


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

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SENATE
S. No. 1779

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE


The Constitution, Article XV, provides:

Section 1. The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.

Statistics from the Department of Labor and Employment show that 800,000 Filipinos are leaving the country annually to work abroad. In 2004, the total remittances of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) amounted to US\$8.5 billion. Despite the economic benefits brought by overseas employment, there are attendant costs in terms of family displacement.

Reports from cases handled by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Non-Government Organizations link social problems, such as broken marriages, drug addiction, sexual immorality, crime, suicide or psychological breakdowns to the long separations between spouses and children.

The bill seeks to protect and strengthen the Filipino family by establishing OFW Family Centers that shall provide welfare assistance and counseling services to the families of OFW. It also seeks to direct the OWWA to develop a comprehensive re-unification, reintegration and replacement plan for returning OFWs.*


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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* This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, First Regular Session.

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1 AN ACT
2 ESTABLISHING A WELFARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO
3 FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND BY OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

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

6 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Left-Behind Households of
7 OFWs Act of 2007.”

8 SECTION 2. *Declaration of State Policy.* – It is declared policy of the State to strengthen
9 the solidarity of the family and actively promote its total development. The State recognizes the
10 Filipino family as the foundation of the nation.

11 Towards this end, the Administrator shall take such actions as are necessary to, to the
12 maximum extent practicable, sustain harmony of the family and prepare families for future
13 reintegration of OFWs.

14 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

15 (A) “Center” means the Overseas Filipino Workers Family Center.

16 (B) “Left-Behind Household” means families left behind by Overseas Filipino Workers
17 to work abroad.

18 (C) “Overseas Filipino Worker” or “OFW” means any Filipino citizen who is temporarily
19 working in any country outside the Philippines.

20 (D) “Administration” means the Overseas Workers and Welfare Administration or
21 “OWWA.”

22 (E) “Administrator” means the Administrator of OWWA.
23

1 SECTION 4. *OFW Family Centers.* –

2 (A) *Centers.* – The Administrator shall establish OFW Family Centers nationwide, using
3 the facilities of its regional offices, or any of the regional offices of Philippine Overseas
4 Employment Administration and the Department of Social and Welfare Development. The
5 purposes of each Center are –

6 (1) To provide welfare assistance and counseling services to the families of
7 OFWs;

8 (2) To serve as coordinating office to non-government organizations and
9 associations that cater to the plight of OFWs;

10 (3) To serve as a link of left-behind households to various services and/or
11 agencies of the government on overseas employment.

12 (B) *Location of Centers.* – Each Center shall be strategically located in every
13 municipality where there is a large population of families who have relatives working abroad.

14 (C) *Jurisdiction.* – The responsibilities of each Center shall be centered on the welfare of
15 left-behind families of OFWs.

16 SECTION 5. *Left-Behind Household Organizations.* – OWWA shall facilitate the
17 establishment of organizations or support groups of families left behind by migrant workers. It
18 shall also provide a venue for the interaction of members of families of migrant workers.

19 SECTION 6. *Report to Congress.* – Three years from the passage of the provisions of this
20 Act, the OWWA shall report to Congress the number of cases brought to the various Centers and
21 the intervention provided. A yearly statistical report shall be submitted to the Department of
22 Labor and Employment and other concerned agencies.

23 SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such sums as may
24 be necessary are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

25 SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
26 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
27 valid and subsisting.

1 SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
2 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
3 with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

4 SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
5 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

6 Approved,