

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6715

Introduced by **HON. AL FRANCIS C. BICHARA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article IV, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitution explicitly allows naturalization as a mode of acquiring Philippine citizenship. The same provision empowers Congress to pass laws granting Philippine citizenship to foreigners who have rendered exceptional service to the country and to the Filipino people.

Mr. Nanaa was first appointed as Philippine Honorary Consul on 24 April 2008 and was subsequently promoted to Honorary-Consul general on 24 April 2011.

Under his leadership, the Philippine Honorary Consulate (PHC) in Aleppo has negotiated and paid in advance the cost of repatriation of hundreds of distressed Filipinos in Aleppo and Idlib, Syria. The assistance he provided our citizens was not limited to reuniting them with their families in the Philippines but he likewise ensured the collection of their unpaid salaries and rectified many of their labor-related concerns.

Having committed himself to the service of the Filipino people, Mr. Nanaa made his private residence available for distressed Filipinos in Syria and has provided sanctuary to hundreds of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) who fled their respective employers or agencies owing to maltreatment, physical abuse, sexual harassment, and other forms of exploitation.

At the outbreak of violence in Syria on January 2012, The Aleppo PHC took an active part in the Philippine government's mandatory repatriation program of OFW's in Syria. As part of its mandate the Aleppo PHC, under the leadership of Mr. Nanaa, dutifully negotiated and even advanced the cost of repatriation of Filipinos caught in the turmoil in certain conflict-stricken areas. At present the Aleppo PHC continues to be an integral part of the Philippine Embassy in the *Damascus' Contingency Plan for the Evacuation of Filipinos from Syria*.

As a private individual, Mr. Nanaa has been engaged in business with Filipino suppliers. For the past fourteen (14) years he has been importing a wide array of products from the Philippines to be distributed in Syria and other areas in the Middle East.



After being appointed as Honorary Consul Mr. Nanaa, being a businessman himself, took the initiative to promote the Philippines as a viable investment and business destination. In 2009 he hosted the 1st Philippine Investment Forum in Aleppo in collaboration with the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry. To promote Philippine culture, Mr. Nanaa hosted several receptions showcasing the colorful traditions, values and culture of the Philippines which includes the celebration of the Philippine National Day in 2010.

Staying true to his commitment at furthering Philippine interest in Syria, Mr. Nanaa arranged and headed the 1st Syrian Tourism Group to the Philippines. Articles and photographs from the said visit have been published in various newspapers, magazines and websites across Syria. In 2011 he likewise headed an all-out campaign to encourage Syrians to vote for the Puerto Princesa Underground River to be included as one of the 7 Wonders of the World. He did not merely rely on airing the campaign through traditional media outlets but he took an innovative approach by utilizing the Aleppo PHC's website to facilitate online voting by Syrians.

In recognition of his invaluable service to the Filipino nation, this bill seeks to grant Wassim Nanaa the honor of Philippine citizenship with all the rights, privileges, duties, and obligations as provided for by the constitution. For these reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



AL FRANCIS C. BICHARA
2nd District Albay

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“AN ACT
GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO WASSIM NANAA”

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

1 SECTION 1. Wassim Nanaa is hereby granted Philippine citizenship with all
2 the rights, privileges, and duties appurtenant thereto and with the same effects and
3 subject to the same conditions as provided under the Constitution.

4 SECTION 2. Upon the taking of the oath of allegiance to the Republic of the
5 Philippines before the Bureau of Immigration and the issuance to him of the
6 Certificate of Naturalization, Wassim Nanaa shall enter upon the full enjoyment of
7 Philippine citizenship.

8 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
9 at least two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

