

An analysis of the linkage between legislators' behavior and  
electoral support: The case of the Filipino labor emigrants  
and the Congress of the Philippines

Diosdado B. Lopega

Department of Political Science

Supervisor: Prof. Sándor Gallai, PhD

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Corvinus University of Budapest

Doctoral School of International Relations and Political Science

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Diosdado B. Lopega

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## Acronyms used in this dissertation

AAMBIS-OWA	– Ang Asosasyon Sang Mangunguma nga Bisaya – Owa
AASENSO	– Ating Agapay Sentrong Samahan ng mga Obrero, Inc.
ACT-CIS	– Anti Crime and Terrorism Community Initiative and Support
ACT-Teachers	– Association of Concerned Teachers
AFP	– Armed Forces of the Philippines
AGAP	– Agricultural Sector Alliance of the Philippines, Inc.
ALONA	– Alliance of Organizations, Networks and Associations
AMIN	– Anak Mindanao (Children of Mindanao)
APEC	– Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives
ASEAN	– Association of Southeast Asian Nations
A TEACHER	– Advocacy for Teacher Empowerment Through Action, Cooperation and Harmony Towards Educational Reforms
BES	– Bureau of Employment Services
BH	– Bagong Henerasyon (New Generation)
BHW	– Barangay Health Workers
BUHAY	– Buhay Hayaan Yumabong
CIBAC	– Citizen’s Battle Against Corruption
COMELEC	– Commission on Elections
ConCom	– Constitutional Commission
CCP	– Cultural Center of the Philippines
CPP	– Communist Party of the Philippines
CWS	– Construction Workers Solidarity
DDS	– Davao Death Squad
DFA	– Department of Foreign Affairs
DICT	– Department of Information and Communications Technology
DIWA	– Democratic Independent Workers’ Association
DMW	– Department of Migrant Workers
DOLE	– Department of Labor and Employment
DPWH	– Department of Public Works and Highways
DSWD	– Department of Social Welfare and Development
DUMPER-PTDA	– Drivers United for Mass Progress and Equal Rights – Philippine Taxi Drivers Association
ETM	– Expectancy Theory of Motivation
EDSA	– Efipanio de los Santos Avenue
FLE	– Filipino Labor Emigrants
FPJPM	– Fernando Poe Jr. for President Movement
1-CARE	– First Consumers Alliance for Rural Energy
GAA	– General Appropriations Act
GABRIELA	– General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action
GSIS	– Government Service Insurance System
HB	– House Bill
HR	– House Resolution
HUDCC	– Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
ILO	– International Labor Organization

IMEC	– International Maritime Employers Council
JCI	– Junior Chamber International
JCP	– Junior Chamber of the Philippines
KABAYAN	– Kabalikat ng Mamamayan (lit. Citizens' shoulder)
KBL	– Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement)
LDP	– Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino
LGU	– Local Government Unit
LPGMA	– Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers Association
MARINA	– Maritime Industry Authority
MIA	– Manila International Airport
MMDA	– Metro Manila Development Authority
MTRCB	– Movie and Television Review and Classification Board
MWCD	– Migrant Workers' Concern Desk
NAIA	– Ninoy Aquino International Airport
NCR	– National Capital Region
NCSO	– National Census and Statistics Office
NGO	– Non government organization
NIC	– Newly industrialized country
NPA	– New People's Army
NSB	– National Seamen's Board
NYC	– National Youth Commission
OAV	– Overseas Absentee Voting
OCW	– Overseas Contract Workers
OEDB	– Overseas Employment Development Board
OF	– Overseas Filipinos
OFB	– Overseas Filipino Bank
OFW	– Overseas Filipino Worker
OFOV	– Office for Overseas Voting
1-PACMAN	– One Patriotic Coalition of Marginalized Nationals
OWWA	– Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
PATROL	– Public Safety Alliance for Transformation and Rule of Law
PBA	– Puwersa ng Bayaning Atleta
PEKAF	– Philippine Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation
PEZA	– Philippine Economic Zone Authority
PHILRECA	– Philippine Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.
PMA	– Philippine Military Academy
PMT	– Philippine Motorcycle Tourism
PO	– People's Organizations
POEA	– Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
PSA	– Philippine Statistics Authority
RA	– Republic Act
RAM	– Rebolosyunaryong Alyansang Makabayan
ROC	– Republic of China
SAGIP	– Social Amelioration and Genuine Intervention on Poverty
SB	– Senate Bill
SBMA	– Subic Bay Metropolitan University

SBP	– Serbisyo sa Bayan Party (Sevice to the Nation Party)
SR	– Senate Resolution
SSS	– Social Security System
TESDA	– Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TLRC	– Technology Livelihood Resource Center
TOFIL	– The Outstanding Filipinos
TOYM	– Ten Outstanding Young Men
TUCP	– Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
UNCAC	– United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UP	– University of the Philippines
UPAA	– University of the Philippines Alumni Association
UPLBAA	– University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association
UST	– University of Santo Tomas
VIE	– Valence, Instrumentality and Expectancy
Villar-SIPAG	– Villar Social Initiative for Poverty Alleviation and Governance
WEKAF	– World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation
WFOW	– Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers
YACAP	– You Against Corruption and Poverty



## **Abstract**

Starting in the 1970s, Filipinos in large numbers, have been migrating to other countries in search for jobs. It was also around this time when overseas labor emigration was institutionalized as a temporary measure to address the country's unemployment problem. Since then, as a result, the number of Filipino labor emigrants (FLEs) or overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have been increasing. During the last twelve years, from 2009 to 2020, the yearly increase was especially noticeable, and in fact maintained a steady climb in numbers. There was only a decrease in 2016, and part of the reason was a stiffer competition in the supply of workers like seafarers from East Asia, but increased again in 2017, which number remained the same at 2.3 million up to the following year, 2018. The number of FLEs or OFWs also had a stiff decrease from 2019 up to the following year 2020, because of the restrictions on human mobility due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but again slightly increased as the restrictions on the movement of people, including overseas labor emigrants were already eased. Considering such development, this dissertation investigates and analyzes the impact of overseas labor emigration on the legislative process, specifically on legislators' behavior when carrying out their legislative work. This study wishes to find out the reasons why labor emigration has become an important legislative agenda by linking it to the legislators' possible motivations after observing their behavior or actions, on the assumption that they initially believed that their enhanced activities would earn them rewards like re-election, made possible by the extra votes of the FLEs or the OFWs, and the other members of their families. The findings of this research although focused on the Philippine context, will shed light on the conditions of similarly-situated countries who have large number of their citizens working overseas. This dissertation goes along the idea that crafting of legislation or statutory construction has to strike a balance between competing considerations of policy that will address the concerns of the different sectors in society, the labor emigrant sector being one of them. Legislators have important role to play toward such end, but such role still depends on their individual political agenda.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The Filipino ancestors came to what is now the Philippines from other parts of Asia and elsewhere (Heine-Geldern, 1932; Beyer and de Veyra, 1947; Beyer, 1948). With this in mind, it can somehow be deduced that the desire to move to places, for whatever purpose, is entrenched in the lives of the Filipinos. In most cases, their urge to move to places is not driven by leisure or adventure but more on making a living. However, there is also evidence that as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, some wealthy Filipinos or the *illustrados*<sup>1</sup> believed that going abroad was the essential first step before anything could be achieved (Coates, 1968), in connection with their political careers. For example, Dr. Jose Rizal considered by many Filipinos as their National Hero, had emigrated to Europe where he studied medicine at the Central University of Madrid. Afterwards, he also worked for a while in Hong Kong by practicing medicine there, before returning for good to the Philippines in 1892. Despite the differing circumstances surrounding their departures, whether forced or otherwise, one common denominator remains, and that is emigration for work or for a better life. During the course of the colonization of the country by the Spaniards for instance, which started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a number of Filipinos were employed in the ships of the Galleon Trade, that plied the Pacific Ocean, from Manila to Acapulco in Mexico. These Filipinos did not have the choice as to the nature of their work, and so they acquiesced to the demands of the colonial authorities. In fact, many of the native Filipinos of the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade were forced into service as crewmen in the galleons (Peterson, 2011). For a period of two-and-half centuries, over 60,000 Filipinos sailed on the galleons mostly as crews (Mercene, 2020). These Filipinos could be said as the country's early seafarers who contributed to the lifeblood of the Galleon Trade, between Asia and New Spain or the Americas, as an important economic component that helped sustain the Spanish Empire, the Philippines being part of that empire. As a consequence, there was migration among the sailors in the galleons who deserted in Acapulco, Mexico to escape the ignominious treatment in the hands of the Spaniards during the long voyage, or who were lured away from the ships for some reasons or another (Guzman-Rivas,

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<sup>1</sup> This group of people refers to the educated class during the Spanish colonial administration of the Philippines especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when many of them went to Europe, particularly Spain to study. Most of them were scions of wealthy families in the Philippines. The best known ilustrado was Jose Rizal considered by many Filipinos as their National Hero.



1960). With this development, it can be argued, that since there were Filipino sailors as part of the Galleon Trade, they could as well be among those who have emigrated to Acapulco, in the course of the voyage. This can for instance be traced, because in Acapulco, there are stores owned and managed by Filipinos, and Tagalog, the lingua franca of the Filipinos, could be heard as spoken by the store owners or managers. All over Acapulco, there are other distinct signs of a recent Filipino presence (Guevarra, 2011).

In another development, migration of people within the different areas in the Philippines is also well documented. This can be evidenced among the early Filipinos, by looking at the *kaingin*<sup>2</sup> farming system or the so-called slash and burn farming, which was a common practice among the people, and consequently induced domestic migration. This farming system involves an arrangement when the people in search for a living wander especially to the forests and cut the trees and other shrubs, burned them and settled in the cleared area where they engaged in subsistence agriculture. After sometime, when these *kaingeros*<sup>3</sup> felt that the plots they cleared are no longer agriculturally-productive, they will abandon the land and move to new plots (EcoLogic, n.d.) to do *kaingin* farming again, and the system is repeated. Also, people from some towns migrate to the forests and do *kaingin* farming (Lawrence, 1999). Indeed, this is a form of domestic labor migration when the early Filipinos move from one place to another to make a living.

At present, many Filipinos are still moving to places especially overseas for employment. This phenomenon can be readily seen and felt as more and more Filipinos, armed with their work contracts and travel documents, line up in Philippine airports and seaports to leave for their countries of destination, where jobs await them. The institutionalization of labor emigration by the government, which saw a noticeable increase during the decade of the 1970s, makes the deployment process systematic, structured and standardized.

This being said, the labor emigration phenomenon which is undoubtedly a famous concern of the Filipinos and their government, is one of the areas of inquiry closest to, and certainly within the orbit of my academic interests. I believe I can offer ample knowledge and experience that may aid in understanding issues associated with the phenomenon. My more than ten years practical experience working with migrant workers of all nationalities, particularly Filipinos, in the

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<sup>2</sup> According to the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Philippines, it is a farming system based on slash and burn cleaning of forest for the planting of agricultural and agro-forestry crops.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the people who engage in *kaingin* farming.

Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan, as a Social Worker with the Migrant Workers' Concern Desk (MWCD), an international non-government organization (NGO) from 1996 to 2006, and in the Northern Marianas Islands (Saipan), U.S.A. as a Social Audits Coordinator, with the Verification of Trade and Exports (VERITÉ) - Southeast Asia, from 2005 to 2006 contributed to my knowledge on the subject, which helped me navigate, and appropriately apply the ideas concerning Filipino labor emigration to this dissertation. These jobs I had with MWCD and with VERITÉ – Southeast Asia, both entailed engagements with FLEs or OFWs, the host governments and the Philippine Government so as to protect and promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs, as well as to ensure a humane and safe working conditions and environment.

Before the year 1970, there was a relatively limited number of Filipinos who left the country to seek employment overseas. At that time, overseas labor emigration was not yet as popular and institutionalized as it is today. During those times, Filipinos can leave the country and work with prospective employers overseas, with less government intervention. In other words, the government did not yet strictly control, as it does today, the outflow of Filipinos who wish to leave the country to work overseas. Understandably, the state of government control on Filipinos wishing to work overseas which is stricter now, compared to what it was before the 1970s, can be partly attributed to the higher incidence of abuses inflicted and suffered by FLEs or OFWs today, which abuses the government zealously wishes to minimize, and eventually wants to curb. This seems in fact natural for governments, as they always endeavor to promote the welfare and protect the rights and interests of their citizens.

During the decade of the 1970s, there were important local and international developments that propelled the standardization of overseas labor emigration from the country. These developments can be pointed out as either push factors or pull factors (Lee, 1966) for Filipino labor emigration. This was during the administration of Ferdinand Marcos, Sr., when the labor emigration phenomenon saw a marked importance in the affairs of the government. To this end, Marcos, Sr. signed on 1 May 1974, Presidential Decree No. 442, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines, wherein overseas employment started to be relatively given emphasis.

The Philippines is one of the migrant-sending countries internationally. It is the second largest exporter of human labor in the world (Castro-Palaganas, et. al., 2017). During the year 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic took its toll on human mobility, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that there were 2.18 million FLEs or OFWs scattered around the globe

(see Table 1). These workers are those who went out of the country and have employment contract with their employers, and those who have no employment contract, yet engaging in paid work. The Philippine Government refers to the former as Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) and to the latter as simply Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Following this delineation, Filipino tourists and students who work abroad can be called as OFWs yet they cannot be called as OCWs simply because they have no employment contracts with their foreign employers. In this dissertation, OFWs are also called Filipino Labor Emigrants (FLEs). Regardless of contract obligations, all Filipinos who work abroad, including OCWs, are referred to as FLEs or OFWs.

Over a twelve-year period from 2009 until 2020, the number of overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs kept on increasing. It only decreased slightly in 2016, and consequently their remittances, partly because of the stiffer competition in the supply of workers like seafarers from East Asia (De Vera, 2017). In just over a year, from 2019 to 2020, the number of FLEs or OFWs also decreased (see Table 1), and one of the reasons was the restriction on human mobility because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. Number of FLEs or OFWs over a twelve-year period from 2009 to 2020

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. of OFWs	1.9 M	2.0 M	2.2 M	2.2 M	2.2 M	2.3 M	2.4 M	2.2 M	2.3 M	2.3 M	2.18 M	1.77 M

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority.

As already hinted earlier, overseas labor emigration and policies started to be institutionalized during the 1970s when a significant number of Filipinos went to the Middle East to work in oil rigs and construction sites (Santos, 2014) although some of them also went to the United States and became part of the Filipino immigrant population numbering around 105,000 to 501,000 between 1960 and 1980 (Davis and Batalova, 2023). At that time, such arrangement has been conceived by the government as a measure to address the unemployment problem in the country, albeit as a temporary solution (Mendoza, 2015, ILO, 2019). However, it appears that there is no abetting of the number of Filipinos desiring to leave the country to work abroad. In fact, the

Philippine Government facilitates the process of labor emigration<sup>4</sup> and government offices such as the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) were established on 1 May 1977 and 1 May 1980 respectively. The POEA came into being by virtue of Executive Order No. 797. After its creation, three relevant offices which have overseas labor-related mandates were put under its aegis. These offices are the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB), the National Seamen Board (NSB) as well as the Bureau of Employment Services (BES) in connection with its overseas employment mandate. The aggrupation of these three offices saw the birth of the POEA.

On the other hand, OWWA was formally established with the signing of Presidential Decree No. 1694 by former President Ferdinand Marcos, Sr. on 1 May 1980. Its precursor agency, the Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers (WFOW) was then organized in 1977. The function of OWWA is further strengthened with the passage of Republic Act No. 10801, signed by former President Benigno Aquino, III on 10 May 2016. Both the POEA and OWWA are under the administrative supervision of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), until 3 February 2022, when POEA was officially dissolved and became an office at the cabinet level called the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW). The dissolution of POEA came about with the signing of Republic Act No. 11641 by former President Rodrigo Duterte, creating the DMW which superseded it.

The conception and establishment of these government offices – OWWA and POEA, which took overseas employment as important aspect of their mandates, is a tacit manifestation of giving primacy to overseas employment, which the Philippine Government cannot give and provide, to many of its citizens. Furthermore, several laws such as Republic Act No. 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, which was further amended by Republic Act No. 10022, were enacted, aimed at defining official out-migration flows, instituting policies on overseas employment and at the same time weaponizing legislation to protect the rights, interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs. Republic Act No. 11641 creating the DMW, can be said as the Philippine Government's highest act of self-recognition that overseas employment is an important pillar for economic development, that must therefore be sustained. These

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<sup>4</sup> Initially in the 1970s, this was an individual decision of the Philippine government to address unemployment but as its neighboring countries in the region developed, they also felt the necessity to import labor and the Philippines was a ready labor supplier because of unemployment in the country.

developments call to mind the appropriateness of the government's earlier pronouncement for labor emigration to be just a temporary solution to the unemployment problem. The establishment of these offices and the passage of laws mentioned above, negate the government's framing of overseas employment as temporary. In fact, it seems that overseas labor emigration has no indication of abetting. To a certain extent, it is already entrenched in the Filipino mind as a normal phenomenon. Cases of grade school children, left alone by their mothers to the care of other family members and relatives, in order for them to take care of other person's kids in Hongkong and Taiwan for instance, is a pretty common arrangement. Labor emigration or overseas employment has already become part of the Filipino culture. As Asis (2006) opined, a "culture of migration" has emerged, with millions of Filipinos eager to work abroad, despite the risks and vulnerabilities they are likely to face. As the local unemployment problem sees no immediate relief, the Philippine Government will continue to harness labor emigration, in order to arrest the problem, and it seems that this phenomenon is here to stay.

In 2013, a report by the ILO as cited by Santos (2014) indicated that the Philippines had the highest unemployment rate in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (*see Table 2*). Seven years later in 2020, it was reported that the Philippines' unemployment rate at 18.5 percent was still the highest in Southeast Asia. It was higher than Thailand's 15.9 percent, Malaysia's 6.5 percent, Indonesia's 5.9 percent, Singapore's 4 percent and Vietnam's 3.6 percent (Agcaoili, 2020). With the unemployment problem the country is currently facing, which did not go lower than 7 percent from 2005 to 2013 (*see Table 2*), and even went up to a two-digit high of 18.5 percent in 2000 as pointed out by Agcaoili (2020), the government is left with very little alternative but to rely on overseas employment.

Furthermore, overseas employment is seen as a tool to sustain the country's economy in the face of crises, brought about by external forces of which the Philippine Government has no control. For instance, during the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 which affected many Asian countries including South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines (Kuepper and Scott, 2020), the Philippines was able to weather the crisis because it has a large overseas workforce remitting foreign currency (Mijares, 1999). In the Philippine case, Presidential Decree No. 442, or the Labor Code of the Philippines, specifically Article 22, makes it mandatory for Filipinos to remit a portion of their earnings to their families, dependents and/or beneficiaries in the country (BWC Project Team, 2022). In order to ensure that remittances are made, a

mechanism is spelled out in Term and Condition No. 12 and Term and Condition No. 13 of the Standard Contract for Filipino Household Service Workers and Standard Contract for Various Skills respectively (POEA Standard Employment Contract – Various Skills, n.d.). Undoubtedly, overseas employment was taken as part of a strategy to weather the difficulties posed by the crisis (Battistella, et. al., 2011). There is no doubt then that overseas employment is made as a convenient recourse by the government to give work to its citizens, not to mention the economic benefits the country and the family members left behind, derive from it. This is how important international labor emigration to the Philippine government can be.

