



Republic of the Philippines

House of Representatives

Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress

Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11132



Introduced by Representatives

**LORDAN G. SUAN, MICHAEL M. MORDEN,
DALE B. CORVERA, and BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE, JR.**

AN ACT

**ESTABLISHING A FULL-CYCLE REINTEGRATION PROGRAM FOR OVERSEAS
FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs), ENSURING THEIR SMOOTH AND SUSTAINABLE
TRANSITION BACK TO THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are heralded as modern-day heroes, significantly contributing to the Philippine economy through their remittances, which totaled USD 36.14 billion in 2022, accounting for approximately 9% of the country's GDP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 2023). However, their sacrifices often come with profound economic, social, and psychological challenges. Many OFWs face exploitation, job insecurity, and challenges in reintegrating into Philippine society after returning home.

The proposed "Full-Cycle OFW Reintegration Act" seeks to institutionalize a comprehensive reintegration program, addressing the needs of OFWs throughout the entire migration cycle: pre-departure, during employment abroad, and upon their return. This holistic approach is crucial for ensuring that reintegration is sustainable and empowers OFWs to make migration a choice rather than a necessity.

While OFWs significantly contribute to the national economy, they remain vulnerable to exploitation, mental health issues, and economic instability upon returning to the Philippines. The lack of a structured reintegration program has led to many returning OFWs facing unemployment, debt, or an inability to reintegrate into their families and communities effectively.

Existing reintegration programs, such as those offered by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), provide limited assistance and often fail to cater to undocumented OFWs, who are particularly vulnerable. A comprehensive and inclusive approach is essential to address these gaps and provide equitable services to all OFWs.

The Philippines, as a signatory to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), is committed to implementing migration policies that promote the safety and well-being of migrant workers. This bill aligns with Objective 21 of the GCM, which advocates for measures to promote sustainable reintegration for returning migrants.

Studies have highlighted the importance of psychosocial and economic support in facilitating successful reintegration. For instance, the International Labour Organization (ILO) underscores the need for tailored reintegration plans, financial literacy training, and access to job opportunities as key factors for ensuring sustainable reintegration (ILO, 2021). These findings are echoed in *UN IOM — A Handbook for Reintegration Programming in the Philippines*, which outlines best practices for reintegration initiatives tailored to the Philippine context. The handbook emphasizes the importance of a holistic, multistakeholder approach that addresses the individual, family, and community dimensions of reintegration.

Undocumented OFWs, who constitute a significant portion of the migrant population, are often excluded from reintegration programs due to their legal status. This bill ensures that no OFW is left behind, establishing mechanisms for the regularization of their status and equitable access to reintegration services. The proposed legislation aims to (1) institutionalize a full-cycle reintegration program that addresses the multidimensional needs of OFWs at every stage of the migration process; (2) establish a dedicated Reintegration Bureau within the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) for the effective implementation and monitoring of reintegration programs; (3) ensure sustainable economic reintegration by providing access to skills training, job placement, and entrepreneurial opportunities; (4) prioritize psychosocial and social

reintegration, including access to housing, healthcare, education, and mental health services; and (5) extend reintegration services to undocumented OFWs, ensuring inclusivity and protection.

The establishment of a Reintegration Fund, supported by government appropriations, private sector partnerships, and international development assistance, ensures the program's financial sustainability. The institutional framework leverages the existing capacities of the DMW, OWWA, and Migrant Workers Offices (MWOs) abroad, enhancing their capabilities to deliver reintegration services effectively.

The “*Full-Cycle OFW Reintegration Act*” underscores the State's commitment to valuing and supporting OFWs throughout their migration journey. By institutionalizing a holistic reintegration program, this legislation not only addresses the immediate and long-term needs of OFWs but also empowers them to contribute meaningfully to national development upon their return.

This bill is anchored on best practices and recommendations found in *UN IOM — A Handbook for Reintegration Programming in the Philippines* with an added emphasis on addressing the needs of undocumented workers

In light of the pressing need for sustainable and inclusive reintegration solutions for OFWs, this bill's approval is fervently sought.



