

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5673



INTRODUCED BY REP. PATRICK MICHAEL “PM” D. VARGAS

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKER (OFW) WARD TO BE KNOWN
AS THE “BAGONG BAYANI WARD” IN EVERY GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Statistics Authority estimates that there were 2.16 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in 2023. This number is higher compared to the 1.77 million in 2020 and still continuously grows.

Every year, the Philippines sends hundreds of thousands of Filipino workers abroad primarily to provide financial assistance for their left-behind families. On average, OFWs spend decades of their lives in other countries, mostly missing out on the majority of their life with their loved ones. Meanwhile, in their retirement years, many would already require health care due to illnesses and old age.

This bill seeks to recognize the invaluable contributions of the OFWs to their families as well as the national economy, through the establishment of “Bagong Bayani Ward” in every government hospital. This Bagong Bayani Ward shall be for the exclusive use of OFWs who need hospital confinement by reason of their health conditions. However, when the urgency of public necessity purposes so requires, such Bagong Bayani Ward may be used for emergency purposes, after which, it shall be reverted to its nature as an OFW ward.

By establishing a special ward in hospitals for OFWs, they will be assured that whenever they need hospitalization, beds will be reserved for them, and they will not be turned away, helpless and fearful for their well-being.

This measure further seeks to put a premium on our OFWs' health and safety as a way of giving back for their sacrifices and contributions to the country.

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



REP. PATRICK MICHAEL "PM" D. VARGAS
Fifth District, Quezon City

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Bagong Bayani Ward Act”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the health of the people. Furthermore, the health of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who are considered our nation’s modern-day heroes shall be protected, upheld, and promoted. Undeniably contributing much to our country, the State shall endeavor to maintain its good health and well-being.

SECTION 3. *Establishment.* – Throughout the country, there shall be established an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) ward to be known as the “Bagong Bayani Ward” in every government hospital. This Bagong Bayani Ward shall be for the exclusive use of OFWs who are in need of hospital confinement by reason of their health conditions. However, when the urgency of public necessity purposes so requires, such Bagong Bayani Ward may be used for emergency purposes, after which, it shall be reverted to its nature as an OFW ward.

SECTION 4. *Eligibility.* – This Act shall cover all OFWs, including, but not limited to, the following: land-based OFWs, seafarers, and other sea-based workers.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health (DOH) shall, in coordination with the Department of Migrant Workers (DWM) and other concerned government departments and agencies, with the participation of the Local Government Units (LGUs), promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the immediate implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the portions or provisions which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to, or inconsistent with, this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,