

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Complex, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4971



Introduced by: Gabriela Women's Party Reps. **LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN** and **EMMI A. DE JESUS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill is hereby filed in response to the campaign of Filipinos in Canada calling on the Philippine government to put up a permanent and full consular office in Alberta to service the burgeoning Filipino communities therein and in other neighboring provinces such as Saskatchewan.

Filipinos are the fastest growing entrants to Canada. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, there are 662,600 Filipinos in Canada. In 2006-2011, they comprised 13.1 % of new entrants yearly. This translated to 20,500 Filipinos entering Canada a year, making them the fourth largest minority among that country's migrant population. Given these figures, Filipinos in Canada made up the 3rd biggest contributor of dollar remittances in the country, next to the OFW contribution from the US and Saudi Arabia. In 2012, they remitted to the country over \$2 billion.

Of the number of Filipinos in Canada, 113,205 are in Alberta, the third largest concentration of Filipinos among Canada's ten provinces and three territories. More than half of them, or 68,695, are non-citizens or non-residents. Another 61,270 are in Manitoba and 16,705 in Saskatchewan. Majority of these Filipinos are women who entered Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program.

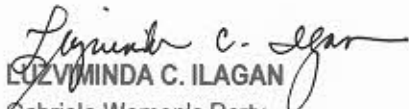
The number is growing because the rate of availing the Temporary Foreign Workers Program is high in Alberta and in neighboring provinces. The TFWP favors hiring Filipinos because of their innate industry, compassion for the aged, and communication skills.

At present, Philippine foreign service posts are limited to the Philippine embassy in Ottawa and the consulates in Toronto and Vancouver. For Filipinos in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the nearest foreign service post is the Philippine consulate in Vancouver which serves approximately 250,000 Filipinos spread in Western Canada, including British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The Philippine consulate office in Vancouver offers from time to time two outreach consular programs in Edmonton and Calgary but their services are limited. They offer only consular services; they do not cover passport renewals and other relevant services on a regular basis.

Because of the sheer distance of the service post in Vancouver, availing of its services, especially passport renewal, is so costly as to be prohibitive for most Filipinos in the far-flung territories. To renew their passports, Filipinos have to

incur travel and hotel costs. They also have to take a few days off from their work, thereby losing a portion of their salaries. They could have avoided incurring absences in their work but the service post in Vancouver does not open on weekends. This says nothing of the exorbitant fees they have to pay for renewing or replacing lost passports.

Because of these difficulties, Filipinos in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are urgently demanding from the Philippine government the opening of a full consular office in Alberta.


LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN
Gabriela Women's Party

EMMI. A DE JESUS
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**AN ACT CREATING A FULL CONSULAR OFFICE
IN ALBERTA, CANADA AND PROVIDING FOR THE FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

Section 1. A Consulate General Office in Alberta, Canada is hereby created.

Section 2. Such Consulate General Office shall service the passport and consular needs of Filipinos in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, all of Canada.

Section 3. The Department of Foreign Affairs shall implement the creation of such Consulate General Office within 30 days after the effectivity of this Act.

Section 4. The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be appropriated in the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days upon publication in the Official Gazette.