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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** — This Act shall be known as the "*Full-Cycle OFW*
2 *Reintegration Act.*"

3 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** — The State recognizes the invaluable
4 contributions of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to national development and
5 is committed to upholding their fundamental rights. It is hereby declared the
6 policy of the State to:

7 (a) Provide comprehensive reintegration assistance to all OFWs,
8 regardless of their documentation status, ensuring their smooth transition back
9 into Philippine society;

10 (b) Mainstream reintegration into all stages of the migration cycle, from
11 pre-departure, through employment abroad, to return;

12 (c) Address the diverse needs of OFWs across economic, social,
13 psychosocial, gender-responsive, and cultural dimensions;

14 (d) Ensure sustainable reintegration by empowering OFWs to make
15 migration decisions as a matter of choice, not necessity; and

(e) Collaborate with stakeholders to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate reintegration assistance programs.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* — For the purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

(a) "OFW" refers to any Filipino working abroad, regardless of documentation status.

(b) "Undocumented OFW" refers to an OFW not registered with the Philippine government or whose documents are incomplete or invalid.

(c) "Reintegration" is a multi-dimensional process enabling OFWs to re-establish economic, social, and psychosocial well-being upon return.

(d) "Full-cycle reintegration program" encompasses interventions starting pre-departure, on-site support during employment, and assistance upon return.

SECTION 4. *Institutional Framework.* — (a) The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) shall serve as the primary agency for implementing the full-cycle reintegration program.

(b) A Reintegration Bureau shall be established within the DMW to oversee program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

(c) Migrant Workers Offices (MWOs) abroad shall be strengthened to provide reintegration counseling and support services to OFWs, including undocumented workers.

SECTION 5. *Reintegration Services.* — (a) Pre-Departure:

1. Mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars covering reintegration services and support for undocumented OFWs.

2. Financial literacy training for effective management of earnings and future planning.

3. Family counseling on coping mechanisms for separation and eventual reunification.

(b) On-Site Support:

1. Accessible support services through MWOs for OFWs in distress, including undocumented workers.

2. Skills development and training to enhance employability upon return.

3. Mechanisms for addressing exploitation and abuse, including access to legal and psychosocial support.

1 (c) Upon Return:

2 1. Personalized reintegration counseling and case management for
3 tailored reintegration plans.

4 2. Economic reintegration assistance, including job placement,
5 entrepreneurship training, and access to financing.

6 3. Social reintegration support, including housing, documentation,
7 education, healthcare, and social protection schemes.

8 4. Psychosocial support services to address mental health concerns
9 and challenges from migration.

10 5. Special attention to vulnerable OFWs, including victims of
11 trafficking, those with disabilities, and those with medical or psychosocial needs.

12 **SECTION 6. *Protection for Undocumented OFWs.*** — (a) No undocumented
13 OFW shall be denied reintegration services due to their status.

14 (b) Mechanisms shall be established for the regularization of
15 undocumented OFWs' status upon return to facilitate access to services and
16 benefits.

17 (c) Information dissemination campaigns shall inform undocumented
18 OFWs of their rights and available reintegration support.

19 (d) A dedicated hotline and online platform shall be established for
20 confidential assistance to undocumented OFWs.

21 **SECTION 7. *Reintegration Fund.*** — There is hereby established a special
22 fund to be known as the Reintegration Fund, which shall be utilized exclusively
23 for the purpose of supporting the reintegration of Overseas Filipino Workers
24 (OFWs) into Philippine society.

25 **SECTION 8. *Monitoring and Evaluation.*** — (a) The DMW shall develop a
26 monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the reintegration program's
27 effectiveness.

28 (b) Regular impact assessments shall ensure program responsiveness to
29 OFWs' evolving needs.

30 **SECTION 9. *Appropriations.*** — The amount necessary for implementing
31 this Act shall be taken from the current budget of the DMW. Thereafter, the
32 amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included
33 in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

1 **SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** — Within ninety (90)
2 days from the effectivity of this Act, the DMW shall promulgate the necessary
3 rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

4 **SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.*** — All laws, presidential decrees, executive
5 orders, memoranda, circulars, and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are
6 inconsistent with the Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

7 **SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.*** — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
8 days after its publication in the Official Gazette, in a newspaper of general
9 circulation, or on a website provided for by law.

Approved,