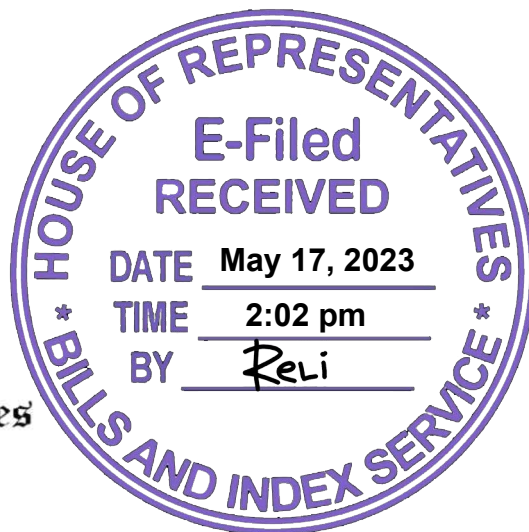




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8165



Introduced by **Representative FRANCISCO JOSE "BINGO" F. MATUGAS II**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Covid-19 pandemic forced employees to work from home or work remotely for safety reasons. Even before the pandemic, however, there has been a growing number of workers who preferred to work outside of the office wherever there was an internet connection. The rapid development of telecommunications technology coupled with employees' desire to seek work-life balance has given rise to a new breed of workers – the digital nomads. Thus, even after the lockdowns many employees have chosen to, not just work from home, but from tourists' destinations where they can work while exploring the beauty of the place.

In a 2020 study done by the MBO Partners,¹ it was noted that "the population of the digital nomads in the US also rose dramatically – with an increase of nearly 50% from 2019."

Many countries have taken advantage of this phenomenon by providing what is known as a "digital nomad visa" – a visa that gives a visitor the right to stay in a country and work remotely for a foreign-based employer or business. The digital nomad visa has come about because "governments at all levels realize that digital nomads spend more money than tourists, don't put much strain on public services,

¹ COVID-19 and the Rise of the Digital Nomad retrieved from <https://s29814.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MBO-Partners-Digital-Nomad-Report-2020.pdf>

create jobs for locals - and even start local businesses.”² To date, there are 54 countries offering some type or form of a digital nomad visa.³ The Philippines is not one of them.

The provision of a digital nomad visa can help jumpstart the local economy affected by the pandemic especially the tourism industry by allowing digital nomads to stay longer and spend more in the country. As aptly stated in an article appearing in Harvard Business Review, “[i]n summary, digital nomads invest their time and money in the local economy, without taking local jobs, and build bridges with local knowledge workers - a win-win for both remote workers and local communities.”⁴

It is believed that the number of digital nomads will continue to grow, and we can take advantage of this phenomenon by providing these types of workers a legal way to stay and work from our country.

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


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² <https://www.mbopartners.com/state-of-independence/digital-nomads/>

³ <https://nomadgirl.co/countries-with-digital-nomad-visas/>

⁴ “How ‘Digital Nomad’ Visas Can Boost Local Economies by Prithwiraj (Raj) Choudhury retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2022/05/how-digital-nomad-visas-can-boost-local-economies>.



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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A NEW VISA CATEGORY FOR DIGITAL NOMADS, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be referred to as the "*Digital Nomad Visa Act.*"

SEC. 2. *Definition of Terms.* As used in this Act:

- a) *Alien* refers to an individual who is not a citizen of the Republic of the Philippines;
- b) *Digital Nomad* refers to an individual who works remotely using digital technologies while travelling to different countries;
- c) *Digital Nomad Visa* refers to the visa granted by the Bureau of Immigration to a person to whom this Act applies.

SEC. 3. *Digital Nomad Visa.* An alien who is employed in a country other than the Republic of the Philippines may, upon making an application to the Bureau of Immigration, be granted a Digital Nomad Visa to work in the Philippines for a period of twelve (12) months, renewable for another twelve (12) months, subject to the following conditions:

- a) Said individual must be at least 18 years old;

- b) Said individual is a digital nomad as defined in Section 2;
- c) Said individual can show proof of sufficient income and that said income is generated outside of the Philippines;
- d) Said individual holds a valid health insurance valid for the period for which the Digital Nomad Visa is granted;
- e) Said individual must not have a criminal record in his home country and will not be a threat to the Republic of the Philippines;
- f) Said individual will pay a fee to be determined by the Bureau of Immigration to cover the cost of processing and issuing the visa;
- g) Said individual will pay a reasonable Entry Fee and Exit Fee, the amount of which will be determined by the Bureau of Immigration.

SEC. 4. *Effect of Grant of Visa.* An alien who has been granted a digital nomad visa shall not be deemed a resident of the Philippines for taxation purposes and the income they receive from their employer abroad, while in the country, shall not be considered income from Philippine sources.

SEC. 5. *No Employment in the Philippines.* An alien who has been granted a Digital Nomad Visa shall not be employed in the Philippines.

SEC. 6. *Revocation of Visa.* The Bureau of Immigration may revoke the Digital Nomad Visa if the holder violates any of the terms or conditions of the visa, or if it is determined that the holder no longer meets the qualifications established in Section 3 hereof.

SEC. 7. *Digital Nomad Visa Register.* A register of all individuals issued a Digital Nomad Visa shall be maintained by the Bureau of Immigration and shall contain such information as the Bureau may deem necessary.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary to cover the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the Bureau of Immigration. Thereafter, the funding shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Bureau of Immigration, shall, in consultation with stakeholders, issue within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the rules and regulations necessary to effectively implement its provisions.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* If, for any reason, any portion or provisions of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, proclamations, rules, regulations, and other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

h) SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or a newspaper of general circulation.