



Senate
Office of the Secretary

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE]
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES]
First Regular Session]**

25 AUG -7 P1:34

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

S.B. No. 1100

Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED, AND SUSTAINABLE
REINTEGRATION PROGRAM FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

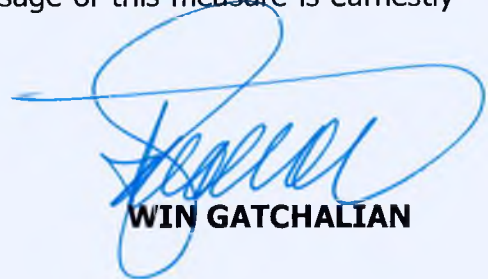
The Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) is an integral part of Filipino society. A hero in their own right, the OFW voluntarily leaves behind the comforts of family, home, and country to sojourn into foreign lands to take up challenging jobs for the sake of their loved ones. After time away from home – often years, for many – the OFW comes home and faces another struggle: the struggle to reintegrate into Filipino society, which has often changed much since they first left home.

This legislation seeks to lend support to our heroic OFWs and their families by establishing a comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable reintegration program for OFWs. The bill adopts a whole-of-government approach to provide learning, employment, business, and psychosocial opportunities for OFWs to reintegrate themselves into Filipino society upon returning home. The approach of the government under this legislation would include providing job fairs, trainings, educational opportunities, psychosocial counseling, and a wide array of other opportunities through the frontline departments and agencies of government. Detailed services are provided throughout the entire OFW cycle, from the pre-departure to the

on-site and return stages. Undocumented OFWs are also afforded special protections under this proposed law to ensure that they are not left behind and forgotten in the reintegration process.

Almost 2.5 million Filipinos deployed as OFWs abroad in 2024 alone.¹ Thus, this critical legislation will directly serve millions of Filipinos who deserve every opportunity to fully reintegrate into Filipino society after their service abroad. We owe it to our OFWs to pass this legislation.

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



WIN GATCHALIAN

¹ Preliminary data from the Department of Migrant Workers - Management Information and Technology Service.

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Bagong*
2 *Balikbayan Act*".

3

4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the invaluable
5 contributions of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to national development and
6 is committed to upholding their fundamental rights, including the right to equal
7 opportunity, decent living, dignity, and participation in decision-making
8 processes affecting their lives and well-being. Further, it is the declared policy
9 of the State to:

10 (a) Implement a comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable integration
11 program for returning OFWs, addressing economic, social, psychosocial,
12 gender-responsive, and cultural dimensions, regardless of their documentation
13 status;

14 (b) Ensure such reintegration programs are customized to the needs and
15 skills of OFWs and mainstreamed throughout the migration cycle and promote:

16 1) Access to local employment, entrepreneurship, agriculture,

- 1 fisheries, aquaculture, and other livelihood opportunities;
2 2) Development of financial literacy programs; and
3 3) Attainment of economic self-sufficiency, social stability, and
4 psychosocial well-being for returning OFWs and their families.
5 (c) Foster conditions where migration is a matter of choice rather than
6 necessity; and
7 (d) Collaborate with relevant public and private stakeholders in the
8 design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of reintegration programs
9 and assistance.

10

11 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following terms
12 are defined as follows:

- 13 (a) *Full-cycle Reintegration Program* refers to interventions starting with
14 the pre-departure stage, on-site support during employment, and
15 assistance upon return;
16 (b) *Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW)* refers to a Filipino who is to be
17 engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in remunerated activity
18 in a country of which they are not an immigrant, citizen, or
19 permanent resident or is not awaiting naturalization, recognition, or
20 admission, whether land-based or sea-based regardless of status;
21 excluding a Filipino engaged under a government-recognized
22 exchange visitor program for cultural and educational purposes;
23 (c) *Reintegration* refers to a multi-dimensional process enabling OFWs
24 to re-establish economic, social, and psychosocial well-being upon
25 return; and
26 (d) *Undocumented OFW* refers to an OFW not registered with the
27 Philippine government as an OFW, or whose documents are
28 incomplete or valid. An undocumented OFW is also known as an
29 "irregular OFW."