Table 2. Unemployment trends among ASEAN member-states showing the Philippines with the highest unemployment rate at 7.3 percent in 2013.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cambodia	1.3	0.8	0.5	0.2	0	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3
Thailand	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.5	1	0.7	0.7	0.8
Laos	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
Vietnam	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	2	1.8	1.9
Singapore	4.1	3.6	3	3.2	4.3	3.1	2.9	2.8	3.1
Malaysia	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.7	3.4	3.1	3	3.2
Myanmar	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5
Brunei	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7
Indonesia	11.2	10.3	9.1	8.4	7.9	7.1	6.6	6.1	6
Philippines	7.7	8	7.4	7.3	7.5	7.3	7	7	7.3

Source: Santos, M. (2014). *Inquirer.net*. <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/files/2014/05/ILO-ASEAN.jpg>

Given this situation, this dissertation investigates the correlation of overseas labor emigration and the legislative behavior of lawmakers. As it stands, overseas labor emigration is a popular phenomenon in the Philippines and is a favorite subject of academic inquiry. It is noteworthy that a number of studies have been conducted looking at it from different perspectives like economic (Ball, 2006; Lindquest, 1993; Orbeta, 2008), social and cultural (Caguio and Lomboy, 2014; Yu, 2015) and political (Asis, 2017; Battistella, 1999; Lopez-Wui and Delias, 2015; Ofreneo and Samonte, 2005). Within and along these perspectives, scholars also employ different units of analysis in explaining the relevance of the labor emigration phenomenon to

society. Lopez-Wui and Delias (2015) and Ofreneo and Samonte (2005) for instance, focus on the rights, welfare and empowerment of the international Filipino migrant workers while Lindquest (1993) focuses on global economic formations and domestic policy in the migration process. Meanwhile, Ball (2006) talks about migrant labor as a palliative against an ailing economy while Orbeta (2008) outlines the advantages of migrant remittances to the Philippine economy. Caguio and Lomboy (2014) emphasize the role of social media in the communication process among migrant workers while Yu (2015) elaborates the changes in the social behavior of the migrant workers upon return to the Philippines. The efficacy and relevance of migration policies (Battistella, 1999) and existing laws and policies aimed at enhancing the protection of overseas Filipino workers (Asis, 2017) also merit attention from scholars. However, there is a deficit of studies that investigate the interplay of labor emigration and the process of legislation particularly the behavior of legislators. This dissertation investigates this phenomenal interplay and the study results will fill in this gap, and will aid in understanding this specific aspect of the migration process. As such, this research will be a contribution to the literature on migration and to some extent, legislative studies.

Specifically, this dissertation will try to answer this main question:

Do legislators who are promoters of labor emigrants' rights and welfare as reflected in the quantity of legislative measures they author, garner more votes from the FLEs or OFWs?

And wishes as well to answer these secondary questions:

1. For Senators, aside from the quantity of legislative measures they author as a possible vote-getting strategy, is the number of FLEs or OFWs in the regions or places where the Senators originate a factor that will ensure the quantity of votes, they garner from the FLE or OFW sector? Do FLEs or OFWs who originate from places or regions where Senators also originate, vote for the Senators whom they share common places of origin with?
2. For the Representatives of Party-list groups, is there a noticeable change of their performance in terms of the quantity of legislative measures they author? Do Representatives of Party-list groups which garner more votes from FLEs or OFWs during elections become more active in authoring more legislative measures during their succeeding term? And conversely, do Representatives of Party-list groups which garner less votes become less active in authoring legislative measures during their succeeding term?

To approach the problem, this dissertation advances the hypothesis that legislators in their belief of what their activities will earn them, behave in such a way as crafting more legislative measures in order to appeal to the voters. They believe that the better they perform in the legislature in terms of filing more legislative measures, the more votes they will earn from the voters which will favor their re-election bids.

That being said, it is important to make clear here that this is not an umbrella assumption, to mean that the number of legislative measures is the only consideration taken into account by overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs, when electing Senators and Party-list groups. As rational voters, there are certainly other factors they may take into account when electing Senators and Party-list groups, which factors are stated quite explicitly here in this chapter, specifically Section 5 or the Scope and delimitation of the study. In the case of Senators, their places of origin are likewise discussed in Section 2, Chapter 3, in order to assess whether FLEs or OFWs vote for Senators whom they share a common place of origin with. Therefore, considering these other factors at play, that rational voters may consider in electing Senators and Party-list groups, such factors may be taken as point of departure in order to conduct further investigation, as these are not tackled in this dissertation. Aware of this limitation, I manifested this future endeavor in Chapter 7 or the Summary and conclusion part of this dissertation. Other interested researchers may as well do further investigation on this, so that the missing piece can be found and the specific link can be established.

The unit of analysis are the legislators. The independent variable is the legislators' belief of what their activities will earn them particularly the imagined reward of extra votes of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or the OFWs considered as an outcome or reward that is satisfying, and the dependent variable is the activity legislators do in Congress, especially crafting legislative measures that has something to do with FLEs or OFWs' concerns.

This dissertation will help explain the fact that for legislators to craft more legislative measures that will benefit a single electoral group like the FLEs or the OFWs for their personal vote, and ensuring their welfare as a payoff, will be disadvantageous to the other marginalized sectors of the Philippine society, like the elderly, the differently-abled, the urban poor, the farmers and the fisherfolks, who also need the aid of legislation in order to improve their status in life. Crafting of laws or statutory construction must strike a balance between competing considerations of policy (Gleeson, 2008). It is not the purpose of this dissertation to delve into the details of the



laws concerning the other sectors mentioned in passing here, but it is somehow plausible to argue as hinted by Gleeson (2000) that if more resources are channeled to a favored sector, like for instance the FLE or the OFW sector in terms of legislation, then the other sectors will be left behind.

In the Philippines, the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or the OFWs are considered a powerful voting block because, aside from their personal vote, they can also influence other members of their families on their political decisions like whom to vote for. This claim is reinforced by a number of literatures which discuss that migrants may transfer not only financial resources to the family members left behind but also political knowledge.

International migration affects political behavior and voting as evidenced by a study in Mexico and Moldova about the positive impact of migration on votes for opposition parties (Demurger 2015). This correlation between migration and the beneficiaries of migrants' votes, is clear indication that indeed, emigrant workers have the power to influence the results of elections in their places of origin, even if they are thousands of miles away when such political exercises take place. This study will also shed light in understanding situations, in similarly situated countries, which experience labor emigration of its citizens. Such a phenomenon can be managed through a purposeful distribution of the results of legislation to the different marginalized sectors of society. Practically, legislation can be a double-edged tool which could narrow as well as exacerbate social inequality among the different sectors of society. But since legislators are single-minded seekers of re-election (Mayhew, 1974), this dissertation believes that lawmakers view legislation as a tool to better the lives of people, in whatever way, thereby getting the support of the people and gaining their votes during elections.

## **1. Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This part discusses and explains how the correlation of labor emigration and the legislative process, particularly the behavior of legislators could be understood. The theoretical framework employed here centers on the imagined reward as a motivating factor why people do things relative to their work or any engagement within an organization. Legislators in the context of this framework are considered as workers.

In this connection, I will employ Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation (ETM), as my theoretical framework. As a process theory, ETM explains that individuals are motivated on

the basis of their interaction with the environment. This theory is used as a framework to guide this dissertation, because the legislators' belief of what their activities will earn them, like the imagined extra votes as outcome or reward coming from the FLEs or the OFWs that may help in their re-election bids, fits appropriately with the basic tenet of the theory, regarding the extrinsic reward as a motivating factor, for people to exert effort, towards an enhanced work performance. The ETM is also called the VIE (Valence, Instrumentality, Expectancy) Theory (Vroom, 1964).

Literatures show that the ETM or the VIE Theory has been used and applied by many scholars and researchers in their works, especially those dealing with motivations in the workplace. As claimed by Fudge and Schlacter (1999), the virtue of ETM is that its components have been experimentally confirmed as having a positive influence on motivation. Similarly, I will apply ETM in this dissertation so as to understand legislators' motivation and expectation when doing their legislative work, specifically in the field of labor emigration which is the central thesis of my research.

This theory assumes that people have goals which they like to achieve and for this reason, they work in organizations (Parijat and Bagga, 2004) or in some other groups or institutions. In other words, ETM views people as purposeful beings who behave in accordance with their expectations that their efforts will result in outcomes they value (Hancock, 1995). In fact, Vroom's theory starts with the idea that people tend to prefer certain goals or outcomes over others (Miner, 2015) and that extrinsic motivators are the causes for individuals to exhibit certain behaviors (Leonard, et. al., 1999). With this, it is worth pointing out for instance that legislators have different commitments and priorities as they embark on their legislative functions. These differences in commitments and priorities can be related to their expectations that will reward their actions. Consequently, an action or behavior could be oriented towards anticipated and individualized goals (Suciu, et. al., 2013). Also, Strom (1997) opined that, legislators have different goals, and that they strategize their behavior to reach those goals which are then shaped by the rules as they compete for four political goods, they typically pursue which are reselection; re-election; party office and legislative office. Literatures also show that these anticipated and individualized goals, like the votes that will realize re-election bids, serve as motivating factors for many legislators. But I also like to point out here that for legislators, aside from re-election, there are other sources of satisfaction for their part. This may include participating in different activities, where legislators can freely express their sentiments with people in and outside parliament (Brouard, et. al., 2013)

and accomplishment of their responsibilities beyond their personal advantage (Bessette, 1997; Norton 2002) or interests. These other sources of satisfaction, that is, other than re-election, are much more common among legislators who serve for a single term in the legislature and therefore not concerned with re-election.

The ETM or VIE Theory has three key elements: Expectancy, Instrumentality, and Valence. People are motivated to the degree that they believe that (a) **effort** will lead to acceptable performance [*Expectancy*], (b) **performance** will be rewarded [*Instrumentality*], and (c) **the value of the reward** is highly positive [*Valence*] (Lunenberg, 2011). In simple terms, the theory suggests that individuals feel motivated when three conditions are perceived - the personal expenditure of effort will result in acceptable level of performance; the performance level achieved will result in a specific outcome for the individual and the outcome attained is personally valued (Isaac, et. al., 2001). Therefore Expectancy, Instrumentality and Valence are linked with each other and motivation is the product of these three elements (Lambright, 2010). Their linkages can be simplified by the formula  $M = E \times I \times V$  (Isaac, et. al., 2001), where M stands for motivation, E stands for Expectancy, I stands for Instrumentality and V stands for Valence.

Following this formula, Expectancy is the belief that increased effort will lead to a good performance. So, the effort that individuals expend is linked to the performance they will do and will do so if they believe that a certain level of performance is attainable (Karathanos, et. al., 1994).

At the level of legislators, it can be said that the effort they expend is linked to their job performance in the legislature like in debates, interpellations, and lawmaking. A legislator for instance, will expend effort beforehand in researching about things that are related to a topic for legislative deliberations as a working knowledge of such things as hinted by this theory, will lead to a good performance during legislative debates and interpellation sessions. Also, greenhorn legislators are likely to expend time, money and effort on crash courses about lawmaking, personal relations, argumentation and debate, and some even enroll in courses for a degree, obviously to equip them of the needed skills and education, that will guarantee a good performance, in time when they discharge their legislative duties. In the Philippines, an incumbent undergraduate senator, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Congresses for instance, only attained his degree in Political Science, while already serving as a legislator, through an alternative education program, that does not adhere to traditional schooling method (Malasig, 2019). This particular case is a reinforcement of the idea along this theory, that education is an important factor for a legislator to actively and

effectively carry out his or her duties as a lawmaker, thereby attaining good performance while discharging his or her legislative work. Undoubtedly, skill and educational attainment are important determinants of a good work performance, concerning any work for that matter, and legislating as a type of work is not an exception to this.

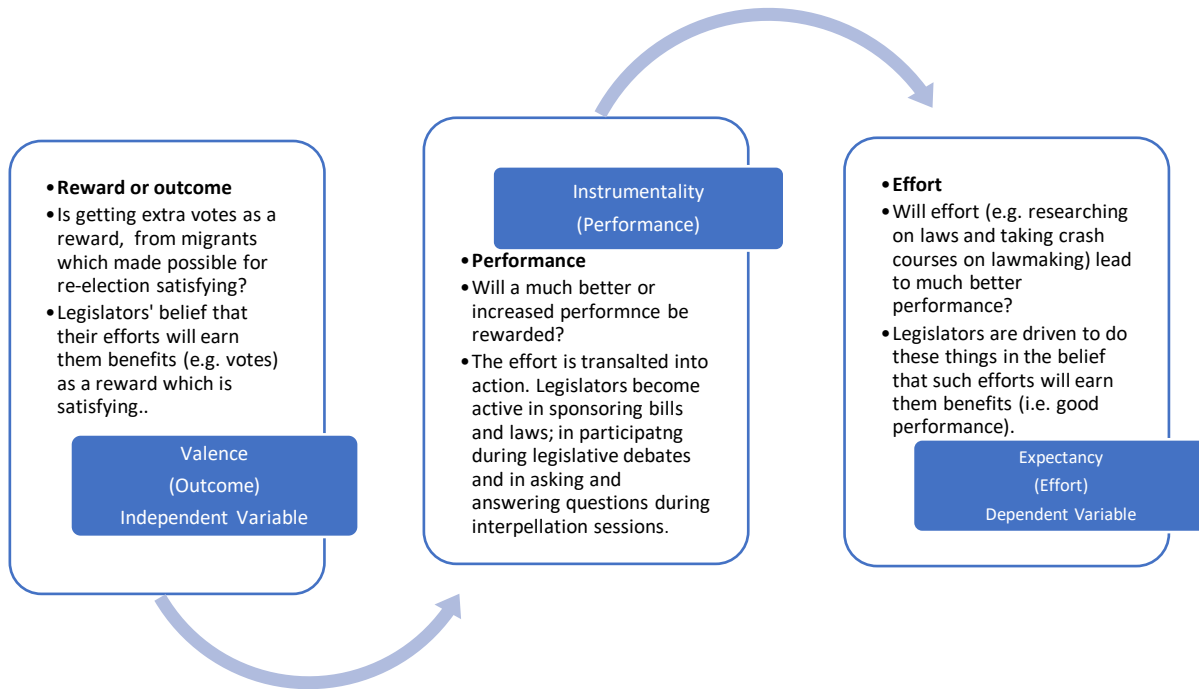
Instrumentality is the belief that if people perform well, a valued outcome will be received. It constitutes a perception that performance levels are related to rewards bestowed and concerns people's expectations that the rewards they will receive are closely tied to their level of performance. The perceived (not actual) correlation between performance and reward is relevant (Fudge and Schlacter, 1999). Looking at this from the lens of the legislators, their active participation in legislative debates or interpellation sessions for instance, which to some extent could be a determinant of good performance, will for them result in the realization of an extrinsic reward or outcome that they value. Re-election fueled by votes cast in their favor, is just one of these extrinsic rewards or outcomes that legislators who wish to seek re-election find valuable and satisfying.

Valence is the satisfaction that people place upon the expected outcome. It refers to the level at which an individual values a reward or outcome (Gerhart, et. al., 1995). It is the degree by which individuals value a particular reward, and the more the individuals value the reward they will receive for their effort, the more motivated they will be to receive the reward or outcome (Fudge and Schlacter, 1999). It is also important to consider that if a person places a high value on a goal, but expect that the probability of attaining it is zero, then the motivation will also be zero (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1980). So, Valence which is the value or importance that people put on the extrinsic reward or outcome is an important determinant of motivation<sup>5</sup>. With the Vroom's Expectancy Theory, I will operationalize my theoretical framework as well as my independent and dependent variables in Figure 1.

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<sup>5</sup> There are other determinants of motivation among legislators aside from the votes of labor emigrants and re-election. Such determinants may include obtaining a better business position, landing in a more influential executive position in government or even an international career. In this dissertation however, I just focus on votes of labor emigrants and re-election in order to establish the impact of labor emigration on the actions and legislative behavior of legislators.

Figure 1. The Vroom Expectancy Theory of Motivation (ETM) as the theoretical framework of this dissertation



As can be seen in Figure 1, the three elements of Vroom’s ETM – Valence, Instrumentality and Expectancy are linked and related to each other. Valence (outcome) is linked to Instrumentality (performance) through the first upward arrow which indicates the O-P (Outcome-Performance) linkage, while Instrumentality (performance) is linked to Expectancy (effort) through the second downward arrow which is the P-E (Performance-Effort) linkage. In this figure, I wish to show that the legislators’ willingness to pursue and seek the realization of an expected reward or outcome that is satisfying (Valence) which is my **independent variable**, is the one that is pushing legislators to expend effort (Expectancy) which is my **dependent variable**, that will result to good performance (Instrumentality). Good performance here means that legislators are able to address the interests of the constituency or the particular group of voters. In this dissertation, this constituency are the FLEs or the OFWs.

As applied in this dissertation, I want to emphasize that the linkages of the three elements – Valence (reward or outcome that is satisfying), Instrumentality (performance) and Expectancy (effort) are important considerations in understanding my independent and dependent variables. Each element is not separate from the other elements. To illustrate this, I wish to point out one of

the literatures that fittingly explains these linkages although applied to a typical work setting. This explanation is offered by Robbins and Judge (2014) who opined that, employees will be motivated to exert a high level of effort (*Expectancy*) when they expect it will lead to a good performance (*Instrumentality*) and the good performance appraisal will lead to organizational rewards (*Valence*); and that the rewards will satisfy the employees' personal goals. Similarly, if I operationalize this situation here in my dissertation, legislators will be perceived to be motivated to exert a high level of effort (*Expectancy*) like engaging the services of academicians to conduct prior research on laws and hiring expert practitioners to tutor them on argumentation and debates, believing that such efforts or expectancy will lead to a good performance (*Instrumentality*) like active participation in debates and interpellation sessions, and such performance appraisal from the voting public, will lead to imagined rewards (*Valence*) like the votes in times of elections, which are definitely satisfying to legislators, as these votes will propel them in the realization of their re-election bids. I wish to add however, that the realization of the imagined reward (i.e. votes of the FLEs or OFWs), will have a greater possibility of attainment, if the activities of legislators are widely disseminated among the people, especially to those who are directly affected and are at the same time eligible voters.

Lawmaking just like any other human activity is driven by rewards or outcomes (*Valence*) that are considered satisfying. In the realm of governance, lawmaking is influenced or shaped by the lawmakers' effort (*Expectancy*) to reap something in return for the work performance (*Instrumentality*) that they have done.

## **2. Review of related literature**

In this dissertation, I wish to see whether there is a correlation between the labor emigration phenomenon in the Philippines and how legislators discharge their legislative duties specifically their legislative behavior. In doing this, related literatures that shed light in understanding this relationship have been resorted to and form part of this section.

It is a public knowledge that Filipino legislators, especially the Senators and Party-list Representatives who claim to represent the labor emigrant sector, are active in crafting laws regarding labor emigration. They are also very vocal in the media about their concern for the welfare of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or the OFWs. In the Philippines, newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations, and even social media platforms do not fail to report the

activities of Filipino legislators, especially when they make engagements, dealing with Filipino labor emigrants' rights and welfare. When there are instances of abuse for instance, that are committed by the foreign employers against overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWS, lawmakers are quick to jump into the fray, to show their solidarity with the aggrieved Filipino workers. Their verbal concern about the welfare of this sector of the Philippine population, is matched by actions, not only by crafting and passing legislative measures aimed at protecting them, but at the same time seeing to it, that government officials mandated to protect their interests, especially when they are still overseas, are made to account for any lapses, in their duties and obligations. For instance, after the killing in 2016 of a Filipina household worker in Kuwait, whose corpse was kept in a freezer for over a year by her employers, until it was discovered in 2018, the sitting Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello that time, was invited to a Senate hearing and he was reminded by quondam Senator Manny Pacquiao to prioritize the safety and welfare of OFWs who are being abused by heartless employers (Roxas, 2018). Filipino legislators can be active in discharging their work especially those concerning FLEs or OFWs. This is on the idea based on my theoretical framework. that people are motivated to act or do something, because they are expecting an imagined reward for their actions.

