



23 JAN 19 P5:12

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

RECEIVED BY:

SENATE
S. No. 1706

Introduced by Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" T. Go

AN ACT
ADJUSTING THE MONTHLY PENSION AND DISABILITY BENEFITS OF
RETIREES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The personnel of the Department of Foreign Affairs are at the frontlines of Philippine foreign relations, sometimes risking their lives under dangerous conditions in their countries of assignment. They face complex challenges of living in foreign lands with different cultures, particularly as pioneers in opening new Posts. They are primarily responsible for responding and attending immediately to Filipinos in distress especially during critical times, disasters, security threats, and other crisis situations. Their patriotism, integrity, professionalism and genuine concern for the welfare of our kababayans here and abroad are sincere expressions of their devotion to the country in achieving the aspirations of the Filipino people.

During their active service, the retired diplomats have demonstrated their resilience as the Philippines' first line of representation in dealing with a plethora of concerns. Their initiative, competence, professionalism and creativity have resulted in enduring bilateral and multilateral partnerships, strategic agreements and collaborative engagements that continue to be harnessed for our people's benefits.

As specialists in the arena of diplomacy and citizen services abroad, foreign service personnel deserve to be honored and cared for in their retirement through an adjustment of monthly pension, and thereby allowing them to afford a decent living in the face of inflation and rising cost of living.

It is the intention of this bill to provide both present and future retirees of the foreign service support that is adequate and responsive to their needs, and to reassure them that their dedication and loyalty to the Filipino people is not forgotten.

Article XVI, Section 8 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates that "the State shall, from time to time, review to upgrade the pensions and other benefits due to retirees of both the government and private sectors." This bill seeks to increase the monthly pension and disability benefits of retirees of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to be at par with the current pay scale enjoyed by those in active service.

This is an important step to duly compensate Philippine foreign service personnel whose invaluable services to the country have helped advance Philippine interests, improve relations with other countries, and protect Filipinos globally.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



SENATOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" T. GO



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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* - The Act shall be known as the "Foreign Affairs
2 Retirement and Disability Benefits Act of 2023."

3 Sec. 2. *Covered Retirees and Retirement Benefits.* - This Act shall apply to all
4 retired officers and employees of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) who:

5 a) served in the Department for at least fifteen (15) years; and

6 b) are eligible to receive a monthly pension from the Government Service
7 Insurance System (GSIS).

8 They shall receive, during the residue of their natural life, an additional pension
9 which shall be the difference between their monthly pension and the highest monthly
10 salary of an incumbent officer or employee occupying the same or equivalent rank, and
11 subject to further adjustment as provided under this Act.

1 This Act shall also apply retroactively to DFA officers and employees who retired
2 prior to the effectivity of this Act.

3 All other officers and employees of the DFA who have also retired after serving in
4 the DFA but who have not met all the above-mentioned requirements, shall instead be
5 covered by applicable benefits under the GSIS Act, as amended.

6 *Sec. 3. Adjustment of Monthly Pension.* - The monthly pension benefits of all
7 retirees of the DFA, as provided under Republic Act No. 7157, shall, upon the effectivity
8 of this Act, be automatically adjusted to the existing rate, and any subsequent increase
9 thereof, of the salary grade of the rank they held upon their retirement.

10 *Sec. 4. Additional Entitlements.* - All officers and employees covered by Section 2
11 of this Act, shall be eligible for disability and death benefits in the same manner
12 provided under the GSIS Act, as amended, and other relevant laws.

13 *Sec. 5. Survivorship Benefits.* - In case of death of a DFA retiree or personnel
14 who has met the requirements provided in Section 2, the following shall be entitled to
15 receive the adjusted retirement benefits that the deceased was receiving or entitled to
16 receive: (a) their surviving spouse, during their lifetime, or until they remarry; and (b)
17 their dependent children. Said benefits shall be distributed or apportioned in accordance
18 with the GSIS Act, as amended.

19 *Sec. 6. Appropriations.* – The differential funding requirements for the initial
20 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's savings of the
21 DFA. Thereafter, the annual differential amount necessary for GSIS to pay the adjusted
22 monthly pension and other benefits to implement the provisions of this Act shall be
23 included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

24 *Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred eighty (180)
25 days after the effectivity of this Act, the DFA, in consultation with the GSIS and relevant

1 government agencies, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective
2 implementation of this Act.

3 *Sec. 8. Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
4 unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected shall continue to be in full force
5 and effect.

6 *Sec. 9. Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, or rules and
7 regulations contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified
8 accordingly.

9 *Sec. 10. Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its
10 publication in the Official Gazette.

Approved,