

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

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2683

Introduced by Hon. Roberto V. Puno

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The International Basketball Federation or FIBA, the governing body in international basketball competitions, allows naturalized players to play for the national team. In the past, several countries have taken advantage of this rule and naturalized women basketball players such as American born Chantelle Denise Anderson, a former WNBA player who was naturalized by Lebanon in 2009. Another example is American born Rebecca “Becky” Hammon, also a former WNBA player who was naturalized by Russia and played for the Russian National Team at the Olympic Games in Beijing, China in 2008.

In line with this, the Republic of the Philippines’ Women’s Senior National Team has been participating in the Asian Basketball Championship or FIBA Asia since 1965. Having participated also in the Southeast Asia Basketball Association and the Southeast Asian Games for the last fifteen (15) years, the team was able to play competitively each time they joined the competitions, but has never been able to win past the Silver medal that they brought home after the 1995 SEAGAMES.

Having a healthy mix of veteran reliable, collegiate standouts and provincial homegrown recruits, the Republic of the Philippines’ Discovery Women’s basketball team is complete with almost all positions except for the center position. Though we have our good local centers, we need an international impact center in the current line up that will practically boost the team’s potential and eventually make the team complete and highly competitive. It is in this purpose, that this bill seeks to grant Philippine Citizenship to Xiaojing Zheng.

Born on February 11, 1984 Fuzhou, China, Xiaojing Zheng is a member of the Fujian basketball team since 1998. Being part of the team significantly contributed in achieving their goals in women’s basketball, where Xiaojing Zheng was also awarded the state level master sportsman title by the General Administration of National Sports. Her height and athleticism is expected to help the Philippine team against the national teams of other countries with much taller players than our present players. Her experience and exposure will be beneficial to the training and development of the National team.

Xiaojing Zheng has expressed her willingness to become a citizen of the Philippines being given a chance to be naturalized. Previously, she joined the RP Discovery Women's Basketball Team developmental pool in various international invitations like the 2008 Singapore Women's Invitational and 2010 Doha, Qatar Women's Invitational, where the RP Discovery team represented the Philippines and finished first (1st).

This representation, together with the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas in its aspiration to pull together a Women's National team, which could bring back honor in international competitions seeks to address the height problem of the national team with the naturalization of 6'3" Xiaojing Zheng, so she may play center for the Philippine team for the upcoming 7th SEABA Women's Championship on October 24-29, 2010 in Manila, Philippines and Asian Games on November 12-27, 2010 in Guangzhou, China.

Recent legislation has shown that Congress confers Philippine citizenship to those who have contributed immensely to the development of the Philippines. Xiaojing Zheng 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 XIAOJING ZHENG

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

SECTION 1. Xiaojing Zheng 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, Xiaojing Zheng shall enter upon the full enjoyment of Philippine citizenship.

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

Approved,