


THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session

SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

6 JUN -8 2015

SENATE

S. No. 2396

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANNY VILLAR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The OWWA fund consists primarily of contributions from the Filipino workers and the fees and charges imposed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) on the said workers. Overseas workers pay up the same upon execution or renewal of their employment contract. The funds are held in trust by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to be utilized on programs and investments favorable to overseas workers. It is the overseas workers who own the funds.

Unfortunately, there is information that the OWWA has been transacting unfavorably to overseas workers. One such transaction is the alleged transfer of OWWA funds to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp (PHIC) to which innumerable Overseas Filipino workers object. These Filipino workers want a "zero transfer." They contended that such a transfer of funds to PHIC could result to the deprivation of health benefits of OFWs inasmuch PHIC's process of reimbursement and qualification are unduly time-consuming and difficult for them to comply with. They likewise maintained that to ensure that the rights and privileges of the overseas workers are safeguarded and uncompromised, they should be allowed greater participation in the administration and management of the OWWA funds through their preferred representatives. But they have not been.

This bill seeks to remedy the inadequacies of the law by giving overseas workers greater participation in the administration and management of funds through their representatives in the Board of Trustees. Moreover, prior approval of overseas workers shall be necessary in the utilization of the OWWA funds. In this way, the overseas workers are assured that their hard-earned money does not go to waste and are not for purposes other than the protection and promotion of their welfare.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


MANNY VILLAR

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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**AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE
NUMBERED SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND FOUR (P.D. 1694), AS AMENDED,
CREATING THE WELFARE FOR OVERSEAS WORKERS**

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

SECTION 1. Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers. - Section 1 of Presidential Decree
No. 1694 shall be amended to read as follows:

"Section 1. Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers. - There is hereby
created a "Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers," hereinafter referred to as the OWWA
FUND (Welfund) which shall be used for the purpose of providing social and welfare
services to Filipino overseas workers, including insurance coverage, legal assistance,
placement assistance, and remittance services.

THE OWWA FUND SHALL BE A TRUST FUND WHICH SHALL BE MANAGED AND
EXPENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND, AND SHALL
NOT BE UTILIZED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH ITS MEMBERS OR
REPRESENTATIVES THEREFORE UNLESS OTHERWISE PROVIDED BY LAW.

SECTION 2. Administration. - Section 3 of P.D. 1694, as amended by P.D. No.
1809, shall be further amended to read as follows:

"Section 3. Administration.- The OWWA FUND (Welfund) shall be administered by a
Board of Trustees through a Secretariat. The Board of Trustees shall consist of the
SECRETARY OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT AS CHAIRMAN, THE
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION
(OWWA) AS VICE CHAIRMAN, THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE
SECRETARY OF FINANCE, THE SECRETARY OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT,
ONE REPRESENTATIVE EACH FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND LABOR SECTORS,
ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE WOMEN SECTOR, AND ONE
REPRESENTATIVE EACH FROM THE SEA-BASED AND LAND BASED OVERSEAS
FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs).

"THE ADMINISTRATOR AND THE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MANAGEMENT,
LABOR AND WOMEN SECTORS, AND LAND-BASED AND SEA-BASED OFWS
SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES, FROM THE
RECOMMENDEES OF THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT UPON
NOMINATION OF CONCERNED LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.