There are a number of literatures reinforcing the claim that people are motivated to do something because of the expectation of an imagined reward for the thing or things they have done, and legislators are not exceptions to this. They are motivated in their legislative duties because of the possible extrinsic reward for their successful performance while discharging their work in the legislature. Such rewards are many to mention but one such reward that stands out among the rest is the possibility of re-election.

One of the classic works that sheds light on this is that of Mayhew (1974) who, referring to members of the United States Congress called them as "single minded seekers of re-election". He magnified this narrative when he connected the re-election goals of legislators in the U.S. Congress over their dilemma whether to pass general benefit bills or pork barrel bills. As pork barrel bills will appropriate more money than general benefit bills, to the hands of legislators, they can readily use such money to be spent on projects in their districts and claim credits for such projects. Given this arrangement, it will be easier for voters to identify who is instrumental in the realization of such projects as none other than their sitting representative in Congress. So, this is much more advantageous for an incumbent legislator who is seeking re-election. Given this

political reality, Mayhew (1974) further said that, “re-election is the proximate goal of everyone, the goal that must be achieved over and over if other ends are to be entertained”. This view is also shared by Alvarez and Saving (1997) saying that “pork barrel whether measured by awards or the dollar value of these awards, the incumbents who obtained federal largesse were rewarded by the electorate to whom they were responsible”. And obviously, the reward they are talking about is none other than the votes cast by the electorate in favor of incumbents that could propel their re-election bids being their primary concern. In the same view, with reference to American legislators, Adler (2002) said that “the primary concern of the overwhelming majority of representatives at any specific time is re-election in their districts”.

With a quite similar observation, Edwards (2015) pointed out that the fundamental incentive sheltering political behavior is re-election. He however said in a precautionary tone that if members of the legislative body do not satisfy voters in their districts, they will not survive in Congress. This is understandable because a trap that legislators seeking re-election must avoid, is insensitivity to voters’ needs in their districts. In fact, Crisp, et. al (2004) reinforced this observation when they identified the United States as a specific case. They said that members of the United States Congress think that district attentiveness is important for re-election and that providing constituency service and pork produces votes. Given this reality, suffice is to say that legislators must be attentive and take constituency service into account if only for them to enjoy the continuous support of the people especially the voters in their districts. They further pointed out that legislators will endeavor to behave in such a way as to maximize their prospects for re-election. This highlights the behavior of legislators as being much concerned for their own personal motive of re-election while at the same time deftly portraying themselves as promoters of people’s needs and concerns. Therefore, it is not an overstatement that lawmaking chambers, like the bicameral U.S. Congress is sometimes portrayed as arrogant, free-spending and out of touch (Windlesham, 1998).

However, although Papp and Russo (2018) acknowledged that most of the things representatives do in the present are attributed to the Member of Parliaments’ (MPs’) individual desire for re-election as other authors pointed out (Mayhew, 1974; Alvarez and Saving, 1997; Adler, 2002; Edwards, 2015 and Crisp, et. al., 2004), they introduced a twist and focused on institutional incentives by investigating if and under what conditions working hard in parliament results in MPs’ re-election. They indirectly focused on the preferences of parties and voters to



understand whether they are also consistently affected by institutional incentives. It is however important to note that regardless of party and voter preferences, there are different conditions in winning a national election and winning in a local election. For instance, in some countries with a two-party system, particularly the U.S., party affiliation is very important for a candidate to win in a national election as party support really counts. Because of this system, independent candidates can hardly win in a national election. On the other hand, party affiliation is not so much important in local elections, so it is easier for independent candidates to clinch local posts. Also, in order to appeal to the personal vote, one must ensure visibility and advertise candidate-specific vote earning attributes by organizing personalized campaigns (Papp and Zorigt, 2016), yet, in a party-list system, this may not be so much of an issue. This is because under such system, it is the party that is voted, and it is the winning party in turn that selects the person as its nominee or representative in the legislature.

Aside from being attentive and from providing constituency services as strategies employed by legislators to woo constituency votes, a number of scholars discussed and showed how legislators choose and frame their agenda as a vote-catching strategy. For instance, as self-interested individuals, lawmakers being politicians themselves have to focus on populist agenda while others may rely on popular mobilization as a survival strategy mechanism (Esen, 2019). However, Esen may just be biased, and tilt against populist agenda because it may not be all that is needed to gain support and votes from the electorate. Following Esen, it could be true that coming up with popular mobilization may also help, because supporters of such agenda may transcend political, economic, and social divides, unlike in populist agenda, when the in-group or the good ordinary people versus the evil, the culprit or the out-group (Canovan, 1999; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 2000) narrative is emphasized. A well-thought of or rational agenda which are not necessarily populist but popular may even gain more supporters than populist ones. And so, it is not a coincidence that legislators especially those who stand election in districts and enjoy great freedom from their parties will try to do everything including the adroit choice of agenda and an intelligent framing of the same, so that it will find favor and acclamation from the voters, thereby earning their support. As a result, this practice is not only observable through the legislators' choice and framing of their agenda in its oral or narrative form, but this is observable as well in their actions as to how legislators choose popular programs and projects they wish to implement.

Taking into account the differences as to the nature of representation whether a legislator is locally or nationally elected, generally, the programs and projects they choose to undertake are those that cater to the broad mass of the population. In the case of legislators who are representing a district or constituency, the projects that the pork barrel has to be funded must still be those that will benefit most of the people in the constituency, regardless of the pork barrel-funded project, as long as it caters to the broad mass of the population. This is even more evident among legislators who are said to represent the State like the Senators in the U.S. or in the Philippines, who are to be elected nationwide. With such a voting arrangement, they must select programs and services that will benefit not only a certain constituency but those who will possibly benefit most if not all people in the State if only to earn their votes.

There are a lot of agenda that legislators can focus on as regards their lawmaking work but some of these agenda are not as popular as the others, and so such agenda are relegated to the back burner. One of the most popular agenda that many voters can relate to and legislators pursue is with regards to unemployment. This agenda often rings a bell among lawmakers as it is one of the basic problems in communities around the world. It is a serious and growing problem in countries from one end of the developing world to the other and dominates international development (Grant, 1971). Even in the United States, some sectors experience high unemployment rates (Dayen, 2017). Although unemployment can be caused by many factors, this phenomenon is heightened when people compete for the limited jobs available. In such a scenario, unemployment results, and becomes a problem which many people can relate to. Through legislation however, lawmakers can definitely address such problem. It is true of course that generally, most lawmakers cannot personally offer or give jobs to the people in great numbers and if that is so, then they can just readily offer jobs to their constituents. However, the reality does not work that way, as there are simply not many jobs that legislators can offer on their own. In many cases however, it is a public knowledge that lawmakers, employ strategies and engage companies and businesses in the private sector to invest in their constituencies in order to create employment opportunities for the people and come up with legislations to increase unemployment benefits and allocation of public funds for job creation.

Furthermore, lawmakers in many parts of the world institute tactics and mechanisms to generate employment through legislation, like giving tax breaks or incentives to companies that will relocate or establish their businesses in the economic zones of the legislators' constituencies

for example. In the United States, it is a common practice among State legislators to offer incentives and other perks to companies who will establish operations in their States with the end in view of creating jobs for the people. For instance, Democrat legislators in Albany, New York have introduced bills that seek to regulate economic development incentives. Holder (2019) pointed out that companies which are given favor by the government through legislation, in the form of tax breaks<sup>6</sup> or incentives may lose such incentives if they fail to meet its hiring goals or if they automate any jobs that has been promised to be given and handled by the people during development agreements between the companies and the government in presidential systems which executes the laws passed by the legislature. This rescinding of tax breaks and incentives can be done by the legislature through its legislative power if companies will renege on their obligation to generate and provide employment to the people. In Chicago for example, an alderman introduced legislation that would allow the city to rescind its tax breaks if companies do not meet its hiring goals (Holder, 2019). These situations point to the fact that legislators in their ability to identify popular programs to implement, like the easing of unemployment in their districts, can actually use their legislative power to offer solutions to such popular problems that voters can relate to. Legislators can do something to ease the unemployment problem, and it is within their power to craft laws that will benefit companies in forms of tax breaks and incentives, hoping to offer a panacea to such widespread problems, in the case of unemployment for instance, to provide jobs to the people of working age, who in all certainty are also potential voters.

Furthermore, in relation to the problem of unemployment as a popular legislative agenda, lawmakers can as well take issue about the plight of workers who are already in the employ of companies but under unique conditions as the employer-employee relationship is not technically satisfied. In many companies around the world, there are the so-called contractual workers who work under contracts, and there are those who work under the quota system, although in Europe, employment arrangements could be different as there are workers employed without written contract with their employers, but with intermediary agencies who have contract with the employer of the emigrant workers. In Hungary for instance, particularly in Budapest, there are Filipino

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<sup>6</sup> In most countries, legislatures have the power to create or pass laws that will give tax breaks to companies in the hope that said companies will create jobs for the people. At the same time, the legislators through their legislative power can rescind such tax breaks if the companies will not meet the conditions (e. g. number of jobs that will be generated) as agreed upon by the government and the companies.

emigrant workers hired under this scheme.<sup>7</sup> Workers under contract work only when the contract is still in effect while those on quota system work to meet the production quota set and agreed upon between the worker and the owner of the production company. Many workers worldwide are under this employment scheme. Under this arrangement, legislators can come into the picture to aid the workers. One way of doing this is again to craft laws that will require companies to take into account, the plight of contractual workers who are at their employ to treat them as normal employees. Considering that such workers are powerless and vulnerable in an employer-employee labor dispute, lawmakers see this workers' vulnerability from employers' threats as a good starting point to let workers realize that they can do something by virtue of their legislative power, in order to protect workers' interests. Conger and Scheiber (2019) pointed out that legislators in California approved a landmark bill that required companies like Uber and Lyft to treat contract workers as employees. The bill passed in a 29-to-11 vote in the state Senate and will apply to app-based companies, despite their efforts to negotiate an exemption. Those who voted against the measure may have their own personal agenda. Under the measure which took effect on 1 January 2020, workers must be designated as employees instead of contractors if a company exerts control over how they perform their tasks or if their work is part of a company's regular business. In such a scenario, legislators as is the case here, can readily come into the picture by crafting laws that will benefit the workers, they being potential voters, who could realize legislators' desire for re-election.

It is as well established in some literatures that popular legislations are targeted at people who can deliver the votes (Crisp, et. al., 2004; Hertel-Fernandez, 2018; Miller, 2014). In other words, legislation becomes a political numbers game. The group who displays large numbers and are organized are often benefited by legislations that are in the first place conceived and passed on their behalf. Lawmakers make laws to benefit certain group of people like groups that are organized, unified, proactive, effective – a force to be reckoned with (Section 10: General Rules for Organizing Legislative Advocacy, 1994). Furthermore, legislators craft laws targeting to benefit a large population who become the “winners” with little regard to groups with small or few members who become the “losers” and who are left to suffer the negative consequences of the

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<sup>7</sup> The author in several instances had a casual talk with some of these Filipino labor emigrants. They said that they do not have a contract with their employer in Budapest, but they have a sort of a contract or agreement with a person in the Philippines who facilitated for a fee, their work arrangement in Hungary.

legislation. Such situations are magnified during policy gridlock wherein policy entrepreneurs or lawmakers who have policy making experience or background (Volden and Wiseman, 2014) come into the picture. This can be seen in the classic situation when legislators craft laws that benefit the workers, to the detriment of the employers, or the consumers to the detriment of the businessmen. In an employer-employee arrangement, in most instances, the workers are the majority. Added to this, they are the party considered to be the victim, often portrayed as maltreated, abused and shortchanged of their benefits by the employers. Legislators may know all too well the famous saying that those who have less in life should have more in law (Magsaysay, 1956), not to mention the fact that in their lawmaking function, their personal interests take the better of them. As self-interested individuals, they have to side with the group which has the greatest numbers so as to help them in their re-election bids.

One of the most powerful literatures that sheds light on such situation is discussed by Volden and Wiseman (2014). Building on the idea of James Q. Wilson in his so-called Wilson Matrix, they articulated and echoed Wilson's idea by classifying any given policy change in terms of those who benefit from and those who are harmed by the proposal. Evidently however, this can only be applied to cases when there are costs to bear, and that for some people or groups, some policies are free of costs while others are free of benefits. This explanation can be related to the bills and laws that the legislators sponsor and pass. Bills and laws have both supporters and dissenters especially in the lawmaking chambers like in congresses and parliaments. That is why it is common among lawmaking chambers around the world to see lobbyists who are either supporting a legislative measure or in the opposite working for the death of a bill. Added to this, the intent of any law which is to create social order (Hardin, 2001) implies that although the application of laws must be universal, people will never be uniformly satisfied with its effects. There are always those who will have a negative feeling against the law while there will also be those who will support and uphold it especially those who directly benefit from such law. And in worst case scenarios there are laws passed favoring only a powerful and/or influential minority, yet because of their economic and political power, they are important to lawmakers. To a certain extent, this is what happens to Filipino labor emigrants. They may be outnumbered by other sectors like the farmers, but during elections for instance, Filipino labor emigrants do not vote alone, as they can influence the political decisions of their family members left behind. The reason for this is that, in the Philippines, the FLEs or OFWs have the "power of the purse" so to speak, wherein

they can withhold or cut financial and material support to family members who go against their wishes, even extending to their choice of candidates during elections. The correlation that Demurger (2015) made between the positive impact of migration on votes for opposition parties, is a reinforcement that emigrant workers living many miles away from their homes are still engaged in the political affairs of their respective countries, and emigrant workers from the Philippines is not an exception. This polarization of people who are affected when a law is applied is best exemplified by Wilson in his so-called Wilson Matrix, showing that the nature of politics, associated with policy proposals depends on whether those who benefit from the proposal or those paying the costs, are concentrated (and thus likely to be politically active) or widely distributed (and thus likely to be politically inactive). Interpreting this matrix can in fact aid legislators on what legislative agenda to focus on and at the same time assess who the intended and logical beneficiaries of the legislation will be (*see Table 3*).

Looking at the matrix, Interest Group Politics happens when those who benefit from the policy change and those who shoulder the cost of the policy are both highly concentrated. In such a case, both groups are likely to be well-organized. Under this arrangement, neither group is willing to give in to the demand of the other group which results in a conflict of wants or in extreme cases confrontation. This situation can be a result of a haphazardly-thought-of-legislation wherein lawmakers in their desire to help workers for example may earn the ire of employers. Feeling that such legislation passed by lawmakers harm their interests, they are not so willing to give in to the demands of the workers despite the presence of legislations favoring the workers. What happens then is that workers organize a strike which could paralyze the business operation of the employer. Under this scenario, legislators may be put in a bind as to whom to side, in their desire to put a legislative solution to future problems of such nature.

The other extreme in the matrix is the Majoritarian Politics. Here, both groups – those who benefit from the policy change and those who shoulder the cost of the policy are widely distributed. Applying this situation to the self-interest of legislators, they may craft laws after determining who commands the greater number and can deliver the votes. Since both groups are widely distributed, the group that may appear to be more organized and may attract the attention of legislators can be the possible target of future legislations. This hinges again on the idea that legislators have always that incentive in mind - the broad support of the people during elections, when crafting laws. A good example of this case is a legislation on tax generation. Increasing the tax that has to be levied

Table 3. The Wilson Matrix

		BENEFITS FROM POLICY CHANGE	
		CONCENTRATED	WIDELY DISTRIBUTED
C O S T  O F  P O L I C Y  C H A N G E	CONCENTRATED	INTEREST GROUP POLITICS	ENTREPRENEURIAL POLITICS
	WIDELY DISTRIBUTED	CLIENT POLITICS	MAJORITARIAN POLITICS

Source: Volden and Wiseman (2014)

on a certain commodity for example may hurt both the business owners as well as the consumers. But generally, since business owners pay more taxes to the government than the consumers do, they can be said as the group shouldering the cost of the policy, while the consumers who themselves could also be inconvenienced by the new policy on an increased tax is the group who is the beneficiary of the policy as they are the ones who often avail of social services than business people do. But then, if in the event the business owners feel that the increased tax on commodities will hurt their business in the long run, they may be driven to approach the legislators to modify the law or to craft a new measure that could be beneficial to the business owners. This may possibly happen after the lawmakers realize that the businessmen are organized and relatively command great number of united members than the widely distributed and unorganized consumers.

Taking a cue from the Wilson Matrix above, Entrepreneurial Politics happens when those who shoulder the cost of the policy change is concentrated or well-organized while those who benefit from the policy change is widely distributed. A good example of this is a legislation that will prohibit businesses to destroy the environment in order to protect consumers. For example, restricting or outlawing the spraying of pesticides on plants and fruit bearing trees may hurt commercial farm owners especially in areas where pests are commonplace. However, such measures are designed to protect the consumers on the idea that pesticides may cause cancer. On the surface, although this measure is for the benefit of consumers, they may not mind or may not even know the importance of such legislation. However, the employers who will be shouldering the cost associated with the new legislation, may organize themselves and let legislators know about their dissatisfaction of the new law as their businesses will suffer. In such a scenario, legislators may likely listen to the plight of the business owners who are organized rather than the consumers who do not even care about the legislation in question. Again, this boils down to the fact that legislators listen to the demands of the group who show strength, who is organized and who has the greater number.

Client Politics on the other hand happens when the group who benefits from a legislation is concentrated and therefore well-organized while the group who shoulder the cost of legislation is widely distributed. An example of this is a legislation that will provide monetary support or will give free crop seedling to farmers. The direct beneficiaries of this legislation who are the farmers are concentrated and well organized while those business people who are being levied high taxes that go to the monetary support given to farmers and possibly be competitors of the farmers especially the commercial farmers are widely dispersed. In such a situation, legislators will continue to craft laws that will aid the farmers as they are concentrated and well-organized who then can possibly deliver votes to the legislators in times of election.

The Wilson Matrix is a powerful literature that when contextualized, may in fact explain that legislations or policies can be crafted depending on who commands the numbers based on the opinion of the legislators in question. Again, as “single minded seekers of re-election” (Mayhew, 1974), legislators will favor groups that display great numbers and are well-organized and are politically active or groups that may have a significant impact on the outcome of the elections, so they are often the beneficiaries of laws as this feed the interests of most legislators.



Another literature relating to legislation and lawmakers' incentives for their lawmaking function is their support for policy decay. In a separate yet interesting literature, it is pointed out that, legislators craft populist legislations not because of immediate support from the people but through adroit political maneuvering, they actually support the so-called policy decay or they tend to favor the legislation even if it is defective in some aspects and are unwilling to take steps in improving the legislation in question. Policy decay can become a distinct advantage for certain politicians. The worse the situation gets, the more power or leverage a given person or groups may have over the outcomes. So, as what Waikar (2017) explained, decay becomes an ingredient in the fight between the governing and opposition parties over policy. Legislators in certain circumstances may also be confronted with this situation and some may even take this as advantageous to their legislative work. In other words, legislators may not always be pushing for laws that will offer immediate benefits to the people but they may even surreptitiously do the opposite, that is support the decaying, outdated or defective legislation for in doing so they will gain advantage over those legislators who are the authors of such decaying, outdated or defective laws. These legislators will find it to their advantage to support the decaying legislation so that it may turn the table in their favor. Given such a situation, it will now be easier for these legislators to craft laws which could be the complete opposite of the decaying or defective legislation. Also, they will appear to the voters as champions of good laws or as legislators who do not commit lapses as complete opposite of those authors of the decaying or defective laws. In this way, they gain advantage over other legislators. Again, this boils down to the fact that legislators are always on watch to do things in relation to their legislative duties, that will earn them good image among the voters.

