

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 292



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE VIRGILIO "VG" S. LACSON

**RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
AND THE COMMITTEE ON GAMES AND AMUSEMENT, AND OTHER
APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF OUR COUNTRY'S
IMMIGRATION AND LABOR LAWS BY POGO OPERATORS WITH THE END IN
VIEW OF ENACTING LAWS TO REGULATE OFFSHORE GAMING
OPERATIONS**

WHEREAS, the Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations (POGO) was first introduced to the country in 2016 and was initially permitted through the government's investment promotional agencies;

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 13 (2017) issued by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte authorized the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) as the regulatory agency of the government as far as POGO is concerned;

WHEREAS, through the efforts of PAGCOR, operators of POGO invested and set up their operations in the Philippines, which was viewed to generate income for the government and provide jobs;

WHEREAS, with the continuing growth of the POGO industry, there has been a substantial increase of Chinese expatriates coming to the country to work in POGO companies;

WHEREAS, these Chinese workers come into the country using Tourist Visas and then as soon as they arrive, Special Working Permits (SWP) were issued them by the Bureau of Immigration (BI);

WHEREAS, these SWPs are valid only for three (3) months and renewable for another three (3) months, and usually issued so that foreign nationals may be able to apply and process for an Alien Employment Permit (AEP) from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);

WHEREAS, there have been reports that most of these Chinese expatriates hired by the POGOs only have SWPs issued by the BI, most of which are suspected to have lapsed, and yet they continue to be employed even with the absence of an AEP;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Immigration have issued at least 120,000 SWPs for Chinese workers for the last three years while only around 50,000 AEPs were issued by the DOLE,

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which has eventually caused confusion among the government agencies leading to possible circumvention of our immigration and labor laws;

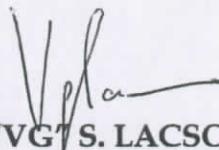
WHEREAS, POGO operators who have invested in the country preferred and hired Chinese nationals, citing language proficiency, when such jobs could be sourced locally – as Filipinos are highly-trainable and considering that the unemployment rate of the country stands at 5.2%;

WHEREAS, it was only in March 2019, three (3) years after the entry of POGO in our country, that an inter-agency task force was formed to address critical concerns the POGO industry has created – from alleged violations and deliberate abuse of the Philippine's labor and immigration laws, tax collection, rising costs of lease of real estate properties, notwithstanding the effects on the social construct of the localities wherein these POGOs are located;

WHEREAS, there is a need to examine the policies effected in relation to POGOs and its enforcement as far as the regulatory agencies of our government is concerned, including the propriety of the issuance of working permits to these foreign nationals to work in the country, wherein it should be that the DOLE is the only authorized agency to determine whether a foreign national may be allowed to work in the Philippines in consideration to our labor laws, which puts into question the legality of POGOs employing Chinese workers recruited from China;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives that the Committee on Labor and Employment and the Committee on Games and Amusement, and other appropriate committees, to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the alleged violations of our country's immigration and labor laws by POGO operators with the end in view of enacting laws to regulate offshore gaming operations.

Adopted,


VIRGILIO "VG" S. LACSON
MANILA TEACHERS