



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

'19 JUL -2 A11 :40

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SENATE

S. B. NO. 150

Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

AN ACT PROVIDING FREE INSURANCE FOR COVERED APPLICANTS OF OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, there are around 2.3 Million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)¹ who worked abroad at any time during the period April to September 2018, excluding Filipino migrant workers who are permanent residents or citizens of another country. Meanwhile, according to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), there are only about 1,315,584 members as of 2018. This means that there around 1 Million OFWs who are unaccounted for by OWWA.

For example, in 2018, news of Filipino truck drivers stationed at Padborg, Denmark surfaced.² During the Senate hearing on this issue, the POEA admitted that the truck drivers were undocumented, unmonitored and were only given attention by the Embassy after media outlets informed the Embassy of their situation.³

Thus, there is a need to incentivize OFWs who do not go through the procedures as prescribed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Authority (POEA), or who have ceased to register their membership with the OWWA after their initial deployment, or who have transferred to another country by way of third-country recruitment, to register with the POEA or with the Philippine Embassy abroad and get their corresponding overseas employment certificates (OECs). This step will help the government in properly

¹ Total Number of OFWs Estimated at 2.3 Million (Results from the 2018 Survey on Overseas Filipinos. Philippine Statistics Authority. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-force/sof-index> (date last accessed: June 30, 2019)

² 2018, October 31. 22 Pinoy truck drivers rescued from 'deplorable conditions' in Denmark: DFA. Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/10/31/18/22-pinoy-truck-drivers-rescued-from-deplorable-conditions-in-denmark-dfa> (date last accessed: June 30, 2019)

³ November 26, 2018 Senate Labor Committee Hearing Transcripts, at p. 118.

monitoring OFWs abroad, and to ensure that they are protected from human trafficking and abuses.

To this end, this bill seeks to give free insurance coverage to covered OFWs that apply for an overseas employment certificate. This bill incentivizing undocumented Filipino workers to acquire proper documentation in order to receive the benefits and protection guaranteed to them by the State, and to devise a system for the State to monitor its workers abroad, to ensure that the Filipino people would not have to grieve over another loved one who chose the risk to work abroad.

The immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives in Congress of the Philippines assembled:

- 1 **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policies.** – The State shall afford full protection to labor,
2 local and overseas, organized and unorganized. Towards this end, the State shall
3 provide adequate and timely social, legal and economic services to overseas
4 Filipinos workers. Pursuant to this, the State shall ensure that all overseas Filipino
5 workers are properly monitored and accounted for with due regard for their
6 protection and welfare, and that overseas Filipino workers are incentivized to
7 make themselves known to Philippine authorities abroad.
8
- 9 **SEC. 2. Coverage.** – The benefits under this Act shall apply to applicants of
10 overseas employment certificates (OECs); *Provided*, That the applicant-migrant
11 worker is abroad; *Provided further*, That he/she has no prior record with the
12 Philippine Overseas Employment Authority (POEA), or if he/she has a prior record,
13 is working in a vulnerable sector, as may be determined by the POEA in
14 consultation with relevant government agencies and other stakeholders.
15
- 16 **SEC. 3. Benefits.** – Covered migrant workers shall, upon securing an overseas
17 employment certificate from the POEA or the Philippine Embassy or consular
18 offices abroad shall be given a free one-year insurance with the same or similar
19 coverage as required under Republic Act No. 8042, as amended, otherwise known
20 as the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act."
21
- 22 **SEC. 4. Funding.** – The payment for the premium of the insurance provided under this
23 Act shall be funded partly by the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
24 earmarked for the Assistance to Nationals and partly by the appropriations in the General

1 Appropriations Act as included in the budget of the POEA. For the first year of the
2 implementation of this Act, an initial amount of Thirty Million Pesos (P30,000,000.00) is
3 hereby appropriated. Thereafter, such amount necessary for its continued implementation
4 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.
5

6 **SEC. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The Department of Labor and
7 Employment (DOLE), DFA, POEA, OWWA, Insurance Commission and other
8 relevant stakeholders, shall issue the implementing rule and regulations of this Act
9 within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.
10

11 To ensure the proper implementation of this Act, DOLE, POEA and DFA shall
12 establish a system that shall facilitate the processing and issuance of OECs
13 abroad.
14

15 **SEC. 6. Separability Clause.** – If any part or provision of this Act is held
16 unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provision hereof which are not
17 affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.
18

19 **SEC. 7. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
20 rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with any
21 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.
22

23 **SEC. 8. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
24 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general
25 circulation.
26

27 Approved,