

SENATE

P.S. Resolution No. 958

Introduced by Senator Ralph G. Recto

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ADDITIONAL COSTS PASSED ON TO OVERSEAS FILIPINOS FOR THE RENEWAL OF PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF REDUCING THE FINANCIAL BURDEN AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE AND INTEREST OF FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

1 WHEREAS, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has sought the use of
2 third-party service providers for the simple renewal of Philippine ePassports in a
3 number of Foreign Service Posts to address the huge demand of applications;

4 WHEREAS, a simple renewal of Philippine ePassports means there will be no
5 changes on the data page of the ePassport;

6 WHEREAS, complex renewals such as changes in the applicant's name and
7 replacement of lost or damaged passports will still be processed directly with the
8 Philippine Embassies and Consulates General;

9 WHEREAS, Overseas Filipinos based in the consular jurisdiction of the
10 Philippine Embassies in Rome, Doha, and Kuala Lumpur are given the option to
11 renew their passports either at the Philippine Embassy or at the BLS International
12 Philippine Passport Application Centre (PaRC);

13 WHEREAS, while the application fee for passport renewals at the Philippine
14 Embassy in Rome costs EUR 54 (PHP 3,084) only, the application fee at the BLS
15 PaRC costs a total of EUR 93.50 (PHP 5,341), which includes the EUR 54 (PHP
16 3,084) Passport Renewal Fee, EUR 4.50 (PHP 257) Passport Revolving Fee (PRF),
17 and EUR 35 (PHP 1,996) Convenience Fee;

1 WHEREAS, while the application fee for passport renewals at the Philippine
2 Embassy in Doha costs QR 240 (PHP 3,323) only, the application fee at the BLS
3 PaRC costs a total of QR 351 (PHP 4,851), which includes the QR 240 (PHP 3,323)
4 Passport Renewal Fee, QR 20 (PHP 277) PRF, and QR 91 (PHP 1,260) Convenience
5 Fee;

6 WHEREAS, while the application fee for passport renewals at the Philippine
7 Embassy in Kuala Lumpur costs RM 288 (PHP 3,437) only, the application fee at the
8 BLS PaRC costs a total of RM 425 (PHP 5,072), which includes the RM 288 (PHP
9 3,437) Passport Renewal Fee, RM 24 (PHP 286) PRF, and RM 113 (PHP 1,348)
10 Convenience Fee;

11 WHEREAS, according to VFS Global, the launch of its ePassport Renewal
12 Centre in Dubai in November 2019 marked the first time the DFA outsourced its
13 ePassport renewal process for Overseas Filipinos abroad and that following its
14 success, the VFS Global expanded its services to Abu Dhabi and three (3) cities in
15 the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic;

16 WHEREAS, Overseas Filipinos based in the consular jurisdiction of the
17 Philippine Embassy and Consulate General will have to pay an additional AED 91.75
18 (PHP 1,259) on top of the AED 240 (PHP 3,293) Passport Renewal Fee and the AED
19 20 (PHP 275) PRF if they opt to renew their ePassports through VFS;

20 WHEREAS, for Overseas Filipinos based in the consular jurisdiction of the
21 Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles passport renewals could cost as much as
22 USD 110 (PHP 5,542) for the simple ePassport renewal with VFS, which includes the
23 USD 65 (PHP 3,275) Passport Renewal Fee and the USD 45 (2,267) VFS Service Fee;

24 WHEREAS, Overseas Filipinos based in the consular jurisdiction of the
25 Philippine Embassy in Riyadh and the Philippine Consulate General in Jeddah also
26 have the option to renew their passports through VFS which will entail a
27 convenience fee SAR 103 (PHP 1,383) on top of the SAR 240 (PHP 3,222) Passport
28 Renewal Fee and the SAR 20 (PHP 269) PRF, and there will be an additional SAR
29 110 (PHP 1,477) Service Fee if passport renewal will be made through Passport on
30 Wheels or Mobile Service;

31 WHEREAS, on 06 August 2021, the DFA and VFS Global signed a contract to
32 extend ePassport Renewal Services to also include 13 cities in Cyprus, Ethiopia,

1 France, Ireland, Kuwait, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and
2 Vietnam;

3 WHEREAS, VFS Global PaRCs opened in Edinburgh, Scotland, Cardiff, Wales,
4 and Dublin, Ireland on 18 October 2021 and in Belfast on 21 November 2021 for the
5 passport renewal of Overseas Filipinos based in the consular jurisdiction of the
6 Philippine Embassy in London;

7 WHEREAS, while the processing fee for passport renewals at the Philippine
8 Embassy costs GBP 55 (PHP 3,683) only; the application fees through VFS Global at
9 Belfast, Cardiff, and Edninburgh costs a total of GBP 105 (PHP 7,034), which includes
10 the GBP 55 (PHP 3,683) Passport Renewal Fee, the GBP 5 (PHP 335) PRF, and the
11 GBP 45 (PHP 3,014.00) VFS Service Fee; and for the processing center in Dublin it
12 costs a total of EUR 110.59 (PHP 6,308), which includes the EUR 54 (PHP 3,080)
13 Passport Renewal Fee, the EUR 4.50 (PHP 257) PRF, and the EUR 52.09 (PHP 2,971)
14 VFS Service Fee;

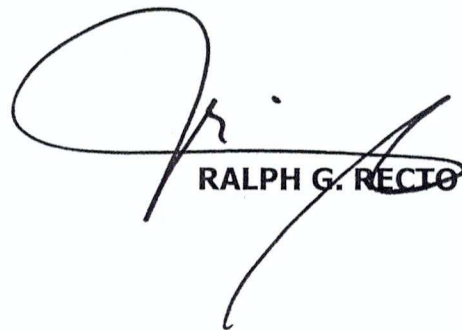
15 WHEREAS, similarly, Overseas Filipinos based in Singapore also have the
16 option to renew their passports through VFS Global PaRC which had its soft opening
17 on 28 October 2021, with a VFS Service Fee of SGD 54 (PHP 1,993) on top of the
18 SGD 102 (PHP 3,766) Passport Renewal Fee and the SGD 8.50 (PHP 314) PRF;

19 WHEREAS, there is a need to look into the rationale of outsourcing ePassport
20 renewal services and its additional costs which in some cases approximate the cost
21 of renewing the ePassport directly with the Embassy or the Consulate General;

22 WHEREAS, the costly fees for the simple renewal of ePassports is an
23 additional burden to Overseas Filipinos, especially migrant workers still reeling from
24 job displacement and the inability to go home to their families due to the pandemic,
25 many of whom have dared to seek employment abroad to provide a better life for
26 their families: Now, therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby resolved, To direct the Senate
2 Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the
3 additional costs passed on to Overseas Filipinos for the renewal of Philippine
4 Passports, with the end in view of reducing the financial burden and promoting the
5 welfare and interest of Filipinos overseas.

Adopted,



RALPH G. RECTO

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