

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House Resolution No. 646



Introduced by ACTS OFW Representative Aniceto D. Bertiz III

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE(S) TO CONDUCT A
PROBE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE PERSISTENT DELAYS IN THE
ISSUANCE OF PASSPORTS TO FILIPINO APPLICANTS AND THE
UTILIZATION OF THE PASSPORT REVOLVING FUND

WHEREAS, Article III, Section 6 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the right to travel “shall not be impaired except in the interest of national security, public safety, or public health, as may be provided by law;

WHEREAS, the Philippine Passport Act of 1996 reiterates the inviolability of the right to travel of Filipinos and the duty of the government to “issue passport to or any travel document to any citizen of the Philippines or individual who complies with the requirement of this Act;”

WHEREAS, the Philippine Passport Act of 1996 allows the Department of Foreign Affairs to charge a Service Fee of not more than P250 for “services rendered to applicants relating to the processing and issuance of passports requiring special consideration, issuance, or waiver beyond office hours” and that this fee shall constitute a “Passport Revolving Fund” which may be utilized by the DFA for the improvement of its passport and consular services;

WHEREAS, there have been numerous complaints from travelers and from Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) for the past several months because of the delay in the processing and issuance of passports;

WHEREAS, no less than the Department of Foreign Affairs admitted in August 2015 that it faced a backlog of 42,230 passports, that it takes three months to secure a passport appointment, and that new passports are being received two to three months late;

WHEREAS, on October 5, 2015, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) signed a 10-year Memorandum of Agreement reportedly worth P10 Billion with APO Production for the latter to handle the end-to-end passport processing;

WHEREAS, the DFA has repeatedly assured the public that delays in the appointment, application, processing, and printing of passports will cease because of this MoA between the department and APO Production that directs the latter to install new technologies and systems by August 2016;

WHEREAS, in an ironic twist, the DFA released a notice to the public last December 8 asking for the public's understanding on the delays in the release of passports and said that these are caused by technical difficulties being experienced by the company in charge of printing the passports (APO Productions);

WHEREAS, these delays have already caused tremendous loss of earnings for OFWs and their families, unparalleled difficulties and inconvenience for the business sector, have added to the burden and cost of foreign travel for Filipinos, and have created doubt on the credibility and integrity of the DFA as an institution;

WHEREAS, the delays and the unending technical problems have put serious doubts on the efficacy and propriety of the Agreement between the DFA and APO Production and the capacity of the latter to meet its obligation to deliver secure passports in a timely manner;

WHEREAS, the delays have also put into question on how the Passport Revolving Fund, which amounted to P341,477,000 in 2015 according to the DFAs National Expenditure Program, is indeed being used for the improvement of passport and consular services;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the appropriate House Committee(s) conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the reasons for the persistent delays in the processing and releasing of passports and on the utilization of the Passport Revolving Fund.

ADOPTED.


ANICETO D. BERTIZ III