

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7451



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 9 of the 1987 Constitution mandates the “promot[ion] of a just and dynamic social order that” and this entails the “promot[ion] of full employment.” Thus, in Article XIII, Section 3, the State is entrusted with the responsibility of “promot[ing] full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all.” Thus, Republic Act No. 11469 (2020), or the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act,” in Section 4(v)(4) thereof, empowers the President to:

(v) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, direct the discontinuance of appropriated programs, projects or activities (P/A/P) of any agency of the Executive Department, including government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), in the FYs 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA), whether released or unreleased, the allotments for which remain unobligated, and utilize the savings generated therefrom to augment the allocation for any item directly related to support operations and response measures, which are necessary or beneficial in order to address the COVID-19 emergency, consistent with the herein declared national policy: *Provided, however*, That the following items in the budget shall be prioritized for augmentation:

x x x

(4) Programs of the Department of Labor and Employment, such as but not limited to Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers and COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP);

x x x

This has resulted in a program specifically catering to OFWs: the Department of Labor and Employment’s (DOLE) “provision of financial assistance to displaced Landbased and Sea-based Filipino workers due to coronavirus diseases (COVID-19), known as ‘DOLE-AKAP for OFWs’.”¹ This program’s beneficiaries will be given a Php10,00.00 grant.² Last month, it was reported that “[n]early 86,000 [OFWs] have been granted the...₱10,000 (\$200) financial assistance.”³ More applicants to this program will be aided, seeing as the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has since been reported as working on adding Php1,000,000,000.00 to the DOLE’s AKAP funds.⁴

¹ <https://www.owwa.gov.ph/index.php/news/central/96-advisory-on-dole-akap-cash-assistance>

² Id.

³ <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/5/3/DOLE-cash-aid-86K-OFWs-COVID-19.html>

⁴ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1102881>

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2 But the AKAP grant is a one-time grant.⁵ Php10,000.00 is not going to
3 tide over entire families for whole months, what with the adjusting that all
4 households will need to go through to adapt to the 'new normal.'

5
6 Fortunately, the DOLE has promised that it shall begin focusing on
7 "providing livelihood programs to [OFWs] in its post-COVID-19 recovery plan,"
8 and that such efforts shall cover "those who are already in the country and
9 those who were stranded because of the pandemic."⁶ Labor Secretary Silvestro
10 Bello III has, in particular, stressed that OFW-beneficiaries will have access
11 to "livelihood assistance for any business that they will choose to put up to
12 help them recover from the socioeconomic impact of the global health crisis."⁷
13

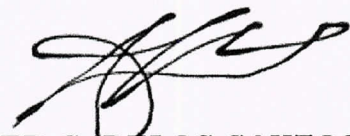
14 Considering that Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año
15 estimates that around 300,000 OFWs will be "return[ing] to the country this
16 year,"⁸ it is crucial that the aid we will be extending to them be something
17 truly sustainable, for the government, and reliable, for the beneficiaries.
18 Equally important is (1) making sure that such aid enables them to move
19 towards self-sufficiency and (2) making staying in the Philippines a viable
20 option for them, socially and economically speaking.

21
22 Hence, in line with the abovementioned policy, and in response to the
23 socioeconomic realities thus brought to light, the State, through this Bill, will
24 set up a comprehensive program to reintegrate OFWs into the local workforce.
25

26 As part of the various measures to be proposed, this Bill aims to: 1)
27 provide capacity-building trainings for OFWs looking to put up businesses; 2)
28 dedicated financing/loan programs for MSMEs put up by OFWs; and 3)
29 government agency and government owned and operated corporation (GOCC)
30 job fairs for civil-service-qualified OFWs.
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32 It must be noted that these measures are not proposed to dissuade the
33 operators of private cold storage facilities.
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35 It is for the foregoing premises that the approval of this Bill is earnestly
36 sought.
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ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS

Representative, Ang Probinsyano Party-List

⁵ <https://www.owwa.gov.ph/index.php/news/central/96-advisory-on-dole-akap-cash-assistance>

⁶ <https://www.covid19.gov.ph/dole-to-focus-on-ofw-livelihood-in-post-covid-19-plan/>

⁷ Id.

