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SENATE
P. S. Res. No. **190**

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PROCEDURES FOLLOWED BY THE DIPLOMATIC POSTS AND THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS LABOR OFFICES (POLO) IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) VIS-À-VIS THE RECENT REPORTED CASE OF ACID BURNING AND DEATH OF ROMILYN EROY-IBANEZ AND THE REPORTED ILL TREATMENT OF OFWS IN DISTRESS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF RECOMMENDING MEANINGFUL AND HUMANE LEGISLATION FOR FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS

Whereas, the 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes the primordial role of Filipino labor, both local and overseas, in nation-building, viz:

1. "Article II, Section 18. The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare."
2. "Article XIII. Section 3. The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. x x x"

Whereas, the Philippine government established various agencies to facilitate and assist in the attainment of the welfare and protection of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs);

Whereas, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) was established as the primary government agency mandated to promote gainful employment opportunities, develop human resources, protect workers and promote their welfare, and maintain industrial peace;

Whereas, in a news article of the Philippine Star (www.philstar.com, September 15, 2010), it was cited that "in a report of the Philippine embassy in Saudi Arabia, an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) was found in the kitchen of her employer's residence with knife wounds in her neck, abdomen and wrist as well as acid burns in her mouth area, arms and legs";

Whereas, a news article published in the <http://arabnews.com> stated that "Labor Attache David Des T. Dicang, head of Philippine Overseas Labor Eastern Region Operations (POLO-ERO) identified the woman as Romilyn Eroy-Ibanez, 22, from the southern Philippine province of North Cotabato";

Whereas, the news report stated that, “it is impossible for the Filipina to have committed suicide by stabbing herself and ingesting the acid at the same time and that the medical staff purportedly said that the Filipina’s internal organs could not sustain the acid ingestion which caused her death”;

Whereas, in a different situation but also involving OFWs, it was reported in a recent episode of the TV program “Failon Ngayon” that there were a number of stranded migrant Filipinos who are in need of repatriation and assistance;

Whereas, it was reported that an official of the POLO in KSA allegedly turned a deaf ear to the OFWs when they asked for assistance;

Whereas, the POLO functions as the satellite office of the DOLE to protect workers in various countries where they are deployed and given this mandate, it is the primary responsibility of the POLOs through the directive of the labor attaché, to attend to the problems of our workers, particularly the most vulnerable groups such as those who were retrenched and displaced from their jobs;

Whereas, among the end objectives in filing this resolution are the review of the appropriation and programs for OFWs assistance and the necessary increase in the same, the tightening of existing laws with regard to overseas recruitment and the establishment of OFW-centered diplomatic posts and POLO offices, among others;

Whereas, the DOLE and the DFA must make the necessary arrangements with the host governments of our OFWs that would cover protection mechanisms and that the DOLE and DFA through its relevant offices must adopt an effective standard procedure to assist migrant workers in distress: NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to urge the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development, and Foreign Relations to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the procedures followed by the diplomatic posts and the Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) in providing assistance to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) vis-à-vis the recent reported case acid burning and death of Romilyn Eroy-Ibanez and the reported ill treatment of OFWs in distress in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the objective of recommending meaningful and humane legislation for Filipino migrant workers.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR