

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'22 NOV 16 P2 :25

SENATE

S. No. 1512

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**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

Overseas Filipinos Workers (OFWs) are our nation's modern-day heroes. Their sacrifices do not only help give their families and loved ones a more comfortable life, but their remittances also contribute to our economy.

They make the painful sacrifice of packing their lives in suitcases and starting anew in foreign shores, with hope inside their pocket and dreams inside their heart. The longing for their family's embrace is often assuaged by the thought that someday the reunions that come few and far between, will no longer be punctuated with goodbyes.

We know their story all too well – often depicted in *teleseryes* and movies; mothers leaving their still suckling babies so they can one day send them to school, fathers giving their tightest hugs with tears in their eyes wondering how the next homecoming would be like after time and distance, first-born children saying their goodbyes to parents and siblings whose future would depend on the months, even years, they will spend away from each other.

Their plight has been magnified in the recent COVID-19 pandemic, where the uncertainty took a toll not only on their profession and livelihood, but ultimately, on their health and safety. The lingering fears that loomed above their heads became the reality that they had to deal with and survive. While they dreaded the unfortunate

scenario of the shutdown of the economy which could mean their jobs on the line, they also worried about their health and the cost of hospitalization should they succumb to illness.

Worse than the mounting costs of hospitalization, was the insufficiency of beds which could accommodate them. Many searched from city to city, some even province to province, in order to get cures for illness.

From the experiences in this pandemic, we must draw lessons to guide us moving forward. For their invaluable contributions to our nation, our OFWs deserve no less than special care, attention and prioritization – especially when their health is exposed to increased risk and hazard.

This is precisely what this proposed measure seeks to endeavor. As we recognize the invaluable contributions of our dear OFWs to society, so too shall we acknowledge the urgency of their health concerns. We have to understand that when their health is on line, their livelihood is likewise affected – and in turn, their families' future will inevitably be affected. By establishing OFW wards in hospitals, they will be assured that whenever their illness would need hospitalization, beds will be reserved for them and they will not be turned away helpless and fearful for their well-being.

The State ought to put a premium on our OFW's health and safety – as a way to pay our debt of gratitude for their role in boosting our economy, but also in faithfulness to our commitment to serve and protect them.

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



RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as "*Bagong Bayani Ward Act*".

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

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

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

16 Sec. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within six (6) months from the
17 effectivity of this Act, the Department of Health (DOH) shall, in coordination with the
18 Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and other concerned government

1 departments and agencies, with the participation of the Local Government Units
2 (LGUs), promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

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

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

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

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

Approved,