

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill ...n No. 1957

Introduced by Anakpawis Rep. Crispin B. Beltran, Rep. Rafael V. Mariano

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The worsening economic conditions of the Philippines, the unprecedented rise of the unemployment rate (18 percent or 5 million jobless Filipinos), painfully low wages that do not cover the daily cost of living, the proliferation of labor flexibility schemes, including contractualization that denies workers stable and permanent jobs, and other factors force our compatriots to go seek employment in uncertain situations in host countries abroad.

Since the Philippines' adopted in 1974 of labor migration as a component of national development, the international migration of over 8 million Filipinas has helped ease economic pressures from domestic unemployment, the balance of payments deficits, and the weakening local currency in relation to the US dollar.The US$7 billion in annual remittance by OFWs comprises some eight to 10 percent of the Gross Domestic Product and is instrumental in keeping our economy afloat. Everyday, 2, 383 Filipinos leave for work abroad.

The worsening plight of overseas workers is evidenced by their increasing number who complain of being ignored and neglected by government agencies that are mandated to providethem services.

In the meantime, what has happened to Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz who fell captive to anti-American government Iraqi militants has shed more light on the plight of migrant workers than any other case in recent years since the unjust execution of domestic helper Flor Contemplacion by Singaporean authorities.

Angelo de la Cruz gave face and name to hundreds and thousands of other Filipino overseas Filipino workers who sought to find better means of livelhood for their families even under the most insecure circumstances abroad. The poverty of his family is much like the poverty suffered by the families of thousands of other OFWs in the Philippines, and the risks Angelo took in going to Iraq despite the escalating strife there mirrors the situation faced by his compatriots in other parts of the world where the Philippine government has essentially no reach.

Clearly, the concerns of OFWs are serious and numerous, and they deserve to be heard by a committee all their own. It isn in the spirit of people empowerment that Congress should establish a committee on OFW concerns. Overseas workers as a special sector of Philippine society should be given direct participation in the policy-making process.

The spirit of empowering our overseas workers as a special sector of society via participation in the policy-making process to address Filipino migrant concerns is specifically stated in Section 2 (f) of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 or RA 8042 [the right of Filipino migrant workers and all overseas Filipinos to participate in the democratic decision-making processes of the

State and to be represented in institutions relevant to overseas employment is recognized and guaranteed];

The creation of a special committee on overseas workers affairs in Congress has been long sought for by the OFWs and their families, migrant workers groups or organizations in order to advance their interests, rights and welfare;

Section 2 (h), of RA 8042 stipulates that since "Non-governmental organizations, duly recognized as legitimate, are partners of the State in the protection of Filipino migrant workers and in the promotion of their welfare, the State shall cooperate with them in a spirit of trust and mutual respect

In the light of all this, it is imperative that the House of Representatives to create a new separate standing committee on overseas workers affairs.

Rep. Crispin B. Beltran
Anakpawis

Rep. Rafael V. Mariano
Anakpawis

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Thirteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. _____

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AN ACT CREATING A NEW COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

SECTION 1: This Act shall be known as the "The Act Creating a New Standing Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs.

SECTION 2. The duties and functions of the new Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs shall be the same as that enumerated in Section 26 of the existing House Rules.

SECTION 3. The said committee shall have a membership of 25, with 2 vice-chairpersons and its members must have a special background and awareness regarding the affairs of migrant workers and labor migration.

SECTION 4. The necessary staff, budget allocation and other prerequisite support shall be given to the new committee, as with the support entailed for other existing House committees.

APPROVED.