

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3232**



Introduced by Representative Richard I. Gomez, DPA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Visa Upon Arrival (VUA) scheme, which allows foreign nationals to obtain visas at the port of entry in the Philippines, has been a convenient mechanism for facilitating business travel and tourism. However, this scheme also presents significant challenges and risks, including potential security threats, illegal immigration, and exploitation by human trafficking syndicates.

The Visa Upon Arrival scheme poses security risks as it allows individuals to enter the country with minimal scrutiny. There have been instances when this scheme has been exploited by criminal elements, including human traffickers and individuals involved in illegal activities. By terminating this scheme, the government can implement stricter screening processes to prevent such individuals from entering the country.

The ease of obtaining a visa upon arrival has contributed to issues of overstaying and illegal immigration. Foreign nationals who enter the country through this scheme may be less likely to adhere to visa regulations, leading to a higher incidence of undocumented individuals residing in the Philippines. Strengthening pre-arrival visa processes will help mitigate these issues by ensuring that applicants are thoroughly vetted before being granted entry.

Human trafficking is a serious concern that the Visa Upon Arrival scheme inadvertently facilitates. Traffickers can exploit this mechanism to bring vulnerable individuals into the country under false pretenses. By requiring visas to be obtained prior to arrival, the government can better protect potential victims through more rigorous checks and coordination with international agencies.

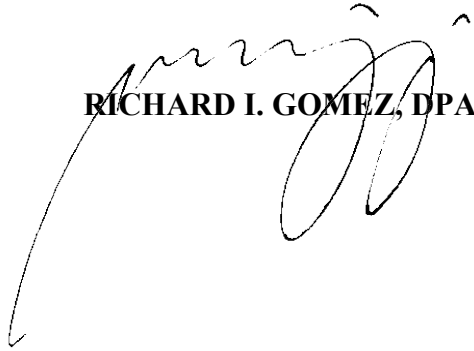
The termination of the Visa Upon Arrival scheme does not intend to hinder legitimate travel and tourism, as the top tourist visitors come from countries that enjoy visa-free entry to the

country. Instead, it aims to promote safer and more secure travel by ensuring that all visitors are properly screened before arrival. This measure aligns with the global standard practices of pre-arrival visa applications, which many countries have successfully implemented.

This bill supports the existing immigration policies and laws in the Philippines, such as the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940 (Commonwealth Act No. 613) and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (Republic Act No. 9208). It strengthens the country's commitment to upholding national security, protecting human rights, and promoting orderly migration.

The Termination of Visa Upon Arrival Scheme Act is a necessary step to enhance the security and integrity of the Philippines' immigration system. By requiring visas to be obtained prior to arrival, the government can better control and monitor the entry of foreign nationals, thereby reducing the risks associated with the Visa Upon Arrival scheme. This policy change is essential for protecting the country's borders, preventing illegal activities, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all residents.

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



RICHARD I. GOMEZ, DPA

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**AN ACT TERMINATING THE VISA UPON ARRIVAL SCHEME IN THE
PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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 "*Termination of Visa Upon Arrival Scheme Act.*"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to ensure the security and sovereignty of the nation while facilitating legitimate travel and tourism. The government recognizes the need to balance openness with the need for stringent immigration controls to protect the country from illegal activities, security threats, and other risks associated with the Visa Upon Arrival scheme.

SEC. 3. *Termination of Visa Upon Arrival Scheme.* — The Visa Upon Arrival scheme is hereby terminated. Foreign nationals from countries where visas are required to enter the Philippines must apply for and obtain the appropriate visa prior to their arrival, in accordance with existing immigration laws and regulations.

SEC. 4. *Monitoring and Compliance.* – The Bureau of Immigration (BI) shall monitor compliance with this Act and ensure that no visas upon arrival are issued at any port of entry in the Philippines. The BI shall submit regular reports to the Department of Justice (DOJ) on the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Bureau of Immigration (BI), in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and other relevant agencies, shall

promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from its effectivity.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,