

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2307

Introduced by Hon. Roberto V. Puno

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Despite the fact that basketball is the acknowledged national past time of the Philippines, the Philippines for the past few decades has been languishing under the cellar of the international basketball competition hierarchy.

The Filipino people have witnessed the abrupt fall from grace of the once mighty Philippine national basketball team, which has been shrugged off in international competitions by our Asian neighbors who were able to adapt to the demands of international competitions by naturalizing foreign athletes who were able to contribute to the cause of their respective national teams.

The International Basketball Federation or FIBA, the governing body in international basketball competitions, allows naturalized players to play for the national team of the country, which naturalized him/her. Taking cue of this development, our Asian neighbors lost no time in naturalizing American born basketball players to boost their stock in international competitions, some of which include Jordan, who naturalized Rasheim Wright, J.R. Sakuragi for Japan, and Jackson Vroman for Lebanon. The said teams performed well in the FIBA Asia Championships Cup held last May 22 – May 30, 2010, where the Philippines finished a dismal 7th place despite fielding a team composed of the best professional players in the country.

Taking advantage of this prescribed rules of competition by the FIBA and as part of a sports development program to help bring basketball in the Philippines to greater heights, the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas has done a rigorous search for a player that would aid the country to reclaim it's rightful place in international basketball competitions. It is in this purpose, that this bill seeks to grant Philippine Citizenship to Marcus Eugene Douthit.

Marcus Eugene Douthit was born on April 15, 1980 in Syracuse, New York. Having played collegiately for the Providence College, Marcus Douthit was later on selected by the Los Angeles Lakers in the second round, 56th overall, of the 2004 NBA Draft. Although Douthit never played for the National Basketball Association, he played an impressive stint for the Albuquerque Thunderbirds in the NBA Development League during the season 2005-2006. He also played for competitive leagues in Turkey, Belgium, and Russia.

During the recent 2010 Smart Philippine Invitational Cup, Mr. Douthit proved to be a valuable member of the Smart Gilas Pilipinas team after averaging 18 points and 10 rebounds that led to the victory over World Championship-bound and Asia's third strongest team, the Jordan National Team. A player who stands 6'11 and plays the center position, Marcus Douthit no doubt can hold his own against other behemoths in Asia, including those from Iran and China, the top two teams in Asia. Furthermore, his experience and work ethic will contribute immensely to the training and development of Filipino basketball players.

In the past, naturalized athletes have brought honor to our country in various international sports events. An example of this is Gillian Akiko Thomson, a gold medalist for the Philippines swimming in the 14th Southeast Asian games of Jakarta, Indonesia and in the 15th SEA Games in the Philippines in 1991. Another example is Christine Jacob-Sandejas, a champion swimmer, a former member of the Philippine women's swimming team, and a medalist in the Southeast Asian Games

Recently, the grant of citizenship by specific decree or legislation has benefited other countries. An example of this is Russia, whose stature in European Basketball skyrocketed from 8th place in the year 2005 to 1st place in the year 2007 in a large part due to the contributions of American-born athletes Jon Robert Holden and Kelly McCarty – who were both naturalized by issuance of a direct decree by President Vladimir Putin. Other countries that have naturalized players in national teams are Montenegro, Bosnia, Germany, Bulgaria and Macedonia.

Legislation by Presidential Decree is a thing of the past. However, recent legislation has shown that Congress confers Philippine citizenship to those who have contributed immensely to the development of the Philippines. Marcus Eugene Douthit is in a position to make a significant contribution to Philippine basketball and Philippine sports and is accordingly eligible for conferment of the honor of being a Philippine citizen.

In consideration of all the above, approval of this measure is respectfully sought.



ROBERTO V. PUNO

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**AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO MARCUS EUGENE
DOUTHIT**

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

SECTION 1. Marcus Eugene Douthit is hereby granted Philippine citizenship with all the rights and privileges and prerogatives appurtenant thereto.

SECTION 2. Upon taking and registration of the oath of allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines, Marcus Eugene Douthit shall enter upon the full enjoyment of Philippine citizenship.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,