### **3. Justification of case selection**

This is a case study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (Gerring, 2004). The case selection strategy I employed here is the purposive (nonrandom) sampling procedure resulting to a small-N of cases, after a review of the datasets from the United Nations and the World Bank. Here, N refers to cases and not observations (Gerring, 2007). The cases selected, after the purposive (nonrandom) sampling, narrowed down to a small-N of 6 cases at the most, in alphabetical order – Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan and the Philippines (*see Table 4*).

Table 4. Typical set of values the six countries are subjected to showing the Philippines as the typical case.

Name of Country (in alphabetical order)	Migrant population is at least 2 M from 2017-2019	Legislature is free to craft laws & not subject to control by other agents of the government	Regular elections are conducted as scheduled	Migrant inward remittance is US\$15 b and above as of 2018	Population is 100 M or more as of 2018	NGOs and POs are officially acknowledged in the Constitution as partner of the Government in the protection of collective interests (e. g. interests of labor emigrants)
Bangladesh	✓ (2.2 M)	✓	✓	✓ (18.3 B)	✓ (164.6 M)	✗ No
India	✓ (17.5 M)	✓	✓	✓ (83.1 B)	✓ (1.38 B)	✗ No
Indonesia	✓ (9 M)	✓	✓	✗ (11.6 B)	✓ (273.5 M)	✗ No
Mexico	✓ (11.8 M)	✓	✓	✓ (38.5 B)	✓ (128.9 M)	✗ No
Pakistan	✗ (500,000)	✓	✓	✓ (22.5 B)	✓ (220.8 M)	✗ No
Philippines	✓ (2.3 M)	✓	✓	✓ (35.1 B)	✓ (109.5 M)	✓ Article XIII, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution

Sources: Refer to footnote No.<sup>8</sup>

The 6 cases are selected because they are the ones that fit into the characteristics enumerated below and likewise listed in Table 4, showing how they exhibit such specialized characteristics that made them stand out from the rest of the cases listed in the United Nations and World Bank datasets. The number of cases employed by a case study may either be small or large (Gerring, 2004). Obviously, I have small-N of cases as there are only 6 of them. Since I have to

<sup>8</sup> International Migration Stock. (2019). United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationStock2019\\_TenKeyFindings.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationStock2019_TenKeyFindings.pdf)

UN Report. (2019). At 17.5 Million, Indian Diaspora Largest in the World: *The Economic Times*.

World Bank Data. (2022) <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>

World Bank Indonesia Report. (2017). Indonesia's Global Workers Juggling Opportunities and Risks.

<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/357131511778676366/Indonesias-Global-Workers-Juggling-Opportunities-Risks.pdf>

World Bank Migrant Remittance Inflows, April 2020.

Worldometer. (2020). Population by Country.

deal with small-N of cases, this may produce estimates with a great deal of variance or the so-called problem of precision (Gerring, 2007). In order to avoid this problem, I linked my case selection to the techniques derived from nine case study types, particularly the Typical Case Study type (Gerring, 2007). Under this type, an explanation of the technique for identifying cases within a population of potential cases, as well as its uses and its representativeness is included. With this, the case identified for intensive study is chosen from a population and the reason for this, hinges upon the way in which it is situated within that population (Gerring, 2007). So, the case selection procedure here is built upon a prior cross-case analysis of the cases that resulted to the 6 cases mentioned above and depends upon certain assumptions about the broader population.

As a result of a cross-case analysis on the cases under consideration, it was found out that the caveats for quantitative (statistical) case-selection technique are not satisfied, particularly as regards the requirement that all standards of statistical research (e. g. identification, specification, robustness) must be carefully considered and wherever possible, investigated (Gerring, 2007). Failing this test, the qualitative approach to case selection is employed instead. Specifically employing the inductive approach to case selection, typical set of values were identified in order to have a better understanding of the phenomenon which are: 1) 2 million or more international migrants from the country as of 2017-2019, 2) legislature is free to craft laws and not subject to control by other agents of the government, 3) free election is held regularly according to official schedule as part of the law of the land, 4) total remittance of the international migrant population to the country is US\$15 billion and above as of 2018, 5) the population of the country is 100 million or more as of 2018, and 6) Non-government organizations (NGOs or People's organizations (POs) are officially acknowledged in the Constitution as partner of the Government in the protection of collective interests (e. g. interests of labor emigrants). With this set of values, the Philippines features as the Typical Case Study type and is therefore selected as the intensive subject of investigation in this dissertation. This can be illustrated in Table 4, showing the characteristics of the cases considered that will point to the Philippines as the typical case. By definition, according to Gerring (2007), "the typical case is representative".

#### **4. Research design and methods**

In Section 3 or the Justification of case selection part of this chapter, it is explained that this dissertation is a case study, and how this case has been selected. Consequently, as its research

design, this study employs both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. In other words, this dissertation is a combination of both the qualitative and quantitative research designs. This is because the data that are needed to come up with the desired result, that is, whether there is an impact of the overseas labor emigration phenomenon on the legislative process, particularly on legislators' behavior, as defined and described in Section 1 or the Theoretical and conceptual framework part of this chapter, are quantitative in nature as this looks at the performance of legislators when they embark on their legislative work. This performance is quantified as to the number of bills, resolutions and laws that have something to do with the promotion and protection of the rights, interests and welfare of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs, that legislators filed, authored or sponsored. Furthermore, overseas labor emigration has also to be quantified, and this is done by identifying the number of votes legislators got from the overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs in a given election.

The qualitative aspect or characteristic of my research design is the use of words or language in a narrative format to describe or explain the research results. Although tables, charts and statistical terminologies are also used in this dissertation, in order to explain the research results and findings, this is in most part aided by descriptive explanations by using words and not numbers, hence qualitative.

In order to reinforce the qualitative aspect of the research design as mentioned here, I had the intention of conducting interviews and reveal the beliefs and causality of the relationships between legislators' activity or behavior and the votes of FLEs or OFWs. Despite my efforts and the assistance of my supervisor, the request for interviews were not addressed in a timely manner by the intended legislator-interviewees, plus the added unfortunate onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, this did not push through. Therefore, I stick to other sources and indirect information. For this reason, I am not in a position to establish and verify a causal link. Considering these circumstances, a further investigation using methods like interviews will be needed to confirm the probable linkage that I formulate based on my indirect data. Build on my current findings, but beyond the scope of this dissertation, I wish to conduct further investigation on the causality of votes and legislative behavior by using direct data.

The purposive sampling technique is used in this dissertation in gathering the data needed for interpretation. This is for the reason that in terms of size, the population of this case study is small and restricted to the number of legislators in the Philippine Congress which is 24 Senators

and about 50 Party-list Representatives, who exhibit qualities, that this dissertation wishes to assess. Since legislators who are promoters of FLEs or OFWs' interests, rights and welfare are already identified based on prior observation as to how they deal with the issue of overseas labor emigration, as seen and read in their media interviews, in their press releases, and on how they are featured by news articles in different mediums like television, radio, and even the social media, it became easier to point out who among the legislators were initially given focus as my samples. These legislators were further assessed as to their socio-demographic profiles or information, political positions, local positions or involvement and their present position in Congress. The reason for this is that, these attributes or statuses connect them to their responsibilities and consequently their functions based on the rules of the Philippine Congress itself, of which they are all part of. For instance, following legislative protocols, if a legislator is head or chairman of a committee, in most instances, he or she is obliged to sponsor the legislative measure or deliver a sponsorship speech in Congress to promote the legislative measure involved. So, a legislator's concern is identifiable with his or her position in the legislative body. Along the standard procedure in Congress, bills and resolutions filed by legislators are always addressed to appropriate committees for action. So, for instance if a problem involving overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs is brought up in a resolution or bill, such resolution or bill is most commonly referred to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs, Committee on Labor and Employment or the Committee on Foreign Affairs, that is after a careful scrutiny of the legislative measure in question. After this, the chairman of each of these committees are expected to make the necessary steps to address the concern stipulated in the bill or resolution as the case may be, if at all the bill or resolution is to be pursued. In effect, this legislative procedure ties legislators to specific causes that they must advance and promote. This made my data gathering systematic, because after identifying the committee chairmen of the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs, the Committee on Labor and Employment and the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, I searched and sieved the legislative measures they promoted there. With this data gathering technique, I was able to systematically quantify the legislative measures the legislators filed, authored and sponsored. This also gave me an idea about the legislators, at this stage of my dissertation, who can be considered as promoters of FLEs or OFWs' interests, rights and welfare. These legislators then are the focus of this dissertation.

In addition to this, in order to ensure that no legislative measures dealing with the interests, rights and welfare of overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs will be left out, the data sets of the Senate and the House of Representatives were examined. So, the bills, resolutions and laws that these legislators filed, authored or sponsored were culled from these data sets which are available online. These legislative measures - bills, resolutions and laws, initiated by the different legislators were further assessed one by one, sorted out and listed down based on the content of the measures – that is, dealing with the issue of overseas labor emigration, which now form part of the data for my analysis and interpretation.

Establishing direct causal links are also hindered by the electoral system of the Congress. The legislators who are the subject of this dissertation cannot be assessed in terms of their electoral success because the Representatives are elected from party lists, while Senators obtain their seats in one single national constituency. Party-list groups and their Representatives are not representing places or districts but (typically marginalized) sectors and specific issues. The Party-list group for FLEs or OFWs for instance, claims to represent the FLE or OFW sector and their concerns, but FLEs or OFWs are scattered all over the country and around the world. It is for this reason that Party-list groups are elected at large or nationally, and the available data are not sufficient (although they would be necessary) to establish a causal link between the legislators' behavior and the FLE/OFW voting pattern. We can only reveal parallel developments in the representation of FLEs or OFWs in the legislation (such as undertaking their issues and submitting/supporting bills in their favor) and the electoral support for their advocacies.

The Senators, are not representing districts as well, but the country as a whole. What was done in the case of the Senators therefore, was to describe their backgrounds, and identify the places of origin or the places where they registered to vote as discussed in Sub-section A, Section 2 of Chapter 3. In this way, aside from the quantity of legislative initiatives they pushed in Congress, this will also be a basis to connect the Senators with the FLEs or OFWs and see whether Senators coming from places or regions with high concentration of FLEs or OFWs, garner high votes from these regions as well. However, it is important to mention here that even if a link to this effect can be seen, such linkage will still be inconclusive because there is no way of knowing whether those FLEs or OFWs coming from the places of origin of Senators actually voted for the Senator whom they share a common place of origin with. At the present time, FLEs or OFWs are free to choose a Senatorial candidate even if such candidate originates from a place or region that

is different from theirs. This being said, there is no way of knowing as to whom the FLE or OFW sector vote for during elections, as there is no platform or mechanism yet where such data could be culled. The COMELEC which is the central government agency that monitors elections in the Philippines, does not specify the places of origin of voters in their data set concerning election results. Presently, what can only be known through data is the quantity of the votes Senatorial candidates garner from the FLE or OFW sector in general.

Another relevant aspect to mention when trying to establish such linkage or connection, concerns the fact that when FLEs or OFWs are already in the Philippines, and voted in elections, their votes are counted together with national votes. With this, there is no way of knowing and accounting for their votes as coming from FLEs or OFWs, even if in the strictest sense of the word they are actually FLEs or OFWs. Only votes of FLEs or OFWs who actually voted abroad are counted separately by the COMELEC. In other words, the votes of FLEs or OFWs who return to the Philippines during elections, and who actually voted in the Philippines, are not counted as FLE or OFW votes. Therefore, in the Philippine case, even if a link or connection can be seen that Senators who came from places where FLEs or OFWs are of great numbers won, or were voted under this context, such link or connection is still inconclusive because FLEs or OFWs coming from other places or regions can freely vote for any Senatorial candidate.

Having said all these, there is still a missing part of the data needed to come up with an explanation about the concern of this dissertation, which is to find out the correlation or the impact of labor emigration on the legislative process. The number of bills, resolutions and laws filed, authored and sponsored by legislators as quantified and now ready, cannot answer yet this dissertation's concern. Such data will just be hanging if left alone, although such is obviously very significant. So, in order to correlate the two variables – labor emigration and the legislative process, there is also a need to quantify the Philippine labor emigration phenomenon. In this dissertation, this quantification was done by coming up with the number of votes each Senatorial candidates and Party-list groups obtained during the elections, when they participated by filing candidacy for re-election after their latest term of office expired. This latest election candidacy which they filed is purposely selected so as to establish a timeframe on how these candidates performed during their last terms in office, which could possibly be one of the many reasons how the overseas Filipinos selected their Senatorial and Party-list group bets. This data is also available online from the website of the COMELEC. Furthermore, additional data were requested from the COMELEC

main office in Intramuros, Manila particularly from the Office for Overseas Voting (OFOV), which data the OFOV readily provided. This data served a very significant purpose – it reinforced and assured the correctness and veracity of the COMELEC data available online. And so, all the votes of the Senatorial candidates and Party-list groups that were collected from the COMELEC website, supported by the data from OFOV, were duly taken into consideration and listed down. Having done this, another set of data is now ready.

At this time when both the quantitative data as to the number of bills, resolutions and laws the legislators filed, sponsored and authored in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the number of votes these legislators garnered from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs, during the latest election these legislators participated in, the sets of data collected which are already available, can now be interpreted. Such interpretation must be guided by the main problem that this dissertation wishes to answer or explain.

In coming up with the needed data, the Senators and Party-list Representatives were listed according to the total number of bills, resolutions and laws they filed, sponsored and authored. The list commenced from the lawmaker who filed, sponsored and authored the highest number of bills, resolutions and laws, followed by the next higher in number and so on. The last name in the list is the one who has the lowest number of bills, resolutions and laws filed, sponsored and authored. Opposite their names, the number of bills, resolution and laws were listed. After coming up with this list, the data from the COMELEC, as to the number of votes was accessed, and the number of votes each lawmaker got from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs, was listed in a separate column, opposite the names of the lawmakers as well. After having done this, the resulting list with both the number of bills, resolutions and laws listed, in one column and the number of votes each lawmaker got from the overseas Filipinos in another column, was carefully interpreted. By this time, it was easy to track and observe patterns and relationships based on the plotted information or data obtained from the Congress of the Philippines and the COMELEC, that were duly listed in a single data set.

In interpreting my data, an important consideration was of course considered. The Theoretical and conceptual framework of this dissertation, served as a guide in doing this. Evidently, filing, authoring and sponsoring bills, resolutions and laws is a situation when a lawmaker expend effort (*Expectancy*). And for those who expended effort, determine whether they performed well (*Instrumentality*), and this could also be seen in the website of the Senate, whether



or not the lawmakers concerned follow through with the legislative measures they filed, sponsored and authored. For instance, if a legislator refiled the same bill or resolution, especially during the same Congress, this situation means that said legislator expended more effort, than any other lawmaker who just allowed a previously filed bill or resolution, to gather dust in the archives of the respective chambers in Congress.

The data as to the number of votes from the overseas Filipinos garnered by the legislators available at the COMELEC, will to some extent, reinforce or prove that those legislators who expended effort (*Expectancy*) and performed well were voted (*Valence*) and reelected which is a reward that is satisfying for most legislators, who are considered as single-minded seekers of re-election (Mayhew, 1974).

By virtue of Republic Act No. 9189 or The Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003, Section 4 stipulates that “All citizens of the Philippines abroad, who are not otherwise disqualified by law, at least 18 years of age on the day of elections, may vote for president, vice president, senators and party-list groups” (Republic Act No. 9189, 2003). The number of votes cast by overseas Filipinos are easy to track or identify as Section 18.6 of the Act prescribes it as a “separate item from the tally of national votes” (Republic Act No. 9189, 2003). That is why, the data sets of the COMELEC contain a separate column where the votes of overseas Filipinos are specifically indicated. Interested individuals like researchers and the legislators particularly the Senators and the nominees of Party-list groups, can therefore readily know as to how and for whom the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs voted for.

Finally, with all the data gathered and interpreted, I will be able now to point out whether those legislators who expended effort (*Expectancy*) which resulted to good performance (*Instrumentality*) through active participation in the different activities in the legislature, were voted and re-elected (*Valence*) into office. After interpreting and cross-checking the different data, I will be able to conclude whether my hypothesis is validated or not.

It is also possible to come up with other possible patterns that are not foreseen by this dissertation, but still merit important consideration. Such patterns and relationships are as well mentioned in Chapter 5 or the Discussion of findings part.

## **5. Scope and delimitation of the study**

This dissertation assesses the impact of labor emigration on the legislative process specifically on the behavior of legislators. Legislators covered by this dissertation are the Senators and Party-list Representatives only. Congressmen and Congresswomen, representing legislative districts, although they are also legislators are not covered by this dissertation. The reason for this is that, the overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs, cannot vote for them during elections. In other words, aside from President and Vice President, overseas Filipinos can only vote for Senators and Party-list Representatives. Since I wish to establish the correlation between the legislative process in terms of the performance of legislators or their legislative behavior, that is quantified by the number of bills, resolutions and laws they filed, authored and sponsored, and the labor emigration phenomenon that is quantified by the voting patterns of overseas Filipinos specifically in terms of how many votes the legislators under observation, garnered from this sector, then only the Senators and Party-list Representatives are covered by this dissertation. As overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs can only vote for these lawmakers, they are therefore the legislators who are the subject of this dissertation.

In the Senate or Upper House, the population of this dissertation are 24 Senators, who will be assessed in two batches, as the 24 Senators that comprise any given Congress in the Philippines are not elected at the same time. The first batch are the 12 Senators elected during the 13 May 2013 Elections. These 12 Senators will be assessed as to their performance from 22 July 2013 after they assumed office up to 4 June 2019 when their six-year term of office expired. The pieces of legislation they filed, authored and sponsored during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, that is from 22 July 2013 up to 4 June 2019, a period of six years, will be taken into account, as the basis of their performance. When these 12 Senators filed for re-election after their six-year term ended in 2019, these pieces of legislation will be quantitatively interpreted as the yardstick of how they were voted by the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs during the 13 May 2019 National Elections.

The second batch are the 12 Senators elected during the 9 May 2016 National Elections. These 12 Senators will then be assessed as to their performance from 25 July 2016 when they assumed office up to 1 June 2022 when their six-year term of office expired. The pieces of legislation they filed, authored and sponsored during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress that is from 25 July 2016 up to 1 June 2022, a period of six years, will be taken into account, as the

basis of their performance. When these 12 Senators filed for re-election after their six-year term ended in 2022, these pieces of legislation will be quantitatively interpreted as the yardstick of how they were voted by the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs during the 9 May 2022 National Elections.

In the House of Representatives or the Lower House, the population of this dissertation also consists of two batches. The first batch are the Party-list groups which won during the 9 May 2016 National Elections. These Party-list groups will be assessed as to their performance from 25 July 2016 when they assumed office up to 4 June 2019 when their three-year term of office expired, a period of three years.

The second batch are the Party-list groups which won during the 13 May 2019 National Elections. These Party-list groups will be assessed as to their performance from 22 July 2019 when they assumed office up to 1 June 2022 when their three-year term of office expired, also a period of three years.

Like the case of the Senators, the yardstick used to determine how the Party-list groups were voted by overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs are the pieces of legislation they filed, authored and sponsored in the House of Representatives. The timeline will be different though, than that used for the Senators. Here, the timeline for the Party-list groups will only be six years, that is from 25 July 2016 up to 1 June 2022. This is because the members of the House of Representatives are elected for only a three-year term of office but they could run for re-election for three consecutive terms or a total of nine years. Even though Party-list groups can file for re-election after finishing their first term, but are not assured of winning, it is therefore necessary that they be evaluated after three years in office, lest some of them will not be accounted for, in the event that they lose in their re-election bids.

