

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

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H. B. No. 275

Introduced by HONORABLE JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is the major supplier of labor migrants to over 100 countries and the leading female migrant sending countries along with Indonesia. More than 8 million or ten (10%) out of the 85 million¹. With this huge number of Filipino migrants (and still more) living the country temporarily (or permanently), a more pressing concern is with regards to children and families left behind. Though there is no systematic data on the number of children left behind, it is estimated to be 9 million or 27% of the total youth.

The impact of migration varies - ranging from economic benefits not only for the family but the country in generally through its remittances to the security and well being of the family of migrants. But a major concern here is the social costs of migration to the families left behind and separation are undeniable, as can be seen in the fragmentation of families of OFWs. And despite the gains of remittances, there are studies that show that there is not much tremendous improvement in the lives of the families. More often, the money being sent is just enough or sometimes hardly meets the demands and needs of the families left behind. Other issues such as emotional disturbance and delinquency, drug addiction and sexual immorality, and psychological breakdowns are also being linked to the phenomenon of migration.

This bill seeks to address the needs of the families left behind by OFWs. It seeks to protect and strengthen the family by establishing OFW family centers that shall provide welfare assistance and counseling services to them. It also directs the OWWA to develop a program for the re-unification and reintegration of returning workers.



JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA
Representative
Lone District, Province of Aurora

¹ "Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos" (2008), Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Republic of the Philippines

Introduced by Honorable JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A WELFARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO
FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND BY OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "***Left-Behind Households of OFWs Act of 2010.***"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of State Policy.* It is declared policy of the State to strengthen the solidarity of the family and actively promote its total development. The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation.

Towards this end, the Administrator shall take such actions as are necessary to, to the maximum extent practicable, sustain harmony of the family and prepare families for future reintegration of OFWs.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* For purposes of this Act, the term:

- a) "Center" means the Overseas Filipino Workers Family Center.
- b) "Left-Behind Household" means families left behind by Overseas Filipino Workers to work abroad.
- c) "Overseas Filipino Worker" or "OFW" means any Filipino citizen who is temporarily working in any country outside the Philippines.
- d) "Administration" means the Overseas Workers and Welfare Administration or "OWWA."
- e) "Administrator" means the Administrator of OWWA.

SEC. 4. *OFW Family Centers.*

- a) *Centers.* - The Administrator shall establish OFW Family Centers nationwide, using the facilities of its regional offices, or any of the regional offices of Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Department of Social and Welfare Development. The purposes of each Center are –

- 1) To provide welfare assistance and counseling services to the families of
 - 2) OFWs;
 - 3) To serve as coordinating office to non-government organizations and associations that cater to the plight of OFWs;
 - 4) To serve as a link of left-behind households to various services and/or agencies of the government on overseas employment.
- b) *Location of Centers.* - Each Center shall be strategically located in every municipality where there is a large population of families who have relatives working abroad.
- c) *Jurisdiction.* - The responsibilities of each Center shall be centered on the welfare of left-behind families of OFWs.

SEC. 5. *Left-Behind Household Organizations.* OWWA shall facilitate the establishment of organizations or support groups of families left behind by migrant workers. It shall also provide a venue for the interaction of members of families of migrant workers.

SEC. 6. *Report to Congress.* Three years from the passage of the provisions of this Act, the OWWA shall report to Congress the number of cases brought to the various Centers and the intervention provided. A yearly statistical report shall be submitted to the Department of Labor and Employment and other concerned agencies.

SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* To carry out the provisions of this Act, such sums as may be necessary are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury, valid and subsisting.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,