

SENATE

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 558

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Introduced by Senator FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN

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RESOLUTION

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY, PEACE, UNIFICATION, AND RECONCILIATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE ENTRY OF SOME FOUR (4) MILLION CHINESE NATIONALS INTO THE COUNTRY SINCE 2017**

*WHEREAS*, according to the Bureau of Immigration (BI), some four (4) million Chinese nationals have entered the Philippines since 2017. Of these 4 million Chinese nationals, around 150,000 were Visa-Upon-Arrival (VUA) applicants, while 3.8 million of them were non-VUA applicants;

*WHEREAS*, under Department Order No. 41 issued in 2017 by then Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre, the VUA allowed Chinese citizens to enter the Philippines without a visa issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Said VUAs were processed by travel agencies, many of which agencies merely required screenshots of applicants' passports sent via the WeChat app;

*WHEREAS*, it was revealed during the 20 October 2020 hearing of the Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations, and Gender Equality that immigration officers who facilitated the entry of the Chinese nationals or assisted the departure of trafficked people have allegedly received around P40 billion in bribe money under the so-called pastillas scheme. The Chinese nationals are believed to have paid P10,000 as "service fee" to ensure their smooth entry into the country;

*WHEREAS*, from 2016 to 2018, around 335,800 working visas and special work permits were issued to Chinese nationals, which represent over half the total number of permits issued to foreigners. More than half of them were for online gaming-related jobs, and the rest for sectors including construction, information, and communications;

*WHEREAS*, from December 2019 to February 2020, a total of 536,205 Chinese nationals have entered the Philippines amidst the coronavirus threat. Of these, about 4,850 came from Wuhan City, the ground zero of the virus, while others came from neighboring areas in Hubei Province. Around 156,000 Chinese nationals carried alien employment permits, 115,000 had special work permits, and around 77,000 had



prearranged employment visas. According to the Bureau of Customs (BOC), the cash declared by the Chinese nationals reached US\$188 million, which the foreign nationals said will be used for gambling, touring, or shopping;

*WHEREAS*, based on Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA) records, almost 28,000 Chinese nationals were allowed entry into the country as retirees under the PRA's Special Residents Retiree's Visa (SRRV). They comprise about forty percent (40%) of all foreign retirees in the country;

*WHEREAS*, under the SRRV, foreign nationals who are at least 35 years of age and with a US\$50,000.00 time deposit are allowed to permanently reside in the Philippines and are also eligible to work, study, or invest. These Chinese retirees may be taking jobs meant for our countrymen while around 23.7 million adult Filipinos are unemployed;

*WHEREAS*, given the lenient requirements for foreign national retirees and the seemingly unchecked entry of some 4 million Chinese nationals into the country, there is a need to look into whether this is an orchestrated "soft invasion" of our country;

*WHEREAS*, China's increased presence in the country has not only been limited to the millions of its nationals who have entered the country since 2017. In July 2020, the Philippine government protested the presence of more than a hundred Chinese vessels, which are believed to be part of China's fishing militia, in Pag-asa Island and the West Philippine Sea. Filipino fishermen in the area, who are civilians and have no military training unlike their Chinese counterparts, are subjected to threats and harassment. Moreover, the country's natural resources are exploited. According to the University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute's findings in 2019, the conservative estimate of the cost of damages in the West Philippine Sea ecosystem incurred by China is pegged at P33.1 billion annually. According to Filipino marine scientists, the damages in the reef ecosystem at Panatag Shoal and the Spratly Islands are mainly due to China's reclamation activities and illegal fishing operations;

*WHEREAS*, some Chinese-funded infrastructure projects were recently flagged for the significant proportion of Chinese workers working on said projects amidst the rising unemployment in the country. These include the Estrella Pantaleon Bridge with 31% Chinese workers and the Binondo-Intramuros Bridge with 45% Chinese workers;

*WHEREAS*, investments and infrastructure projects funded by China have also been hounded by concerns over debt exposure, geopolitical risks, and sovereignty issues;

*WHEREAS*, it is imperative to determine whether the entry of some 4 million Chinese nationals since 2017 and the retirement of around 28,000 of them in the country are an additional cause for concern and have national security implications;


*WHEREAS*, the Philippine government should take the necessary measures to ensure that our immigration laws are strictly implemented, and that illegal immigration and exploitation of illegal migrant workers are duly penalized and stopped;



**WHEREAS**, there is a need to review our policies in order to protect our national interest and national security from the unintended effects of the influx of foreign nationals while ensuring that they are afforded the respect for their basic rights and protection under the law that we expect for our fellow Filipinos abroad;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification, and Reconciliation to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the national security implications of the entry of some four (4) million Chinese nationals into the country since 2017.

*Adopted,*



**FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN**