

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 708



Introduced by REP. JUDY J. SYJUCO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Trade liberalization has strangled a lot of local industries, particularly in the agriculture sector thus affecting our locally products such as garlic, ginger, chicken, vegetables, onion, etc.. A large percent of our economy is dependent on agriculture, yet this sector is greatly affected by the current liberalization set-up and open-ended policies of the government.

Trade liberalization revolves around the World Trade Organization (WTO), the final forum or arena for international trade disputes. The WTO has a set of detailed and complex rules and regulation.

Today, the WTO is the largest trade organization and its scope continues to extend to matters beyond trade, including intellectual property, services, investments and environment. Hence, it is a must that we review and study thoroughly the dynamics of the game within the WTO game field since the Philippines is among other countries as players.

It is the intention of this proposed measure to create a World Trade Organization (WTO) Affairs Strategy (WTO-ASO) Office under the Office of the President to be headed by the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry. Primarily, the WTO-ASO is tasked to formulate set of policies to be adopted by the government concerning WTO matters and affairs, and its rules on engagement.

In consideration of the aforementioned, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Judy J. Syjuko".

JUDY J. SYJUCO

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AN ACT
CREATING A WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) AFFAIRS STRATEGY
OFFICE (WTO-ASO) UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to pursue a trade policy that serves the general welfare and utilizes all forms and arrangements of exchange on the basis of equality and reciprocity.

SECTION 2. Creation of World Trade Organization (WTO) Affairs Strategy Office (WTO-ASO). – A World Trade Organization (WTO) Affairs Strategy Office (WTO-ASO) is hereby created under the Office of the President.

SECTION 3. Composition. – The Office shall be composed of the following:

- a. Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – as Chairman
- b. Two (2) WTO Experts from the Private Sector to be appointed by the President from a list of five (5) nominees to be submitted by the Chairman – as Co-Chairmen
- c. Director General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) – as Member
- d. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) – as Member
- e. Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) – as Member
- f. Fifteen (15) Representatives from the Private Sector representing every industries, the agriculture and labor sector, academic and research community, and the consumers group – as Members

SECTION 4. Powers and Functions. - The Office shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. To formulate set of policies to be adopted by the government concerning WTO matters and affairs, and its rules on engagement;
- b. To conduct a continuing research and study on WTO issues and concerns and its effect to the Philippine economy;

- c. To review existing laws and economic policies of the government in relation to global developments;
- d. To create such sub-committees, task forces and technical working groups as may be necessary to accomplish its functions;
- e. To formulate and adopt rules and guidelines to govern the internal affairs of the Commission; and
- f. To perform such other powers and functions as may be necessary to achieve the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 5. Secretariat. – The Office shall establish a Secretariat to be headed by an Executive Director with the rank equivalent to a Department Assistant Secretary, who shall be appointed by the Chairman.

SECTION 6. Appropriation. - The amount needed to carry out the provisions of this Act is hereby authorized to be appropriated in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation. The publication shall not be later than seven (7) days after approval hereof.

Approved,