

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 647



Introduced by: **REP. TOBIAS "TOBY" M. TIANGCO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

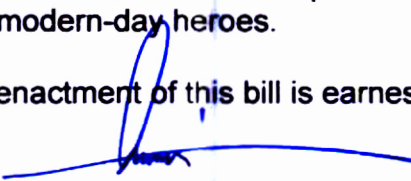
This bill seeks to provide comprehensive financial relief to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) by amending Republic Act No. 8042, also known as the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995," as amended. In 2022, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported a record-high OFW remittance inflow of \$36.14 billion, underscoring the vital role that OFWs play in sustaining the Philippine economy and supporting millions of Filipino families. With over 10 million Filipinos working abroad, the vast majority regularly send remittances home, making the Philippines one of the world's top remittance-receiving countries.

Despite their invaluable contributions, OFWs continue to face significant financial burdens, particularly during the pre-deployment stage. They are confronted with high fees for passports, clearances, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) documents, placement services, and mandatory pre-employment medical examinations. These upfront costs substantially diminish their net earnings even before they begin working overseas. Furthermore, the high cost of remittance fees continues to erode the economic benefits of their labor, as nearly all OFWs regularly remit funds to their families back home.

In addition to these financial challenges, OFWs are also vulnerable to psychological stress, anxiety, and mental health issues brought about by prolonged family separation, workplace pressures, and cultural adjustment in foreign environments. Access to affordable mental health care and therapy is often limited, further compounding their struggles.

To address these pressing concerns, this bill proposes to mandate a minimum 10% discount on essential pre-departure fees and charges, as well to lower remittance fees for all OFW transactions sent through banks and remittance centers. It also seeks to provide a minimum 20% discount on therapy sessions, psychiatric and psychological consultations, and medical consultations at government and accredited private health facilities in the Philippines. By enacting these provisions, the bill aims to offer immediate and meaningful economic relief to OFWs, support their mental well-being, and ensure that a greater portion of their earnings benefits their families and communities. This measure not only recognizes the sacrifices of OFWs but also upholds the State's commitment to their protection and welfare as modern-day heroes.

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


TOBIAS "TOBY" M. TIANGCO
Representative
Lone District, Navotas City

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HOUSE BILL NO. 647

Introduced by: **REP. TOBIAS "TOBY" M. TIANGCO**

AN ACT
GRANTING DISCOUNTS ON CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS TO OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS
ACT OF 1995," AS AMENDED

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

1 **SECTION 1.** A new section denominated as Section 20-A is inserted after
2 Section 20 of Republic Act No. 8042, as amended, to read as follows:

3
4 **SECTION 20-A—IN RECOGNITION OF THE VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND**
5 **UNIQUE HEALTH NEEDS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS), THE**
6 **STATE SHALL ENSURE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE**
7 **BY MANDATING DISCOUNTED RATES FOR THERAPY AND MEDICAL**
8 **CONSULTATIONS.**

9
10 **A. ELIGIBILITY:**

11 **ALL ACTIVE OR RETURNING OFWS, AS CERTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF**
12 **MIGRANT WORKERS (DMW), OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE**
13 **ADMINISTRATION (OWWA), OR THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT**
14 **ADMINISTRATION (POEA), SHALL BE ENTITLED TO A MINIMUM TWENTY**
15 **PERCENT (20%) DISCOUNT ON PROFESSIONAL FEES FOR:**

16
17 **I. MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY SESSIONS**

18
19 **II. PSYCHIATRIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSULTATIONS**

20
21 **III. GENERAL AND SPECIALIZED MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS**

22
23 **SEC. 2.** A new section denominated as Section 22-A is inserted after Section 22
24 of Republic Act No. 8042, as amended, to read as follows:

25 **SEC. 22-A. REDUCED REMITTANCE FEES FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO**
26 **WORKERS. —ALL BANKS, REMITTANCE CENTERS, AND FINANCIAL**
27 **INSTITUTIONS OPERATING IN THE PHILIPPINES AND ABROAD THAT**

1 FACILITATE THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM OFWS TO THEIR
2 BENEFICIARIES IN THE PHILIPPINES SHALL GRANT A MINIMUM TWENTY
3 PERCENT (20%) DISCOUNT ON SERVICE FEES AND CHARGES FOR EVERY
4 REMITTANCE TRANSACTION MADE BY AN OFW.

5
6 **SEC. 3.** Under Article III on Services, a new section shall be inserted as follows:

7
8 **SECTION 14. ANNUAL FREE MEDICAL CHECK-UP FOR OVERSEAS**
9 **FILIPINO WORKERS. —IN RECOGNITION OF THE HEALTH NEEDS OF**
10 **OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, THE STATE SHALL ENSURE THAT ALL**
11 **OFWS ARE ENTITLED TO AN ANNUAL FREE MEDICAL CHECK-UP AT**
12 **GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS OR DOH-ACCREDITED PUBLIC HEALTH**
13 **FACILITIES.**

14
15 **SEC. 4.** A new section denominated as Section 36-A is inserted after Section 36 of
16 Republic Act No. 8042, as amended, to read as follows:

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18 **"SEC. 36-A. DISCOUNTS. - THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS ARE**
19 **ENTITLED TO THE FOLLOWING DISCOUNTS:**

20
21 **(A) AT LEAST 15% DISCOUNT ON THE PASSPORT ISSUANCE AND**
22 **RENEWAL FEES; "**

23
24 **(B) AT LEAST 15% DISCOUNT ON CLEARANCE AND OTHER**
25 **CERTIFICATION FEES ISSUED By DIFFERENT LOCAL AND NATIONAL**
26 **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES;"**

27
28 **(C) AT LEAST 10% DISCOUNT ON ALL PHILIPPINE RELATED DOCUMENTS**
29 **REQUIRED FOR OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT;**

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31
32 **SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** —The Department of Migrant Workers
33 (DMW), in coordination with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA),
34 Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Department of Labor and
35 Employment (DOLE), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Health (DOH),
36 and other relevant agencies, shall be responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and
37 enforcement of the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this
38 Act not later than ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

39
40 **SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.*** — If any provision or part of this Act is declared
41 unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force
42 and effect.

43
44 **SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.*** — All laws, executive orders, issuances, rules and
45 regulations, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

46
47 **SEC. 8. *Effectivity.*** — This shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
48 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

49
50 *Approved,*