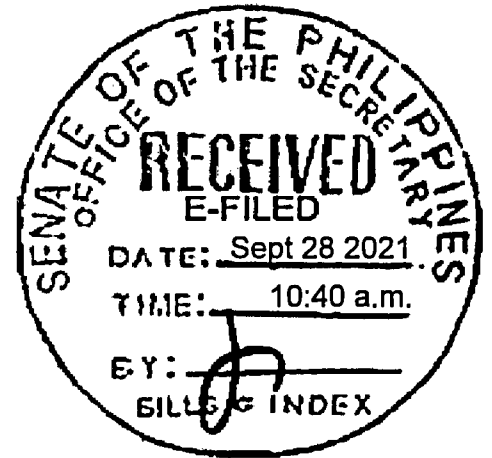


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Third Regular Session )



SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 921

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Introduced by SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON REPORTED PASSPORT RENEWAL FIXERS OPERATING ONLINE WITH THE END VIEW OF CUTTING RED TAPE AND IMPROVING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' (DFA) PASSPORT RENEWAL SERVICE AND PROVIDING QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE**

1           WHEREAS, Section 2 of Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9485, as amended by R.A. No.  
2 11032, otherwise known as the “Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government  
3 Service Delivery Act of 2018” declares that the State shall “promote integrity,  
4 accountability, proper management of public affairs and public property as well as to  
5 establish effective practices, aimed at efficient turnaround of the delivery of  
6 government services and the prevention of graft and corruption in government.  
7 Towards this end, the State shall maintain honesty and responsibility among its public  
8 officials and employees, and shall take appropriate measures to promote transparency  
9 in each agency with regard to the manner of transacting with the public, which shall  
10 encompass a program for the adoption of simplified requirements and procedures that  
11 will reduce red tape and expedite business and nonbusiness related transactions in  
12 government”;

13           WHEREAS, the lockdowns and restrictions to mobility imposed by the  
14 government to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus have forced both businesses  
15 and government agencies alike, to accelerate the migration of their services online in  
16 order to keep up with the growing demand from consumers and customers. The  
17 migration of government services online has largely been an uneven process.  
18 According to Jeremiah B. Belgica, Director General of the Anti-Red Tape Authority  
19 (ARTA), agencies who already had plans in place to automate and streamline

1 processes before the pandemic hit were the ones who were most prepared to handle  
2 the transition;<sup>1</sup>

3 WHEREAS, Director General Belgica also stated that automating processes  
4 should also come with streamlining or the removal of unnecessary requirements and  
5 duplicated processes, lest it run the risk of “automating red tape”;<sup>2</sup>

6 WHEREAS, the presence of red-tape in government transactions makes for a  
7 veritable breeding ground for “fixers” who capitalize and exploit these systemic  
8 inefficiencies for financial gain;

9 WHEREAS, with the accelerated migration of government services and  
10 transactions online owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, “fixers” have followed suit and  
11 have moved their illicit operations to various social media platforms, Facebook in  
12 particular;

13 WHEREAS, recently, there have been reports that “fixers” have migrated to  
14 Facebook to capitalize on the delays in the passport renewal services of the  
15 Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). These “fixers” have reportedly figured out how  
16 to make multiple online reservations for passport renewals and are profiting by selling  
17 these slots on Facebook to desperate Filipino travelers;<sup>3</sup>

18 WHEREAS, for its part, the ARTA has already recognized the delays in the  
19 passport renewal process and signified that they would help the DFA in addressing  
20 these issues;<sup>4</sup>

21 WHEREAS, without question, “fixers” are unscrupulous individuals who  
22 knowingly prey on the vulnerabilities and desperation of others for financial gain.  
23 However, it cannot be denied that the prevailing inefficiencies in government services  
24 are also an enabling factor in the prevalence of such predatory practices;

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<sup>1</sup> Ibañez, J. P. (1 March 2021). *Coronavirus forces agencies to ease bureaucratic red tape*. Retrieved 24 September 2021, from <https://www.bworldonline.com/coronavirus-forces-agencies-to-ease-bureaucratic-red-tape/>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Deakin, J. (14 September 2021). *Passport fixers mutate; now selling slots in social media*. Retrieved 24 September 2021, from <https://mb.com.ph/2021/09/14/passport-fixers-mutate-now-selling-slots-in-social-media/>

<sup>4</sup> Philippine News Agency. (29 June 2021). *ARTA to help DFA address delays in passport appointments*. Retrieved 24 September 2021, from <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1145310>

1           WHEREAS, there is a need to go after these “fixers” and ensure they are  
2 punished under the full extent of the law;

3           WHEREAS, passporting services address key human rights issues such as the  
4 right to identity and nationality, and right to travel. If we allow predatory individuals  
5 to restrict our citizens’ access to these services for profit, we would also, in effect, aid  
6 and abet the violation of the said rights;

7           WHEREAS, it behooves the government to undertake all necessary actions to  
8 prevent such abuses against Filipinos in need of passporting services;

9           WHEREAS, there is a need for the DFA to invest in proper safeguards, such as  
10 IP address tracking and blockers, and other technologies that can reduce the  
11 possibility of fraudulent activities by these “fixers”;

12           WHEREAS, there is likewise need to determine how to further expunge red tape  
13 from passport renewal services in order to improve its public services to ensure that  
14 everyone has fair access to such services without being preyed upon by “fixers”;

15           WHEREAS, there is a need for the ARTA to judiciously enforce its mandate and  
16 monitor the compliance of agencies, such as the DFA, with R.A. 11032;

17           WHEREAS, there is a need to conduct an inquiry to determine how the DFA,  
18 ARTA and other concerned government agencies can be further strengthened to  
19 improve passport renewal services for Filipinos;

20           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, to direct the  
21 appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on reported  
22 passport renewal fixers operating online with the end view of cutting red tape and  
23 improving the Department of Foreign Affairs’ (DFA) passport renewal service and  
24 providing quality public service to the Filipino people.

*Adopted,*

  
**LEILA M. DE LIMA**