of OFW. It also seeks to direct the OWWA to develop a comprehensive re-unification, reintegration and re-placement plan for returning OFWs.

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
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AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING A WELFARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO  
FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND BY OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Left-Behind Households of OFWs Act of 2005.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of State Policy.* – It is declared policy of the State to strengthen the solidarity of the family and actively promote its total development. The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation.

Towards this end, the Administrator shall take such actions as are necessary to, to the maximum extent practicable, sustain harmony of the family and prepare families for future reintegration of OFWs.

SECTION 3. *Definitions.* For purposes of this title –

- (1) “Center” – means the Overseas Filipino Workers Family Center.
- (2) “Left-Behind Household” – means families left behind by Overseas Filipino Workers to work abroad.
- (2) “Overseas Filipino Worker” or “OFW” – means any Filipino citizen who is temporarily working in any country outside the Philippines.

(3) "Administration" – means the Overseas Workers and Welfare Administration or "OWWA."

(4) "Administrator" – means the Administrator of OWWA.

SECTION 4. *OFW Family Centers.* – The Administrator shall establish OFW Family Centers nationwide, using the facilities of its regional offices, or any of the regional offices of Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Department of Social and Welfare Development.

(A) The purposes of each Center are –

(1) To provide welfare assistance and counseling services to the families of OFWs;

(2) To serve as coordinating office to non-government organizations and associations that cater to the plight of OFWs;

(3) To serve as a link of left-behind households to various services and/or agencies of the government on overseas employment.

(B) Location of Centers – Each Center shall be strategically located in every municipality where there is a large population of families who have relatives working abroad.

(C) Jurisdiction – The responsibilities of each Center shall be centered on the welfare of left-behind families of OFWs.

SECTION 5. *Left-Behind Household Organizations.* – OWWA shall facilitate the establishment of organizations or support groups of families left behind by migrant workers. It shall also provide a venue for the interaction of members of families of migrant workers.

SECTION 6. *Report to Congress.* – Three years from the passage of the provisions of this Act, the OWWA shall report to Congress the number of cases brought to the various Centers and the intervention provided. A yearly statistical report shall be submitted to the Department of Labor and Employment and other concerned agencies.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such sums as may be necessary are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,