

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 299

Introduced by Representatives
Horacio P. Suansing, Jr. and Estrellita B. Suansing

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to extend benefits and privileges to professional Filipino athletes who have given honor, glory and pride to the Philippines by winning world championship titles in international professional sports competitions and other equally prestigious world championship games in both individual and team events.

The Philippines became famous in the boxing arena because of the championship fights won by the likes of Gabriel "Flash" Elorde, Luisito Espinosa, Gerry Peñalosa, Nonito Donaire, and most notable of all, our esteemed Senator Manny Pacquiao.

Other names who excelled in their own fields and became champions are Lydia de Vega and Elma Muros-Posadas – Track and Field; Rafael "Peng" Nepomuceno and Olivia "Bong" Co – Bowling; Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Rubilen Amit – Billiards; and Eugene Torre – Chess. The list of professional Filipino athletes with world-class talents is endless, and they, at one time or another, earned our, as well as the rest of the world's, respect and adulation.

Most sports are physical in nature and many of our Filipino athletes risk their lives to become champions. Moreover, unlike other career professionals, the career lifespan of a professional athlete is short. Many do not reach the age of 40 before retiring, giving way to the much younger and stronger athletes. Some are forced to retire because they have passed the height of their careers. Others are just given bad breaks in life after winning a title.



While many of them are greatly compensated by the prizes they win in these competitions, they deserve more than just a "hero's welcome," crowd adulation, and a pat on the back for a "job well done."

The cases of former Filipino world boxing champions Rolando Navarette, Luisito Espinosa and Z. Gorres - who became comatose after a successful fight are cases in point. Navarette is reduced to the life of a pauper - dependent on charitable gestures from his countrymen for his existence and medical expenses. Luisito Espinosa is forced to fight mediocre fights just so he could survive living in the United States. Z. Gorres is fortunate that many generous persons contributed to shoulder some of the medical bills he incurred.

Our champions should not have to endure this. At their twilight years, the country which they have given honor, glory and pride must be able to provide them some sort of support.

The purpose of this bill is to provide health care, retirement and death benefits to professional Filipino athletes who win world championship titles in international professional sports competitions or in other equally prestigious world championship games, in both individual and team events through the following: (a) extend medical insurance and medical assistance to hospitalized professional Filipino champions, (b) grant a monthly pension of Php 15,000.00 to individual world champions and Php 10,000.00 to each member of team events world champions at the retirement age of 50 years, and (c) death benefits to help in funeral services/expenses.

This measure recognized the honor, glory and pride professional Filipino athletes gave given our country, and also reassures them that their efforts are not forgotten.

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


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AN ACT

GRANTING HEALTH CARE, RETIREMENT, AND DEATH BENEFITS TO PROFESSIONAL FILIPINO ATHLETES WHO WIN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES IN INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL SPORTS COMPETITIONS OR IN OTHER EQUALLY PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Professional
2 Filipino Athletes Health Care, Retirement and Death Benefits Act.”

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State shall provide health care,
4 retirement and death benefits to professional Filipino athletes who win world
5 championship titles in international professional sports competitions or in
6 other equally prestigious world championship games, in both individual and
7 team events, in recognition of the glory and honor they bestowed to the
8 Philippines.

9 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – For purposes of this Act, the following
10 terms shall be defined as follows:

11 a. **Professional Filipino athletes** shall refer to athletes who are Filipino
12 citizens and paid a sum of money or other compensation as a salary
13 or prize money for participating in a game, bout, tournament, or
14 contest of professional sport, either as an individual contestant or as

1 a member of a team under a contract entered into with a professional
2 sports promoter/operator or team owner and licensed by the Games
3 and Amusement Board (GAB);

4 b. **Professional Sports** shall refer to individual or team sports, games,
5 contests, bouts, tournaments or competitions whereby the
6 participating athlete is paid sums of money and other forms of
7 compensation as regular salary or prize for participation, which are
8 accredited and recognized by the GAB;

9 c. **International professional sports competitions** shall refer to
10 international competitions that confer world championship titles in
11 both individual and team events which are duly sanctioned and
12 recognized by international sporting organizations and bodies and
13 accredited by the GAB;

14 d. **Other equally prestigious world championship games** shall refer to
15 other international professional sports competitions that confer the
16 same rank or stature as world championship titles and recognized as
17 such by the GAB.