30 This Act shall also extend to OFWs who required targeted assistance,
31 including senior or solo-parent OFWs. Furthermore, the families of returnee-
32 OFWs shall likewise be covered and benefited by the provisions of this Act,

1 subject to and as may be further detailed within the implementing rules and
2 regulations promulgated hereto.

3
4 SEC. 5. *Access to Employment Opportunities and Qualification*
5 *Recognition.* –

6 (a) Job Fairs. The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), together with
7 the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) shall, in
8 coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE),
9 Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry
10 (DTI), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG),
11 Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), Civil
12 Service Commission (CSC), Commission on Higher Education (CHED),
13 Public Employment Services Office, and in consultation with concerned
14 business chambers and groups in the private sector, private enterprises
15 recognized for ensuring security of tenure, humane conditions of work,
16 and a living wage, and relevant Local Government Units (LGUs), plan
17 and conduct regular series of job fairs in strategic sites and LGUs where
18 there are significant presence of returnee-OFWs.

19
20 These job fairs shall facilitate employment opportunities in: (1) the
21 private sector; (2) the national or local government, including their
22 agencies, bureaus, offices, instrumentalities, and government-owned
23 and/or controlled corporations (GOCCs), for civil service qualified OFWs;
24 and (3) academic and non-academic positions in public schools, and
25 state colleges and universities. Such job fairs shall take into
26 consideration the specific skills, credentials, eligibilities, and experience
27 acquired by OFWs from working overseas.

28
29 (b) Expanded Employment Facilitation. The DMW and other concerned
30 government agencies shall expand the employment facilitation offering
31 for OFWs in the public, private, and development sectors based on
32 progressive eligibility or qualification criteria, in partnership with the

relevant national government agencies, the Private Sector Advisory Council, industry or professional associations, and other stakeholders.

(c) Civil Service Eligibility. The CSC shall formulate guidelines to grant appropriate civil service eligibility to non-civil service qualified OFWs, based on the education, training, and experience they acquired while living or working overseas.

(d) Skills and Academic Recognition. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the CHED shall provide the necessary rules and regulations to grant pertinent national certification or appropriate degree diploma(s), respectively, recognizing the education, training, and experience OFWs acquire while living or working overseas.

SEC. 6. *Initiation of Reintegration Process.* – The reintegration process for concerned OFWs shall be initiated by the relevant Migrant Workers Offices (MWOs) six (6) months before the intended return of the OFW to the Philippines. This process shall commence by providing access to four (4) paths for reintegration, namely:

- (a) Education, upskilling / reskilling / retooling / micro-credentialing (Kaalaman);
- (b) Psychosocial and social support services (Kalinga);
- (c) Entrepreneurship (Negosyo); and
- (d) Employment (Hanapbuhay).

SEC. 7. *Returnee-OFWs Management Information System (ROMIS) and Reintegration Management System (RMS).* –

- (a) Establishment of ROMIS. The DMW shall establish and maintain the ROMIS, which shall serve as the primary information network and database containing information on the educational attainment, skills levels, and experience of all returning OFWs. The ROMIS shall

1 function as a referral system to the private sector and government
2 institutions to facilitate job matching, possible hiring, and/or skills
3 upgrading.

4 (b) Development and Function of RMS. Within the ROMIS framework,
5 the DMW shall finalize the development and operationalization of the
6 RMS. The RMS shall be an online system and platform designed to
7 streamline the reintegration process for returnee-OFWs. It shall
8 provide access to a range of services, including financial literacy
9 programs, livelihood training, and access to funding opportunities.

10 (c) System Objectives. Both the ROMIS and RMS shall facilitate effective
11 connections with government and private sector partners to ensure
12 a smooth transition for returnee-OFWs back into local employment
13 or entrepreneurship. The RMS shall further aim to provide efficient
14 support for the holistic needs of returnee-OFWs and their families,
15 thereby seeking to empower them to reintegrate successfully and
16 continue contributing to national development.