So, the time covered by this dissertation is from 22 July 2013 to 1 June 2022, a period of about nine years encompassing three congresses – the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress from 22 July 2013 to 6 June 2016, the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress from 25 July 2016 to 4 June 2019 and the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress from 22 July 2019 to 1 June 2022. Legislations concerning labor emigration proposed and enacted during these periods are the ones included as part of the data for this dissertation.

In some parts of the dissertation, there are instances when the time element mentioned goes back before 22 July 2013 especially in Chapter I and Chapter II. The dates mentioned earlier than 22 July 2013 in these chapters, and elsewhere in the dissertation, are meant to give context and

explain the situations and events and are not considered the periods as coverage of this dissertation, in so far as data analysis is concerned.

As can be observed, the reckoning periods of the performances of the legislators in the two chambers of the Philippine Congress are not the same in scope. This is because the terms of office of the Senators and Party-list Representatives are not the same, as mentioned in Section 2, Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The Senators have a term of office of six years, and this will be the scope of the assessment of their performance in the Senate. The Party-list Representatives on the other hand have a term of office of three years, and this will be the scope of the assessment of their performance in the House of Representatives.

This dissertation likewise involves overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs. Since the COMELEC has no distinction whether a Filipino is an overseas labor emigrant or simply an overseas Filipino, this dissertation considers FLEs or OFWs and overseas Filipinos as one and the same. As used in this dissertation these terms are interchangeable. However, for purposes of clarification and definition, labor emigrants refer to all Filipinos who work overseas, both land-based and sea-based, and who underwent and followed the government process of obtaining work permits. FLEs or OFWs in this dissertation therefore are those who have valid contracts with their employers regardless of their classification after reaching the countries of destination. FLEs or OFWs as used in this dissertation also include those considered undocumented workers, or those with no proper documentation as emigrant workers. Some of the FLEs or OFWs continue to work legally with their employers and finish their work contracts while others, for some reasons, abscond their jobs without finishing the duration of their work contracts. On the other hand, students who are at the same time working, are classified as overseas Filipinos. Generally, as used in this dissertation, overseas Filipinos refers to labor emigrants both documented and undocumented, students and family members of labor emigrants. In other words, all overseas Filipinos who are allowed to vote, by virtue of the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003 or Republic Act No. 9189, are included in this dissertation.

Immigrants of Filipino descent or those permanently residing in other countries, who renounced their Filipino citizenship, although they are working, are not considered as FLEs, OFWs or overseas Filipinos in the strict purview of this investigation, therefore they are not a concern of this dissertation.

Furthermore, former FLEs or OFWs who already returned to the Philippines and are now based in the country are not also included in this study simply because, there is no way of accounting for their votes, as their votes in such case, are now integrated into the total number of national votes or the votes cast by all voters based in the Philippines. As already made clear in this chapter, Section 4, or the Research design and methods, only votes of overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs, residing overseas during the time of elections, are accounted separately by the COMELEC, as mandated by Republic Act No. 9189 or the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003.

Party affiliation of overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs, is also not a concern of this dissertation, mainly because in the Filipino political culture, party affiliation is not taken seriously and very few Filipinos, especially coming from the ranks of the masses, like the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs and OFWs, seldom join political parties. In fact, elections in the Philippines, inevitably involves talking about families and personalities but not political parties (Rood, 2013). Added to this, political parties, except a few, are not so established, they come and go, many mushroom during the approach to elections, and die after such political exercise. If this situation makes it an unrewarding enterprise for politicians to be joining political parties, this is much more so with ordinary Filipinos, like the FLEs or OFWs.

For emphasis, this dissertation only endeavors to establish the correlation between the behavior of legislators in terms of the legislative measures they filed and labor emigration in terms of the votes the legislators garner from the overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs. In the case of the Senators, their places of origin are also discussed in Section 2, Chapter 3 in order to assess whether FLEs or OFWs originating from places or regions where the Senators also originate, vote for the Senators whom they share a common place of origin with. So, this dissertation only looks at the number of legislative measures and the places of origin as possible factors that FLEs or OFWs may consider when electing Senators and does not include the other factors as mentioned above. A further investigation of these other factors can certainly offer additional insights into the debate on the correlation of the behavior of legislators and overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs' electoral support, which merit a separate investigation.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Zealous government and the state of Philippine labor emigration**

This chapter describes the Philippine labor emigration landscape. As such, the nature of the overseas labor emigration landscape in the country is discussed, most especially its metamorphosis into a policy agenda that is given importance by the country's leaders in the Executive Branch of the government, as a reinforcement of the legislative measures crafted by legislators. This is reflected in the discussion of the metamorphosis of the Philippine labor emigration from a less considered social phenomenon, to a significant legislative agenda in Section 1 of this chapter. The reason for discussing this aspect, is for this dissertation to show that the present crop of legislators, who are the unit of analysis here, take cue from the practices of legislators in the past, or those who came before them, especially as to how they respond to problematic situations, experienced by FLEs or OFWs, when they are still overseas. Therefore, having a picture of the legislations in the past, and how the political actors responded to the phenomenon, is an important thing to consider, if only to understand and be able to describe, how the present legislators, who are the subject of this dissertation, behave in relation to their functions of crafting laws. As has been observed for example in 1995, the Filipino legislators that time quickly responded by crafting and passing a law, R. A. No. 8042, aimed to protect FLEs or OFWs, when Filipina household helper, Flor Contemplacion, was hanged in Singapore for a double murder case. Lawmakers' response to high profile cases of FLEs or OFWs like this one of Contemplacion, favorably puts them in a situation wherein they are freely exposed and featured in the media, thereby gaining mileage, especially for those who plan to run for re-election. Today, whenever FLEs or OFWs are subjected to unjust and inhuman treatment by their employers overseas, legislators oftentimes do the same, that is, to craft and pass legislations aimed at curbing abuses of FLEs or OFWs by their employers. The many amendments to Republic Act No. 8042 sponsored by legislators, is a testament that they are always on watch at improving the lot of FLEs or OFWs. Considering that legislators are single-minded seekers of re-election (Mayhew, 1974), it is worth observing how lawmakers, who are active in sponsoring legislative measures for the benefit of the FLEs or OFWs, fare during elections by taking into account the quantity of votes they garner from the FLE or OFW sector.

Therefore, the circumstances, that fueled the growth and development of overseas labor emigration among Filipinos, from the decade of the 70s during the Marcos, Sr. administration, up to 30 June 2022 which is the end of the Duterte administration, is briefly discussed in this chapter. This timeline will give us a comprehensive picture of the Philippine labor emigration phenomenon, and how the Filipinos and their government, especially the Legislative Branch zealously responds to the phenomenon. As mentioned in the Scope and Delimitation of the Study in Chapter 1, Section 5, this date is not the inclusive timeline as the scope of this dissertation in terms of data analysis. Rather, the purpose of covering such a timeline, is to give an overview how the overseas labor emigration phenomenon developed in the country over time, which reflects the degree of relevance, the government accords to this phenomenon. The unfolding picture of this phenomenon within this specific timeline, will consequently give us an idea, why and how in the present time, such phenomenon is treated with such considerable interest by the Filipino legislators.

In order to contextualize and offer a picture of the Philippine overseas labor emigration phenomenon, this chapter consequently includes discussion of the many problems and issues associated with it, and how it merits legislative attention. This is particularly done in order to emphasize that the Philippine government, which in this dissertation is personified by the legislators, who are armed with the power of lawmaking, always take issue of the phenomenon, whenever FLEs or OFWs feature in problematic situations. Therefore, the problems of the FLEs or OFWs are especially highlighted, because these serve as the entry points, when lawmakers intervene, and become especially active in crafting legislations, regarding FLEs or OFWs' concerns. Most lawmakers jump into the bandwagon, whenever there are cases of abused FLEs or OFWs.

Also, the narratives of the FLEs or OFWs as to their reasons of labor emigration are briefly mentioned. Concomitant to this, a brief discussion of the reasons why people in general migrate, is given impetus, in order to emphasize and show that the Filipino labor emigrants as a group, is not a unique case. Each FLE or OFW is just like any other labor emigrant, who has also a reason or reasons of engaging in such an enterprise.

As already hinted earlier, the present-day Filipinos are descendants of immigrants whose purpose of settling in what is now the Philippines may not be strictly labor-related. So, that

character associated with the urge and desire to travel, and move from one place to another, which could be due to different reasons, had already become part of the narrative that defines the Filipino. It can be said that Filipinos generally love moving to places, especially if it concerns a job, regardless of the distance or the scope of place that they have to take.

During this modern time, the FLEs or OFWs still encapsulate this trait as they are seen moving out of the country to work in different places around the world. In most cases, their departures are supported by their families, both morally and financially, and in turn facilitated by the government. Added to this, their deep desire to go out of the country to work, is unfettered by the odds and dangers that usually go with labor emigration. It is worth noting that, for most of these Filipinos, the many unfortunate narratives of the labor emigrants who left the country before them, do not serve as a deterrent in taking the same action. Also, the government, in its effort to protect the interests of the FLEs or OFWs, and at the same time to minimize the physical as well as the psychological impact of such unfortunate events on them, comes out with advisories and even travel bans, by identifying countries considered risky, in terms of employment. However, such advisories and travel bans are oftentimes ignored and trivialized by the Filipino nationals in diaspora. For instance, quondam Foreign Affairs Secretary Allan Peter Cayetano lamented that, “there are places like Iraq that already have travel bans but are still seeing a rise in Filipino workers” (Bacungan, 2018). With this, the ILO could not therefore be faulted in its report that protective measures introduced by the governments of labor-sending countries are in many cases ineffective (ILO, 1996). Furthermore, cases of Filipina labor emigrants who are raped (Galvez, 2007; Naar, 2023; Santos, 2017; Underwood, 2000; Viehland, 2014) are common, while both male and female workers are physically abused (Cepeda, 2021; Yeung and Bacani, 2020), tortured (Kelly and Thompson, 2015; Rocamora, 2020; Rodriguez, 2005), killed or murdered (Abad, 2023; Bacungan, 2018; Kotte, 2020; Wang and Murphy, 2018) and some have accidentally died while seafarers perished (Ang, 2017; Gorecho, 2021), and their remains were repatriated to the Philippines in caskets. In Kuwait alone, the POEA has documented 196 deaths of Filipino workers since 2016 (Turak, 2018, Naar, 2023), and considering that this data does not include those that happened in earlier years, the number of deaths can certainly be higher. The latest case of a serious physical abuse that resulted to death, committed against a Filipina household helper came to light on 21 January 2023, when Jullebee Ranara was found dead and buried in a desert in Kuwait. An autopsy by the Kuwaiti authorities, found her pregnant at the time of her death. She was allegedly



raped and killed by the 17-year-old son of her employer (Sakina, 2023). After the death of Ranara, quondam Secretary Susan Ople of the newly-created DMW said that “no, we’re not contemplating suspension of deployment to Kuwait but yes, we are looking at additional safeguards and reforms to make sure workers bound for Kuwait are better protected” (CNN Philippines Staff, 2023). This is a total change in perspective on the part of Ople, because in 2018, while she was still working with an NGO, as head of the Blas F. Ople Policy Center, she slammed the “abrupt” lifting of the ban on deployment of workers to Kuwait (Medenilla, 2020), which the Philippine government imposed in February 2018, because of the same reason – death of an OFW in that country. Here, it is obvious that the perspective, among Philippine Government officials among the branches of government, in so far as some FLE or OFWs’ welfare are concerned, such as deployment ban to countries considered risky for FLEs or OFWS like Kuwait, differs. Former DMW Secretary Susan Ople from the Executive Branch for example, was not in favor of the deployment ban while Senator and Committee on Migrant Workers Chairperson Raffy Tulfo of the Legislative Branch is for the total ban of deployment for FLEs or OFWs to Kuwait (Eugenio, 2023). Under Section 14 of Republic Act No. 10022, which amended Republic Act No. 8042, OFWs must only be deployed to countries where the Philippines has concluded bilateral labor agreements, provided that such countries shall guarantee to protect the rights of Filipino migrant workers, and provided further that such countries shall observe and/or comply with the international laws and standards for migrant workers (Republic Act No. 10022, 2010). The Philippines and Kuwait inked a bilateral labor agreement on 11 May 2018 (Gita-Carlos, 2020), signed by quondam Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano of the Philippines and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. In February 2018, former President Rodrigo Duterte imposed a ban on deployment of workers to Kuwait (Tadalan, 2020) after it was found out that a Filipina household helper, Joanna Demafelis, had been killed and kept in a freezer in an abandoned building, for more than a year by her employers – Lebanese Nader Essam Assaf and his Syrian wife Mouna Ali Hassoun, who fled Kuwait (Silverio, 2023, Wang and Murphy, 2018) after the discovery of the frozen corpse of the Filipina. The deployment ban was only lifter in May 2018, after about four months.

In addition to this, some FLEs or OFWs if not victims of employers’ abuse are victims of the escalation of forces or wars between and among countries. For instance, during the latest confrontation of military forces between Russia and Ukraine, fueled by the former’s attack on the

latter, which started on 24 February 2022, a Filipino crewmember sustained injury to his shoulder. This happened when their ship *Namura Queen*, was hit by a missile fired by Russia, targeted at Ukraine near Odessa region, where the ship was going to dock and load grain (Kyodo News, 2022).

These problematic cases do not seem to matter for those Filipinos who want to leave the country to work overseas. For many of them, no amount of scary precedence, not even the most gruesome of death, can deter them from leaving. In fact, when they are confronted with such situations, their usual answer oftentimes hinges on the rhetoric that what happened to others will not necessarily happen to them. They add that, if others suffered such fate, it does not mean that the same fate will befall them. Still some retort by appealing to emotion and say that it is better to venture out and try to do something to ease hunger, rather than suffer from hunger and difficulties without doing anything<sup>9</sup>. And what is more disturbing is when the government, in the midst of plain cases of abuse, continues to send defenseless FLEs or OFWs like household helpers, to risky labor emigrant destinations, where they can be readily maltreated, and even easily killed. Indeed, labor emigration has already become part of the Filipino culture (Asis, 2006; OECD and Scalabrini Migration Center, 2017) and almost every Filipino family's life (Gordo, 2020).

There are many reasons why people migrate, and the Filipinos have their own reasons as well. For one, natural and man-made calamities find an answer in migration, and this is pretty universal. Living in a country prone to natural calamities, the Filipinos know all too well, that the best thing to do during emergencies associated with natural disasters like floods, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and typhoons, is to move to safer spaces. Such natural calamities, induce not only internal migration but overseas labor emigration in the long run. In this connection, internal migration in the Philippines is oftentimes precipitated by environmental shocks and sudden-onset natural hazards (Ayeb-Karlsson and Uy, 2022). Consequently, many arrivals in Manila travel to the capital as a 'stopgap' measure with the intention of making arrangements to continue their migration journey overseas in order to find jobs (Anderson, et. al., 2017).

Natural calamities are push factors for migration (Kline, 2003; Dorigo and Tobler, 1983; Lee, 1966) like unattractive climate and uncongenial social surroundings (Ravenstein, 1889).

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<sup>9</sup> During my stint as Social Worker with the Migrant Workers Concern Desk (MWCD) in Taipei, Taiwan, from 1996 to 2006, these are the usual reasons given by FLEs or OFWs when asked why they are not afraid to go abroad to work, in spite of the many cases of abuse committed by employers, especially against household helpers.

Therefore, almost all people will try to avoid the dangers associated with calamities, both natural or human-induced, and the common step they take is migration to safer grounds. Other than warning, the wrath of catastrophic natural calamities knows no safety intervention but to flee or to migrate. It will be non-sensical for example, for a government to construct concrete walls along seashores to mitigate the impact of tsunamis, as a protective measure, and after doing so, allow people to live in such dangerous places. That is why, governments strictly prohibit people, to live in places prone to the onslaught of natural disasters. Furthermore, governments also prohibit people, to live in areas that are within the reach of the results of human-induced disasters, like places around nuclear plants, where radioactive substances may pose hazard to health. Also, when there are wars, revolutions and regime changes, as a result of political conflicts and ideological differences, people will migrate at all cost to attain safety. We can just for instance watch in solidarity, those people clinging to a United States Air Force plane, taking off at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan in their desperate attempt to migrate to a safer place, after the Taliban took control of the country on 15 August 2021. In a similar fashion, as an aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people migrated from crowded cities and heavily populated places to rural areas for safety. During health emergencies, especially involving highly transmissible viruses, migration to sparsely populated areas seem to be the best measure. Zanin and Papo (2020) in their study about the impact of COVID-19 on the movement of people, concluded that the reduction in the density of highly populated areas, when people will move to rural areas, is better for the majority of the people.

It is as well true that when there are crises resulting from man's mishandling of situations, like poverty as a result of bad governance, the tendency of people is to migrate to more economically prosperous locations. Many people migrate to developed regions, and poverty is one of the reasons promoting migration of individuals in search of better life (Castelli, 2018). People's mobility is oftentimes associated with their intention to look for better work and earn higher pay. For this reason, households in places with depressed economies are likely to 'send' members of the household to distant labor markets in search of better employment opportunities and of higher incomes (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2008).

In a nutshell, it is a natural tendency for people to migrate to safe places during calamities, emergencies, pandemics, wars and revolutions. Also, poverty as a result of bad governance and economic mismanagement, induces people to migrate.

However, problems other than calamities, in a particular case, like economic crisis, does not find migration to be a single, universal answer among states and governments, in order to avert such crisis. Aside from fleeing and migrating, there are other measures implemented by governments, to mitigate the impact of economic crisis, on the lives of the people. In other words, unlike calamities that find a universal answer in migration, economic crisis does not. Governments differ in their strategies, to mitigate the impact of economic crisis. Some implement austerity measures (Poeschl, et. al.,2021) others create lending programs (Metrick, 2020), while others like the Philippines, encourage overseas labor migration as a necessity, like for example during the Asian economic crisis (Santo Tomas, 1999).

So, overseas employment which is a national policy (Santo Tomas, 1999), sets the Philippine government apart from other governments because it weaponizes overseas labor emigration to address economic crisis. Whatever is the prevailing reality, be it natural calamities or economic crisis, the Philippine government takes overseas labor emigration as a ready answer to such problems.

It is well established then, that when there is economic crisis, states and governments differ in how to address it. Migration as a universal safety net during calamities, cannot be said to be resorted to universally and uniformly during economic crisis by states and governments. Aside from migration, there are certainly other steps to take, as pointed out above, to mitigate an economic crisis. In other words, migration is just one of the options taken by governments during economic crisis.

The Philippines resorts to overseas labor emigration during economic crisis (Santo Tomas, 1999; Mijares, 1999; Battistella, et. al., 2011) and migration has become a way of life for many Filipinos (Santos, 2014). The Philippine government considers labor emigration, as an important tool that it can readily draw, to answer economic crisis. The reasons for this are pretty obvious. Labor emigrants who get employment overseas, contribute to the country's economic recovery and development, through their remittances. The cash remittances sent to the Philippines by the

overseas Filipinos, are important to the government, because it is one of the dimensions in assessing its migrant labor policy, the other being job generation (Santo Tomas, 1999). In fact, in order to institutionalize, the remittance system among the overseas Filipinos, the government rehabilitated the once defunct Philippine Postal Savings Bank (PPSB), under the Philippine Postal Corporation and renamed it the Overseas Filipino Bank (OFB), now a subsidiary of the Landbank of the Philippines, by virtue of Executive Order No. 44, signed by Rodrigo Duterte in September 2017. With the establishment of the OFB, the overseas Filipinos from around the world can now conveniently remit their money through online or e-banking. In this way, the government is competing with private remittance companies to rake in more share in the service fees of the remitted money by the overseas Filipinos.

