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SENATE
Proposed Senate Resolution No. 1475

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR MANNY VILLAR

RESOLUTION
RECOMMENDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO
CREATE A DATABASE ON OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS WITH THE
OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO OFWS AND THEIR FAMILIES

WHEREAS, there are more than 10 million Filipino workers scattered in 197 countries, over 9% of the total labor force. Permanent OFWs are concentrated in North America and Australia, while those with work contracts or undocumented are dispersed in West Asia (Middle East), Europe, East and South Asia, and as sea-based workers (roughly 250,000);

WHEREAS, Filipino workers work in service and industrial sectors, in households, for multinational and domestic firms, in low-skilled and low-paid work. Most OFWs today (46.8%) are service workers: household or domestic helpers, maids or cleaners in commercial establishments, cooks, waiters, bartenders, caregivers and caretakers (IBON 2008). Although most are professionals with college degrees, teachers, midwives, social workers, etc., they are generally underpaid by the standards of their host countries;

WHEREAS, based on the records of Migrante, there are more than 3,000 overseas Filipino workers now languishing in jails in different Middle Eastern countries and there is a possibility that there are still many who are still unaccounted since the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Philippine consulates based in Middle Eastern nations have failed to come up with the exact number;

WHEREAS, the same OFW advocacy group said 70 percent of the 3,000 cases are not just simply immigration-related offenses as what the DFA claimed but cases involving abuses, maltreatment and labor malpractices. They said that DFA failed to include the rising numbers of OFWs temporarily seeking refuge at the resource centers, Bahay Kalingas, and safe houses maintained by the regional offices of Philippine Overseas Labor Offices and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration;

WHEREAS, many OFWs were not given their promised salary and they experience poor working conditions such as lack of food and water. They likewise suffer violations to their privacy and physical and sexual abuse. Moreover, there were reports that the OFWs; upon arrival to the country of destination, were made to sign new contracts. Worse, their employers would deploy them to far places against their consent;

WHEREAS, not all RP posts maintain a database of arriving OFWs including their sponsor-employers, hence, there are difficulties in locating them and in giving assistance in times of need and desperation;

WHEREAS, the database of all OFWs including their sponsor-employers will be a great help as it will give the DFA an easy and ready reference in tracking the whereabouts of OFWs and their sponsors-employers, thereby, timely assistance or aid shall be provided to them as well as to their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES, to recommend to the Department of Foreign Affairs to create a database on Overseas Filipino Workers with the objective of providing assistance to OFWs and their families.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
Senator