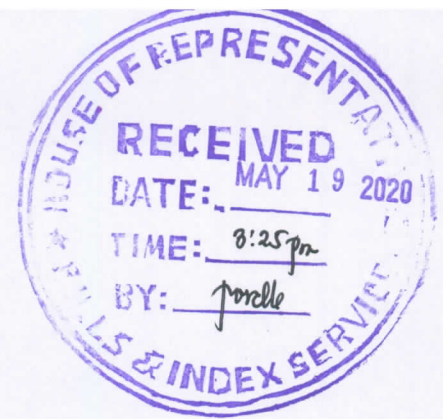


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. **887**



Introduced by

BAYAN MUNA Representatives **FERDINAND R. GAITE**,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and **EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT**

RESOLUTION

**EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TO RECOMMEND THE INCREASE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE
DOLE-AKAP PROGRAM FOR DISTRESSED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS
AND FOR SIMPLE, EASY, SPEEDY, ORGANIZED AND SAFE ACCESS AND
DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL AID UNDER THE PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, Section 9 Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution affirms that “(t)he State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all;”

WHEREAS, Section 18 Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that “(t)he State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare;”

WHEREAS, Section 3 Article XIII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution affirms that “(t)he State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all;”

WHEREAS, Section 2 (c) of Republic Act 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 asserts that “(w)hile recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances, the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The existence of the overseas employment program rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Filipino citizens shall not, at any time, be compromised or violated. The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development;”

WHEREAS, for many decades, the Philippine government has relied on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) remittances to save the country’s economy. Now that the OFWs are the ones in need of saving, it shall be imperative for our government to extend financial help to our distressed OFWs due to the health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor -Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong (DOLE-AKAP) for OFWs was announced by Philippine Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III on March 25, 2020 as a one-time

1 financial assistance by the Philippine government to be given to displaced OFWs – both sea-based
2 and land-based – around the world, due to COVID-19;
3

4 **WHEREAS**, DOLE declared that the amount of the one-time financial assistance is Php 10,000
5 or \$200 per beneficiary and that the allotted P1.5 billion special fund released for the program for
6 an estimated 150,000 OFWs;”
7

8 **WHEREAS**, many affected OFWs proceeded to the various Philippine Overseas Labor Office
9 (POLO) & Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) offices to seek for the DOLE-
10 AKAP program but some faced negative results. It was reported that when OFWs went to the
11 POLO offices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Philippine officials called the local police to
12 disperse distressed OFWs who trooped to the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh. The OFWs were
13 merely seeking out the US\$200 financial assistance promised to them by the Duterte government
14 through Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III. They were yelled at and harassed by embassy officials
15 and personnel;”
16

17 **WHEREAS**, in another incident on April 20, 2020, the POLO in Dubai and Northern Emirates
18 issued a public statement informing OFWs that they have temporarily suspended the acceptance
19 of applications for the DOLE-AKAP. In the UAE alone, there is an estimated 650,000 OFWs,
20 most of them are employees who were laid off from work, whose wages have been delayed, whose
21 wages have been cut by 25 to 50 per cent; and who have been put under “no work, no pay”
22 arrangements;”
23

24 **WHEREAS**, based on the 7th report submitted by President Rodrigo Duterte to the Joint
25 Congressional Oversight Committee last May 11, 2020, the assistance for OFWs under CAMP-
26 AKAP has the highest backlog among all SAPs, with 51.099% or 76,648 OFWs still without aid
27 out of 150,000 target beneficiaries. However, the target number of beneficiaries is conservative
28 given that an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 OFWs will be laid off or suffer pay cuts due to the
29 pandemic;”
30

31 **WHEREAS**, the DOLE admitted that it would need an additional P2 billion in emergency funds
32 to be able to service a significant portion of the 368,703 OFWs who had sought the cash aid as of
33 May 5, 2020;”
34

35 **WHEREAS**, all OFWs and fellow Filipinos, whatever their visa status, as long as they are affected
36 by the Covid-19 pandemic should be given financial assistance. Moreover, OFWs who have been
37 laid off from work, whether staying in the host country or in the Philippines, those who have been
38 placed under “forced unpaid leave” and “no work, no pay” arrangements and those whose wages
39 have been cut and are delayed shall likewise be included in the DOLE-AKAP financial assistance
40 program;”
41

42 **WHEREAS**, the DOLE-AKAP financial assistance shall cover women migrants who are staying
43 in shelters, OFWs who are in quarantine or self-isolation, workers who are supposed to return to
44 work but are stranded in the Philippines, OFW frontliners, OFW health workers who are affected
45 by the suspension of overseas deployment of health workers and household workers who have
46 been dismissed or who ran away because of abuses by employers;
47

48 **WHEREAS**, the DOLE-AKAP program shall extend financial assistance and repatriation to
49 distressed OFWs who are stranded due to the pandemic and who desire to come home to the
50 Philippines to be with their families and loved ones;”
51

1 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the House of Representatives express its sense
2 to recommend the increase of financial assistance under the DOLE-AKAP Program for distressed
3 Overseas Filipino Workers and for simple, easy, speedy, organized and safe access and distribution
4 of financial aid under the program.

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7 *Adopted,*

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13 **REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE**
14 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

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19 **REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**
20 *Bayan Muna Partylist*


REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist