



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. **2829**

Introduced by **Representatives JOCELYN P. TULFO, RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO, and EDVIC G. YAP**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A DIGITALIZED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFW) WELFARE AND MONITORING SYSTEM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The welfare and protection of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are paramount concerns of the Philippine government. OFWs contribute significantly to the national economy through their remittances, yet they often face various challenges, including illegal recruitment, contract violations, abuse, exploitation, and difficulties in accessing government services while abroad. The current systems for monitoring and assisting OFWs are often fragmented, manual, and reactive, leading to delays in intervention and inadequate support.

This proposed "**Digitalized OFW Welfare and Monitoring System Act**" seeks to address these challenges by establishing a comprehensive, centralized, and accessible digital platform. This system will leverage modern technology to streamline the registration, monitoring, and provision of welfare services to OFWs from their pre-departure to their reintegration. It aims to provide real-time data on OFW locations, employment status, and welfare concerns, enabling proactive intervention and efficient delivery of assistance.

Key features of the proposed system include:

1. **Centralized Database:** A secure and integrated database containing essential information about OFWs, accessible to relevant government agencies.
2. **Real-time Monitoring:** Mechanisms for OFWs to report their status, location, and any issues, allowing for immediate government response.
3. **Emergency Assistance Module:** A dedicated feature for OFWs to easily request emergency assistance, which will trigger immediate alerts to relevant authorities.

4. **Service Access:** A platform for OFWs to access government services, such as welfare assistance, legal aid, and reintegration programs, remotely.
5. **Information Dissemination:** A channel for the government to disseminate vital information, advisories, and alerts to OFWs.
6. **Data Privacy and Security:** Robust measures to ensure the privacy and security of OFW data, in compliance with existing data privacy laws.
7. **Inter-Agency Coordination:** Facilitation of seamless data sharing and collaboration among government agencies involved in OFW welfare.

By digitalizing and centralizing OFW welfare and monitoring, this Act aims to enhance the government's capacity to protect and promote the well-being of OFWs, ensure their rights are upheld, and provide timely and effective assistance, ultimately fostering a more secure and supportive environment for our modern-day heroes.

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



HON. JOCELYN P. TULFO
Representative, ACT-CIS PARTYLIST



HON. EDVIC G. YAP
Representative, ACT-CIS PARTYLIST



HON. RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO
Representative, 2ND DISTRICT OF
QUEZON CITY



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

SECTION 1. Short Title.

This Act shall be known as the ***"Digitalized OFW Welfare and Monitoring System Act."***

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.

It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect the rights and promote the welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as vital contributors to national development. Toward this end, the State shall establish a comprehensive, accessible, and secure digitalized system for the registration, monitoring, and provision of welfare services to OFWs, ensuring timely intervention, efficient service delivery, and enhanced protection against exploitation and abuse.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.

For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. **Digitalized OFW Welfare and Monitoring System (DOWMS):** Refers to the integrated digital platform established under this Act for the registration, monitoring, and provision of welfare services to OFWs.
- b. **Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW):** Refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a country of which he or she is not a citizen or permanent resident or is not seeking permanent residence. This term shall include documented and undocumented OFWs, seafarers, and those in irregular situations.
- c. **Personal Information:** Refers to any information, whether recorded in a material form or not, from which the identity of an individual is apparent or

can be reasonably and directly ascertained by the entity holding the information, or when put together with other information would directly and certainly identify an individual.

d. **Sensitive Personal Information:** Refers to personal information:

1. About an individual's race, ethnic origin, marital status, age, color, and religious, philosophical, or political affiliations;
2. About an individual's health, education, genetic or sexual life, or to any proceeding for any offense committed or alleged to have been committed by such person, the disposal of such proceedings, or the sentence of any court in such proceedings;
3. Issued by government agencies peculiar to an individual, which includes, but is not limited to, social security numbers, previous or current health records, licenses or their denials, suspension or revocation, and tax returns; and
4. Specifically established by an executive order or an act of Congress to be kept classified.

e. **Welfare Services:** Refer to the programs and assistance provided by the government to OFWs, including but not limited to legal assistance, repatriation, medical assistance, financial aid, psychosocial support, and reintegration programs.

SECTION 4. Establishment of the Digitalized OFW Welfare and Monitoring System (DOWMS).

There is hereby established a Digitalized OFW Welfare and Monitoring System (DOWMS) under the direct supervision and control of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW). The DMW shall be the primary agency responsible for the development, implementation, operation, and maintenance of the DOWMS.

SECTION 5. Functions of the DOWMS.

The DOWMS shall have the following functions:

- a) **Centralized Registration and Database:** To serve as a comprehensive and centralized digital repository of all OFWs, including their personal information, employment details, contract information, travel history, and other relevant data, subject to data privacy regulations.
- b) **Real-time Monitoring and Status Updates:** To enable OFWs to regularly update their status, location, and employment conditions, and to report any concerns, issues, or emergencies through a user-friendly interface.
- c) **Emergency Assistance Module:** To provide a dedicated module for OFWs to request immediate emergency assistance, which shall trigger real-time alerts to the DMW, Philippine Foreign Service Posts (PFSPs), and other relevant agencies for prompt action.
- d) **Access to Welfare Services:** To serve as a portal for OFWs to access information on and apply for various government welfare services, including legal assistance, repatriation, medical aid, financial assistance, and psychosocial support.

- e) **Information Dissemination:** To disseminate timely and relevant information, advisories, alerts, and government programs to OFWs through various digital channels.
- f) **Grievance Mechanism:** To provide a streamlined mechanism for OFWs to file complaints and grievances related to their employment or welfare, and to track the status of their concerns.
- g) **Reintegration Program Management:** To facilitate the enrollment and monitoring of OFWs in reintegration programs upon their return to the Philippines.
- h) **Data Analytics and Reporting:** To generate comprehensive reports and analytics on OFW demographics, employment trends, welfare cases, and other relevant data to inform policy formulation and program development.

SECTION 6. Interoperability and Inter-Agency Coordination.

The DOWMS shall be designed to be interoperable with existing and future digital systems of other government agencies involved in OFW welfare, including but not limited to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the Philippine National Police (PNP). The DMW shall establish protocols for secure data sharing and coordination among these agencies to ensure a holistic approach to OFW welfare.

SECTION 7. Data Privacy and Security.

The DMW, in coordination with the National Privacy Commission (NPC), shall ensure the highest standards of data privacy and security in the development, implementation, and operation of the DOWMS. All personal and sensitive personal information collected, stored, and processed through the DOWMS shall be handled in strict compliance with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the "Data Privacy Act of 2012," and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

SECTION 8. Access to Information.

Access to information within the DOWMS shall be strictly limited to authorized personnel of the DMW and other relevant government agencies, on a need-to-know basis, and for legitimate purposes directly related to OFW welfare and protection. Unauthorized access, disclosure, or misuse of information shall be subject to penalties under existing laws.

SECTION 9. Funding.

The initial funding for the development, implementation, and operation of the DOWMS shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Migrant Workers. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued operation and maintenance shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Migrant Workers, in consultation with relevant government agencies, OFWs, and civil

1 society organizations, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the
2 effective implementation of this Act.

3 **SECTION 11. Separability Clause.**

4 If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of
5 the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

6 **SECTION 12. Repealing Clause.**

7 All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with
8 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

9 **SECTION 13. Effectivity.**

10 This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in
11 the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

12 *Approved,*