

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1521

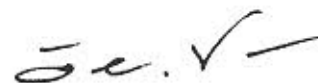
Introduced by REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO, Ph. D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are now being dubbed as "Overseas Filipino Investor" (OFI) for their undeniable immense contribution in our economy through their remittances, property acquisition and business ventures. According to Commission on Population (POPCOM), an estimated of ten percent (10%) of the country's population or about eight (8) million Filipinos are migrant workers distributed in 182 countries. More and more Filipinos are leaving the country in search of more lucrative jobs abroad. However, before they leave the country, applicants have to undergo a difficult application process, comply a lot of requirements, endure long lines as well as attend to various trainings and seminars.

In the interest of promoting the welfare of our migrant workers, this proposed measure seeks to liberalize and accelerate the processing and deployment of the OFWs. The bill proposes to lessen the processing time of all the necessary documents as well as reduce in half the fees being collected by the government. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in partnership with the local government units shall set OFW kiosks in their localities with the objective of providing current information to their constituents on all the processes and aspects of overseas employment. Also the DOLE with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Health (DOH) shall interact and negotiate with the receiving countries regarding their medical, dental, psychological or physical examination requirements to ensure that a large number of medical clinics for OFWs, including government hospitals or clinics from all over the country are accredited and recognized to provide such examinations to OFWs.

With the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO, Ph. D.
2nd District, Province of Iloilo

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Introduced by REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO, Ph. D.

**AN ACT LIBERALIZING AND ACCELERATING THE PROCESSING AND
DEPLOYMENT OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, AND APPROPRIATING
THE NECESSARY FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known and cited as the “Overseas
Filipino Worker (OFW) Liberalization Act of 2010”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – In recognition of the significant contribution
of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to the national economy, it is hereby declared
the policy of the State to encourage and actively promote the export of labor as a
means of employment generation and increasing the national income.

SEC. 3. *Liberalization and Acceleration of Deployment of OFWs.* –
Consistent with the declaration of policy, the government shall implement the
following actions to liberalize and accelerate the processing of documents of
OFWs:

- (a) The processing period of all documents needed by OFWs shall be reduced to a maximum of six (6) weeks. The database of all government agencies and offices catering to the documentary requirements of OFWs shall be fully computerized and interconnected to facilitate the fast release and authentication of documents needed by OFWs. Modern information and communications technology, such as the internet, shall be pursued to simplify and facilitate the processing of documents;
- (b) The fees being collected from the OFWs shall at all times be reasonable. Upon the effectivity of this Act, the fees being collected by government agencies from the OFWs shall, as far as practicable, be cut in half;
- (c) The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall enter into partnership with the local government units regarding the setting up of OFW kiosks in their localities with the objective of providing current information to their constituents on all the processes and aspects of overseas employment. Such kiosks shall be fully computerized and shall be linked to the database of all concerned government agencies, particularly the Philippine Overseas

Employment Administration (POEA), for its updated list of overseas job orders and licensed recruitment agencies; and

- (d) The DOLE, with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Health (DOH), shall, immediately upon the effectivity of this Act, interact and negotiate with the receiving countries regarding their medical, dental, psychological or physical examination requirements to ensure that a large number of medical clinics for OFWs, including government hospitals or clinics from all over the country are accredited and recognized to provide such examinations to OFWs. Monopoly of a few medical clinics and the decking practice in whatever form shall not be allowed.

SEC. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOLE, in coordination with all government agencies catering to the documentary requirements of OFWs for overseas employment such as, but not limited to, the DFA, the DOH, the POEA, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the National Bureau of Investigation, the National Statistics Office and the Maritime Industry Authority, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 5. Nothing in this Act shall detract from the responsibility of the State and its enforcement agencies to protect the rights and welfare of OFWs.

SEC. 6. *Funding.* – The DOLE shall include in its program the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions not affected thereby.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,