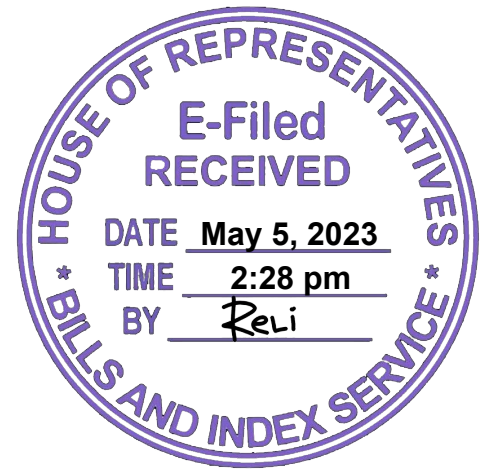


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7940**



Introduced by Representatives HON. JOCELYN P. TULFO, EDVIC YAP, ERIC GO YAP and RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO

Through this proposed measure we seek to grant benefits and privileges to our Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) who we consider today as our modern-day heroes.

According to the latest Overseas Filipinos' Cash Remittances Statistics by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, personal remittances from Filipinos abroad increased by 3.6% to a record high of \$36 billion in 2022 from its \$34 billion recorded remittances in 2021.

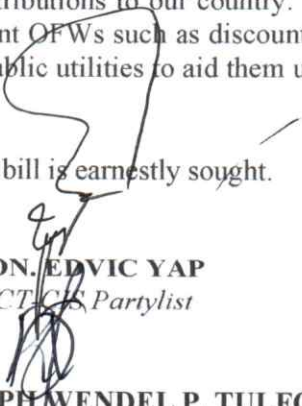
Notwithstanding their invaluable contributions to the country's economic growth and the recognition of being the modern-day heroes, a vast majority of our OFWs who return to the country still struggle with the continuing issues of the increasing rate of unemployment, costs of living, lack of capitalization for small business enterprises, and affordable health care.

The perennial problem in OFW reintegration became more apparent when more or less 1.2 million OFWs were repatriated during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the International Organization for Migration of the United Nations, 82.5% of the repatriated OFWs encountered or experienced challenges in finding a job or income-generating activity upon their return to the country.¹

We strongly believe that our repatriated OFWs deserve the government's support and acknowledgment for the magnitude of their sacrifices and contributions to our country. We, therefore seek to grant certain privileges and benefits to indigent OFWs such as discounts in burial services, purchase of medicines, medical services, and public utilities to aid them upon their return to the country.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


HON. JOCELYN P. TULFO
ACT-CIS Partylist


HON. EDVIC YAP
ACT-CIS Partylist


HON. ERIC YAP
Representative, Lone District of Benguet


HON. RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO
Representative, 2nd District of Quezon City

¹ https://philippines.ion.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11651/files/documents/1_Uncertain%20Homecoming%20-%20Challenges%20Faced%20By%20Returned%20Overseas%20Filipino%20Workers.pdf

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House Bill No. **7940**

**Introduced by Representatives HON. JOCELYN P. TULFO, EDVIC YAP,
ERIC GO YAP and RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO**

**AN ACT GRANTING BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES TO INDIGENT OVERSEAS
FILIPINO WORKERS**

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

1
2 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Indigent Overseas Filipino*
3 *Workers (OFWs) Discounts Act.*”
4

5 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The Constitution affirms that labor is the primary social
6 economic force and mandates the State to protect the rights of the workers and promote their
7 welfare.
8

9 Recognizing the significant contributions of our Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to our
10 country’s national economy, the State shall adopt measures to protect and grant benefits to our
11 modern-day heroes who return to the country after their overseas employment and assist them
12 as they continue to contribute to nation-building.
13

14 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** –
15

- 16 a. *Overseas Filipino Worker* – shall mean any resident citizen of the Philippines previously
17 employed overseas and has been certified by the Department of Migrant Workers or the
18 Philippine Overseas Employment Agency for previous overseas employment purposes who
19 has rendered employment services overseas for at least one (1) year including but not
20 limited to seafarers, entertainers, domestic helpers, and professionals, regardless of their
21 current employment status.
22
- 23 b. *Lodging establishment* - refers to a building, edifice, structure, apartment or house
24 including tourist inn, apartelle, motorist hotel, and pension house engaged in catering,
25 leasing or providing facilities to transients, tourists or travelers;
26
- 27 c. *Medical Services* - refer to hospital services, professional services of physicians and other
28 health care professionals and diagnostics and laboratory tests that the necessary for the
29 diagnosis or treatment of an illness or injury;
30
- 31 d. *Dental services* – refer to oral examination, cleaning, permanent and temporary filling,
32 extractions and gum treatments, restoration, replacement or repositioning of teeth, or

alteration of the alveolar or periodontium process of the maxilla and the mandible that are necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of an illness or injury;

