

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

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS  
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6169



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**Introduced by Hon. Roberto V. Puno**

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This bill seeks to grant Philippine citizenship to JaVale Lindy McGee.

Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur (FIBA), The International Basketball governing body in international basketball competitions, allows a naturalized player to play in a national team. In the Asian region, naturalized players include Samuel Hoskin for Lebanon, Rasheim Wright for Jordan, J.R. Sakuragi for Japan and the Stevenson Brothers for Korea. In the European region, naturalized players include Bo McCalebb for Macedonia, Serge Ibaka for Spain, J.R. Holden for Russia and Chris Kaman for Germany.

Seeking to regain lost glory in international basketball competitions, the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas in 2008 launched a program consisting of innovations which included hiring a foreigner as head coach, utilizing college level players to sustain long term programs, acquiring Filipino-American players and most importantly, fielding a naturalized player in accordance with FIBA rules and consistent with Philippine laws.

Thus in 2011, Republic Act 10148 conferred Philippine Citizenship to an American national and exceptional athlete Marcus Eugene Douthit. With Douthit as the new starting center, the Philippines' men's national basketball team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the very strong 21<sup>st</sup> Dubai Basketball Invitational Tournament behind Asian powerhouses Iran and Lebanon on 2010, 4<sup>th</sup> place during the 2010 William Jones Cup, 3<sup>rd</sup> place during the 2011 William Jones Cup, 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 22<sup>nd</sup> FIBA Asia Champions Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia; and 4<sup>th</sup> place during the recently concluded 26<sup>th</sup> FIBA Asia Championship held in Wuhan China. These 4<sup>th</sup> place finishes in FIBA sanctioned tournaments led to the country's highest ranking in a long time. Our country's ranking rose from the 53<sup>rd</sup> rank to the 45<sup>th</sup> rank worldwide, the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest movement in ranking in the world behind Macedonia and Great Britain.

The Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) would like to maintain and sustain the momentum it has started with the Smart Gilas program in 2008. The new program of the SBP incorporates learnings obtained in previous tournaments. Therefore the program now restores the use of a local head coach, once again creates a pool of players from the Philippine Basketball Association (no longer college ball players), continues to scout overseas-based Filipino players, but most importantly, seeks to galvanize, strengthen and ensure continuity with regards to our naturalized player. It is no doubt that the biggest success of the 2008 Smart Gilas Program was the

conferment of Philippine Citizenship to Marcus Eugene Douthit. It is for this purpose that this bill seeks to grant Philippine Citizenship to JaVale Lindy McGee.

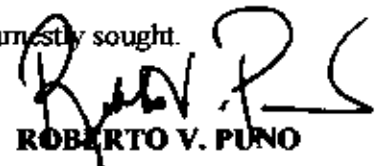
JaVale Lindy McGee was born on January 19, 1988 in Flint, Michigan, USA. A basketball standout at the Hales Franciscan High School in Chicago, McGee later on signed as the starting center for the University of Nevada during college. After only two years, McGee was selected by the Washington Wizards in the 1<sup>st</sup> round, 18<sup>th</sup> overall, of the 2008 NBA Draft. He played for the Washington Wizards from 2008 – 2012. On March 15, 2012, he was traded to the Denver Nuggets.

Starting his career as a professional basketball player in the United States in 2008, McGee, who stands 7'1" tall, is a versatile player with tremendous mobility and athleticism. McGee, who averaged 10.1 points, 8 rebounds and 2.4 blocks with the Washington Wizards during the NBA Season 2010 – 2011, was also ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the NBA in blocks per game for season 2009 – 2010. As a rookie for the year 2008 – 2009, he scored a season-high 18 points in three games and also grabbed a season-high 11 rebounds in three games. He was considered twice to play center position for the United States Men's National basketball team and trained at the Team USA's summer training camp in preparation for the 2010 World Championship in Turkey. In 2011, he was chosen to participate at the NBA Slam dunk contest, the first player in Washington Wizards history to do so. Though he did not win, he was cited by the Guinness Book of World Records for achieving a world record in most basketballs dunked in one jump, having used three balls in a single dunk during the competition.

Given his remarkable track record in the United States' professional basketball scene McGee will no doubt be a great asset to our country if given a chance to play for the Philippine team. McGee is widely regarded as the only NBA player eligible for naturalization, since majority of the center players from the NBA have already played for other national teams and are no longer eligible for naturalization per FIBA rules. This bill is also in tune with the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas' new program maximizing the eligibility of a naturalized player, McGee being only 24 years old. With the approval of this bill, our country could have two (2) naturalized players who would contribute effective development to the team. The two of them would practice against each other, and also would serve as back up players to each other in case any one of them gets injured and would not be able to play in certain tournaments. The addition of another naturalized player in the person of JaVale Lindy McGee would ensure continuity in the program that was started with Marcus Douthit. Both players can alternate in tournaments, in preparation for the 2014 FIBA World Championships and finally, the ultimate dream for an Olympic berth in 2016.

Finally, McGee has genuinely expressed his willingness to play for the Philippine team, if we will not naturalize McGee, it is most certain, that another country will

In view of the foregoing reasons, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
ROBERTO V. PUNO

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**AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO JAVALE LINDY  
MCGEE**

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

**SECTION 1.** JaVale Lindy McGee is hereby granted Philippine citizenship  
with all the rights and privileges and prerogatives appurtenant thereto.

Upon taking and registration of the oath of allegiance to the Republic of the  
Philippines, JaVale Lindy McGee shall enter upon the full enjoyment of Philippine  
citizenship

**SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,