

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9766



Introduced by Representative Eduardo Roa Rama Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As the COVID-19 pandemic forced many traditional office workers to work from home, a subset of these workers joined a growing movement of location-independent workers referred to as Digital Nomads. Digital Nomads are individuals who travel to different places, while relying on technologies to access the internet and do their work from any location in the world. The Philippines is a great destination for Digital Nomads. Cebu, a thriving economic center and tourism hub, is a perfect base as it offers easy access to fast internet, co-working communities, world-class infrastructure, and numerous tourist destinations.

Today, there are around 54 countries that offer Digital Nomad visas.¹ In 2023, a study by an independent workforce management platform reported that 17.3 million American workers currently describe themselves as digital nomads, growing by 2% from 2022 after increasing a staggering 131% from the pre-pandemic year 2019 to 2022.² Significantly, Digital Nomads are reported to contribute \$787 billion to the global economy annually.³ They inject money into local economies through spending on accommodations, co-working spaces, food, transportation, entertainment, and other services. This leads to the growth of tourism-oriented industries and in turn further bolster the overall economic growth of the country.

The world is changing in response to the growing Digital Nomad population. Due to the mass advancement of information and communication technologies,

¹ Ibrahim, Mon (22 August 2023). *Work without borders: The rise of the digital nomads*. Manila Bulletin. <https://mb.com.ph/2023/8/21/work-without-borders-the-rise-of-the-digital-nomads>.

² MBO Partners (August 2023). *Nomadism Enters the Mainstream*. MBO Partners. https://info.mbopartners.com/rs/mbo/images/2023_Digital_Nomads_Report.pdf.

³ Bell, Rosie (3 October 2023). *Digital Nomads have billions to spend. Entrepreneurs are cashing in*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20231002-digital-nomads-have-billions-to-spend-entrepreneurs-are-cashing-in#:~:text=One%202023%20survey%20conducted%20by,those%20who%20cater%20to%20them>.

emergence of co-working spaces, changes in work culture, and the appeal of exploring new places while maintaining careers, countries all over the world have taken advantage of this phenomenon by providing for a new visa category called the “Digital Nomad Visa.” Thus, this legislative measure seeks to create a special visa category to accommodate Digital Nomads. This bill presents an opportunity for the Philippines to: (1) push tourism development, (2) increase the influx of cash from abroad, and (3) enhance the economic activity of various regions, thereby increasing revenue and generating greater economic productivity.

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



EDUARDO ROA RAMA JR.
2nd District, Cebu City

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

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

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be referred to as the “*Digital Nomad Visa Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* –

- a. “***Alien***” shall refer to any person who is not a citizen or a national of the Republic of the Philippines.
- b. “***Digital Nomad***” shall refer to individuals who travel freely while working remotely using digital technology.

c. ***“Digital Nomad Visa”*** shall refer to a type of visa granted by the Bureau of Immigration to an individual to whom this Act applies.

d. ***“Grantee”*** shall refer to an individual who has been granted a Digital Nomad Visa by the Bureau of Immigration upon fulfillment of the requirements set forth in this Act.

SECTION 3. *Digital Nomad Visa.* – An alien who is employed in a country other than the Republic of the Philippines may, upon 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 requirements provided for in this Act.

SECTION 4. *Requirements.* – An applicant for a Digital Nomad Visa must be subject to the following conditions:

- a. Individual must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- b. Individual must have a valid passport upon application for the visa.
- c. Individual must show proof of sufficient income that is generated from sources outside the Philippines.
- d. Individual must be a holder of a valid international health insurance policy with coverage in the Philippines.
- e. Individual must provide an address of accommodation in the Philippines.
- f. Individual must not have a criminal record in his home country.
- g. Individual must pay fees to be determined by the Bureau of Immigration to cover to costs of processing and issuing the visa, and reasonable Entry and Exit Fees.

SECTION 5. *Mandatory Health Insurance Policy.* – The international health insurance policy of the grantee with coverage in the Philippines must be valid for the whole duration of the grantee's stay.

SECTION 6. *Effect of Grant of Visa.* – A grantee of a digital nomad visa shall not be deemed a resident of the Philippines for taxation purposes, and the income they receive from their employer outside the Philippines, while in the country, shall not be considered as income from sources within the Philippines.

SECTION 7. *Grounds for Revocation.* – The Bureau of Immigration may revoke the Digital Nomad Visa upon the finding of any of these grounds:

- a. Any information provided in the application was found to be fraudulent.
- b. The holder finds employment in the Philippines during his/her stay.
- c. The holder violates any Philippine law or is found to have committed any criminal activity.
- d. The holder no longer meets any of the qualifications established in Section 4.
- e. The holder breaches any of the terms or conditions provided in the visa.

SECTION 8. *Digital Nomad Visa Register.* – A register of all individuals issued a Digital Nomad Visa shall be maintained by the Bureau of Immigration, which shall contain such information as the Bureau may deem necessary.

SECTION 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to cover the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Bureau of Immigration. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Bureau of Immigration shall, in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders, issue the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws and parts of any law, order, rule and regulation or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.