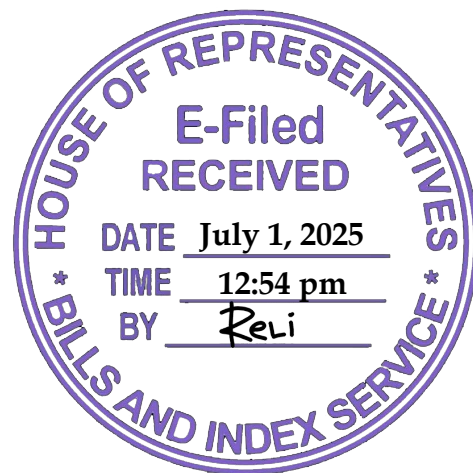




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 781



Introduced by REP. RODOLFO "OMPONG" M. ORDANES

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS FOR
RETURNING SENIOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) have long been recognized as modern-day heroes for their significant contributions to the Philippine economy through remittances. Many OFWs dedicate a substantial part of their lives to working abroad, often under challenging conditions, to provide a better future for their families.

As they age, returning senior OFWs face unique and often overlooked challenges that require targeted support and assistance. Sub-chapter 3.2 of the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 focuses on strengthening social protection for Filipinos. During the planning period, the government aims to increase social protection expenditure as a percentage of GDP from 2.7% in 2021 to 5.25% by 2028. OFWs and senior citizens are among the key sectors identified for expanded social protection coverage.

In response to these challenges, the proposed legislation seeks to honor the sacrifices and contributions of senior OFWs by creating comprehensive programs and benefits tailored to their needs as they return to the Philippines. This proposed Act aims to support their reintegration into society and provide essential health and economic assistance, enhancing their well-being during their transition home.

This proposed legislation is a testament to the Philippine government's unwavering commitment to honoring and supporting its senior OFWs. Providing the

necessary programs and benefits ensures their dignified transition back to the Philippines and appropriately acknowledges their contributions. This proposed Act not only improves the quality of life for returning senior OFWs but also strengthens the socio-economic fabric of the nation.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rodolfo Omping M. Ordanes', written over the printed name.

RODOLFO "OMPONG" M. ORDANES



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

1 SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Returning Senior OFW Act.*”

2 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
3 acknowledge the fundamental rights of senior citizens, ensuring their equal access to
4 government services, discounts, and privileges, in recognition of their invaluable
5 contribution to society. It is likewise the policy of the State to afford full protection to
6 labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment
7 opportunities for all. Towards this end, it shall be the State’s responsibility to protect
8 the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

9 The State shall promote inclusivity, equity, and accessibility to goods and
10 services so that senior OFWs, through standardized benefits and incentives, are
11 afforded adequate social services, a decent standard of living, and improved quality
12 of life.

13 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* –As used in this Act, the following terms and
14 phrases are defined as follows:

- 1 a. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) refers to a Filipino who is to be engaged,
2 is engaged, or has been engaged in remunerated activity in a country of
3 which he or she is not an immigrant, citizen, or permanent resident or is not
4 awaiting naturalization, recognition, or admission, whether land-based or
5 sea-based regardless of status; excluding a Filipino engaged under a
6 government-recognized exchange visitor program for cultural and
7 educational purposes. For purposes of this Guidelines, a person engaged in
8 remunerated activity covers a person who has been contracted for overseas
9 employment but has yet to leave the Philippines, regardless of status, and
10 includes "Overseas Contract Workers". The term "OFW" is synonymous to
11 "Migrant Worker".
- 12 b. Senior OFW refers to OFW who is a Senior Citizen or at least sixty (60) years
13 old.
- 14 c. Health Care Voucher as used in this Act refers to assistance to qualified
15 Senior OFWs beneficiary in the form of a voucher that has monetary value
16 to be utilized for the healthcare needs of the Senior OFW beneficiary.
- 17 d. Health care provider refers to any of the following:
- 18 (1) A health facility which may be public or private, devoted primarily to
19 the provision of services for health promotion, prevention, diagnosis,
20 treatment, rehabilitation and palliation of individuals suffering from
21 illness, disease, injury, disability, or deformity, or in need of obstetrical
22 or other medical and nursing care;
- 23 (2) A health care professional who may be a doctor of medicine, nurse,
24 midwife, dentist, rehabilitation therapist, occupational therapist or other
25 allied professional or practitioner duly licensed to practice in the
26 Philippines;
- 27 (3) A community-based healthcare organization, which is an association of
28 members of the community organized for the purpose of improving the
29 health status of that community; or
- 30 (4) Pharmacies or drug outlets, laboratories and diagnostic clinics.

