

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
633

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. _____



Introduced by Gabriela Party List Representative Luzviminda C. Ilagan

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY ON THE REPORTED EXCESSIVE COLLECTION OF PROCESSING FEES, CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER PAYMENTS FROM OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs), BY THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION, AND RECOMMEND MEASURES THEREOF

WHEREAS, Art. II, Sec. 18 of the Philippine Constitution declares it a state policy, to "... protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare."

WHEREAS, Section 2, Paragraph b of The Migrant Workers Act of 1995 (R.A. 8042) states that it is also the policy of the state "...to afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment for all. Towards this end, the State shall provide adequate and timely social, economic and legal services to Filipino migrant workers."

WHEREAS, Art. XIII, Sec. 1 (Social Justice and Human Rights) of the Philippine Constitution states that "The Congress shall give the highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the rights of all people to human dignity and reduce social, economic and political inequalities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good";

WHEREAS, an estimate of 3,000 OFWs leave the country everyday, 70% of whom are women;

WHEREAS, the OFWs are considered the biggest partners of the country's economic development with their remittances accounting as the premier reason for the continuing appreciation of the Philippine peso;

WHEREAS, the Philippine government, through the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) has reportedly been collecting excessive fees from Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) either directly or indirectly through their employers;

WHEREAS, it has been reported that the OFWs are paying an average of ₱15,400.00 each in government fees, including \$25 mandatory OWWA membership fee, \$100 POEA processing fee, P924 (more than \$22) for Medicare, P650 (more than \$16) for passport and other charges including mandatory training and assessment even for domestic workers;

WHEREAS, the POEA has attempted to further systematize collection of fees on OFWs through the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration Memorandum Circular No. 4 (POEA MC-04), Series of 2007, "Guidelines on Direct Hiring of Filipino Workers implemented on January 15, 2008, and which has met strong opposition from migrant workers and their families who have demanded its scrapping in its entirety.

WHEREAS, after the imposition of these additional fees, in 2006, an OFW remitted only an average of ₱70,000.00 for the whole year or ₱6,000.00 per month, although remittances amounted to an aggregate total amount of US\$14B or about ₱600B for the same year;

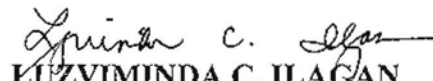
WHEREAS, the household income poverty threshold is **₱6,250.00** per month;

WHEREAS, the average monthly remittance of OFWs to their families is now below the household income poverty threshold, reflecting the real level of income of OFWs;

WHEREAS, collection of excessive state fees on workers with such level of income is contrary to the state policy on social justice;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the House of Representatives Committees on Labor, on Foreign Affairs and on Overseas Workers Affairs conduct an investigation on the reported excessive collection of processing fees, contributions and other payments from OFWs by the POEA, the DFA and the OWWA, and recommend measures thereof.

Adopted


LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN