

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

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SENA TE P.S. Res. 248

HEGEIVED BY:

## Introduced by Senator Villar

## RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGATIONS OF BAD ATTITUDE, NEGLIGENCE AND INCOMPETENCE OF SOME PHILIPPINE EMBASSY AND CONSULAR PERSONNEL STATIONED IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN HANDLING CASES OF DISTRESSED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSING AND REVIEWING EXISTING POLICIES AND RECOMMEND REMEDIAL MEASURES IN THIS REGARD

Whereas, the 1987 Philippine Constitution is a landmark in championing the majesty of social justice and the greatness of labor rights as reflected in various principles and provisions:

- 1. "[t]he State shall promote social justice in all phases of national development." (Article II, Section 10);
- 2. "[t[he State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare." (Article II, Section 18);
- 3. "[t]he State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all" (Article XIII, Section 3);

Whereas, the Overseas Filipino Workers are now considered the biggest partner of the country's economic development with their remittances accounting as the premier reason for the continuing appreciation of the Philippine peso and in the area of human resources, they are acknowledged as shining exemplars of persistence, hard work, competence and skills;

Whereas, it has been reported and alleged that bad attitude, negligence and incompetence have been defining the work ethics of a substantial number of the country's diplomatic corps;

Whereas, it has been reported that some consular personnel are guilty of abusing and exploiting the OFWs under their jurisdiction;

Whereas, the following cases presented by the Center for Migrant Advocacy are examples of cases of distressed OFWs denied care and protection by the DFA personnel:

- OFW Teresita Santos was gang raped in August 2005. The 5 perpetrators were found guilty in the court of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and were sentenced to a four (4) year imprisonment and 500 lashes each. The said OFW however accused our consulate personnel in Jeddah of negligence, incompetence and simply bad attitude towards migrants in distress such as herself.
- OFW Esnaira Angin, a Muslim woman from Maguindanao, was one
  of the 4 OFWs in Dubai whose house was broken into 3 Emirati and 1
  Omani national. She was stabbed on her chest and back while traying
  to resist their attackers. Accordingly, she was denied assistance by the
  POLO (labor attaché office) in Dubai.
- A DFA staff of the Philippine permanent mission in Geneva was found guilty by the Geneva Labor court for non-payment of wages to her Filipino domestic worker.

Whereas, the seeming insensitiveness and indifference of a number of our diplomatic and consular officials and personnel have been reported and they are destroying the image and dignity of a larger more committed, devouted and excellent public servants in foreign service;

Whereas, the mindset and thinking of our corps of foreign service must be changed, that their existence in countries in which they are detailed and stationed, is a gift to our citizens, particularly the OFWs and that they must show compassionate justice that they richly deserve;

Whereas, the relevant assessment of existing duties, scope of protection and assistance program vis-à-vis distressed OFWs must be made: Now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate of the Philippines, To urge the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the allegations of bad attitude, negligence and incompetence of some Philippine embassy and consular personnel stationed in various countries in handling cases of distressed overseas Filipino workers, for the purpose of assessing and reviewing existing policies and recommend remedial measures.

Adopted,

MANNY VILLAR