⁸ <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1280494/around-300000-ofws-to-return-to-philippines-amid-covid-19-pandemic-dilg#ixzz6O3RUGntR>

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Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR
THE REINTEGRATION OF REPATRIATED OFWS INTO THE PHILIPPINE
WORKFORCE AND BUSINESS SECTOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “OFW
Reintegration Act of 2020.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes its duty to
secure the interests and welfare of all Filipino workers, whether they be
employed locally or abroad. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are among
those who have borne the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic’s economic and
social repercussions, with many of them losing their foreign employment. As
such, the State acknowledges the necessity of enacting measures to ease them
back into the Philippine workforce and/or business sector, as they may so
choose, with the focus on putting them on back on track to self-sufficiency in
the context of the ‘new normal’ of the per- and post-COVID-19 world.

SECTION 3. *Applicability.* – This Act shall apply to all OFWs who have
been repatriated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, whether they willingly
resigned from their posts abroad or had their employment terminated due to
their employers being adversely affected by the said pandemic.

SECTION 4. *Business-oriented capacity-building trainings for OFWs.* –
The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in coordination with the
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), shall provide trainings for OFWs who
are seeking to set up their own businesses. The trainings shall focus on the
following areas:

- 1) Business conceptualization and the conduct of feasibility studies;
- 2) Registration and all other administrative matters related to creating
one’s own business;
- 3) Safe and sustainable business financing;
- 4) Business promotion/advertising/marketing; and
- 5) Service/product delivery in the context of the ‘new normal’.

1
2 The trainings shall also be a means for the OFWs to be assisted in
3 finding and connecting with mentors in the business sector, particularly those
4 already established in the specific industry that an OFW would want to
5 venture into.

6
7 Prioritization shall be given to those OFWs with no background in
8 putting together and running/operating their own businesses, especially
9 those who will be going into single proprietorship, with no seasoned business
10 partners to rely on.

11
12 SECTION 5. *Dedicated financing/loan programs for OFWs' MSMEs.* –
13 The DOLE, in coordination with the Department of Finance (DOF) and the
14 Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall create new
15 financing/loan programs that will exclusively cater to OFWs, who are in the
16 process of setting up their own MSMEs.

17
18 Such programs shall strictly be for those OFWs with no existing
19 MSMEs. OFWs with existing MSMEs can be sufficiently accommodated in the
20 DTI's standing programs.

21
22 SECTION 6. *Government Job fairs for civil-service-qualified OFWs.* – The
23 DOLE, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the
24 Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Office of the
25 Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC), shall have a series of job fairs:

- 26
27 a) Job fairs involving government agencies. – Civil service qualified
28 OFWs may seek employment in government agencies, whether on
29 the national level, or in the many regional offices; and
30 b) Job fairs involving government owned and controlled corporations
31 (GOCCs). – OFWs may also choose to look for vacancies in the
32 GOCCs.

33
34 SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary of
35 Labor and Employment and the Secretary of Interior and Local Government
36 shall jointly promulgate the necessary rules and regulations required for the
37 effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

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39 In drafting the IRR, the Secretaries shall consult with public and private
40 stakeholders:

- 41
42 1) The Civil Service Commission (CSC);
43 2) The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)
44 3) The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
45 4) The Department of Finance (DOF);
46 5) The Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
47 6) The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA); and
48 7) The Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC).
49

1 SECTION 8. *Appropriations* – The amount necessary to carry out the
2 provisions of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current
3 and subsequent General Appropriations Act.

4
5 SECTION 9. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision or part of this Act is
6 held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts unaffected
7 shall remain in full force and effect.

8
9 SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, executive orders,
10 presidential decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders,
11 rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this
12 Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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14 SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
15 days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general
16 circulation.

17
18 Approved,