



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

H. B. No. 4156

Introduced by Representative TEODORICO "NONONG" T. HARESCO, JR.

AN ACT
PROVIDING AN ASSISTANCE FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS IN
DISTRESS, BOTH DOCUMENTED AND UNDOCUMENTED, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

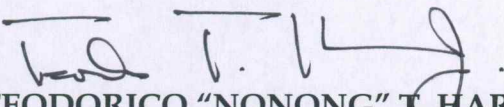
The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the State affirms labor as a primary social economic force and it shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there are approximately 2.3 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as of 2018 and just from April to September 2018, their total remittance sent was estimated at 235.9 Billion Pesos.

With this massive share in our economy, it is but just that the State protect and promote the rights of the OFWs. And while it is true that the Legislative Department is not remiss in its duty to champion the rights of OFWs through meaningful legislation, additional safeguards are always welcome to keep up with the call of the times.

With this massive share in our economy, it is but just that the State protect and promote the rights of the OFWs. As such, this bill seeks to establish a special fund in the amount of One Billion Pesos (Php1,000,000,000.00) that will aid OFWs in distress. The special fund shall be extended to OFWs for medical expenses; migration fees; legal assistance; payment of blood money, when necessary; and for basic necessities of OFWs caught in emergencies or those detained. Furthermore, this bill aims to cure the lack of government aid given to our undocumented OFWs by including them in the coverage of those who may avail of the special fund. After all, their Filipino citizenship and the rights accompanying thereto are not lost by reason of their being undocumented in another country. Moreover, undocumented OFWs' remittances form part of the aggregate OFWs contribution to our economy.

Labor, as used in our Constitution, is an all-encompassing term which necessarily includes local and overseas workers, legally documented or not.

Wherefore, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


TEODORICO "NONONG" T. HARESCO, JR.



4156

H. B. No. _____

Introduced by Representative TEODORICO "NONONG" T. HARESCO, JR.

AN ACT
PROVIDING AN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS IN DISTRESS, BOTH DOCUMENTED AND UNDOCUMENTED,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

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2 **SECTION 1. Declaration of State Policy.** – It is the declared policy of the State that
3 labor is affirmed as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of
4 workers and promote their welfare. The State shall extend its protection to all workers,
5 regardless of their being overseas or local, documented or otherwise.

6
7 **SEC. 2.** Beginning the year this Act is enacted, a Special Assistance Fund for Overseas
8 Filipino Workers in Distress, both documented and undocumented, in the amount of
9 One Billion Pesos (Php1,000,000,000.00) is enacted. The fund shall be utilized for the
10 following purposes:

- 11
12 1. Medical expenses, hospitalization and purchase of medicine in the form of
13 vouchers for six (6) months from arrival;
14
15 2. Migration fees for overstaying Filipinos;
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17 3. Legal assistance, including litigation expenses, legal fees, payment of
18 translation fees, attendance in court hearings;
19
20 4. Payment of blood money, when necessary; or
21
22 5. Basic necessities of OFWs caught in emergence or are detained.

23
24 *Provided, That, thirty percent (30%) of the total fund shall be allotted to support a*
25 *livelihood training program or re-training of returning overseas Filipino workers in*
26 *new skills and literacy.*

27
28 **SEC. 3.** In the utilization of Fund, the principles of accountability and transparency
29 must be fully observed.
30

1 **SEC. 4.** The fund needed to initially implement the provisions of this Act must be
2 sourced primarily from the General Appropriations Act. The appropriations allotted
3 to Assistance to Nationals and Legal Assistance Fund in the Department of National
4 Foreign Affairs shall serve as core fund for the program. Thereafter, the yearly One
5 Billion Pesos (Php1,000,000,000.00) appropriation shall be sourced from the earnings
6 of the Bureau of Immigration, Duty-Free Philippines, passport processing fees of the
7 Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, and other
8 relevant offices or agencies as may be recommended and identified in the
9 implementing rules and regulations.

10
11 **SEC. 5.** The Department of Labor and Employment, in consultation with the
12 Department of Budget and Management and representatives of the private sector and
13 recognized overseas labor organizations, shall issue the necessary implementing rules
14 and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

15
16 **SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations
17 or other issuances or parts thereof contrary to inconsistent with the provisions of this
18 Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

19
20 **SEC. 7. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its
21 publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

22
23 *Approved,*