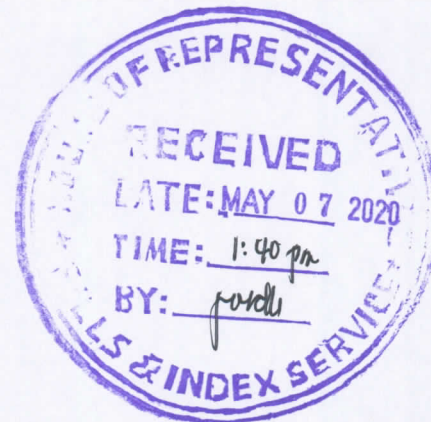


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 842



Introduced by MARINO Party-list Representatives
SANDRO L. GONZALEZ
and **MACNELL M. LUSOTAN**

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT AND/OR THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS AND/OR THE DEFEAT COVID-19 AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE IMPACT OF THE "NEW NORMAL" TO THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS WHO LOST THEIR JOBS AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PROVIDING THEM ALTERNATIVE JOBS AND LIVELIHOOD, FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, AND OTHER INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

WHEREAS, President Rodrigo Duterte issued on 30 April 2020 Executive Order No. 112 imposing an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in high-risk geographic areas of the Philippines and a General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in the rest of the country in a bid to contain the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) as it rages unabated since March 2020;

WHEREAS, the Covid-19 pandemic has created a global crisis which has impacted all aspects of life, affecting individuals, families and industries in ways that will herald the dawn of a new normal. In the maritime sector, the pandemic has seen severe restrictions put in place on the deployment of Filipino seafarers worldwide. Shipping has been crippled as large swaths of the global economy shut down for extended periods. The future of the cruise industry is also in turmoil, reeling from wide-reaching travel bans. The disruptions from Covid-19 are on track to continue for a long time, affecting the employment of hundreds of thousands of Filipino seafarers;

WHEREAS, the impact of the pandemic on Filipino sailors is being overlooked. The Department of Foreign Affairs reports that as of 30 April 2020, it has facilitated the repatriation of 16,936 Filipino seafarers from foreign countries as a result of restrictions imposed by governments to stop the spread of the virus. More repatriations are in the works, as countries flinch from the lingering effects of the virus. This will leave many seafarers laid off and unable to feed their families, joining the growing number of poor and unemployed Filipinos. The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) also reports that there are several thousands more seafarers who are stranded in Metro Manila who are seeking

employment or awaiting deployment. They are struggling with no money, meager food and are yearning to go back home;

WHEREAS, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) is the sole government agency mandated to provide livelihood assistance or community-based income generating projects to seafarers. However, as the OWWA is a membership institution, it has only assisted seafarers who paid the US\$25 membership contribution. Thousands of unemployed seafarers who were stranded in Metro Manila were excluded from OWWA's programs and services. As such, it is important to broaden the coverage of government programs and services to include seafarers who are non-OWWA members in social and economic amelioration programs and ensure that the government's hallmark of inclusivity is realized;


WHEREAS, Filipino sailors have historically propped our economy, especially during its floundering years, sending home a record high of \$6.14 billion or around P318.55 billion in 2018, based on data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). The remittances from the seafarers comprise 19% of the total remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in 2018, amounting to \$32.21 billion despite the Philippines' cooling economy. The total remittances of seafarers amounted to 9.7% of the country's gross domestic product, and 8.1% of its gross national income for 2018;

WHEREAS, it is the duty and obligation of the government to lay out appropriate policies and programs that will provide comprehensive financial and non-financial assistance to unemployed seafarers as a deed of reciprocity and in recognition of their sacrifices and hardship in keeping our economy robust through their enormous remittances;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the House of Representatives to direct the Committee on Labor and Employment and/or the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs and/or the Defeat Covid-19 Ad-hoc Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the impact of the "new normal" to the hundreds of thousands of Filipino seafarers who lost their jobs as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the end in view of providing them alternative jobs and livelihood, financial and non-financial assistance, and other income opportunities.

Adopted,


SANDRO L. GONZALEZ
Representative
MARINO Party-list


MACNELL M. LUSOTAN
Representative
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