

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 993

RECEIVED BY: *[Signature]*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORT THAT FILIPINOS AND OTHER FOREIGN WORKERS ARE ABUSED IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 18 provides: "The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare";

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 13, Section 1 provides: "The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all";

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, in a news article on 24 October 2014, reported that abuse by employers is rampant among many Asian and African women working as domestic workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE);

WHEREAS, the report also said that some 146,000 migrant women are employed as domestic helpers in the UAE, one of the world's ten richest countries and most of them come from the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Ethiopia;

WHEREAS, forms of abuse cited by the *Inquirer* included passport confiscation, nonpayment of wages; excessive work; forced confinement; food deprivation; and psychological, physical, and sexual abuse;

WHEREAS, the workers also claimed that they often endure months of abuse and exploitation because of fear of deportation, of being banned from future employment or of being charged with "absconding";

WHEREAS, the Human Rights Watch allegedly said that the problem is that the migrant workers' residency is tied to their employers through the visa sponsorship system that prevents them from easily changing jobs;

WHEREAS, the New York-based organization called for a repeal or changes to the UAE visa sponsorship system that gives employers control over domestic workers' immigration status, freedom of movement, and freedom to terminate employment;

WHEREAS, the Human Rights Watch also urged the workers' home countries to improve their cooperation with the UAE on oversight of the recruitment process, validity of contracts, and resolving legal cases;

WHEREAS, Congress should review existing laws in order to ensure that the full mantle of protection is given to overseas Filipino workers;

WHEREAS, Congress, in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs, should study measures to improve links with foreign governments with the objective of ensuring the welfare of Filipinos abroad;

WHEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE PHILIPPINE SENATE to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the report that Filipinos and other foreign workers are abused in the United Arab Emirates.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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