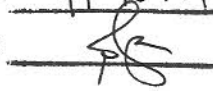


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 756

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
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Introduced by DIWA Party-list Representative Emmeline Y. Aglipay – Villar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Early this year, we have been hearing news about the “tanim-bala” controversy in our airports allegedly perpetrated by airport officials in connivance with some members of our law enforcement officers. The modus allegedly involves unscrupulous airport personnel surreptitiously planting ammunition inside the handbags or luggage of airport passengers and then upon inspection and arrest will be extorted for money for their release or the dropping of their case. It has been reported that this scheme has been going on for the past 3 years. Just this year, almost 1, 400 ammunition-related security cases in airports have been recorded by our transport officials. To make matters worse, most of the victims are overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) like 56 year old Gloria Ortinez, a nanny employed in Hong Kong who was arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) last October 25, 2015 after two policemen claimed to have found a live bullet inside her bag. After 3 days, the case was eventually dropped against Ortinez due to lack of probable cause. However, Ortinez lost her job after she failed to return to Hong Kong on time after falling victim to the bullet-planting racket at the Manila Airport. Fortunately, her employer reconsidered the decision to discontinue Ortinez’ services upon learning about the “tanim-bala” incident.

Consequently, Congress, both in the Senate and at the House of Representatives, has filed several resolutions calling for the investigation, in aid of legislation, of these allegations. This is expected as these revelations have great impact not only in our tourism industry, but more importantly in the welfare of our overseas workers.

Aside from the said resolutions, there were also bills filed in the House of Representatives. This bill, based on House Bill No. 6260 filed by Rep. Mark A. Villar last 16th Congress, with some changes on the functions and duties of the Passenger Protection Office, seeks to address this “tanim-bala” problem and other passenger rights violation incidents by establishing a passenger protection office (PPOs) in all major airports in the Philippines. These PPOs shall be composed of a public prosecutor from the Department of Justice, and 2 public attorneys from the Public Attorneys’ Office who are tasked to provide immediate and adequate legal assistance to passengers in all major airports. Furthermore, the proposed bill provides for the establishment of an Overseas Filipino Workers’ Assistance Desk in all major airports which shall provide assistance to our OFWs should their circumstances be under those which the PPOs have coverage.

The government has always been consistent in stressing the important contribution of our overseas workers in our modern society and we have always prioritized their proper recognition for their invaluable sacrifice for their families in particular, and for our entire nation in general. The least we can do is to allow them to safely return to their families, unburdened by fear of apprehension and extortion from these “tanim-bala” mercenaries by enacting laws which can adequately address these issues.

Emmeline Y. Villar

EMMELINE Y. AGLIPAY – VILLAR
Representative, DIWA Party-list

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

756
House Bill No. ____

Introduced by **DIWA Party-list Representative Emmeline Y. Aglipay – Villar**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PASSENGER
PROTECTION OFFICE IN ALL MAJOR AIRPORTS IN
THE PHILIPPINES**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. -This Act shall be known as the "*Passenger Protection Office Act.*"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - Consistent with the Government's prime duty to serve and protect the people, to maintain peace and order, to protect life, liberty and property, to promote general welfare, to ensure due process, to provide free access to adequate legal assistance, and to give speedy disposition of cases, the State recognizes that means that assure proper application of due process can be applied to protect tourists and Filipinos from unlawful schemes.

SECTION 3. Coverage - This Act shall cover all major airports. Major airports, as defined in this Act, shall be the top ten (10) busiest international and domestic airports in the Philippines, as provided by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, namely:

- (a) Ninoy Aquino International Airport;
- (b) Mactan-Cebu International Airport;
- (c) Francisco Bangoy International Airport;
- (d) Iloilo International Airport;
- (e) Kalibo International Airport;
- (f) Lumbia Airport;
- (g) Bacolod-Silay International Airport;
- (h) Puerto Princesa International Airport;
- (i) Clark International Airport; and
- (j) Daniel Z. Romualdez Airport.

SECTION 5. Creation of Passenger Protection Office. - There shall be established a Passenger Protection Office (PPO), composed of one (1) Public Prosecutor, and two (2) Public Attorneys in all major airports.

SECTION 6. The Department of Justice shall appoint a public prosecutor and staff necessary for the operation of the Office, and the Public Attorney's Office shall likewise designate the public attorneys, subject to the civil service laws, rules and regulations.

SECTION 7. Functions of the Passenger Protection Office. - The Passenger Protection Office shall have the following functions:

- (a) The Passenger Protection Office shall endeavor to efficiently, speedily, and expeditiously resolve the matters brought to it;
- (b) The Passenger Protection Office shall have jurisdiction over incidents, conflicts, occurrences, acts, or events that has happened within the major airport involving or affecting passenger's rights; and
- (c) The Passenger Protection Office shall have jurisdiction when a passenger is brought in or detained in the Passenger Protection Office for questioning in connection to an alleged unlawful act committed.

SECTION 8. Duties of the Passenger Protection Office. - The members of the Passenger Protection Office shall have the following duties:

- (a) The Public Attorneys shall render legal assistance to the passengers in all major airports;
- (b) The public prosecutor shall conduct a brief, speedy investigation when there is an incident, conflict, occurrence, act, or event involving or affecting passenger's legal rights and the passenger is detained;
- (c) The public prosecutor shall conduct a brief, speedy inquest proceeding when a passenger is brought in or detained in the Passenger Protection Office for questioning in connection to an alleged unlawful act committed;
- (d) The Public Attorneys shall assist the passenger throughout the conduct of the investigation or the inquest proceeding; and
- (e) The public prosecutor shall undertake to resolve the investigation or the inquest proceeding within the day, unless the circumstances warrant otherwise, or further proceedings are necessary.

SECTION 9. Overseas Filipino Workers Assistance Desk. - There shall be established in all major airports, an overseas Filipino Workers Assistance Desk with the objective of providing assistance to Overseas Filipino Workers, should their circumstances be under those which the Passenger Protection Office has coverage.

SECTION 10. The Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, in partnership with the Local Government Unit wherein the major airport is located, shall assign two (2) Overseas Filipino Workers Assistance Desk staff, who shall have expertise on Overseas Filipino Workers' rights.

SECTION 11. Issuance of Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Department of Justice in consultation with appropriate agencies, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act. Such rules and regulations shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

SECTION 12. Appropriations. - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged to the current appropriations of the Department of Justice. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 13. Separability Clause. - If any law or provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 14. Repealing Clause. - Any other provisions of law or rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 15. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,