

12 July 2018

REPRESENTATIVE CHERYL P. DELOSO-MONTALLA

Chairperson
Committee on Foreign Affairs
RVM Bldg., House of Representatives
Quezon City

Dear Chairperson Deloso-Montalla:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development supports various bills amending the Philippine Passport Act under House Bill Nos. 329, 3015, 3284, 4645, and 5574 introduced by Representatives Xavier Jesus Romualdo, Mariano Michael Velarde, Jr., Linabelle Ruth Villarica, Ana Cristina Siquian-Go, and Magnolia Rosa Antonino, respectively.

To contribute to the bills' enhancement, we recommend the following:

1. To consolidate the five (5) bills into one.
2. On HBN 329: An Act Providing for the Issuance of Passport and Travel Documents, as well as for the Revocation Thereof, Defining and Penalizing Offenses Relating to Passports and Travel Documents, Repealing Republic Act No. 8239, Otherwise Known as the Philippine Passport Act of 1996, and for Other Purposes or the "Philippine Passport Act of 2016" (Rep. XJ Romualdo)

- 2.1 We support the proposed measure to expedite the application process and simplify the passport documentation requirements of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The National ID system could support the reduction of documentary requirements since it integrates multiple government IDs and it is considered official and sufficient proof of identity.

2.2 **Sec. 6 - Requirements for the Issuance of Passport**

- ✚ On letter (f), to revise the provision which will be read as follows:

*"For **dependent child applicant** due to orphanhood or absence or death of parents which presently under the custody of the relative or grandparents will not require Certification Declaring a Child Legally Available for Adoption (CDCLAA) by the DSWD, but a legal document will be required exercising over the child in the order of preference provided under Article 216 of the Family Code of the Philippines (EO No. 209 as amended)."*

- ✚ On letter (g), item no. 1

Please note that the **DSWD does not issue a Foundling Certificate**. May we recommend to change "DSWD" to "**Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)**" as the appropriate authority on this matter.

✚ On letter (g), item no. 3

For purposes of clarity, please specify the kind of Certification that will be issued by the DSWD.

2.3 Sec. 8 - Application

✚ To use “**persons unable to read and write**” instead of stating persons who are *illiterate*.

✚ To use appropriate terminology such as “**Persons with Disability (PWD)**” instead of *physically disabled*.

3. On **HBN 3015: An Act Amending Certain Provisions of Republic Act 8239 Otherwise Known as the “Philippine Passport Act of 1996”** (Rep. Mariano Michael Velarde, Jr.)

The proposed measure **extending the Philippine Passport validity to 10 years for 18 years old and above and five (5) years for those below 18** was already enacted into law on 02 August 2017 under Republic Act No. 10928 entitled: *“An Act Extending the Validity of Philippine Passports, Amending for the Purpose Section 10 of Republic Act No. 8239, Otherwise Known as the “Philippine Act of 1996”, and for Other Purposes”*.

Related to this, we recommend that those **Persons with Disability (PWD) shall be afforded the appropriate passport validity extension** subject to existing laws, rules and regulations that pertain to their condition and privileges.

Further, extending validity of Philippine Passport will also save a lot of resources for travelers especially for the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

4. On **HBN 3284: An Act Providing for a New Passport Law, Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act Numbered Eight Thousand Two Hundred Thirty-Nine (R.A. No. 8239), Otherwise Known as the “Philippine Passport Act of 1996” or the “New Philippine Passport Act”** (Rep. Linabelle Ruth Villarica)

We support to the proposed **creation of committee to adjudicate complaints with efficiency** and the **imposition of stiffer penalties for violations of the Philippine Passport Act**.

5. On **HBN 4645: An Act Creating a Passport Processing and Issuance Center for Every Province, Amending for this Purpose, Republic Act No. 8239 or the Philippine Passport Act of 1996** (Rep. Ana Cristina Siquian-Go)

We support to the proposed decentralization of passport processing in every province. However, may we recommend the following:

✚ To **Include cities and municipalities especially the Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA)** subject to the **issuance of criteria** to explicitly define the requirements for decentralization and the corresponding capacity of provinces, cities and municipalities to execute passport processing in accordance with enhanced policies.

✚ For DFA to consider “**off sites**” **passport processing** accessible to target clientele.

6. On **HBN 5574: An Act Authorizing the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to Issue Official Passport to Barangay Officials when on Official Trip Abroad**, Amending for the Purpose Section 7 Paragraphs (b) and (c) of Republic Act No. 8239, Otherwise Known as the "Philippine Passport Act of 1996" (Rep. Magnolia Rosa Antonino)

We support to the proposed **inclusion of Barangay Officials among government officials to be issued official passport** that would entitle them to certain privileges provided that such barangay officials will only include duly elected, qualified and incumbent Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan officials and provided, further that they are able to present duly authenticated documentary requirements.

Further, "**Barangay Officials**" should already be counted as "Government Officials". The author may consider **defining the term "Government Officials"** which will include Barangay Officials so the latter will not be mentioned repeatedly in the subsequent Sections.

7. **Other Comment:**

To provide **special procedure in coordination with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)** to facilitate the passport **application of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) who do not have birth certificates.**

For consideration of the Committee.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,



VIRGINIA N. OROGO
Acting Secretary