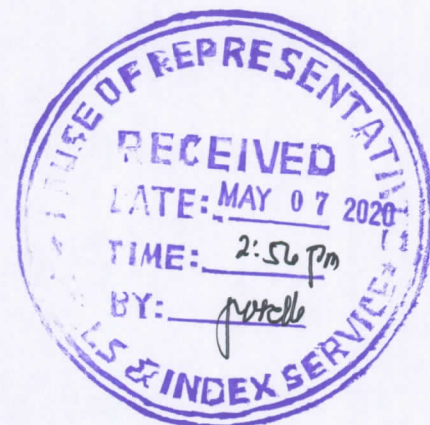


1 Republic of the Philippines
2 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
3 Quezon City

4
5 EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
6 First Regular Session

7
8 House Resolution No. 844



9
10 *Introduced by*
11 RAYMOND DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA
12 *Representative, Trade Union Congress Party*
13

14
15 A RESOLUTION

16 DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS TO
17 CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON COVID-19 ON-SITE
18 ASSISTANCE, REPATRIATION, AND REINTEGRATION OF OFWS BOTH LAND-
19 BASED AND SEA-BASED, IN VIEW OF THE NEED FOR SEAMLESS
20 COORDINATION AMONG CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SUCH AS THE
21 DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF
22 LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE) THROUGH THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS
23 LABOR OFFICE (POLO), OVERSEAS WORKERS' WELFARE ADMINISTRATION
24 (OWWA) AND PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION
25 (POEA), AND NEED FOR AN OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT PLAN IN THE LIGHT OF
26 MASSIVE JOB LOSS WORLDWIDE

27
28 WHEREAS, by end of March over 100 countries are in either full or partial
29 lockdown as the most common control approach worldwide to flatten the curve
30 of transmission of COVID-19 or SARS-COV-2 affecting billions of people from Asia
31 and the Pacific, Europe, Americas and Sub-Saharan African countries;¹

32
33 WHEREAS, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Labor and
34 Employment data, as collated by the POEA, shows that as of April 22, 2020, the
35 number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) affected by the virus has reached
36 1,114 with 159 deaths and there are 707 stranded Filipinos in various parts of the
37 world, and still counting;

38
39 WHEREAS, while several swift and positive interventions on-site to assist our
40 OFWs were noted, cases of mishandling such as the verbal abuse of OFW Joy

¹ April 06, 2020. Coronavirus: The world in lockdown in maps and charts. Available at:
<https://bbc.com/>

1 Parafina by an OWWA officer in Dubai, the POLO initiation/prosecution for
2 deportation of OFW Elanel Egot Ordidor in Taichung, Taiwan for alleged crime of
3 cyber libel, and recently, the physical and verbal abuse of OFW Marvin Agdigos
4 inside the Philippine Consulate in Jeddah;

5
6 **WHEREAS**, it is worth reiterating that these cases show grave disconnect with the
7 mandate of the personnel of DOLE POLO as provided in Administrative Order No.
8 168, Series of 2013,² or the Manual of Operations of Philippine Overseas Labor
9 Office (POLO), implicitly states that it is DOLE's "overseas operating arm in the
10 implementation of Philippine labor policies and programs for the protection of the
11 rights and promotion of the welfare of Filipinos working abroad, and the functions
12 and responsibilities of POLO include: 1) ensuring the protection and the rights and
13 promote the welfare and interests of overseas Filipino migrant workers and assist
14 them on all problems arising out of employer-employee relationship; and (2)
15 perform other functions as may be directed by the Secretary of Labor and
16 Employment;"

17
18 **WHEREAS**, on the seafarers plight, the TUCP-Partylist Representative and
19 HCOWA chairperson have first-hand experiences of being tossed from one agency
20 to another with respect to stranded Filipino seafarers at Dormitel, United Nations
21 Avenue in Manila, the repatriation of stranded seafarers in Cebu and other cases,
22 these emphasized the need for empathy and seamless coordination among the
23 concerned government agencies and the local government units to facilitate the
24 return of OFWs to their respective homes without discrimination or being left on
25 their own;

26
27 **WHEREAS**, other than the one-time financial assistance of USD200.00 or
28 P10,000.00 for displaced OFWs, or DOLE-AKAP for OFWs, or the usual
29 reintegration package of maximum of P20,000.00 for returning OFWs, no
30 assistance or an Overseas Employment Plan has been discussed or presented on
31 jobs that are available to displaced OFWs locally or overseas in post COVID-19
32 scenario in the light of massive job loss worldwide;

33
34 **WHEREAS**, it should be noted that overseas jobs may no longer be available for
35 our OFWs, in fact the International Labour Organization (ILO) has forewarned that
36 the COVID-19 crisis is expected to wipe out 6.7 per cent of working hours globally
37 in the second quarter of 2020 – equivalent to 195 million full-time workers, and
38 large reductions are foreseen in the Arab States (8.1 per cent, equivalent to 5
39 million full-time workers), Europe (7.8 per cent, or 12 million full-time workers)
40 and Asia and the Pacific (7.2 per cent, 125 million full-time workers) while the


² <http://ilab.dole.gov.ph/app/webroot/js/ckfndr/nj/files/AO%20168-13%20Manual%20of%20Operations,%20Policies%20&%20Guidelines%20for%20the%20POLO.pdf>

1 most at risk sectors include accommodation and food services, manufacturing,
2 retail, and business and administrative activities;³
3

4 **WHEREAS**, as jobs overseas are disappearing due to the global economic
5 slowdown brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an urgent need not
6 only to ensure that on-site assistance are expeditiously extended to our OFWs and
7 their rights are protected, including their right to repatriation and reintegration,
8 if called for by circumstances, but more importantly, to ensure, in aid of legislation,
9 the readiness of an Overseas Employment Plan under the new normal.

10
11 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, by the
12 House of Representatives to direct the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs to
13 conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the implementation of COVID-19 on-
14 site assistance, repatriation and reintegration of OFWs both land-based and sea-
15 based, coordination among concerned government agencies such as the
16 Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Department of Labor and Employment
17 through the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO), Overseas Workers Welfare
18 Administration (OWWA) and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
19 (POEA), and the readiness of an Overseas Employment Plan.

20
21 **Adopted,**
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25

26 
27 **RAYMOND DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA**
28 **TUCP Partylist**
29
30
31

³April 07, 2020. ILO: COVID-19 causes devastating losses in working hours and employment.
Available at: <https://www.ilo.org>.