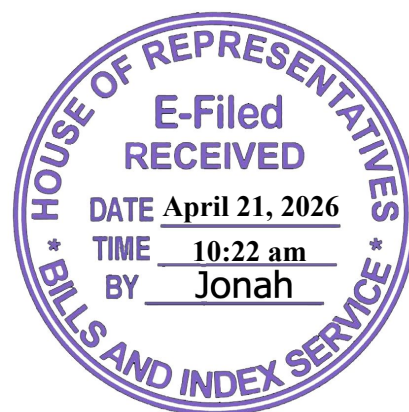




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8902



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE REGISTRY OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS (OFWs)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 18, Article II of the 1987 Constitution mandates the State to protect labor and promote the welfare of workers, including Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) whose remittances significantly contribute to national development and sustain millions of Filipino families. Despite their vital role in the economy, OFWs continue to face illegal recruitment, contract substitution, inadequate pre-departure preparation, fragmented government monitoring, and limited access to timely welfare assistance. There remains no single, centralized, and comprehensive database that consolidates accurate and up-to-date information on OFWs and overseas employment opportunities.

This bill seeks to establish the Philippine Registry of OFWs, a centralized, secure, and integrated national database covering land-based and sea-based workers, as well as individuals intending to work abroad. The Registry shall contain verified information on workers, accredited recruitment agencies, licensed employers, and approved job orders to ensure transparency and prevent fraudulent recruitment practices. It shall serve as an official platform for monitoring deployment, tracking employment status, and facilitating immediate government response in cases of emergency, distress, or repatriation. The measure designates the Department of Migrant Workers as the lead implementing

agency, in coordination with relevant government offices, to establish, manage, and safeguard the Registry in compliance with data privacy and cybersecurity standards.

By institutionalizing a unified information system, the bill strengthens regulatory oversight, enhances inter-agency coordination, improves delivery of welfare and reintegration services, and reinforces the State's constitutional duty to protect Filipino migrant workers throughout the entire migration cycle.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



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JUDE A. ACIDRE



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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 “The OFW Registry Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – As used in this Act:

- (a) *Data Sharing* – refers to the disclosure or transfer to a third party of personal data under the control or custody of a personal information controller (PIC) or personal information processor (PIP).
- (b) *Data Sharing Agreement* – refers to a contract, joint issuance, or similar document that contains the terms and conditions of a data sharing agreement between two or more parties.

- (c) *Financial Literacy* – refers to the ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting, and investing.
- (d) *First-time OFW* – refer to a Filipino who is seeking employment abroad for the first time.
- (e) *Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW)* – refers to a Filipino who is to be engaged, or has been engaged in remunerated activity in a country of which he or she is not an immigrant, citizen, or permanent resident or is not awaiting naturalization, recognition, or admission, whether land-based or sea-based regardless of status, excluding a Filipino engaged under a government-recognized exchange visitor program for cultural and educational purposes. For purposes of this provision, a person to be engaged or is engaged in remunerated activity covers a person, whether land-based or sea-based, who has been contracted for overseas employment and is already at the point of hire ready for deployment. The term “OFW” is synonymous to “Migrant Worker”.
- (f) *OFW Registry* – refers to a comprehensive database maintained by the government that records and tracks information on all registered OFWs, both land-based and sea-based, including their employment details, personal information, educational background, training, and other relevant data necessary to enhance government protection.
- (g) *OFW Scorecard* – refers to a tool used to evaluate and monitor the readiness and suitability of an individual for overseas employment. The scorecard includes various metrics and indicators and other relevant criteria that determine the overall competency and work readiness of an OFW.
- (h) *Physical Examination* – A medical evaluation conducted by licensed healthcare professionals to assess the overall physical health and fitness of

an individual for overseas employment. This examination ensures that OFWs are physically capable of performing their duties and responsibilities in a foreign country.

- (i) *Psychological Assessment* – A standardized evaluation conducted by licensed professionals to assess the mental health, emotional stability, and psychological readiness of an individual for overseas employment. This assessment aims to ensure that OFWs are mentally and emotionally prepared for the challenges of working abroad.
- (j) *Returning OFWs (or balik-manggagawa)* – refers to an overseas Filipino worker who has served or is serving his/her employment contract and is returning to the same employer in the same jobsite or returning to the same employer in a new job site and who has an existing record in the DMW database of deployed workers.
- (k) *Work Readiness* – The state of being fully prepared and equipped with the necessary competence, knowledge, physical fitness, psychological stability and mental health to undertake employment in a foreign country.

SEC. 3. Objectives. – The objectives of this Act are as follows:

- (a) To empower Filipinos who are seeking employment abroad to be fully prepared and equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, physical fitness, psychological stability and mental health to undertake and sustain employment in a foreign country;
- (b) To facilitate the matching of skills or competencies and qualifications of all Filipinos seeking employment abroad with available job opportunities;
- (c) To eliminate illegal recruitment activities and protect potential overseas workers from exploitation, abuse and fraud;
- (d) To effectively monitor Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to ensure their welfare and protection while working abroad; and

- (e) To enable the DMW and other agencies of the government to effectively and efficiently provide the appropriate interventions to enhance the competencies or skills and work readiness of OFWs and all those intending to work abroad.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of the OFW Registry.* – The DMW shall establish the OFW Registry, which shall be made accessible to all OFWs, as well as those intending to work abroad.

This registry shall include a comprehensive scorecard to assess the competencies and work readiness of applicants for overseas employment. The DMW shall develop the scorecard that will measure various aspects, including qualifications, competencies or skills, financial literacy, psychological stability, mental health, and physical fitness.

