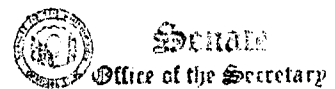


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



20 MAY -4 A11:12
RECEIVED BY:

SENATE

P. S. RES. NO 384

Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT, AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ADEQUACY OF ON-SITE ASSISTANCE AND PROGRAMS FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS IN LIGHT OF THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) PANDEMIC AND THE CONSEQUENT OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT DISPLACEMENTS WORLDWIDE

WHEREAS, On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern;

WHEREAS, As of April 30, 2020, there are already 3,212,262 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 228,299 deaths in 186 countries worldwide.¹ In an effort to stem the transmission of the virus, more than 100 countries have been implementing lockdown or stay-at-home measures by the end of March 2020,² and consequently restricting the movement of more than a third of the world's population;³

WHEREAS, The lockdown resulted in the loss of jobs of many people around the world, including overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) announced that more than 230,000 displaced OFWs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have applied for the financial benefits under its AKAP

¹ COVID-19 Dashboard. Available at <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> (date last accessed: April 30, 2020).
² 2020, April 7. Coronavirus: The world in lockdown in maps and charts. BBC. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52103747> (date last accessed: April 30, 2020).
³ 2020, April 30. A third of the global population is on coronavirus lockdown. Business Insider. Available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/countries-on-lockdown-coronavirus-italy-2020-3> (date last accessed: April 30, 2020).

Program,⁴ which gives affected OFWs Php10,000.00 (or US\$200.00) financial assistance, in addition to the assistance being given by the DOLE, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) under their regular programs;

WHEREAS, The United Nations estimates that some 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy worldwide is set to lose their livelihoods, while some 430 million enterprises risk “serious disruption.”⁵ This number will include OFWs worldwide;

WHEREAS, During this crucial time of massive job displacements and the continuing health risks posed by COVID-19, government officials abroad play a crucial role in ensuring that OFWs, whether documented or undocumented, are given immediate and proper assistance, and to ensure that no OFW will go hungry or homeless abroad because of job displacement or any other cause. Part of this role is knowing what actions to prioritize, i.e., giving assistance to workers, rather than policing the actions, including on social media, of our OFWs;

WHEREAS, As the number of displaced workers is expected to rise, especially as economic recession and/or contraction are happening around the globe, and with social distancing and other measures expected to continue, and in preparation for the “new normal” for OFWs, there is a need to inquire and review, in aid of legislation, the implementation of the Government’s assistance measures and policies on the protection of the rights and welfare of our OFWs, particularly on:


- 1) The responsibilities, duties and functions of concerned government agencies and Philippine Overseas Labor Officials (POLO) assigned to ensure the protection, rights, and welfare of OFWs in host countries;
- 2) The implementation of the One Country-Team Approach at the Foreign Posts and coordination, as provided under Rule VIII, Section 3 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 8042, as amended by Republic Act No. 10022, to effectively implement assistance to, and protection of, OFWs, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- 3) The assessment of concerned agencies, if any, on the state of overseas employment, displacements, recovering markets and new markets, and programs for reintegration;

⁴ 2020, April 26. Over 230k OFWs seek govt cash aid; 2m workers displaced by pandemic. DOLE. Available at <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/over-230k-ofws-seek-govt-cash-aid-2m-workers-displaced-by-pandemic/> (date last accessed: April 30, 2020).

⁵ 2020, April 28. Nearly half of global workforce at risk as job losses increase due to COVID-19: UN labour agency. UN News. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1062792> (date last accessed: April 30, 2020).

RESOLVE BY THE SENATE, that the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development and other appropriate Senate Committees, conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the adequacy of on-site assistance and programs for overseas Filipino workers in light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the consequent overseas employment displacements worldwide, with a view to addressing the gaps in the current laws, rules and regulations to ensure a well-funded and comprehensive adjustment measures program for our Overseas Filipino Workers and their families.

Adopted,


SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA 