



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

Nineteenth Congress
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10761**



Introduced by Representatives **Michael John R. Duavit**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article IV, Section I of the 1987 Constitution provides who are citizens of the Philippines including those naturalized in accordance with law. Naturalization may be administrative, judicial, or legislative and all these modes of acquiring citizenship by naturalization an act of Congress.

Administrative naturalization is governed by Republic Act No. 9139 or “The Administrative Naturalization Law of 2000.” Judicial naturalization is covered by Commonwealth Act No 473 or the “Revised Naturalization Law”. Both of these laws provide for qualifications of applicant for Philippine citizenship. On the other hand, legislative naturalization is a direct grant of Philippine citizenship and is considered a blanket authority of Congress.

This bill seeks to grant Philippine citizenship to Matthew Steves Westfall, an American urbanist, writer, filmmaker and entrepreneur, by direct act of Congress is a recognition of this exemplary work for the nation through his urban development and policy planning programs and projects, documentary filmmaking to highlight our country’s development challenges, historical writing on Philippine history, and the establishment of a pioneering PEZA-registered business initiative to promote the Philippines in overseas export markets while supporting local sustainability initiatives. He possesses all of the qualifications and none of the disqualification provided under Commonwealth Act No. 473, particularly Section 2 which states:

“Section 2. Qualifications. – *Subject to section four of this Act, any person having the following qualifications may become a citizen of the Philippines by naturalization:*

First. He must not be less than twenty-one years of age on the day of the hearing of the petition;

Second. He must have resided in the Philippines for a continuous period of not less than ten years;

Third. He must be of good moral character and believes in the principles underlying the Philippine Constitution, and must have conducted himself in a proper and irreproachable manner during the entire period of his residence in the Philippines in his relation with the constituted government as well as with the community in which he is living.

Fourth. He must own real estate in the Philippines worth not less than Five thousand pesos, Philippine currency, or must have some known lucrative trade, profession or lawful occupation.

Fifth. He must be able to speak and write English or Spanish and any one of the principal Philippines languages; and

Sixth. He must have enrolled his minor children of school age, in any of the public schools or private schools recognized by the Office of Private Education of the Philippines, where the Philippine history, government and civics are taught or prescribed as part of the school curriculum, during the entire period of residence in the Philippines required of him prior to the hearing of his petition for naturalization as Philippine citizen.

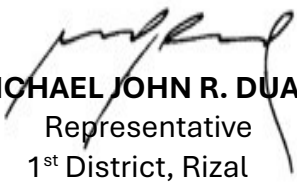
Born on June 30, 1961 in New York City, NY, USA, Matthew Westfall is sixty-two (62) years of age. He has been living in the Philippines for a continuous period of more than 33 years. He is a respectable member of Barangay Forbes Park, Makati City and has never committed any acts in violation of Philippine laws. He has deep ties to the Philippines over three generations. His grandfather, Peter Gottlieb Westfall, arrived in the Philippines from Russia in 1918, was employed as the head of San Miguel Brewery's Royal Soft Drinks Plant, and acquired Philippine citizenship in 1926. He died in 1937 and was buried at Manila's North Cemetery. Matthew Westfall's father, Michael Peter Westfall, born in 1937, was raised in Manila, with Filipino citizenship, until his family's immigration to America in 1937. Other relatives, Matthew's uncles and aunts, also held Filipino citizenship prior to their immigration to America prior to World War II.

Gainfully employed as an urban development and policy planner with US Agency for International Development since 1991, and the Asian Development Bank since 1994 until his retirement in 2015, Matthew Westfall has designed, led and implemented numerous aid-funded projects in support of Philippine development. Now overseeing a PEZA-registered enterprise in Calamba, Laguna that support regional development, job promotion and export of world-class Philippine spirits, it is evident that he has a legitimate profession.

Being American, Matthew Westfall speaks and writes fluent English, and has had language immersion during his stint in the US Peace Corps in Ilokano and conversational Tagalog. An award-winning author of book on Philippine history, and an award-winning writer and filmmaker who has documented challenges of urban poverty, housing, solid waste and indigenous peoples, he has genuinely immersed himself in Filipino culture and has already acquired Filipino traits.

Married to Laura Gozon Jimenez in November 1996, Matthew and Laura's three children have been educated in the Philippines in accredited private schools, and are Filipino citizens, fully meeting the sixth qualification.

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



MICHAEL JOHN R. DUAVIT
Representative
1st District, Rizal



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

Nineteenth Congress
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10761**

Introduced by Representative **Michael John R. Duavit**

AN ACT
GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO MATTHEW STEVES WESTFALL

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

- 1 **SECTION 1. *Grant of Philippine Citizenship to Matthew Steves Westfall* –**
2 Matthew Steves Westfall is hereby granted Philippine citizenship with all the rights
3 privileges and prerogatives, as well as the duties and obligations appurtenant thereto
4 under the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.
- 5 **SEC. 2. *Oath of Allegiance*** - Matthew Steves Westfall shall take the Oath of
6 Allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before an officer duly authorized for this
7 purpose. The Oath of Alliance shall be registered with the Bureau of Immigration.
- 8 **SEC. 3. *Certificate of Naturalization and Enjoyment of Philippine Citizenship*–**
9 Upon Registration of the Oath of Allegiance, the Bureau of Immigration shall forthwith
10 issue Matthew Steves Westfall’s Certificate of Naturalization, who shall thereupon
11 enter into the full enjoyment of Philippine Citizenship.
- 12 **SEC. 4. *Effectivity*** – This Act shall take effect upon publication in The Official
13 Gazette or in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

