

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
4401



Introduced by Rep. Faustino Michael T. Dy III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Mr. Bennie Boatwright is a 27-year-old basketball player from Los Angeles, California, USA. As a senior in high school, Mr. Boatwright averaged 27 points and 12 rebounds per game. In college, he signed with the University of Southern California, where in his senior year, he averaged 18.2 points, 6.6 rebounds, and 2.5 assists per game.

Standing at a mighty 6 feet 10 inches, Mr. Boatwright signed with the San Miguel Beermen in December 2023 as the team's new import for the PBA Commissioner's Cup. Mr. Boatwright and the Beermen eventually went on to claim the crown, with Mr. Boatwright tallying 19 points, 13 rebounds, and eight assists in Game Six.

The International Basketball Federation, FIBA, defines a national basketball team as being composed of 11 natural-born players and one naturalized player. The Philippines has had a long history of recruiting naturalized athletes to play for its national team as a way to improve its global rankings. Various countries in Asia have utilized a pool of naturalized players to boost their national team: Lebanon has Omari Spellman, James Youngblood, and Norvelle Pelle; Qatar has Mike Lewis and Boney Watson; Japan has Josh Harrelson and Joshua Hawkinson; and Syria has Javion Coleman Blake, Brandon Peterson, and Amil' Hinton. Even Georgia, which we will be playing against in the Olympic Qualifying Tournaments (OQTs), naturalized Thad McFadden and Joe Thomasson, to join its pool of naturalized players.

In our country, there are currently 2 modes of acquiring citizenship: 1) by birth or Jus Sanguinis (right of blood), which is the legal principle that, at birth, an individual acquires the nationality of his/her parents; and 2) by naturalization.

Naturalization in the Philippines, in turn, may be conferred judicially, administratively or through legislative act. There are strict prerequisites for naturalization to be conferred judicially and administratively. By legislation however, there are no such prerequisites. We in Congress may, and in multiple occasions in the past already have, enacted naturalization legislation on the basis of the athlete's exceptional merit and ability.

It is in this light that we are urging Congress to naturalize yet another player in the person of Mr. Boatwright. Being only 27 years old, his naturalization is also aligned with the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas' program of having a pool of talented naturalized players available, as do other countries. And with Mr. Boatwright's outstanding talent in basketball coupled with his eagerness to play for our flag, he will, undoubtedly, be an invaluable asset to our national basketball team, and is certain to bring pride and honor to our country.

Bestowing naturalization to athletes of exceptional merit and ability is indeed one unique and concrete contribution of the House of Representative to Philippine sports in general and to international basketball competitions in particular, The passage of this measure will continue this honorable tradition.

In view of the foregoing, the prompt passage of this bill is respectfully and urgently sought.



REP. FAUSTINO MICHAEL T. DY III

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AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO BENNIE FRANCOIS BOATWRIGHT 111

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

SECTION 1. Bennie Francois Boatwright III is hereby granted Philippine Citizenship with all the rights, privileges, prerogatives, as well as duties and obligations appurtenant thereto, under the Constitution and laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

SECTION 2. Bennie Francois Boatwright III shall take the Oath of Allegiance duly authorized to administer the same. The Oath of Allegiance shall be registered with the Bureau of Immigration.

SECTION 3. Upon registration of the Oath of Allegiance, the Bureau of Immigration shall issue a Certificate of Naturalization to Bennie Francois Boatwright III who shall thereupon enter in to the full enjoyment of Philippine Citizenship.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,