17
18 SEC. 8. *Institutional Framework for Recognition.* –

19 (a) Lead Agency. The DMW shall, in coordination with the OWWA and
20 the National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO), serve as the
21 primary agency responsible for the implementation of the full-cycle
22 reintegration program.

23 (b) Role of the NRCO. The NRCO shall function as the central
24 coordination mechanism to: (1) enhance participation of all
25 stakeholders to achieve transformative, effective, and efficient
26 delivery of services to returnee-OFWs and their families; and (2)
27 Ensure the harmonized and synergized implementation of the full-
28 cycle national reintegration policy and program.

29 The NRCO shall design and institutionalize reintegration
30 frameworks, strategies, and standards that address the economic,
31 social and psychological aspects of return, and shall lead the
32 coordination of relevant government agencies, local government

1 units, and partners from the private sector and civil society. Together
2 with the OWWA, it shall implement reintegration programs and
3 services in accordance with established plans, policies, and
4 guidelines. It shall maintain a centralized reintegration database,
5 undertake policy and program research, and ensure that all
6 reintegration initiatives are coherent, evidence-based, and aligned
7 with national migration and development properties.

8
9 (c) Role of MWOs and OWWA Overseas Welfare Offices (OWOS). The
10 MWOs together with the OWOS located abroad shall be strengthened
11 to enable them to provide reintegration counseling and support
12 services directly to OFWs onsite, including undocumented workers.

13
14 SEC. 9. *Pre-Return and Reintegration Orientation Seminar (PPROS)*. –

15 There shall be a PPROS to be offered by MWOs worldwide, similar in intent to
16 pre-employment, pre-departure, and post-arrival orientation seminars, but
17 concentrating on essential information for a returning OFW seeking to be
18 reintegrated back into the Philippine economy and society.

19
20 SEC. 10. *Business-Oriented Capacity-Building Training*.

21 (a) Provision of Training. The DOLE shall, in coordination with the DTI
22 and the DA, provide Business-Oriented Capacity-Building Training for
23 OFWs who are seeking to set up their businesses.

24 (b) Training Focus Areas. The training shall focus on the following key
25 areas: (1) business conceptualization and conduct of feasibility
26 studies; (2) registration and all other administrative matters related
27 to creating one's own business; (3) safe and sustainable business
28 financing, incorporating the DMW's Financial Awareness Seminar-
29 Small Business Management Training (FAS-SMBT), which promotes
30 financial awareness and provides training for the development and
31 management of small businesses; (4) business promotion /
32 advertising / marketing; and (5) service/product delivery.

1 (c) Enhancement of FAS-SBMT and Collaboration. The DMW's FAS-SBMT
2 shall strengthen program coordination and shall expand its offerings.
3 Pursuant thereto, the DMW shall collaborate with concerned national
4 government agencies and stakeholders to provide co-opportunities
5 for entrepreneurship development, incubation, marketing, and
6 mentoring.

7 (d) DA Agricultural Credit Policy Council Support (ACPC). The DA's ACPC
8 shall offer capacity-building support alongside its credit programs.
9 The DA and its ACPC shall provide services specifically designed for
10 those engaged in the agri-fishery sector. This support shall be made
11 available to returnee-OFWs applying for ACPC's loan programs to
12 assist them in acquiring the necessary skills and improving their
13 business management.

14 (e) Small Business Corporation (SB Corp). The SB Corp., a government-
15 owned and controlled corporation operating under the DTI, shall
16 support reintegration efforts by providing capacity-building programs
17 and access to credit facilities.

18 (f) Mentorship facilitation. The training provided under this Section shall
19 serve as a means by which returnee-OFWs are assisted in finding
20 and connecting with mentors in the business sector, particularly
21 those established in the industry the returnee-OFW intends to enter.

22 (g) Prioritization. Prioritization for participation in the training and related
23 support under this Section shall be given to those returnee-OFWs
24 with no background in putting together and running or operating
25 their own businesses, particularly those intending to establish a sole
26 proprietorship and having no seasoned business partners.

