

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill no. **3783**



Introduced by Representative Roberto V. Puno

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This year, the Philippines will get the opportunity to realize its dream of becoming one of the world's basketball greats as it competes in the FIBA Basketball World Cup to be held starting August 2014 in Madrid, Spain.

Fresh from bagging the silver medal in the 27th FIBA Asia Championship, the Gilas Pilipinas team, which will represent the country in Spain, needs to reinforce its strength in the global basketball arena so that we can be assured of a solid fighting chance in this year's Basketball World Cup. We can only accomplish this goal by doing what other countries have long done—naturalizing athletes that would prove to be great assets to their teams.

We need to naturalize at least two players to avoid jeopardizing the entire basketball program in the event of an injury to any one of our naturalized players. Also, the addition of another player will contribute to effective team development. The two naturalized athletes would practice against each other and serve as back-up players to one another.

Thus, we are now urging Congress to naturalize another player in the person of Andray Blatche.

Mr. Blatche, who stands 6'11", started playing professionally eight years ago. He currently plays center for the Brooklyn Nets in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

His career averages are impressive: 9.9 points, 5.4 rebounds and 1.4 assists per game.

If granted the opportunity to play for the Philippines, Blatche will, undoubtedly, be an invaluable asset to the national team. Being only 28 years old, Blatche's naturalization is also in line with the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas' continuing program of maximizing the eligibility of naturalized players.

Allowing naturalized athletes to play for national teams is nothing new. This move is necessary for the Philippines to catch up with its rivals, which have long been naturalizing basketball players to improve their respective global rankings. These include Jordan, which has naturalized Jimmy Baxter, Andre Emmett and Rasheim Wright and Spain, with naturalized players Serge Ibaka and Nikola Mirotic. Chinese Taiwan, even with its recognized advantage and skill in basketball, also has naturalized an American in the person of Quincy Davis.

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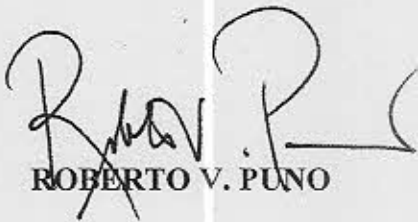
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Congress now has a unique opportunity to contribute to the Philippines' success in the global basketball arena by naturalizing Mr. Blatche through legislation. Mr. Blatche, with his exceptional ability in the field of basketball, complemented by his commendable work ethics, will certainly bring pride and honor to our country. As such, he truly deserves to enjoy the full benefits of Philippine citizenship.

Congress, however, needs to act swiftly as Mr. Blatche's naturalization has now acquired a sense of urgency—our national basketball team needs to submit its initial lineup to FIBA by May 30, 2014.

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



ROBERTO V. PUNO

Republic of the Philippines
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HOUSE BILL NO. 3783

Introduced by Hon. Roberto V. Puno

**AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO ANDRAY
BLATCHE**

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

SECTION 1. Andray Blatche 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, Andray Blatche shall enter upon the full enjoyment of Philippine citizenship

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

Approved,