For easier access, the DMW may segregate the OFWs based on sector, whether land-based or sea-based, gender, country of destination, nature of work, nature of OFW whether first-time or returning OFWs (*balik manggagawa*), and other reasonable criteria.

SEC. 5. *Contents of the Registry.* – All OFWs shall provide the following details or information to the registry, when applicable:

- (a) Full name;
- (b) Date of birth;
- (c) Address;
- (d) Contact details;

- (e) National ID number, including Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Social Security System (SSS), Bureau of Internal Revenue Tax Identification Number (BIR TIN), PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG MID numbers;
- (f) Educational attainment;
- (g) Qualifications, relevant trainings or seminars attended, if any;
- (h) Transcripts/diplomas, if any;
- (i) Work history;
- (j) Psychological Assessment Results;
- (k) Physical Examination Results;
- (l) Financial Literacy Assessment Results; and
- (m) Any other pertinent information deemed necessary by the DMW and other relevant government agencies, such as the Bureau of Immigration.

SEC. 6. *Mandatory Registration.* – All OFWs, including returning OFWs and those who intend to work abroad, must register with the OFW Registry.

Only those registered and belong to the OFW Green List shall be allowed to work abroad.

The DMW shall provide the mechanism for easy registration and validation of information provided by the registrant, including uploading of pertinent documents.

SEC. 7 *Minimum Period from Registration.* – For first-time OFWs, a minimum of ninety (90) days from registration shall be required in order to be eligible for deployment.

For other types of OFWs, the DMW shall determine the length of time from registration – from zero (0) to ninety (90) days – before the OFW may be legally deployed.

SEC. 8. *OFW Green List.* – In addition to the required minimum period, the DMW shall determine who are eligible for deployment based on the scorecard it has developed, ensuring that only individuals who meet the established criteria and demonstrate work readiness through the scorecard evaluation will be allowed to join the pool of Filipinos eligible for deployment abroad.

All those eligible for deployment abroad shall be considered part of DMW's OFW Green List.

SEC. 9. *Recruitment within the OFW Registry.* – Unless exempted by the DMW, recruitment of OFWs – whether land-based or sea-based – shall only be within the OFW Registry. In this regard, all verified job orders or crew orders shall be immediately posted by the DMW in the OFW Registry, which shall be made accessible to all qualified pool of applicants.

SEC. 10. *Illegal Recruitment.* – Any recruitment activities outside the OFW Registry, or those exempted by DMW, shall be considered illegal recruitment.

SEC. 11. *Protection of Privacy and Protection Against Unlawful Disclosure of Information.* – The DMW, in coordination with the DICT, shall ensure the integrity and privacy of the OFWs, as well as those intending to work abroad, who are in the OFW Registry.

No person may disclose, collect, record, convey, disseminate, publish, or use any information pertaining to registered individuals with the OFW Registry, give access thereto or give copies thereof to third parties or entities, except when the registered person has given his or her consent, specific to the purpose prior to the processing.

Information disclosed shall not be used except for the specific purpose for which it was authorized and shall not be divulged by any person to any third party other than the person so authorized.

The DMW must ensure that information in the OFW Registry is used only in accordance with its intended purpose as set forth in this Act.

Any information obtained as a result of unlawful disclosure under this Act shall be inadmissible in any judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative proceedings.

SEC. 12. *Data Sharing Involving Government Agencies.* – Data sharing agreements involving the information contained in the OFW Registry between government agencies must strictly adhere to the data privacy principles delineated in Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012,” along with its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), and all issuances by the National Privacy Commission (NPC).

SEC. 13. *Regular Updating of the Registry.* – OFWs are required to regularly update their information in the registry. All updates shall be subject to validation by the DMW to ensure the accuracy of the data and the current status of the OFWs.

SEC. 14. *Blacklisting.* – The DMW may blacklist OFWs or those intending to work abroad for violation of their overseas contract, or on other legal grounds.

SEC. 15. *Role of Government Agencies.* – The DMW shall be the lead agency responsible for implementing this Act. Accordingly, the DMW shall:

- (a) Develop and maintain the system infrastructure for the OFW registry;
- (b) Develop the scorecard system that will assess the competencies or skills and work readiness of the OFWs or those intending to work abroad;
- (c) Implement a systematic approach for the continuous and regular updating of the registry;
- (d) Validate the information provided by the OFWs or those intending to work abroad;
- (e) Adequately inform upon registration for the OFW Registry on how their data will be used or processed, and how they can access their registered information and record history;
- (f) Post verified job orders or crew orders in the OFW Registry which shall be made accessible to all qualified candidates;
- (g) Transmit the information of interested qualified applicants to the concerned recruitment agency or manning agency;
- (h) Enforce blacklisting as provided in the immediately preceding section;
- (i) Grant access to specific individuals or groups on specific data in the OFW Registry as may be necessary in the performance of their mandates or functions; and
- (j) Undertake appropriate measures to ensure that the objectives of this Act are realized.

The DICT shall provide technical assistance to the DMW in developing and operating the OFW Registry.

The Bureau of Immigration (BI), Overseas Workers Welfare Affairs (OWWA), and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) shall also provide technical support and assistance to the DMW as may be necessary.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DMW, in coordination with the DICT, BI, OWWA, and DFA, and upon consultation with relevant stakeholders, including associations of recruitment agencies, manning agencies, OFW groups, and advocates, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 17. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 18. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act or any part hereof be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of Act.

SEC. 19. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 20. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effects fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,