

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 626



INTRODUCED BY: SENATOR EMMANUEL D. PACQUIAO

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A RESOLUTION

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, ~~EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES~~ AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO CONDUCT AN EXHAUSTIVE INQUIRY AND INVESTIGATION REGARDING THE UNTOWARD DEATHS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) AND A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S LABOR AND FOREIGN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN LIGHT OF THE CONTINUED ABUSES, EXPLOITATION, AND DEATHS OF OUR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) SINCE THE DEATH OF FLOR CONTEMPLACION ON MARCH 17, 1995**

**WHEREAS**, it is the policy of the State under Article II, Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution that "The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights;"

**WHEREAS**, Article XIII, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution provides that "The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment for all. Toward this end, the State shall provide adequate and timely social, economic, and legal services to Filipino migrant workers;"

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended by Republic Acts No. 9422 and 10022, declares that the government is mandated "to ensure that the rights and interests of distressed overseas Filipinos, in general, and Filipinos migrant workers in particular, documented or undocumented, are adequately protected and safeguarded;"

**WHEREAS**, The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that the number of Overseas Filipino Workers deployed in 2016 was estimated at 2.2 million;

**WHEREAS**, the same report shows that Saudi Arabia continued to be the leading destination of OFWs. The other preferred destinations were United Arab Emirates (UAE), Europe, Kuwait, and Qatar, respectively;

**WHEREAS**, the said top destinations are the same countries which constitute the most number of tragic plights of our OFWs;

**WHEREAS**, data from the Department of Labor and Employment show that in Kuwait alone, a total of 1,447 cases of maltreatment, 227 sexual abuses and 63 cases of rape of Filipino workers were reported in 2016 only;

**WHEREAS**, Joanna Daniela Demafelis left the country in 2014 to work as a domestic helper in Kuwait in search of a greener pasture. In 2016, she decided to renew her work contract for another year to further help her family make both ends meet;

**WHEREAS**, Joanna's family barely heard a word from her since then. On February 8, 2018, Labor Sec. Silvestre Bello III confirmed that her body was found inside a freezer in an abandoned apartment in the Al Shaab area. Authorities revealed she might have been stored therein for over a year and that there was a high probability that she was tortured. Initial reports also showed that she was strangled to death;

**WHEREAS**, the gruesome story of Joanna mirrors the narrative of million other Filipinos who have sacrificed their lives to feed their families and incidentally boost our country's economy only to be at the receiving end of abuses and maltreatment of foreign employers;

**WHEREAS**, an inquiry and investigation must be conducted to ferret out the truth surrounding the deaths of our modern heroes, as well as a reexamination of our current labor and foreign laws, with the end view of strengthening such policies and programs and establishing solid mechanisms for further protection of our OFWs rights, safety, and well-being;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Committees on Labor, Employment, and Human Resources and Foreign Relations to conduct an inquiry and investigation regarding untoward deaths of OFWs and a re-examination of the government's labor and foreign policies and programs in light of the continued abuses, exploitation, and deaths of our OFWs.

Adopted,



**EMMANUEL D. PACQUIAO**