

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 332



Introduced by Representative ROSE MARIE J. ARENAS

**AN ACT REQUIRING ALL HEADS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
UNITS TO ESTABLISH "OFW FAMILY HELP DESKS" IN THEIR
OFFICES**

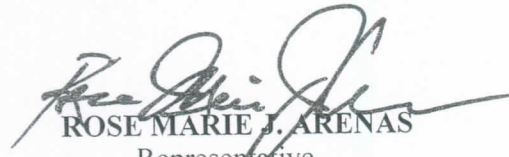
EXPLANATORY NOTE

The number of our Filipinos who choose to work abroad as Overseas Filipino workers, whether sea-based or land based is quickly growing. While our migrant workers choose to earn their living in foreign lands to ensure the support and sustenance of their families, both these breadwinners and the families they leave behind endure the difficulties of living distantly from each other.

With the OFWs forced to leave apart from their families, the immediate possible adverse effect is the weakening of family ties. This can also result to other effects whereby the families of the OFWs do not feel psychologically, socially, and emotionally supported. As a way of recompense to these difficulties faced by the families of our sea-based and land based OFWs, this bill seeks to require all heads of Local Government Units to create or establish an OFW Family Help Desks in their respective offices. The primordial purpose of the OFW Family Help Desks is to strengthen and enhance the protection by the government of the families of OFWs who get deprived of pillars of their families when the OFWs leave for abroad to work.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is most respectfully requested.

This bill was first introduced by ANGKLA partylist during the 17th Congress.



ROSE MARIE J. ARENAS
Representative
3rd District, Pangasinan

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

SEC. 1. Title. - This Act shall be known and cited as the "OFW Family Help Desks Act of 2016."

SEC. 2. Coverage. - This Act shall cover all Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), whether land-based or sea-based, documented or undocumented, including their families in the Philippines.

SEC. 3. Declaration of Policy. - This Act is in furtherance of the State Policies provisions of the Constitution, to wit:

- A. Section 12, Article 11: "The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of unborn from conception. The natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the support of the Government.";
- B. Section 1, Article XV: "The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.";
- C. Section 3, Article XV: "The State shall defend:

- (1) The right of spouses to found a family in accordance with their religious convictions and the demands of responsible parenthood;

(2) The right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development;

(3) The right of the family to a family living wage and income; and

(4) The right of families or family associations to participate in the planning and implementation of policies and programs that affect them."

This Act is also in pursuance of Article 149 of the Family Code which says that, "The family, being the foundation of the nation, is a basic social institution which public policy cherishes and protects."

SEC. 4. Ten (10) Million Weakened Families. – The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) estimate the total number of OFWs as having reached ten (10) million and almost all of them are heads of families and breadwinners.

When millions of heads of families and/or breadwinners leave to work overseas, millions of Filipino families in the homefront are left without the essential pillars of their homes which expose them to certain vulnerabilities such as to the drug menace; to abuses such as bullying in schools and in the neighborhood and the like.

SEC. 5. The Role of Governors and Mayors. – Provincial Governors, City and Municipal Mayors are traditionally known as the "Ama" or "Ina" of their respective local government units and must perforce fill the gap in protecting and overseeing the welfare of weakened OFW Families in their areas of responsibilities.

SEC. 6. Creation of OFW Family Help Desks. – All Provincial Governors, City and Municipal Mayors are hereby required to create or establish OFW Family Help Desks in their offices to attend to, provide assistance and to address concerns or problems of Overseas Filipino Workers and their families including counseling on business and livelihood opportunities, who are residing in the local government unit's territorial jurisdiction.

All local government units (LGUs), in partnership with the DFA, POEA, OWWA, other concerned government agencies, advocating the rights and welfare of overseas Filipino workers, shall also take a proactive stance in the dissemination of information to their constituents on all aspects of overseas employment. Such help desks shall be linked to the database of all concerned government agencies particularly the POEA and the OWWA for its updated lists of overseas job orders and licensed recruitment agencies in good standing.

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government is hereby tasked to implement this Act and shall, in consultation with the local government units, the Philippine

Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), other concerned government agencies, formulate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 8. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations which may be inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act, are hereby deemed repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,