

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **7787**



**Introduced by Representatives Bryan B. Revilla, Lani Mercado-Revilla, and
Ramon Jolo B. Revilla III**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Sections 18, Article II of the 1987 Constitution provides that the state affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare. This provision is essential not just to Filipino workers who are residing within the country, but perhaps more importantly, to those workers who often risk life and limb to provide for the needs of their families back here in the Philippines.

Currently, there are an estimated 2.47 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) all over the world. Each and every one of them have long been considered modern-day heroes not simply due to their sacrifice, but also because of their enormous role in the Philippine economy. With total remittances often exceeding hundreds of billions of pesos each year, OFWs are a major economic driver – greatly contributing to our growth and development as a nation.

The struggles of working abroad are numerous and overlapping. OFWs often grapple simultaneously with homesickness and depression, poor working conditions, unfair compensation, and even abusive and violent employers. Despite this, our *kababayans* persevere and make the ultimate sacrifice – often not being able to come home to see their families for months or even years at a time.

In order to avail of programs relevant to their employment and residency abroad, our OFWs heavily rely on consular offices and service attachés of Philippine government agencies for critical services such as passport renewal, contract verification, legal aid, and enrollment in social protection programs. Yet OFWs encounter difficulties in accessing such services since these are usually made available only on weekdays which come into conflict with their schedules. This situation forces OFWs to take a leave from their work, sometimes without pay or at risk of termination, just to access essential government services. Such an

arrangement is not only inefficient, but also unjust since the current work schedules of Philippine government offices abroad do not properly reflect the needs of the stakeholders in the respective countries.

This bill seeks to address the need for essential government services in foreign service stations to be made available on weekends. It mandates all Philippine consulates, and service attachés abroad to remain operational on two weekend days per month, subject to offsetting arrangements, as these are the most accessible times for the Filipino migrant community. To ensure faithful implementation, the bill includes a penal clause that imposes administrative sanctions on officials who unjustifiably fail to comply with the provisions of this Act.

The measure upholds the State's obligation to make government services accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the realities and lived experiences of our dear OFWs. It embodies the principle that no Filipino worker should be penalized financially or professionally for seeking help from the Philippine government.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of the measure is earnestly sought.


REP. BRYAN B. REVILLA
Representative, AGIMAT Party-list


REP. LANI MERCADO-REVILLA
Representative, 2nd District of Cavite


REP. RAMON JOLO B. REVILLA III
Representative, 1st District of Cavite

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AN ACT

**MANDATING PHILIPPINE CONSULAR OFFICES AND SERVICE ATTACHÉS
ABROAD TO OPERATE ON AT LEAST TWO WEEKEND DAYS A MONTH TO
ENABLE OVERSEAS FILIPINOS TO TRANSACT BUSINESS WITHOUT LOSS
OF INCOME 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 “The Overseas
Filipinos Consular Access Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the Policy of the State to ensure that the
rights, welfare, and interests of Overseas Filipinos are protected and promoted. The
government shall endeavor to bring services closer to Overseas Filipino Workers
(OFWs) by making these accessible during the times they are most available, without
jeopardizing their employment or income.

SEC. 3. *Mandatory Consular Operations During Weekends.* – All Philippine
Embassies, Consulate General, and consular offices abroad, including service
attachés of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and other relevant government
agencies shall be open for service at least two weekend days per month after a
thorough consultation with stakeholders in their respective host countries , which shall
be offset with the equivalent rest days in accordance with the internal policies of the
DMW, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

SEC. 4. *Flexible and Offset Work Arrangements.* – Heads of Posts shall
adopt flexible and staggered work schedules to allow for compliance with Section 3
of this Act while ensuring that personnel are not overburdened.

Personnel who work during designated weekends shall be granted
compensatory days off and/or additional pay, consistent with existing civil service
rules and regulations covering government personnel.

SEC. 5. Scope of Services. – Services to be made available during designated weekends shall include, but not limited to:

- a. Passport and travel documents services;
- b. Authentication and notarial services;
- c. Civil Registry (birth, marriage, death);
- d. Visa processing (where applicable);
- e. Legal Assistance to Nationals (LAN);
- f. Contract verification and welfare case assistance by the DMW and OWWA; and
- g. Enrollment and inquiries related to SSS, Pag-IBIG, PhilHealth, and other social protection programs.

SEC. 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DFA and DMW, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 7. Appropriations. – Initial funding for the implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the respective operating budgets of the implementing agencies. Future funding requirements shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. Penalties. – Failure of any consular post or service office abroad to comply with this Act without justifiable cause shall be subject to administrative sanctions under existing civil service laws and regulations, including reprimand, suspension, or dismissal and any other penalties depending on the gravity of the offense.

SEC. 9. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any reason, the remainder of this Act or the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 10. Repealing Clause. – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. Effectivity. – 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, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,