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SENATE
P.S. Res. 2

RECEIVED BY: *ja*

Introduced by Senator Poe

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT A RE-EXAMINATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ANENT THE VARIOUS PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS WITH THE INTENTION OF FORMULATING FOCUSED MEANINGFUL AND VIABLE MECHANISMS INCLUDING FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAM TO ASSIST MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE USE OF THEIR EARNINGS

Whereas, the 1987 Philippine Constitution is most known for its social justice principles;

Whereas, the issues of protection of labor and overseas Filipino workers are main issues enshrined in the social justice principle;

Whereas, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) recognizes that the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) remain an important source of investments in the country and that overseas remittances are a significant part of a country's economy, whether developed, developing or at any stage of economic development¹;

Whereas, accordingly about 10 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) remitted \$ 15.57 billion in the first quarter of 2012 and that on the average, an OFW sent home roughly \$ 2,400 per year²;

Whereas, a number of major issues vis-à-vis OFWs surfaced in the last one year:

1. The reported bullying, harassment, and job displacements of OFWs in Taiwan as a result of a shooting incident of a Taiwanese fisherman in Philippine waters;
2. The reported "sex for fly" incidence in various Middle East countries and which allegations resulted in the recall of labor officers and foreign affairs personnel;
3. The reported increase in Filipinos serving as drug mules and for the purpose, the rising number of OFWs in death row;

Whereas, the perennial problems of illegal recruitments, spiraling number of undocumented OFWs, the problem of repatriation, the high cost of documentations/requirements needed by an OFW, the absence of legal assistance to distressed migrant workers, the lack of opportunities in the country, the high statistics of exploitation of women OFWs, among others, remain as barriers;

Whereas, there are a number of government agencies in the bureaucracy attending to the needs of OFWs: Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Commission on Overseas Filipino, and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

¹ NEDA statement as culled from a report of the Rappler news (September 10, 2012)

² www.asianpundit.com, 2012

(OWWA); all of them with specific mandates to create programs that would best address the social and economic needs of OFWs and their families;

Whereas, of recent, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has embarked on a financial literacy program to assist OFWs and their families so that they can wisely manage their monies and savings;

Whereas, there is a need to re-examine the programs and various projects and interventions of the government on the issues confronted by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), including the direction that our embassies and consulates must adopt a friendlier approach, and the feasibility of engaging in a bilateral agreements with host countries with the intention of providing more protective and favorable treatment of our *kababayans*;

Whereas, the assessment of our policies and programs on OFWs are needed at this time and reflect significantly the cardinal right of our people to human dignity, the true hallmark of social justice: Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE, AS IT HEREBY RESOLVES, To Direct the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development to conduct a re-examination, in aid of legislation, anent the various programs of the government to help overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) with the intention of formulating focused meaningful and viable mechanisms including financial literacy program to assist migrant works and their families in the use of their earnings.

Adopted,


GRACE POE