On the part of the families of FLEs or OFWs, it can safely be said that they are least affected by economic crises because they receive financial support, in the form of cash remittances from family members working overseas. For this reason, such families can still afford to provide for their daily necessities even in the midst of biting economic difficulties. Aside from patronizing the legal remittance system in place, wherein the government and other businesses earn percentages in service fees, the FLEs or OFWs send cash remittances to their families through other channels like through friends, which then keep the local economy afloat fueled by their spending capacity. The cash remittances made by the overseas Filipino labor emigrants from all over the world, over a considerable span of time, which stands at \$28.4 billion US Dollars (*see Table 5*) as of November 2021 per Central Bank of the Philippines data, is hard to ignore. This makes labor emigration an important policy area for the Executive Branch of the government to focus, in terms of policy implementation, as this brings a tremendous benefit to the country's economic well-being.

Meanwhile, the Legislative Branch of the government looks at overseas labor emigration from the perspective of legislation on how it can be used as a tool to help uplift the condition of the FLEs or OFWs, and at the same time propel their political careers through re-election.

Generally, Philippine legislators also see cash remittances as an important aspect in their lawmaking agenda, and in fact some legislative measures have been filed or crafted to this effect. However, as single-minded seekers of re-election (Mayhew, 1974), this dissertation wishes to argue that Philippine legislators like some Senators and Party-list Representatives are more

concerned of doing their legislative work that will offer them direct benefits especially re-election. Other issues, like cash remittances from the FLEs or OFWs although these obviously help the country economically, are just secondary considerations on the part of the legislators, because their desire for re-election takes a more important motivation for them to do good in their legislative work. Therefore, issues and concerns that will immediately connect FLEs or OFWs to the direct benefits of legislations, like social services especially health care, establishment of FLE or OFW Family Help Desks in local government units, and the creation of a credit assistance program for FLEs or OFWs are given more impetus by legislators.

Table 5. Cash remittances of FLEs or OFWs from around the world over a twelve-year period from 2010 to 2021 in US Dollars

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2010	18,762,989,000
2011	20,116,992,000
2012	21,391,333,000
2013	22,984,035,000
2014	24,628,058,000
2015	25,606,830,000
2016	26,899,840,000
2017	28,059,789,000
2018	28,934,112,000
2019	30,133,300,000
2020	29,903,256,000
2021 (Jan. to Nov.)	28,430,500,000

*Source: Central Bank of the Philippines*

In the aspect of cash remittance from the FLEs or OFWs, the amount remitted is not really a big concern by the legislators. What they are more concerned about is how to make the remittance transaction faster and more convenient, which the FLEs or OFWs can immediately take notice of, and credit such legislated service to the concerned legislator. Those legislators identified in my Research Methodology section as promoters of FLEs or OFWs' rights and welfare will especially be looked into, to re-enforce this claim.

## **1. Metamorphosis of overseas labor emigration phenomenon and the Legislative-Executive nexus**

This section describes the Philippine overseas labor emigration phenomenon, in order to give us an idea how it developed and came to be given so much attention by the Filipino political actors especially the legislators. This being said, the purpose of the discussion is to connect such phenomenon to the behavior and actions of legislators as they embark on their lawmaking work. In order to contextualize the discussion, its metamorphosis from a less considered social phenomenon to a significant legislative agenda is emphasized, especially as it relates to the behavior of legislators starting from the institutionalization of the phenomenon in the decade of the 1970s, to the weaponization of legislations, through the passing of time since then, thereby giving ample protection to FLEs or OFWs.

The metamorphosis of the country's overseas labor emigration, capped with the passage in Congress and presidential approval of Republic Act No. 11641 (RA No. 11641) on 30 December 2021, creating the DMW. Senators, and Party-list groups especially those allied with former President Duterte, were very much vocal about their support for the passage of R. A. No. 11641. The DMW is now a Cabinet-level office under the Executive Branch that officially started to exist on 3 February 2022, or one month after the presidential approval of RA No. 11641. With this, the DMW is the lead agency for implementing policies, plans and programs that will ensure the protection, promotion of interests, timely resolution of problems, and effective reintegration of OFWs (Office of Senator Bong Go, 2021). Having this in mind, the nexus of the Legislative and Executive branches of the Philippine Government, is also discussed and emphasized. This is due to the fact that the legislators (i.e. coming from the Legislative Branch) and the Philippine leaders especially the President (i.e. coming from the Executive Branch), are both instrumental in extending protection to FLEs or OFWs, by weaponizing legislation, because in order for a legislation to be valid and executory, it must first be deliberated and passed in Congress and afterwards signed or approved by the President. All laws have to undergo this process, hence the Legislative-Executive nexus.

Aside from discussing the metamorphosis of the overseas labor emigration, and the Legislative-Executive nexus concerning legislations, and the country's president, the problems of FLEs or OFWs especially those they experienced while working overseas, are also discussed in this section, because as already mentioned, it is during such instances when legislators are moved

to action in crafting legislations as an intervention mechanism to the problematic situation, experienced by the FLEs or OFWs.

Overseas labor emigration, since the time of former President Marcos, Sr. has been justified as a measure to curb unemployment in the country (*see Table 6*), especially during the 1970s. Today, the unemployment problem is still haunting the country. Although the unemployment pattern in the Philippines fluctuates over time (*see Table 2*), the phenomenon is hard to vanish, and is considered by the government as a serious problem that has to be dealt with, and overseas labor emigration is generally seen that can somehow offer a panacea. And when FLEs or OFWs are already overseas and experience problems, like what happened to Flor Contemplacion who was hanged by the Singaporean Government on 17 March 1995, the Philippine Government, particularly the legislators have to act by employing their legislative power in order to protect the interests of the FLEs or OFWs. Observing the actions of legislators, like their immediate and speedy response to such problematic situations, can be interpreted based on the main research question of this dissertation, that they do so, in order to gain favor from the FLE or OFW sector and other members of their families because they expect a reward for their actions, and that reward are the votes of the FLEs or OFWs.

From the data of the PSA, during the year 2020, there were an estimated 1.77 million FLEs or OFWs worldwide. These workers are those who went out of the country as FLEs or OFWs and work with foreign employers. Over a twelve-year period from 2009 until 2020, the number of FLEs or OFWs kept on increasing. It only decreased slightly in 2016, because of stiffer competition in the supply of workers like seafarers from East Asia (De Vera, 2017). The number of FLEs or OFWs also steeply decreased during the years 2019 to 2020 at 2.18 M to 1.77 M respectively (*see Table 1*), due partly to the COVID-19 pandemic, which practically restricted human mobility worldwide.

The institutionalization of overseas employment by the Philippine government starting in the 1970s, was partly due to the fact that there was high demand for workers in the Middle East during that time, and the countries in that region saw the impact of the vast oil reserves on their respective economies. This led to economic modernization and prosperity (Malachova, 2012), and the large oil revenues sustained the boom in the 1970s (Yousef, 2004). The Philippine government which was somehow crippled by unemployment (Tidalgo and Esguerra, 1984), saw this as an opportunity to send more workers to that region, in order to abate unemployment at home.



The overseas employment program during the administration of Marcos, Sr. was anchored on Presidential Decree No. 442, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines, which he himself issued on 1 May 1974. Considering that a presidential decree issued by Marcos, Sr. during that time, has the effect of a law, the Philippine overseas employment program, is therefore a product of a unilateral act of a man, who wielded enormous powers on governance, and not an act of the legislature. Overseas employment is given impetus in this decree, particularly Article 17 as the OEDB is created to undertake, in cooperation with relevant entities and agencies, a systematic program for overseas employment of Filipino workers (Arellano Law Foundation, 1974). Thus, the institutionalization of the overseas employment program of the government began. Marcos, Sr. who wielded enormous powers during those times is the main culprit (Marasigan, 2022).

Table 6. Unemployment situation in the Philippines during the decade of the 70s

Year	Labor Force	No. of Unemployed	Percentage
1971	12,911,000	666,000	5.1
1972	13,701,000	867,000	6.3
1973	14,140,000	690,000	4.9
1974	14,470,000	584,000	4.0
1975	14,724,000	581,000	3.9
1976	15,018,000	780,000	5.2
1977	15,328,000	781,000	5.1
1978	16,579,000	811,000	4.9

*Source: National Census and Statistics Office (NCSO) now the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), National Sample Survey of Households Bulletin (formerly the BCS Survey of Household Bulletin) for figures up to 1976 and the Integrated Survey of Households for 1977 and 1978 as cited by Tidalgo and Esguerra (1984).*

Overseas employment took a slight pause starting 25 February 1986 when Corazon Aquino took the helm of the Philippine presidency after Marcos, Sr. was overthrown from power during the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution. As the newly-installed president of the country, Corazon Aquino effected major revamps in the Philippine bureaucracy. And so, a lot of expectations were heaved unto her, including the improvement of the conditions of the FLEs or OFWs. In fact, labor advocates saw her presidency as an opportunity to make sensible steps

towards improving the conditions of both the local and the overseas workers. However, there was not much that have been done, and because of this, many non-government organizations (NGO) soon distanced themselves from her administration and began to express their critical views (Gonzales III, 1996).

One of the noticeable acts done by Corazon Aquino concerning overseas employment was the issuance of Executive Order No. 247, series of 1987. This executive order reorganizes the POEA and for other purposes. Section 3.h of this executive order mandates the POEA to undertake overseas market development activities for placement of Filipino workers (Executive Order No. 247, 1987). This particular section is a clear indication that during her presidency, overseas employment has to continue and even has to be enhanced. And in June 1988 she likewise signed Proclamation No. 276, declaring December 1988 and the same month of every year thereafter as the “Month of Overseas Filipinos”. This proclamation gave recognition to overseas Filipinos who contributed to the restoration of Philippine democracy and to Philippine development through their taxes and remittances (Office of the President of the Philippines, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, n.d.). Through this presidential proclamation, the Corazon Aquino Administration explicitly recognized the importance of the remittances of the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs.

Under her watch, the situation of the FLEs or OFWs did not register any noticeable improvement, in terms of government protection and provision of welfare services. Reported abuses committed against FLEs or OFWs while working abroad continued to fill the consciousness of the Filipino public. Problems such as confiscation of passports and other identification documents by employers and representatives of labor recruitment agencies in the countries of destination, non-payment of overtime pay, non-provision of decent living space, restriction of movement and prohibition of contacts with other *kababayans*,<sup>10</sup> physical assault and rape were common. These were also the problems verbalized by many FLEs or OFWs in Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and in the Middle East<sup>11</sup>. Because of such abuses, Corazon Aquino banned the deployment of FLEs or OFWs during the late 1980s and countries interested in hiring Filipino

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<sup>10</sup> This is a term commonly used by Filipinos to refer to their compatriots especially when they are outside the country.

<sup>11</sup> These problems were verbalized and pointed out by representatives of church-based NGOs during conferences and seminars which the author attended.

domestic helpers had to negotiate on a country-by-country basis regarding the terms of employment that would have to be met for the ban to be lifted (Sayres, n.d.).

After six years in the helm of governance, Corazon Aquino stepped down as the country's president on 30 June 1992 because she did not seek re-election.

The overseas employment program of the government was faced with perhaps the most challenging circumstance in 1995, during the term of Fidel Ramos when one of the country's FLEs or OFWs, Flor Contemplacion was hanged in Singapore on 17 March 1995. She was accused of murdering Delia Maga, a fellow Filipina household helper and whose ward, an epileptic boy (Dacanay, 2012), also died of drowning. The high court of Singapore heard Contemplacion's case from 26 to 29 January 1993. On 29 January said court found Contemplacion guilty on two counts of murder and sentenced her to death. On 17 March 1995, Contemplacion was executed by hanging (Guingona, Jr., 2013) at the Changi Prison and Rehabilitation Center in Singapore.

Although Contemplacion herself owned up to the murder of Maga, many believed she was innocent. This was after a post mortem examination on Maga's body, which was exhumed (Cairns, 2005) and autopsied as ordered by Fidel Ramos (World News Briefs: New Autopsy Planned in Singapore Murder, 1995), showed her skull was fractured and her throat was almost crushed due to the force inflicted by her killer, and a woman like Contemplacion could not have done that (Jimenez, 2022). This claim however was disputed by Singaporean forensic experts (Tangbawan, 1995). As a reaction to this high-profile case, the people back in the Philippines were high in emotion, as they perceived that the Singaporean government lacked compassion, even though no less than the then President Fidel Ramos himself, sought two pleas for clemency (Tan, 1995) on behalf of Contemplacion. Gabriela and Bayan Muna, two Party-list groups which are sympathetic to the causes of FLEs or OFWs still recall the case of Contemplacion after 27 years (Valmonte, 2022), which the Party-lists' Representatives verbalized in a protest rally, they organized together with like-minded groups on 17 March 2022 in Manila. This latest protest action done by Party-list Representatives, shows how important it is to pore into past events, especially high-profile ones, like death of an FLE or OFW by hanging, because such events serve as bases for policy conception, especially among legislators as these will aid them in crafting appropriate legislations.

For instance, as an answer to this unfortunate event in 1995, Philippine lawmakers hurriedly passed Republic Act No. 8042 (RA No. 8042) or An Act to Institute the Policies of Overseas Employment and Establishing a Higher Standard of Protection and Promotion of the

Welfare of Migrant Workers, their Families and Overseas Filipinos in Distress and for Other Purposes. RA No. 8042 was signed into law by former President Fidel Ramos on 7 June 1995. Noticeably, the passage of Republic Act No. 8042 into law, came just two months and 20 days after Flor Contemplacion's death. Obviously then, this case hammered Republic Act No. 8042's speedy passage.

Immediately after the passage of RA No. 8042, lawmakers were thrust to the limelight. They earned the Filipino people's appreciation in coming to the defense of a perceived innocent Filipina whom they considered as a hardworking mother toiling overseas to support a family. Today, after 28 years since the hanging of Flor Contemplacion, Filipino lawmakers interestingly still employ the same reaction when confronted with similar unfortunate situations. They do not waste time in coming to the defense of FLEs or OFWs who feature in hapless and cruel situations overseas, perhaps thinking of the fact that their actions will earn them recognition that could possibly translate into votes during elections, not only from the FLEs or OFWs, but from the Filipinos in general, who take the causes of FLEs or OFWs to heart.

During Joseph Estrada's watch as the country's Chief Executive, there had been no substantial programs implemented concerning the country's overseas employment situation, except the issuance of executive orders, presidential proclamations, and other similar orders. The most notable of these issuances is the one that seeks to address the concerns of FLEs or OFWs through the sharing of information on migration by different government agencies. Estrada issued Executive Order No. 203, series of 2000, which is titled, Establishing an Inter-Agency Committee on the Shared Government Information System for Migration. This executive order is a reinforcement and in consonance with Republic Act No. 8042, signed into law by his predecessor, Fidel Ramos, because the establishment of such committee is provided in Section 20 therein. This inter-agency committee is established through Estrada's executive order so that the different concerned government agencies can singularly, fully and swiftly address general and specific concerns of migrant workers and overseas Filipinos (Executive Order No. 203, 2000)

In a related development, Estrada likewise issued Executive Order No. 252 on 5 May 2000 with the title Establishing the Inter-agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas, Defining Its Composition, Structure and Functions. This executive order establishes the committee, which shall serve as the policy-making body, and a forum for discussion and resolution of issues concerning the establishment, operation and management of Philippine schools or educational

programs, to ensure quality education for Filipino youth overseas (Executive Order No. 252, 2000). This executive order is an intervention aimed to address the educational needs of the offspring of FLEs, OFWs or overseas Filipinos in general who established their families and raised their children overseas. Although, during the early years of their contracts, FLEs or OFWs cannot establish their families in their countries of destination, because of restrictions to this effect in their work contracts, a number of them are able to do so after an extended period of time, when they somehow manage to go by the rules, and finally establish their own families overseas. In Italy for instance, there are a lot of families that can be traced to former FLEs or OFWs. And one of the problems of these families, is how to send their children to appropriate schools where Filipino language is taught, and Filipino culture is experienced. Since there are few or even no schools overseas with such a curriculum, Filipino parents find it a challenge to raise their children and become Filipino culture-oriented adults. So, what they sometimes do is to write to library directors and request that more Filipino books be made available in their collection (Hidalgo, 2021). With such a challenge, Executive Order No. 252 will be an appropriate intervention relative to this concern.

After Estrada, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo served as acting President by finishing the unexpired portion of the former, from 20 January 2001 to 30 June 2004. During the time when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office as acting President, she did not do much in relation to the government's overseas employment program. This is understandable though because, the political tensions in the Philippines during those times, call for more urgent attention. She however strengthened the government's overseas employment program after she was re-elected as the country's President in 2004.

One of the earliest acts that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did as part of the government's efforts to help overseas Filipinos, including FLEs or OFWs, cope with multi-faceted problems, whether they are in the Philippines or abroad in their work destinations, was the launching of the Kabayanihan Program on 12 December 2002, after more than a year into her term as acting President. Under this program, overseas Filipinos can avail certain benefits from the Philippine Government. With this, the acting President said that overseas Filipinos can avail from OWWA expanded onsite welfare services; obtain an e-card which frees overseas Filipinos from lining at POEA to get an overseas employment certificate for exemption from the travel tax and airport terminal fees; avail of free medical services in the Philippines and the overseas Filipinos' host

countries, courtesy of OWWA-Medicare; obtain housing loans on a more affordable basis through the Pag-ibig Overseas Housing Project; save for their respective retirements through the Social Security System's (SSS) Flixifund; and purchase the OFW Bond at better than usual returns in denominations of \$100 (Javellana-Santos, 2002).

Also, the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Administration came up with an initiative on how former FLEs or OFWs will be re-integrated into the Philippine local labor landscape. This is a reasonable initiative because looking for appropriate jobs after doing work in different economic settings, and being away from the country for an extended period of time, adjusting to the local job market norms can be a challenge. And so, on 12 March 2007, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo launched the country's first National Reintegration Center for the Overseas Filipino Workers. This initiative is in consonance with the provision of Republic Act No. 10022, Section 10, which lapsed into law during her Administration. It states:

**Section 10.** *Establishment of National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers. -A national reintegration center for overseas Filipino workers (NRCO) is hereby created in the Department of Labor and Employment for returning Filipino migrant workers which shall provide a mechanism for their reintegration into the Philippine society, serve as a promotion house for their local employment, and tap their skills and potentials for national development.*

*"The Department of Labor and Employment, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) shall, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, formulate a program that would motivate migrant workers to plan for productive options such as entry into highly technical jobs or undertakings, livelihood and entrepreneurial development, better wage employment, and investment of savings.*

*"For this purpose, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Technology Livelihood Resource Center (TLRC), and other government agencies involved in training and livelihood development shall give priority to returnees who had been employed as domestic helpers and entertainers" (Republic Act No. 10022, 2010)*

Undoubtedly, this initiative will help actualize the potential of the FLEs or OFWs who certainly gained meaningful experiences while working overseas which they can put to good use after their homecoming. Concomitant to the benefits the FLEs or OFWs can avail from the Kabayanihan Program, the Reintegration Center shall provide additional basic services to OFWs and their families like face-to-face/online responses to queries; evaluation/channeling of requests

for assistance; job search assistance for local/overseas employment; assistance for entrepreneurship/enterprise development; training/retooling assistance; psychosocial services; facilitating participation in Brain Gain Movement Initiatives; linking OFW assistance to Local Government Units (LGUs) and Communities; introduction to Special Retirement Program; information on Special Remittance Package, and Investment Portfolios (Information and Publication Service, 2007). In this way, it will be a lot easier for quondam FLEs or OFWs to adjust to the new job market environment after their return to the country.

