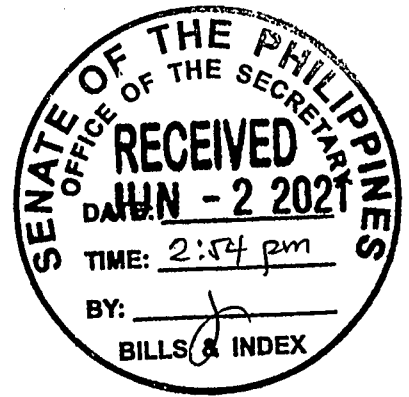


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



SENATE
P.S.R. No. 741

Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES, TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE VACCINATION PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED ON OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, INCLUDING SEAFARERS, AND ENSURE THEIR SAFE DEPLOYMENT ABROAD

1 **WHEREAS**, during the hearing conducted by the Senate Committee on Labor,
2 Employment and Human Resources Development on 10 May 2021, this Representation
3 expressed his concerns on the reported policy of certain countries to require foreigners
4 entering their territory to be vaccinated with specific brands of Coronavirus (COVID-
5 19) vaccines;

6
7 **WHEREAS**, in the same hearing, an official from the Department of Labor and
8 Employment (DOLE) said that the apprehension raised by this Representation was
9 incorrect:

10
11 "SEN. TOLENTINO. With the permission of the Chair and my other
12 colleagues, the creeping policy that I have heard is this: Before you
13 enter another country, whether you are an OFW, a tourist or
14 whatever classification, you should have a certain type of vaccine. For
15 instance, Israel, I heard, and some European countries, will not
16 accept those vaccinated with Chinese vaccines. Am I correct?

17
18 [LABOR OFFICIAL]. Your Honor, I don't think that is a correct
19 information, Your Honor. In fact, we are meeting some of them anytime this

1 week, Your Honor, because they need not less than 5,000 of our caregivers.
2 And, in fact, I had a meeting with an ambassador, nakikiusap siya na ipadala
3 na namin sila.

4
5 SEN. TOLENTINO. I hope you are correct.

6
7 [LABOR OFFICIAL]. Yes, Your Honor.

8
9 SEN. TOLENTINO. Because we are after the right vaccines for our
10 countrymen, not just OFW entering a country. I won't mention the
11 other countries, I might be wrong. I hope I am wrong. Whether
12 vaccinated or not, they should be allowed to enter. But, of course, the
13 host country has the proper determination of the type of visas—not
14 just visas, but those who will be allowed to enter their jurisdiction.
15 So we have to be correct on this. x x x So can you clarify this for the
16 sake of our countrymen who will be travelling within the next few
17 months if they receive the country-specific vaccine or, if there is a
18 country-specific vaccine? And you can check that with your DFA
19 counterpart or your POLO or what have you, para lang maliwanag."¹
20

21 **WHEREAS**, on 1 May 2021, five thousand (5,000) minimum wage workers and
22 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) workers were inoculated with the Sinovac-
23 CoronaVac COVID-19 (Sinovac) vaccine as part of the Labor Day celebration in Manila
24 spearheaded by the DOLE;²

25
26 **WHEREAS**, Switzerland, along with other countries in the European Union,
27 plans to exempt fully vaccinated foreign travelers from the required entry quarantine
28 protocols. However, the exemption will apply only to those inoculated with vaccines
29 made by Western pharmaceutical companies Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna, and
30 Johnson & Johnson.³ Further, travelers from countries with significant concerns on
31 Covid variants will still not be allowed entry despite receiving vaccination;⁴
32

33 **WHEREAS**, Saudi Arabia also eased travel restrictions for foreign travelers
34 vaccinated with Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson but excluded
35 in the list those vaccinated with Chinese-made vaccines such as Sinovac and
36 Sinopharm.⁵ DOLE, however, clarified that OFWs not vaccinated with the approved
37 brands will still be allowed entry but will have to undergo the required RT-PCR test
38 and the "institutional quarantine" upon arrival;⁶

¹ TSN of the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development Joint with the Committees on Foreign Relations; Civil Service, Government Reorganization And Professional Regulation; And Finance, dated May 10, 2021, pp. 74 to 77; underscoring supplied.

² "Inoculation of locals, OFWs starts in Manila," dated 1 May 2021. *Retrievable at:*
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1138709>.

³<https://www.schengenvisaInfo.com/news/switzerland-to-start-implementing-eu-covid-19-passport-system-on-june-7/>

⁴ Id.

⁵<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/saudi-arabia-and-eu-bars-travelers-who-received-chinese-made-jabs-47142>

⁶ <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/196532/dfa-no-travel-ban-on-on-unvaccinated-ofws-in-saudi-arabia;>

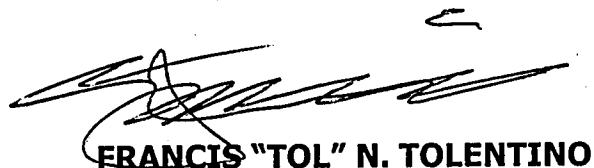
1
2 **WHEREAS**, on 28 May 2021, Malacañang announced that outbound OFWs will
3 be moved up to the top priority group for vaccination or the A1 category.⁷ President
4 Duterte likewise approved the plea of Filipino seafarers to be inoculated with Western-
5 made COVID-19 vaccines as most international shipping companies only allow
6 embarkation of crew members who were inoculated with Western vaccines;⁸
7

8 **WHEREAS**, on 1 June 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) included
9 the Sinovac vaccine in its Emergency Use Listing (EUL), whereby the quality, safety,
10 and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines are assessed. WHO's EUL is a prerequisite for
11 COVAX Facility vaccine supply that would allow countries to expedite their own
12 regulatory approval to import and administer COVID-19 vaccines;⁹
13

14 **WHEREAS**, the differing treatments implemented by host countries on the
15 basis of the type of COVID-19 vaccine administered may entail additional costs at the
16 expense of a deployed OFW. Since the Philippines is continuously deploying Filipino
17 workers abroad amidst the pandemic, there is a need to craft policies that are aligned
18 and consistent with those of the prospective host countries for the proper
19 implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination program of OFWs, taking into
20 consideration their health and safety;
21

22 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, TO DIRECT THE SENATE**
23 **COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES**
24 **DEVELOPMENT, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES, TO**
25 **CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE**
26 **VACCINATION PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED ON OVERSEAS FILIPINO**
27 **WORKERS, INCLUDING SEAFARERS, AND ENSURE THEIR SAFE**
28 **DEPLOYMENT ABROAD.**
29

30 Adopted,
31
32
33
34


FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO

⁷ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/ofws-health-workers-families-moved-up-vaccine-priority-list>;
<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2021/05may/20210527-IATF-RESO-117-RRD.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/6/1/Filipino-seafarers-allowed-to-receive-Western-made-vaccine.html>

⁹ "WHO validates Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use and issues interim policy recommendations," dated 1 June 2021. *Retrievable at:* <https://www.who.int/news/item/01-06-2021-who-validates-sinovac-covid-19-vaccine-for-emergency-use-and-issues-interim-policy-recommendations>.