18 **SEC. 4. Health Care Benefits.** – Immediately upon winning in any
19 international professional sports competition, professional Filipino athletes
20 shall be covered by the National Health Insurance Program of the Philippine
21 Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), through a special program
22 sponsored by the GAB, which will provide the required local government
23 premium counterpart to be directly remitted to the PhilHealth. Upon reaching
24 the age of fifty (50), the athlete shall be an honorary member of the program,
25 subject to existing rules and regulations of the PhilHealth.

26 In case of hospitalization of the professional Filipino athlete in any
27 hospital or clinic, any amount in excess of the PhilHealth benefit shall be
28 shouldered by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) under its
29 Individual Medical Assistance Program (IMAP); *Provided*, That the requirement
30 for qualification and grant of the health care assistance to be extended by the
31 PCSO shall be made consistent with and subject to the compliance with
32 PCSO's existing rules and guidelines; *Provided, futher*, That any qualified
33 beneficiary shall have the option to waive the benefits mentioned under this
34 section.

35 **SEC. 5. Retirement Benefits.** – Professional Filipino athletes as defined
36 under this Act, who win in international professional sports competitions shall,
37 upon reaching the age of fifty (50), receive the following retirement benefits:

1 A. For individual events – a lifetime monthly pension of at least Fifteen
2 thousand pesos (Php 15,000.00) for the individual winner;

3 B. For team sports events – a lifetime monthly pension of at least Ten
4 thousand pesos (Php 10,000.00) for each team member;

5 *Provided*, That for athletes who win in both individual and team events,
6 the retirement benefits for individual events shall apply.

7 Athletes who are actively employed at the time they reach the age of fifty
8 (50) and have availed of the retirement benefits under this Act may continue
9 with such employment: *Provided*, That the retirement benefits under this Act
10 shall be separate and distinct from the mandatory retirement benefits provided
11 by existing laws.

12 **SEC. 6. Death Benefits.** – Upon the death of the professional Filipino
13 athlete, the primary beneficiaries shall be entitled to a lump sum death benefit
14 of Thirty thousand pesos (Php 30,000.00) to cover funeral services/expenses:
15 *Provided*, That, if there are no primary beneficiaries, the secondary
16 beneficiaries shall be entitled to the said benefits.

17 For purposes of this Act, the primary beneficiaries shall refer to
18 legitimate spouse, legitimate or illegitimate children. Secondary beneficiaries
19 shall refer to the parents, and in their absence, to the brothers or sisters of the
20 professional Filipino athlete.

21 **SEC. 7. Retroactive Effect.** – The benefits provided under this Act shall
22 retroact to all living professional Filipino athletes who, prior to the enactment
23 of this Act, have won in any international professional sports competition,
24 upon compliance with the requirements that shall be prescribed by the GAB in
25 its Implementing Rules and Regulations: *Provided*, That the winning
26 professional Filipino athlete was duly licensed by the GAB at the time of the
27 competition and the sports event participated in was recognized and accredited
28 by the GAB.

29 **SEC. 8. Adjustment of Retirement Benefits.** – The adjustment in
30 retirement benefits provided in Section 5 hereof may be authorized, subject to
31 the approval of the President, upon the joint recommendation of the Secretary
32 of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Chairman of the
33 GAB, based on studies, consultations and public hearings with relevant
34 agencies, entities and concerned athletes or coaches. However, no
35 memorandum, order or issuance shall diminish the prescribed retirement
36 benefits.

1 **SEC. 9. Appropriations.** – The Chairman of the GAB shall immediately
2 include in the Board’s program the implementation of the benefits under this
3 Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General
4 Appropriations Act.

5 **SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The GAB, in
6 consultation with the Senate, the House of Representatives and other
7 concerned agencies, shall promulgate and issue the Implementing Rules and
8 Regulations within ninety (90) days upon approval of this Act.

9 **SEC. 11. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part of this Act shall
10 be held unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions, which are not affected
11 thereby, shall continue to be in full force and effect.

12 **SEC. 12. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive
13 orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the
14 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

15 **SEC. 13. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
16 publication in the Official Gazette and at least one newspaper of general
17 circulation.

18 Approved,