Showing her resolve to strengthen the government's overseas employment program which was in the pipeline for phaseout during the Fidel Ramos Administration, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law Republic Act No. 9422 or An Act to Strengthen the Regulatory Functions of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Amending for this Purpose Republic Act No. 8042 Otherwise Known as the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995" on 10 April 2007. Interestingly, this law is a reinforcement of Executive Order No 247, series of 1987, which was signed by former President Corazon Aquino reorganizing the POEA. This action could be interpreted that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, like other government officials, believes that the overseas employment program is successful (Opiniano, 2010). Because of this supposed success, her administration was bent on continuing it, although at times with painful costs.

It will be noted that during the Ramos Administration, Republic Act No. 8042 was passed into law. Important provisions of this law are Section 23, paragraph b.1, Section 29 and Section 30. The gist of Section 29 and Section 30 requires the DOLE within one year to formulate a five-year comprehensive deregulation plan on recruitment activities and for DOLE within five (5) years to phase-out the regulatory functions of the POEA, respectively. These two sections of Republic Act No. 8042 were repealed by Republic Act No. 9422 which was signed by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. This act is a clear indication that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was bent on continuing full-blast the sending of more Filipinos to work abroad. During her administration, the role of the POEA in the overseas employment program of the government, has been further strengthened, as against the plan of the Ramos Administration to phaseout its regulatory functions.

As with other presidencies, the Legislative-Executive nexus was also seen in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo when she issued Administrative Order No. 247 on 4 December 2008, reinforcing Republic Act No. 9422 as an amendatory law to Republic Act No. 8042. Section 2 of this Administrative Order states that "Within the next few weeks, the POEA shall submit to the

President a global employment map with emphasis on what can be called the Code Green areas, countries that are aggressively recruiting foreign workers, hence, natural deployment sites for Filipino expatriates” (Administrative Order No. 247, 2008). In short, POEA is mandated by this administrative order to look for possible countries that can be destinations of future Filipino overseas workers.

In 2008, on the occasion of her visit to Seoul, South Korea, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo unveiled a PHP1 Billion government assistance program for OFWs displaced by the economic crisis (Office of the Press Secretary, 2008). As will be noted, a financial crisis started in Thailand in 1997 and spread across East Asia. The Philippines was not much affected by such crisis. Its economy ran afloat because of the remittances sent to the country by the FLEs or OFWs. As Paderanga (n.d.) pointed out, the importance of remittances to the Philippine economy became apparent in 1998, immediately a year following the financial crisis. The money remitted by the OFWs can be said as a valuable safety net that shielded the Philippines from the ill-effects of the financial crisis. The assistance program unveiled by Macapagal-Arroyo, from the point of view of the Philippine Government is then a fitting gesture to reciprocate the FLEs or OFWs, especially those who were displaced from their jobs because of the crisis.

The tilted direction of the overseas employment program by her predecessors, is now assuaged by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Observing from the actions she did after assuming the presidency, it can be seen that she utilized the full powers of her office, in cooperation with the Legislature, to somehow resuscitate the program which former President Fidel Ramos, saw as something to be slowly phased out, by signing Republic Act No. 8042, or the law that planned for the deregulation or the phasing out of the overseas recruitment function of the POEA within five years after the passage of the Act.

So, when she already was at the helm of the presidency, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo left no stone unturned and used the powers of the Executive by resurrecting the POEA, so that the agency can actively involve again in the overseas employment program of the government, in contrast to the plan of Ramos as envisioned in Republic Act No. 8042. She did this by signing Republic Act No. 9422, amending Section 23, b.1 and repealing Section 29 and Section 30 of Republic Act No. 8042. This action of Macapagal-Arroyo puts the overseas employment program on the original tract, before Republic Act No. 8042 was passed during the Ramos Administration. So, the overseas employment program of the government under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was given a new lease of



life, so to speak. Apparently, whoever is the Philippine President must come to terms with the reality that the overseas employment program is replete with problems and challenges. And so whatever intervention the Chief Executive does, be it the signing or passage of laws that will benefit the FLEs or OFWs, or merely giving nice sounding names to FLEs or OFWs of which Macapagal-Arroyo is famous for, these are all geared towards the alleviation of the overseas Filipinos' way of life that is characterized by sacrifice.

During her term as acting President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law Republic Act No. 9189 or the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003 on 13 February 2003 which enables FLEs or OFWs to vote in national elections. So, upon the effectivity of this law, overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs for the first time, were able to vote during the 2004 national elections, of which Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was a presidential candidate.

If Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was bent on sending more FLEs or OFWs abroad in order to sustain the country's economic well-being, the next president after her had a different take on overseas employment. It can be said that Benigno Aquino III, who succeeded Macapagal-Arroyo, was the most emphatic in terms of "generating more local jobs to give Filipinos another option rather than leaving the country to work abroad" (Nishimori, 2010). Benigno Aquino III showed this resolve early on, as can be evidenced during his Inaugural Address in 2010 after winning the Presidency, when he made it clear that his goal was "to create jobs so that there will be no need to look for employment abroad" (Aquino III, 2010). Furthermore, Benigno Aquino III as pointed out by Cepeda (2016), said that, "at the end of my administration, working abroad will be a choice rather than a necessity." Although these pronouncements could be driven by good intentions like the obvious, which is to minimize the social cost of migration to the Filipino family, such plan is most often not realized as it merits less prioritization, along the way. Creating jobs at home is a very good idea a leader can possibly conceive of. However, in the Philippine case, the program of creating local jobs is often relegated to the back burner, because this is mostly overshadowed by the job availability overseas, which can offer a very quick relief to the unemployment problem (*see Table 2*), and at the same time can help sustain the country's economic well-being through the remittances of the FLEs or OFWs right away. It's a quick fix so to speak. Also, under this arrangement, sending Filipinos to work overseas is less costly for the government, than engaging in new initiatives for local job creation. So, looking at it from the lens of rational choice theory, wherein man is seen as self-interested, purposeful and maximizing being (Petracca, 2009),

overseas employment will be resorted to by any Philippine leader, in favor of venturing on new initiatives for local job generation. with more hassles. However, this is somewhat a trap that all Philippine Presidents fall into, leaving the people to misguidedly wonder why unemployment seems unabated. Using an analogy to drive home the point, we can think of a person who has a hammer as his only tool at hand. When confronted with other carpentry problems, the tendency of this person is to use the hammer to cut a plank of wood, for instance, by hitting it hard, even if using a saw is the appropriate solution to get the cutting job done. Philippine leaders, including Benigno Aquino III are like the man with the hammer. Since the Philippines has a good number of FLEs or OFWs (*see Table 1*), who are so much willing to take even the most menial jobs overseas, the government then considers this diasporic human resource, as an all-encompassing tool to weather economic problems, such as economic crises, as their remittances can certainly offer a big help to sustain the Philippine economy. When the Philippines is confronted with other economic problems, the government just do the same strategy by continuously sending FLEs or OFWs abroad to ease such problems like unemployment for instance, even when creating local jobs is the most appropriate thing to be done to curb such economic malady. So, the Philippine Government resorting to the deployment of its workers abroad rather than creating jobs locally which is the most appropriate step to take to stave off the problem, is like the man using a hammer rather than a saw to get the cutting job done.

And so, like most of the Philippine presidents before him, Benigno Aquino III was slowly lulled to fall into this trap and drifted away from his earlier plan of creating jobs at home. Also, he was accused of doing little for the FLEs or OFWs. His critics accused him, saying that his first year in office was arguably the worst year for OFWs and their families (Perez, 2011). This criticism seems to carry weight as there could be no significant interventions geared towards the country's overseas employment program, especially during the first early half of his administration. As the country's Chief Executive however, he cannot just close his eyes in the midst of the mounting criticisms hurled against him, and with this, he slowly picked the pieces together and did something, to somehow come to the aid the FLEs or OFWS or the Philippines' modern-day heroes, as his mother, Corazon Aquino first called them in 1988. Again, from the perspective of any Philippine leader, the overseas employment program is fraught with problems and therefore solutions have to be proactively planned.

Benigno Aquino III's initiatives only gathered steam during the second half of his term. At first, he did the usual lighter things associated with ceremonial duties as President, like meeting his counterparts from countries hosting large population of FLEs or OFWs, gracing overseas labor-themed gatherings and bestowal of recognitions to best performing private labor recruitment agencies.

One of the early initiatives put forward by the Benigno Aquino III Administration relative to the overseas employment program, was the creation of six Social Welfare Officer positions in 2013, midway into his term of office, to provide support and assistance to OFWs in need of social protection (Department of Budget and Management, 2013). Although a reactive measure, this is nonetheless noteworthy considering the problems the FLEs or OFWs have to face on a daily basis. Given the breadth and scope of the work locations, coupled with the number of FLEs or OFWs (*see Chart 1 and Table 7*) who could be found around the world, work-related problems are therefore to be expected. And the solution of their problems requires at least the intervention of trained social workers. This initiative of the Benigno Aquino III Administration of creating Social Welfare Officer positions is therefore in order. And the good thing is that, per instruction of the Department of Budget and Management (2013), holders of the newly-created positions will be stationed in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Jeddah, Hong Kong, South Korea and Qatar. These places are relatively well-known as having high concentration of FLEs or OFWs (*see Table 7*). FLEs or OFWs in these places will therefore be extended the needed intervention, especially during problematic situations, even if they are separated from their loved ones whom they always expect as their strongest pillar of support.

It can also be noted that on 10 February 2014, Benigno Aquino III conferred the Presidential Award of Excellence to five licensed overseas recruitment companies at the Rizal Hall of Malacañang Palace (Gabito, 2014). Giving out awards to private recruitment companies for their so-called outstanding performance is however a tacit acknowledgment by the Philippine Government, that its overseas employment program has to continue, and these awards incentivize the private recruitment companies to work harder in sending out Filipinos overseas to work.

Meanwhile on 18 November 2015, Benigno Aquino III met his South Korean counterpart, President Park Geum-hye, during the latter's visit to Manila. In their closed-door meeting, the Philippine leader floated to the South Korean leader, if she could positively consider proposed amendment to the Social Security Agreement between the two countries on behalf of the FLEs or

OFWs, so that they will be able to refund their National Pension System (NPS) contributions to the South Korean government. There were reports that the FLEs or OFWs were unable to refund their NPS contributions, at the conclusion of their work contract in that country (Sabillo, 2015).

The Legislative-Executive nexus can again be seen during the Benigno Aquino III Administration. For one, on 13 May 2014, he inked a very important legislation on the part of the country's seafarers. This law is Republic Act 10635 or An Act Establishing the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) as the single Maritime Administration Responsible for the Implementation and Enforcement of the 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, as Amended, and International Agreements or Covenants Related Thereto.

During the month prior to stepping down as President, Benigno Aquino III signed two important legislations, which therefore became laws. One of these laws is Republic Act No. 10801 or An Act Governing the Operations and Administration of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). This was signed into law on 10 May 2016. This legislation is relevant in so far as the FLEs or OFWs are concerned because they can now expect more services from OWWA as a membership organization. As mentioned in the Department of Labor and Employment-OWWA (n.d.) website, an FLE or OFW can become a member after paying a contribution of US\$25, which is good for two years regardless of the duration of the contract, change of employer, jobsite or recruitment agency. After two years, OWWA membership has to be renewed, provided there is a proof of active employment. Before the signing of Republic Act No. 10801 in 2016, overhead expenses of OWWA were sourced from the FLE or OFW membership contribution, but after the approval of this law, the overhead expenses of OWWA will now be sourced from the national government. It is expressly provided in Chapter XIII of Republic Act No. 10801 that after the initial implementation of the Act, the expenses for the continued operation and maintenance of the OWWA shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) (Republic Act No. 10801, 2016). This means that since the operational expenses of OWWA will be included in the GAA, the OWWA Fund coming from the contributions of FLEs or OFWs will now be solely used for the welfare programs and services geared towards the members. In other words, more funds are now available to be spent towards the welfare programs and services for the FLEs or OFWs.

Another law signed by Benigno Aquino III was Republic Act No. 10863 or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act. This measure was signed into law on 30 May 2016, 20 days after signing into law Republic Act No. 10801 and also just one month before he stepped down from office. This law is as well important to the FLEs or OFWs because it stipulates the increase of the value for tax exemption purposes, goods and items in a *balikbayan* box<sup>12</sup> sent by FLEs or OFWs to their families back in the Philippines. A *balikbayan* box is important in the lives of FLEs or OFWs, because it is one way of showing their love and concern for their family members left behind, by giving them things and other necessities, sourced from the countries where the FLEs or OFWs work. Under Title VIII, Chapter 1, Section 800, Paragraph g, of Republic Act No. 10863, FLEs or OFWs can send personal goods to their families in the Philippines, tax-free if the total value of the items or goods will not exceed One Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (₱150,000.00) per year (Republic Act No. 10863, 2016).

Although Benigno Aquino III was not immediately able to respond to the government's overseas employment program, and job generation as he earlier envisioned, he however closed his term with a bang by approving two very important legislations – Republic Act No. 10801 and Republic Act No. 10863, that will greatly benefit FLEs or OFWs for the years to come. He signed these laws during the last month prior to his official exit from the presidency, on 30 June 2016.

After Benigno Aquino III's exit as the country's chief executive, Rodrigo Duterte, a populist leader took over. After he came to power, he got rock-solid support from the people despite his official gaffes and bad language (Affatato, 2017). As president, he had consequently brought his brand of populism to the domain of the FLEs or OFWs. For this, he easily earned adulation and support from this sector, which had been generally portrayed as victims of social injustice, not only in their places of work overseas, but in their own country as well. Rodrigo Duterte knew how the FLEs or OFWs spent their lives overseas by taking cues from those whom he had personal audiences with, especially those who featured in problematic situations abroad like Pahima Alagasi, who was allegedly abused by her employer in the Middle East. When Duterte met Alagasi in Davao City, he handed her a check worth One Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱100,000.00) and a cash gift of Twenty Thousand Pesos (₱20,000.00) from OWWA (Presidential Communications Office, 2018).

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<sup>12</sup> This is a relatively big box stuffed with different items accumulated by the FLEs or OFWs, during the course of their stay overseas, sent mostly via sea cargo through forwarding services, to their families in the Philippines.

All Philippine presidents before him, acknowledged in their statements in public that the FLEs or OFWs face problems in their places of work overseas. However, they were a bit restrained in their statements so as not to offend any government of a country hosting FLEs or OFWs, but not Rodrigo Duterte. As can be gleaned from his statements, the populist persona in him showed. Addressing his Kuwaiti counterparts, when the body of Joanna Demafelis was discovered lifeless in 2018 inside a freezer, in an abandoned apartment of her employers in Kuwait, Anderson (2018), pointed him out as saying, “What are you doing to my countrymen? And if I were to do it to your citizens here, would you be happy?” Likewise, Villamor (2018) pointed Duterte out as saying, “Every abuse committed to an OFW is an affront against us.” In these statements, the divide between ‘us’ or the ordinary citizens and ‘them’ or the self-serving elites (Aiginger, 2020) is quite apparent. As a leader, Rodrigo Duterte identified himself with the FLEs or OFWs, his countrymen. For him, they are the everyday heroes (Staff Report, 2018). Jagers and Walgrave (2007), hint that in populism there is a divide between the “good” ordinary people, versus “the corrupt” political elites. For Rodrigo Duterte, these elites could be anyone regardless of location, so long as they abuse the everyday heroes, or the “good ordinary people”, as acts of violence against them are unacceptable (Flores, 2018). They could be representatives of foreign governments, Philippine government officials and even foreign employers, as they can also be considered political elites, for the reason that they exercise power and authority over the people they employ. Politics or being political after all is a process of maneuvering to assert rival interests (Boswell, 2020). With this, Rodrigo Duterte, envisioned that the interests and concerns of the FLEs or OFWs, the everyday heroes, must be protected and must be advanced. In his audience with the FLEs or OFWs in Bangkok, Thailand in 2017 for example, he told them saying, “I hope that when you go back to the Philippines, there will no longer be opening of your baggage. I prohibited the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Immigration from tinkering into your things” (Presidential Communications Office, 2017). In the Philippines, this populist president, made it known that he must protect the interests of the FLEs or OFWs, against the corrupt government officials, or the political elites in Philippine society, whom he can easily issue commands and orders, being the Chief Executive, especially those government officials, from the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Immigration, who have been victimizing these everyday heroes for the longest time. To his credit, it was him who was able to materialize these populist orders on behalf of the FLEs or OFWs.

During the first year of Rodrigo Duterte's term as president, he immediately ordered the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, to establish One-Stop Service Centers, so that Filipinos desiring to work overseas, will just go to one place where all the needed paperwork could be processed. With this idea, it was envisioned that different clearances, certificates, and the needed forms to be secured and signed, must be available in the service centers, and manned by responsible and competent officials. This way, Filipino overseas job applicants will save time, money and effort when processing their documents. As of October 2017, Rodrigo Duterte's second year in office, the DOLE has reported that there were already 17 One-Stop Service Centers all over the country (Rivera, 2017).

The year 2017 also saw the establishment of the Overseas Filipino Bank (OFB) by virtue of Rodrigo Duterte's Executive Order No. 44. As the name of the bank obviously implies, this financial institution's mandate is to serve the banking needs of the overseas Filipinos as well as members of their families.

Like Philippine Presidents before him, the Legislative-Executive nexus also showed during Rodrigo Duterte's term. To demonstrate such nexus, Duterte approved notable laws which aim to benefit the FLEs or OFWs. On 2 August 2017, he approved Republic Act No. 10928. This Act extends the validity of Philippine passports from five years to 10 years. In the past, a Philippine passport was only valid for five years. Practically, this will benefit not only the Filipino citizens in general, but the FLEs or OFWs in particular. Taking the duration of the validity of a Philippine passport into account, as a consequence of Republic Act No. 10928, the cost of a passport application is now cheaper, as this will save half of the amount compared to the time when this legislation was non-existent yet. Obviously, passport valid for longer periods of time means less expenses associated with renewal fees.

On 22 February 2019 Rodrigo Duterte likewise approved Republic Act No. 11227. As can be gathered from its long title, this law mandates the POEA to develop, publish, disseminate and update a handbook on the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers. This law aims to empower FLEs or OFWs by informing them of their rights and responsibilities as workers. Although the environment could be very different when the migrant workers are already in their places of work overseas, knowledge of one's rights and responsibilities as workers, can still offer self-protection, and this law takes that into account. The same year 2019 also saw another law which Rodrigo Duterte approved. This is Republic Act No. 11299 which he inked on 17 April. This law creates

the Office for Welfare Attaché and is an amendment to Republic Act No. 8042 by inserting in Section 23 in the said amended Act, an additional paragraph - Paragraph e, which reads:

*“(e) Department of Social Welfare and Development - The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall deploy Social Welfare Attachés in countries with large concentration of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), as determined in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The Social Welfare Attaché shall possess the minimum qualifications set by the Civil Service Commission and the preferred qualifications prescribed by the DSWD (Republic Act No. 11299, 2018).*

This is an important legislation, because a new Social Welfare Attaché position is created in the Civil Service, in which the holder of such position, will be deployed to countries where there are large concentrations of FLEs or OFWs, so as to make the necessary interventions, in the event when the FLEs or OFWs are thrust into problematic situations.

On 30 December 2021, Rodrigo Duterte approved Republic Act No. 11641. This legislation creates the DMW. As already mentioned in Section 1, Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the DMW is envisioned to be the lead agency for implementing policies, plans and programs that will ensure the protection, promotion of interests, timely resolution of problems, and effective reintegration of FLEs or OFWs.

During Rodrigo Duterte’s final year in office, that was year 2022, he approved two legislations concerning Filipino seafarers. The first legislation is Republic Act No. 11760 which creates an extension office of MARINA in Vigan, province of Ilocos Sur in northern Philippines. The second legislation is Republic Act No. 11761 which converts the satellite office of MARINA in Maasin, province of Southern Leyte in the Visayas, into an extension office. These two legislations are important in so far as Filipino seafarers are concerned, because those seafarers living in northern Philippines and also those living in the Visayas, will no longer need to go to Metro Manila for their specific concerns. They can now go to the MARINA extension office near the place where they live, for their specific concerns. In some way, this will save them time, money and effort.



