

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8549



Introduced by Representative Joseph Gilbert F. Violago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the pursuit of a just and inclusive society, it is imperative that we recognize the valuable contributions made by individuals who have demonstrated their dedication to our nation's progress. This bill seeks to grant Filipino citizenship to Mr. Ahmad Okla Alkhalaf, a Syrian national who has not only established deep roots in the Philippines but has also actively contributed to our society in various ways. His commitment to our country, his family, and his tireless efforts in fostering economic growth and social development merit our support and acknowledgement.

Mr. Ahmad Okla Alkhalaf first arrived in the Philippines in September 2010, as a foreign recruitment agency owner from Qatar. During his business ventures, he had the fortune of meeting Ms. Janiece Ferrer Esebido, a Filipina and currently a councilor in Lupao, Nueva Ecija. This serendipitous encounter blossomed into a loving relationship, resulting in the birth of two Filipino children. This family unit embodies the spirit of cultural exchange and harmony that our nation strives to foster.

Recognizing the tremendous potential in the Philippines, Mr. Alkhalaf brought his entire family from war-torn Syria to our shores. Their status as refugees was duly recognized, providing them with a safe haven where they could rebuild their lives. Throughout his residence in the Philippines, Mr. Alkhalaf has remained an upstanding citizen – exemplifying good moral character and displaying utmost respect for the laws of our land. Notably, he has never been involved in any criminal or civil cases, establishing a commendable track record of integrity.

To further his commitment to personal growth and contribute to the betterment of society, Mr. Alkhalaf pursued a degree in Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Marketing Management at Marie-Bernarde College Inc., which he successfully completed in March 2020. This academic achievement showcases his dedication to acquiring knowledge and applying it for the benefit of our country. By combining his academic expertise with his extensive experience in overseas recruitment, Mr. Alkhalaf has emerged as a prominent figure in the field, effectively bridging the gap between foreign employers and our Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

Mr. Alkhalaf's investment in various businesses within the Philippines exemplifies his sincere desire to uplift the lives of Filipinos. His ventures, which include a barbershop and an overseas recruitment agency, have provided countless employment opportunities, helping to alleviate unemployment and contribute to the growth of our economy. Moreover, his longstanding involvement in the overseas recruitment industry, spanning nearly two decades, demonstrates his commitment to safeguarding the rights and welfare of our OFWs. His proposals to professionalize the recruitment process and reconcile the interests of foreign employers and OFWs have received widespread acclaim, emphasizing his invaluable contributions to the betterment of our society.

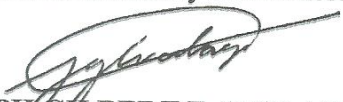
Beyond his entrepreneurial endeavors, Mr. Alkhalaf has actively engaged in various socio-civic activities, notably his involvement with The Fraternal Order of Eagles (Philippine Eagles). This organization, renowned for its conservation efforts and dedication to preserving our nation's natural treasures, aligns perfectly with Mr. Alkhalaf's commitment to environmental sustainability. His collaboration with the Philippine Eagles underscores his genuine concern for the welfare of our nation, transcending national and cultural boundaries to forge a brighter future for all.

In light of Mr. Ahmad Okla Alkhalaf's exemplary character, significant investments in our economy, and valuable contributions to our society, it is with great conviction that I urge my esteemed colleagues to support this bill.

By conferring Filipino citizenship upon Mr. Alkhalaf, we acknowledge and celebrate his unwavering commitment to our nation, his love for his Filipino family, his pursuit of academic excellence, his entrepreneurial ventures, and his active participation in socio-civic activities all contribute to the tapestry of our diverse society. Moreover, granting Mr. Alkhalaf Filipino citizenship aligns with our nation's values of compassion, inclusivity, and reciprocity. It sends a powerful message to the world that the Philippines welcomes individuals who have demonstrated a genuine desire to contribute to our nation's progress and have embraced our culture and values as their own.

As a naturalized Filipino citizen, Mr. Alkhalaf will continue to invest in our economy, create job opportunities, and foster international partnerships. His extensive experience in the overseas recruitment industry uniquely positions him to advocate for the rights and welfare of our OFWs, ensuring their protection and fair treatment. Furthermore, his dedication to environmental conservation through his involvement with the organization Philippine Eagles demonstrates his commitment to preserving our natural resources for future generations.

With the foregoing, the passage of this bill is most humbly and earnestly sought.



JOSEPH GILBERT F. VIOLAGO

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AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO AHMAD OKLA
ALKHALAF

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

SECTION 1. Mr. Ahmad Okla Alkhalaf is hereby granted Philippine citizenship with all the rights, privileges and prerogatives, and is likewise vested with the duties and obligations appurtenant thereto.

SECTION 2. Mr. Ahmad Okla Alkhalaf shall take the Oath of Allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before an officer duly authorized to administer the same. The Oath of Allegiance shall be registered with the Bureau of Immigration.

SECTION 3. Upon registration of the Oath of Allegiance, the Bureau of Immigration shall issue a Certificate of Naturalization to Mr. Ahmad Okla Alkhalaf who shall thereupon enter into the full enjoyment of Philippine citizenship.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,