31 SEC. 4. **Coverage.** OFWs, as defined in Republic Act No. 11641, who are
32 resident senior citizens aged 60 years and above, returned to the Philippines

1 irrespective of date, and have served and completed at least one employment or
2 service contract overseas.

3 SEC. 5. *Health Care Voucher Program for Senior OFWs.* - Senior OFWs who
4 are 71 years old and above shall be entitled for a one-time voucher with a monetary
5 value of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000). This voucher shall be consumed solely for
6 the health care needs of the beneficiary both for product and services necessities
7 which includes primary care, medicines, diagnostics and laboratory, and preventive,
8 curative, and rehabilitative services, from the accredited providers. Further, the
9 Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) shall formulate accreditation of health care
10 providers, including the payment scheme for remuneration of services rendered in
11 favor of Senior OFWs and monitoring thereof.

12 SEC. 6. *Employment Facilitation Program for Senior OFWs.* - The government
13 shall encourage and provide incentives to local employers that employ senior OFWs,
14 regardless of employment status, to enable them to continue being economically
15 productive and to share their knowledge and expertise to the local economy. Private
16 entities that shall employ senior citizens as employees, upon the effectivity of this Act,
17 shall be entitled to an additional deduction from their gross income equivalent to
18 thirty five (35%) of the total amount paid as salaries, wages, benefits, and trainings
19 provided to Senior OFWs, subject to the provision of Section 34 of the NIRC, as
20 amended: Provided, however, That such employment shall continue for a period of at
21 least six (6) months: Provided, further, That the annual income of the Senior OFW does
22 not exceed the latest poverty threshold as determined by the National Statistical
23 Coordination Board (NSCB) of the National Economic and Development Authority
24 (NEDA) for that year.

25 SEC. 7. *Entrepreneurship Program for Senior OFWs.* - The Department of
26 Migrant Workers (DMW) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
27 (OWWA), shall establish and sustain a dedicated entrepreneurship and training
28 program for senior OFWs, whether individual or group, who have developed an
29 entrepreneurial mindset to enable them to continue being economically productive
30 upon their return to the Philippines, in collaboration with NGAs, LGUs, Department
31 of Trade and Industry, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
32 (TESDA), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Finance (DOF), Department

1 of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Education (DepEd), Commission
2 on Higher Education (CHED), private companies and social organization, among
3 others.

4 **SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within ninety (90) from the
5 effectivity of this Act, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) shall, in
6 coordination with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA),
7 Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Budget and
8 Management (DBM), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), National Economic
9 and Development Authority (NEDA), National Commission for Senior Citizens
10 (NCSC), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA),
11 Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of
12 Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and other concerned
13 government agencies, as well as civil society organization, non-government
14 organizations and people's organizations, promulgate the necessary rules and
15 regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

16 The intended guidelines must include the establishment of the corresponding
17 Reintegration Application System for the proper administration, operation, and
18 maintenance thereof. It shall likewise set the mechanism in the identification of
19 beneficiaries of the programs and benefits under this Act.

20 **SEC. 9. Implementing Guidelines for Programs.** DMW shall promulgate the
21 necessary implementing guidelines of the programs and services covered under this
22 Act.

23 **SEC. 10. Appropriations.** - The amount necessary for the implementation of the
24 provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act
25 following its enactment into law.

26 **SEC. 11. Separability Clause.** - If any section, clause, or term of this Act is held
27 to be illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional, such parts not affected by such declaration
28 shall remain in full force and effect.

29 **SEC. 12. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and
30 regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed,
31 amended, or modified accordingly.

1 SEC. 13. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days
2 following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2)
3 newspapers of general circulation.

4 *Approved.*