- e. *Indigent OFW* - refers to any OFW who is without pension or permanent source of income, compensation or financial assistance from his/her relatives to support his/her basic needs, as determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in consultation with the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board

SEC. 4. Privileges and Discounts granted to OFWs and Former OFWs. – Any qualified indigent OFW as determined by the Department of Migrant Workers and the Department of Social Welfare and Development shall be entitled to the following:

- a) The grant of twenty percent (20%) discount and exemption from the value-added tax (VAT), if applicable, on the sale of the following goods and services from all establishments, for the exclusive use and enjoyment or availment of the OFW:
- (i) On the purchase of medicines, and such other essential medical supplies, accessories and equipment to be determined by the Department of Health (DOH); Provided, that the DOH shall administer free vaccination against the influenza virus and pneumococcal disease for indigent OFW patients.

The DOH shall establish guidelines and mechanism of compulsory rebates in the sharing of burden of discounts among retailers, manufacturers and distributors, taking into consideration their respective margins;
 - (ii) On the professional fees of attending physician/s in all private hospitals, medical facilities, outpatient clinics and home health care services;
 - (iii) On the professional fees of licensed professional health providing home health care services as endorsed by private hospitals or employed through home health care employment agencies;
 - (iv) On medical and dental services, diagnostic and laboratory fees in all private hospitals, medical facilities, outpatient clinics, and home health care services, in accordance with the rules and regulations to be issued by the DOH, in coordination with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth);
 - (v) In actual fare for land transportation travel in public utility buses (PUBs), public utility jeepneys (PUJs), taxis, asian utility vehicles (AUVs), shuttle services and public railways, including Light Rail Transit (LRT), Mass Rail Transit (MRT), and Philippine National Railways (PNR);
 - (vi) In actual transportation fare for domestic air transport services and sea shipping vessels and the like, based on the actual fare and advanced booking;
 - (vii) On the utilization of all establishments relative to hotels and similar lodging establishments, restaurants and recreation centers nationwide;
 - (viii) On admission fees charged by theaters, cinema houses and concert halls, circuses, leisure and amusement

- (ix) On funeral and burial services for the death of the indigent OFW, regardless of the cause of death;
- b) The grant of a minimum of five percent (5%) discount relative to the monthly utilization of water and electricity supplied by the public utilities: Provided, That the individual meters for the foregoing utilities are registered in the name of the OFW residing therein: Provided, further, That the monthly consumption does not exceed one hundred kilowatt hours (100 kWh) of electricity and thirty cubic meters (30 m³) of water: Provided, furthermore, that the privilege is granted per household regardless of the number of OFWs residing therein;
- c) Exemption from training fees for socioeconomic programs;
- d) Free medical and dental services, diagnostic and laboratory fees such as, but not limited to, x-rays, computerized tomography scans and blood tests, in all government facilities, subject to the guidelines to be issued by the DOH in coordination with the PhilHealth;
- e) To the extent possible, the government may grant special discounts in special programs for OFWs on purchase of basic commodities, subject to the guidelines to be issued for the purpose by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- f) Priority in existing livelihood programs beings undertaken by various government agencies subject to the guidelines and qualifications by the implementing body;
- 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 or the Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF).

SEC. 5. Monitoring and Data Gathering on all OFWs. – The Department of Migrant Workers in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine Overseas Employment Agency and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) shall maintain and regularly update at least on a quarterly basis the list of all OFWs, including indigent OFWs, and shall issue a nationally uniform identification card which shall be valid anywhere nationwide.

SEC. 6. Penalties – Notwithstanding any administrative or civil liability from existing laws, any person or company who violates the provision of this Act by denying or hindering an indigent OFW from availing of any of the benefits under this Act shall be penalized by a fine of:

- a. Not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) for the first violation;
- b. One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00) for the second violation; and
- c. Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200,000.00) for the third violation.

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Department of Migrant Workers, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Health, Department of Tourism, and the Department of Finance shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act.

133
134 **SEC. 8. Appropriations.** – The National Government shall appropriate such amount
135 necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

136
137 **SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and
138 regulations which may be inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed
139 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

140
141 **SEC. 10. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or
142 invalid, such holding shall not affect other provisions not affected thereby.

143
144 **SEC. 11. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
145 the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

146
147 *Approved,*
148