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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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SENATE
P.S. Res. No. 905



Introduced by Senator Raffy T. Tulfo

**A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ALLEGED
ILLEGAL PRACTICES OF PINOY CARE VISA CENTER (PCVC) AND OTHER
RECRUITMENT AGENCIES EXPLOITING THE STUDENT VISA-TO-WORK
PERMIT PATHWAY
TO OFFER EMPLOYMENT ABROAD**

1 WHEREAS, Republic Act 11641, otherwise known as the "Department of
2 Migrant Workers Act" mandates among others, that the "It is the duty of the State to
3 protect the rights and promote the welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers and their
4 families, by (a) ensuring that private recruitment shall meet professional, legal and
5 ethical standards."

6 WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 8042, or the "Migrant Workers and Overseas
7 Filipinos Act", as amended by Republic Act No. 10022, defines "recruitment and
8 placement" as any act or acts of canvassing, enlisting, contracting, transporting,
9 utilizing, hiring or procuring workers, including referrals, contract services, promising
10 or advertising for employment, locally in the Philippines or abroad and whether for
11 profit or not.

12 WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 10022 further states that any person found guilty
13 of illegal recruitment shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment of not less than twelve
14 (12) years and one (1) day but not more than twenty (20) years and a fine of not less

1 than One million pesos (P1,000,000.00) nor more than Two million pesos
2 (P2,000,000.00).

3 If the illegal recruitment constitutes economic sabotage, the penalty of life
4 imprisonment and a fine of not less than Two million pesos (P2,000,000.00) nor more
5 than Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00) shall be imposed.

6 WHEREAS, on July 12, 2023, a group of Filipinos who fell victim to the alleged
7 illegal recruitment scheme filed a case with the DMW and the National Bureau of
8 Investigation against the chief executive officer of a company that reportedly asked
9 applicants for more than P100,000 in placement fees.

10 WHEREAS, Prisca Nina Mabatid, former Cebu City councilor and CEO of Pinoy
11 Care Visa Center (PCVC)-Opportunities Abroad, was at the receiving end of the
12 complaint, according to overseas Filipino worker (OFW) rights group Migrante
13 International, which assisted the complainants.

14 WHEREAS, according to the victims, they were told by the companies to apply,
15 between 2017 and early 2023, for student visas to Canada, with the promise of three
16 months in processing time, and of getting jobs that will allow them to pay for tuition
17 fees and living expenses. They were asked to pay more than PhP 100,000 each, or
18 avail of a lower PhP 94,000 fee within a three- to five-day promotion period.

19 WHEREAS, the victims were told the payment is required before their
20 application is processed. After they paid, they were asked to sign a memorandum of
21 agreement indicating that the fees collected from them are non-refundable. They were
22 also given a list of requirements they were not told about beforehand, and are difficult
23 to fulfill. In most cases, staff members of Mabatid's company stopped responding to
24 their questions and concerns or became hostile when they asked for a refund.

25 WHEREAS, Mabatid herself and her staff have also issued threats of suing
26 anyone who complained about their operations or branded them as dishonest, citing
27 the illegal MOA as basis. Despite countless complaints against Mabatid and her

1 companies, they continue to organize and hold seminars throughout the country and
2 overseas.

3 WHEREAS, victims across the Philippines say they learned of the recruitment
4 through social media posts of their local PESO offices as well as local government
5 officials who openly promoted the illicit activities. Meanwhile, overseas, OFWs were
6 enticed to apply by the promise personally made by Mabatid of a "loan" of P1 million
7 which they are meant to present as proof of their financial capability to Canadian
8 authorities.

9 WHEREAS, Mabatid likewise, has been allegedly working with one Bryan
10 Calagui, a Hong Kong-based Filipino blogger, to recruit helpers to apply for the visa.
11 Calagui has posted details of recruitment talks on his personal Facebook account,
12 which has more than 300,000 followers, attracting workers to attend workshops at
13 the Sunbeam Theatre in North Point.

14 WHEREAS, the company supposedly told them to pay HK\$18,500 within seven
15 days to secure a spot in the program. Workers were also required to pay additional
16 fees to process their applications, which cost around 122,000 Philippine pesos.

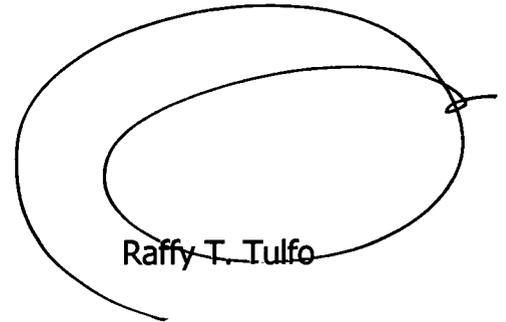
17 WHEREAS, after realizing that they may have been scammed, the workers
18 called the police to resolve the issue and asked Mabatid for a refund. She promised
19 the victims that she would issue a refund in front of police officers. However, she failed
20 to do so.

21 WHEREAS, such cases appear to be happening not only in Hong Kong but also
22 in other countries where Filipino domestic helpers work, including the Middle East and
23 Japan.

24 WHEREAS, Mabatid and her company have taken millions of pesos from hard-
25 working Filipinos and OFWs who dreamt of a promising life and economic security in
26 Canada, without actual deployment nor a clear justification for refusal and/or refund.

1 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the
2 appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation on the
3 alleged illegal practices of Pinoy Care Visa Center (PCVC), and other recruitment
4 agencies by exploiting the student visa-to-work permit pathway in order to offer
5 employment abroad.

Adopted,



Raffy T. Tulfo