27
28 SEC. 11. *Components of Reintegration Services.* – Reintegration services
29 shall include the following components provided at relevant stages of the
30 migration cycle:

31 (a) Pre-Departure:

32 1. Mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars covering

1 available reintegration services and support for
2 undocumented OFWs;

3 2. Financial literacy training focused on management of earnings
4 and future planning; and

5 3. Family counseling on coping mechanisms for separation and
6 eventual reunification.

7 (b) On-Site Support:

8 1. Provision of accessible support services through MWOs for
9 OFWs in distress, including undocumented workers;

10 2. Opportunities for skills development and training designed to
11 enhance employability upon return; and

12 3. Establishment of mechanisms for addressing exploitation and
13 abuse, ensuring access to legal and psychosocial support.

14 (c) Upon Return:

15 1. Provision of personalized reintegration counseling and case
16 management to develop tailored reintegration plans;

17 2. Delivery of economic reintegration assistance, including
18 facilitation of job placement, entrepreneurship training, and
19 access to financing;

20 3. Facilitation of social reintegration support, covering access to
21 housing, documentation, education, healthcare, and social
22 protection schemes;

23 4. Provision of psychosocial support services addressing mental
24 health concerns and challenges from migration; and

25 5. Grant of special attention to the needs of vulnerable OFWs,
26 particularly victims of trafficking, persons with disabilities, and
27 those with specific medical or psychosocial needs.

28

29 SEC. 12. *Protection of Undocumented OFWs.* No undocumented OFW
30 shall be denied reintegration services due to their status. Mechanisms shall be
31 established for the regularization of undocumented OFW's status upon return
32 to facilitate access to services and benefits. Information dissemination

1 campaign shall inform undocumented OFWs of their rights and available
2 reintegration support. A dedicated hotline and online platform shall be
3 established for confidential assistance to undocumented OFWs.

4
5 SEC. 13. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* – The DMW shall develop a
6 monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the reintegration program's
7 effectiveness and conduct regular impact assessments to ensure program
8 responsiveness to OFW's evolving needs.

9
10 SEC. 14. *Dedicated Financing and Loan Programs.* –

11 (a) Development and Provision. The DMW and the OWWA shall, in
12 coordination with the Department of Finance (DOF), the Department
13 of Budget and Management (DBM), the DA, particularly its
14 Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Services (AMAS), and ACPC,
15 Government Financial Institutions (GFIs) and qualified private
16 financial institutions, develop and provide dedicated financing or loan
17 programs.

18 (b) Purpose and Terms. These programs shall facilitate the
19 establishment, operation, sustainability, or expansion of enterprises
20 and livelihood projects, including micro, small, and medium-sized
21 enterprises (MSMEs), owned by returnee-OFWs, under minimal and
22 affordable terms and conditions.

23 (c) Eligibility and Support. (1) The dedicated programs under this section
24 shall primarily cater to returnee-OFWs with no existing enterprise or
25 livelihood project. (2) Returnee-OFWs with an existing enterprise
26 that is dismally performing shall also be eligible: *Provided,* That the
27 DMW, OWWA, DOF, DBM, DA (through AMAS and ACPC), and GFIs
28 shall provide financial and other support, including technical
29 guidance, necessary to revitalize the undertaking. (3) Returnee-
30 OFWs with existing enterprises deemed robust may be referred to
31 the standing programs of the DTI for appropriate assistance.

1 SEC. 15. *Program for Qualified OFWs to Teach in the Academe.* – The
2 DMW shall, in coordination with the CHED and TESDA, provide a program to
3 invite qualified and highly-skilled OFWs to teach in colleges/universities
4 recognized by the CHED and/or in training centers accredited by the TESDA.

5
6 SEC. 16. *Social Assistance Measures.* – The DMW shall, together with
7 the OWWA, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the DA,
8 shall include returnee-OFWs as beneficiaries in their respective social protection
9 and other relevant programs.

