

FIFTEENTH Congress of the)
of the Republic of the Philippines)
Second Regular Session)



House of Representatives

House Bill No. 6323

Introduced by : Atty. MA. THERESA B. BONOAN-DAVID
Representative, 4th District Manila

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Modern heroes are what we call them. Overseas Filipino Workers, whose hard earned dollars are responsible for buoying up our economy to levels that have allowed us to achieve growth as a nation, and industrialization along with modernization as a country.

It is with great pleasure, honor and urgency that the passage of this legislation is earnestly sought as this will allow the Overseas Filipino Workers to feel the rewards of their hard work, and reap the benefits, which, once upon a time, during the prime of their lives, they strived hard to achieve.

For this reason, assistance in the form of discounts in establishments, medical assistance, enjoyment of benefits granted by the respective social service systems, even housing programs, shall be extended to them, all matters of expressing our debt of gratitude to them, because we as a nation can only move forward if we know how to look back from where we came from.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "T. Bonoan-David", written in a cursive style.

Atty. MA. THERESA B. BONOAN-DAVID
Representative, 4th District Manila

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AN ACT TO UTILIZE THE FUNDS OF THE OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE FUND (OWWA) TO PROVIDE BENEFITS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES TO FORMER OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policies and Objectives. - Pursuant to the Constitution, the State hereby adopts a policy of giving full protection to labor, and affirms labor as a primary social economic force. Consonant with these constitutional principles the following are the declared policies of this Act:

- a) to recognize the magnitude of contribution to the economy of overseas Filipino workers whose lonely sacrifices in foreign lands bring in a considerable amount of foreign exchange;
- b) to motivate and assist former overseas Filipino workers to contribute to nation-building;

In accordance with those policies, this Act aims to grant former overseas Filipino workers with a package of benefits and incentives.

SEC. 2. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act, the term "former overseas Filipino Worker" shall mean any resident citizen of the Philippines at least fifty (50) years old, previously certified by the Department of Labor and Employment Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) for overseas employment purposes and has an income of not more than sixty thousand pesos (P60,000.00) per annum subject to review by the National Statistics Coordination Board (NSCB) every three (3) years. It covers all nationals who have worked in a foreign country under employment contracts for a period not less than 10 years, including but not limited to, professionals, seamen, entertainers, domestic helpers, regardless of their employment status in the foreign country.

SEC. 3. Privileges of former OFWs. - Any qualified former OFW as determined by the Office for Former Overseas Filipino Workers (OFOFW) shall be entitled to the following:

a) the grant of twenty percent (20%) discount from all establishments relative to utilization of transportation services, hotels and similar lodging establishment, restaurants and recreation centers and purchase of medicine anywhere in the country: Provided, That private establishments may claim the cost as tax credit;

b) a minimum of twenty percent (20%) discount on admission fees charged by theaters, cinema houses and concert halls, circuses, carnivals and other similar places of culture, leisure and amusement;

c) exemption from the payment of individual income taxes: Provided, That their annual taxable income does not exceed the income level as determined by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) for that year;

d) free medical and dental consultations in private or public hospitals and similar establishments anywhere in the country and medical insurance program to be provided by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC);

e) to the extent practicable and feasible, the continuance of the same benefits

and privileges given by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Social Security System (SSS) and PAG-IBIG, as the case may be, as are enjoyed by those in actual service;

f) priority in existing livelihood programs being undertaken by various government agencies subject to the guidelines and qualifications by the implementing body; and

g) priority in national housing programs, affordable "pabahay" loans and other housing opportunities subject to the guidelines and qualifications set by the National Housing Authority (NHA) or the Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF). Such privately owned establishments shall enjoy tax credits equivalent to the discounts extended to former OFWs.

SEC. 4. Retirement Benefits. - To the extent practicable and feasible, retirement benefits from both the Government and the private sectors shall be upgraded to be at par with the current scale enjoyed by those in actual service.

SEC. 5. The Office of Former Overseas Filipino Workers (OFOFW) - There shall be established in the Office of the Mayor an OFOFW to be headed by a Councilor who shall be designated by the Sangguniang Bayan and assisted by the Community Development Officer in coordination with the Department of Labor and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The functions of this office are:

a) to maintain and regularly update on a quarterly basis the list of former OFWs and to issue nationally uniform individual identification cards which shall be valid anywhere in the country;

b) to service as a general information and liaison center to serve the needs of former OFWs; and

c) to issue nationally uniform individual identification cards which shall be valid anywhere in the country.

SEC. 6. City / Municipal Responsibility. - It shall be the responsibility of the City / Municipality through the mayor to ensure that the provisions of this Act are implemented to its fullest.

SEC. 7. Penalties. - Violation of any provision of this Act for which no penalty is specifically provided under any other law, shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding one (1) month or a fine not exceeding One Thousand pesos (P 1,000.00) or both.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, jointly with the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Finance, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Health, the Department of Transportation and Communications and the Department of Interior and Local Government shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 9. Appropriation. - The necessary appropriation for the operation and maintenance of the OFOFW shall be appropriated and approved by the local government units concerned. The National Government, through the **Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)** shall appropriate such amount, as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 10. Repealing Cause. - All provisions of laws, orders, decrees, including rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,