10 The DMW and the OWWA, through their regional offices, shall
11 encourage community engagements for returnee-OFWs and their families.

12 All reintegration programs and services, including social assistance
13 measures under this Act, shall be guided by the principles mandated under
14 Section 17 of Republic Act no. 11641, otherwise known as the "Department of
15 Migrant Workers Act," ensuring a multi-dimensional reintegration program that
16 effectively addresses the economic, social, psychosocial, and cultural aspects
17 of reintegration.

18 The implementing rules and regulations of this Act shall contain detailed
19 and specific provisions on social assistance and protection to ensure that more
20 OFWs are included in the various social protection programs offered by the
21 government, the private sector, and non-government organizations (NGOs).

22
23 SEC. 17. *Right to Participate.* – Former OFWs who are to be reintegrated
24 into the Philippine domestic economy shall, as much as practicable, participate
25 in policy and decision-making processes affecting their rights and benefits
26 under existing laws and under the provisions of this Act.

27
28 SEC. 18. *Application of Anti-Age Discrimination Law.* –

29 (a) Compliance Obligation. In the extension of services to former OFWs
30 and in all matters concerning their local or domestic employment, all
31 government agencies, GOCCs, and all private corporations,
32 partnerships, sole proprietorships, including NGOs and other kinds of

1 private organizations, shall strictly observe and follow all provisions
2 of Republic Act No. 10911, otherwise known as the "Anti-Age
3 Discrimination in Employment Act."

4 (b) Monitoring and Coordination. The DMW and the DOLE shall
5 constantly coordinate to monitor the plight and situation of all former
6 OFWs employed in local/domestic jobs to ensure full compliance with
7 the aforementioned law.
8

9 SEC. 19. *Psychosocial Support and Counseling.* – The DMW shall,
10 together with OWWA and the DOH, facilitate psychosocial support and
11 reintegration counselling for returnee-OFWs and their families.
12

13 SEC. 20. *National Reintegration Network (NRN).* – The NRN shall be
14 established through formal partnership agreements with relevant government
15 and private partner agencies. It shall serve to strengthen and institutionalize
16 collaborative efforts aimed at ensuring the effective delivery of reintegration
17 programs and services. The NRN shall facilitate convenient and seamless
18 access to such services through the creation of both Physical and Online One-
19 Stop-Shops, wherein all relevant programs and services are integrated and
20 made available on a unified platform. All government agencies and
21 instrumentalities offering services to OFWs shall form part of the NRN.
22

23 SEC. 21. *Creating/Upgrading Offices and Personnel.* – The DMW and
24 other concerned government agencies, upon consultation with and approval of
25 the DBM, shall create or upgrade the necessary offices and hire appropriate
26 personnel to ensure the effective implementation of this Act.
27

28 SEC. 22. *Non-Diminution of Benefits.* – All rights, privileges, and benefits
29 previously enjoyed by returnee or reintegrated OFWs before the effectivity of
30 this Act, including those set forth in Republic Act No. 8042, otherwise known
31 as the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995", as amended,
32 Republic Act No. 10801 or the "Overseas Workers Welfare Administration Act,"

1 and other relevant laws and issuances, including pertinent Supreme Court
2 decisions, shall continue to be recognized and shall not be diminished.

3
4 SEC. 23. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DMW shall,
5 together with the OWWA and the National Reintegration Center for OFWs
6 (NCRO), promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations within
7 ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

8 The promulgation shall be made in coordination with the key
9 government agencies mentioned in this Act, and in consultation with concerned
10 GOCCs, especially those giving grants, extending loans, and providing technical
11 assistance to MSMEs, and other relevant stakeholders in the private sector and
12 NGOs.

13
14 SEC. 24. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial
15 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's
16 appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, such
17 amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

18
19 SEC. 25. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is
20 declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof shall remain in full
21 force and effect.

22
23 SEC. 26. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules,
24 and regulations which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed,
25 amended, or modified accordingly.

26
27 SEC. 27. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days
28 from its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general
29 circulation.

30
31 *Approved,*