## 2. Composition and destinations of Filipino labor emigrants

Filipino labor emigrants or overseas Filipino workers are scattered around the world. They are employed either as land-based or sea-based workers. Because of the sizeable number of FLEs or OFWs coupled with the breadth and scope of their work locations, a popular joke has been advanced, that when FLEs or OFWs will stop working even just for a day, the world economy will somehow be affected. This is because ships' schedules for cargo or leisure will be lulled as 30 percent of international seafaring crew around the world are Filipinos (Santos, 2014), and it is estimated that one in every four or five crew members on board a vessel at any time is a Filipino (Gatchalian, 2022), fishing boats will slow down to venture out to fish, factories and oil refineries especially in Asia and the Middle East, will somehow see a decrease in production, households will be unattended and the corporate lady executives employing Filipina home managers will be forced to stay at home to take care of their young children, the sick members of their families and the elderly. The faces of the Filipino overseas labor emigrants can be seen in ships as seafarers, in fishing vessels as fishermen, in factories as production line workers, and in households and elderly homes as home managers and caretakers. Generally, these are the kind of jobs that the Filipino labor emigrants engage in and do while they are employed overseas. This is not to say however that there are no Filipinos employed in the white-collar category like teachers, engineers, hospital staffs, office workers and managers.

According to the PSA, there are 1,830,000 FLEs or OFWs all over the world as of 2021 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022), with an increase of 60,000 from that of 2020, which stood at 1,770,000 (*see Table 1 and Table 7*). The data shows that there is an increase in headcount, now that restrictions of mobility due to the Covid-19 pandemic in late 2019 and the entire year of 2020, is already eased. This number increase again to 1,960,000 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023) in 2022. These FLEs or OFWs include the Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) or those who have employment contracts with their employers and those who do not have such contract, yet they engage in paid work overseas. So, in this dissertation FLEs or OFWs include all overseas Filipinos of voting age, except those of Filipino descent, but renounced their Filipino citizenship, and are ineligible to vote during Philippine elections.

The largest number of these FLEs or OFWs can be found in Asia specifically in Saudi Arabia at 470,820 (*see Table 7*), representing 26.6 percent (*see Chart 1*) of the total FLEs or OFWs worldwide. The breakdown of the FLEs or OFWs as to the continents and countries of destination

is reflected in Table 7. Noticeably, countries in the Middle East specifically Saudi Arabia remains to be the most popular destination of land-based FLEs or OFWs. The Middle East has been one of the earliest regions of destination for the FLEs or OFWs as this was promoted by the Philippine Government partly because of the oil boom there during the 1970s. Also, the presence of the sizeable Filipino community in the region since the 1970s, makes it easy and convenient for future FLEs or OFWs to go there and work. Aside from information regarding the availability of work, nature of the job that needs to be filled, and some other details about the job provided by those who are already on site, the presence of a notable network, is very appealing to future Filipino workers, because the assurance of help in case of problems, is undeniably being factored in. The semblance of a community that can be counted as a support system, is therefore an important consideration when future labor emigrants decide about their overseas work options. This is in fact noted by Vertovec as cited in Kurekova (2010), that the existence of diaspora or networks is likely to influence the decisions of migrants when they choose their destinations. Networks are sets of social ties that connects migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin (Massey, et. al., 1993).

Table 7. No. of FLEs or OFWs by continent/country of destination as of the year 2020

Continent/Country of Destination	No. of Filipino labor emigrants or OFWs
ASIA	1,479,720
Saudi Arabia	470,820
United Arab Emirates	258,420
Kuwait	113,280
Hongkong	111,510
Qatar	95,580
Singapore	93,810
Other countries in Asia	336,300
AFRICA	19,470
AUSTRALIA	60,180
NORTH and SOUTH AMERICA	92,040
EUROPE	118,590
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,770,000</b>

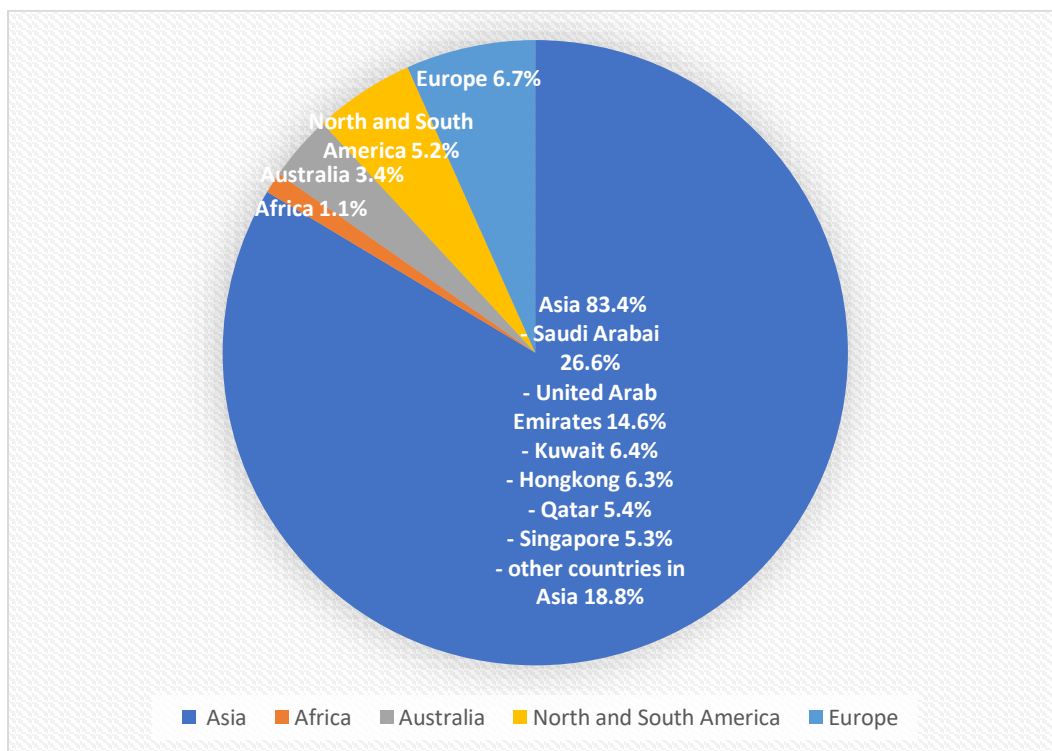
Source: Philippine Statistics Authority

For the overseas Filipino labor emigrants, these networks are realized in their association with a friend, a relative or any other person they closely identify with. Migration networks therefore, result to a reduced social, economic and emotional costs of migration (Light, et. al.,

1989). In academic literature, a number of authors refer to this as Network Theory of Migration (Light, et. al., 1989, Martinez-Brawley and Zorita, 2014, VandenBelt, 2020).

Asia is still the most favored continent of destination for FLEs or OFWs. The countries where sizable number of FLEs or OFWs are located are in Asia. Saudi Arabia has been a traditional migrant destination country since the 1970s, when the Philippine Government took opportunity of the great number of jobs generated there, as a result of the oil boom in that country. Other notable countries in Asia hosting large number of FLEs or OFWs are the so-called Asian Dragons - Hong Kong and Singapore.

Chart 1. Percent distribution of FLEs or OFWs by continent/country of destination



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority

In addition to this number which only covers the land-based FLEs or OFWs, there are also the sea-based FLEs or OFWs. They are commonly referred to as seafarers. As reported by Hand (2021), per POEA figures published by MARINA, there were 217,223 Filipino seafarers in 2020. This figure is a stiff drop of 54 percent from the figure in 2019 which was at 469,996. The reasons for the drop of the number of seafarers was the extended lockdowns caused by the Covid-19

pandemic, border closures and the changes in crew composition as an aftermath of the pandemic. Evidently, the Covid-19 pandemic affected the movement of FLEs or OFWs both land-based and sea-based, as border controls and lockdowns were implemented by most countries worldwide.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Philippine legislature**

This chapter takes the description of labor emigration characterized with problems, being an important policy agenda as discussed in Chapter 2, as the point of departure. This is done in order to show that legislative intervention is one of the vital steps to ease social problems like those embedded in the domain of overseas labor emigration. This being the case, lawmakers in most instances have to step in, they being armed with lawmaking power in order to solve or at least mitigate such problem. The discussion will center on how the legislature is seen as the central government agency and the lawmakers as the political actors that can powerfully offer a panacea to the problems associated with labor emigration through the lawmaking process.

During the early period in their history, the Filipinos had already instituted their system of lawmaking. Before the arrival of their colonizers for example, laws were made by a council of the village chiefs, and announced to the villages by a crier ringing a bell (Loarca, 1582, as cited in Mintz, 2006). This system may be considered backward by some standards but such a step was obviously taken as a mechanism to enable the work of the legislature easier and more transparent as a democratic institution. During this contemporary time, the system of lawmaking in place, is of course a far cry from the pre-colonial period, yet there are manifestations that some actions of the present bred of Filipino lawmakers, are traceable to their colonial past. It is in poring at these lawmakers' actions when the country's colonial past lends a semblance of relevance.

#### **1. The nature and present composition of the Philippine Congress**

The Philippine Congress or the Legislative Branch of the government is one of the three branches of the government, the other two being the Executive Branch and the Judicial Branch. The Philippine Legislature also known as the Congress of the Philippines is bicameral, which means that it is composed of two chambers – the Senate and the House of Representatives. The members of each house or chamber are elected for a specific period as provided for in the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines.

For the Members of the House of Representatives, they are called Congressmen, Congresswomen or Party-List Representatives. They are elected for a term of three years. This is provided in Section 7, Article VI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which states:

*“Members of the House of Representatives shall be elected for a term of three years which shall begin, unless otherwise provided by law, at noon on the thirtieth day of June next following their election.*

*No member of the House of Representatives shall serve for more than three consecutive terms. Voluntary renunciation of the office for any length of time shall not be considered as an interruption on the continuity of this service for the full term for which he was elected” (Philippine Constitution of 1987, art. VI, § 7, 1987).*

The majority of the members of the House of Representatives, eighty percent of the total membership, are elected from legislative districts by the registered voters in those districts. At present, there are 243 legislative districts in the country (Legislative Information, n.d.). Also included as members of this Chamber, are the nominees of Party-List groups who win in elections, which compose the other twenty percent. The party-list system is a mechanism of proportional representation in the House of Representatives from national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations registered with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) (Republic Act No. 7941, 1995). In the party-list system, what is elected is a group, and not a person. Therefore, in the official ballot during elections, the names of Party-list groups are stated alphabetically, and the voters can elect one Party-list group of their choice. In this way, registered voters who are voting in the Philippines, are in fact electing 2 representatives to the House of Representatives – one for the legislative district from where the voter is registered, and the other for Party-list group of their choice.

In the case of FLEs or OFWs who are voting overseas, they can only vote or elect Party-list groups, and not for the representative of the legislative districts. This is understandable, and for practical purposes, for COMELEC to do away with a very cumbersome process of sorting out official election ballots to be sent out to different Philippine Embassies and Missions abroad, where overseas voting usually takes place.

It will be unimaginable in the case of a city in the world where FLEs or OFWs are concentrated, like Hong Kong for instance, for COMELEC to sort and send sufficient official election ballots to that city, because in doing so, it will need to coordinate with other government agencies, like OWWA or POEA now the DMW, in order to identify each FLEs or OFW’s legislative district of origin in the Philippines. Doing this will be very time-consuming considering that FLEs or OFWs are scattered all over the world. Certainly, this process of sorting out official election ballots vis-à-vis the exact number of FLEs or OFWs, in a certain place in the world, with

their correct legislative districts of origin, will require a considerable long period of time to do so. Also, there could as well be the possibility of mismatch as to the FLEs or OFWs with their correct legislative districts of origin. In such a case, this can be a valid reason for candidates to raise election protests if some FLEs or OFWs will not be able to vote because of lack of official election ballots due to COMELEC's inability to get the exact information as to FLEs or OFWs legislative districts of origin. Given these practical yet valid reasons, it is then reasonable why FLEs or OFWs are not made to vote for legislative district representatives.

In determining who will represent the winning party-list groups, Section 8, Paragraph 1 of RA 7941 or the Party-list System Act states that, each registered party, organization or coalition shall submit to the COMELEC not later than 45 days before the election a list of names, not less than five, from which party-list representatives shall be chosen in case it obtains the required number of votes (Republic Act No. 7941, 1995).

The Party-list groups are elected nationwide like the manner of election for the Senators, and therefore they have no geographical limitations (Nicolas and De Vega Law Offices, 2007). So, as their election is nationwide in scope, FLEs or OFWs, even if they are outside the country, can vote for them.

Republic Act No. 7941 or the Party-list System Act is important in so far as the FLEs or OFWs are concerned because the overseas labor sector is considered a marginalized group and therefore is qualified to have representatives in Congress through the party-list system. Therefore, Filipino overseas labor emigrants can organize or form associations and contest in elections. Party-list groups are supposed to represent marginalized and underrepresented sectors to obtain possible representation in the House of Representatives, which traditionally is dominated by parties with big political machinery (Commission on Elections, 1998). Not surprisingly, there are several party-list groups claiming to represent the overseas Filipino labor emigrants, for both the land-based and the sea-based categories. For instance, *Angkla*<sup>13</sup> is a Party-List group that claims to represent the sea-based FLEs or OFWs. *Ahon Pinoy*<sup>14</sup> on the other hand, is a Party-List group established for the benefit of overseas Filipino workers and their families (Ahon Pinoy, 2010) in general.

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<sup>13</sup> This Party-List has a longer name written in its promotional leaflets - *Angkla Para sa Pilipinong Marino*, which can be translated into English as *Anchor for the Filipino Mariner/Seafarer*. Its name obviously represents the Filipino seafarers, being a group of sea-based overseas Filipino labor emigrants.

<sup>14</sup> *Ahon Pinoy* is a Party-List group that claims to represent the overseas Filipino workers and their families. The name can be roughly translated into English as, *Rise Filipinos*.

Noticeably, the party-list groups are very creative in coining unique and catchy names, obviously for easy memory recall during elections. This is an indication that every candidate, including party-list groups have that ultimate goal of winning during elections.

The first election under the party-list system was held in May 1998 (Republic Act No. 7941, 1995). Meanwhile, the total number of party-list representatives in Congress as well as the number of representatives an individual party-list group can get, is provided in Section 11 of the Act and it states;

*The party-list representatives shall constitute twenty-percentum (20%) of the total number of the members of the House of Representatives including those under the party-list. For purposes of the May 1998 elections, the first five (5) major political parties on the basis of party representation in the House of Representatives at the start of the Tenth Congress of the Philippines shall not be entitled to participate in the party-list system. In determining the allocation of seats for the second vote, the following procedure shall be observed: The parties, organizations, and coalitions shall be ranked from the highest to the lowest based on the number of votes garnered during the elections.*

*The parties, organizations, and coalitions receiving at least two percent (2%) of the total votes cast for the party-list system shall be entitled to one seat each: provided, that those garnering more than two percent (2%) of the votes shall be entitled to additional seats in proportion to their total number of votes: provided, finally, that each party, organization, or coalition shall be entitled to not more than three (3) seats (Republic Act No. 7941, § 11, 1995).*

In this provision of the law, it is clear that the total number of representatives from the party-list groups will constitute 20 percent of the total number of representatives in the House of Representatives, as already mentioned. And a party-list group which garners 2 percent of the total number of votes for party list, is assured of 1 representative. Furthermore, party-list groups which garner more than 2 percent of the votes for party-list, is entitled to additional seats in proportion to their total number of votes. The maximum number of representatives a party-list group can get is 3. In previous legislative elections therefore, some party-list groups were allocated 3 representatives, as they got higher votes than the 2 percent threshold, stated in the law.

The eighty percent of the members of the House of Representatives or the Lower House of the Philippine Congress comes from representatives of legislative districts. This will not however be discussed in detail here, as this is not a concern of this dissertation, mainly because, FLEs or OFWs cannot vote for them, as mentioned in the Scope and delimitation of the study, in Section 5, Chapter 1.



The Senate is composed of twenty-four (24) Senators. Like the party-list representatives, they are also elected nationwide, and therefore FLEs or OFWs can likewise vote for them. A Senator has a term of office of six (6) years, and can run for two (2) consecutive terms. The term of office of a Senator is stated in Article VI, Section 4 of the Philippine Constitution, which reads;

*The term of office of the Senators shall be six years and shall commence, unless otherwise provided by law, at noon on the thirtieth day of June next following their election. No Senator shall serve for more than two consecutive terms. Voluntary renunciation of the office for any length of time shall not be considered as an interruption in the continuity of his service for the full term of which he was elected (Philippine Constitution of 1987, art. VI, § 4, 1987).*

Under the present set-up, the 24 Senators that compose the Senate or the Upper House of the Philippine Congress, do not end their terms of office at the same time. Half or 12 of them, end their terms of office, three years before the other half end theirs. This means that the Philippine Senate is a continuing institution in so far as manpower is concerned, as there are always sitting Senators, at any given period of time.

This arrangement started during the 1992 elections, the second elections under the 1987 Constitution. During the first election under the 1987 Constitution, elected senators served office for a full six-year term as stipulated in the Philippine Constitution of 1987, art. VI, § 4 (1987). During the second election under the 1987 Constitution, the 12 Senators who got the highest number of votes served for six years while the other 12 Senators who got the lowest number of votes served for three years. After three years, another election under the 1987 Constitution was held, and that was when another 12 Senators were elected to join the remaining 12 Senators. At this present time, a Senatorial Election is held every after three years, with 12 Senators elected in each election.

## **2. Background of Senators: Tracing their migrant connections**

This section aims to offer answers or explanations to the Secondary Research Question No. 1, that can be read in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. In this connection, the background of the Senators who are the subject of this dissertation, are described and discussed. With this, the Senators who are included are the ones who won during the 13 May 2013 and the 9 May 2016 National Elections and who are similarly situated based on the following qualifications: 1) assessment period is six years, and 2) must stand for re-election after six years.

During the 13 May 2013 National Election, 12 Senators have to be elected and those who won, with their Family Names listed in alphabetical order were: 1) Juan Edgardo Angara 2) Paolo Benigno Aquino IV 3) Nancy Binay 4) Alan Peter Cayetano 5) Joseph Victor Ejercito 6) Francis Escudero 7) Gregorio Honasan 8) Loren Legarda 9) Aquilino Martin Pimentel III 10) Grace Poe 11) Antonio Trillanes and 12) Cynthia Villar. They are the first batch of Senators who were evaluated and are the subject of this dissertation. However, among these 12 Senators, five of them did not pass the test based on the second qualification mentioned above, that is, they must stand for re-election after six years. The five Senators who did not qualify, with their Family Names listed in alphabetical order were 1) Alan Peter Cayetano 2) Francis Escudero 3) Gregorio Honasan 4) Loren Legarda and 5) Antonio Trillanes. They did not stand for-re-election as they were already barred in doing so, because they already maximized the term limit for Senators as stipulated in Article VI, Section 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, and already mentioned in this Chapter, Part 2, above. And so, only seven of the 12 Senators qualified based on the second qualification mentioned above. Those who qualified with their Family Names listed in alphabetical order were 1) Juan Edgardo Angara 2) Paolo Benigno Aquino IV 3) Nancy Binay 4) Joseph Victor Ejercito 5) Aquilino Martin Pimentel III 6) Grace Poe and 7) Cynthia Villar. These are the first batch of Senators, seven of them whose background will be discussed and described in this section.

In addition to this first batch of seven Senators, a second batch will also be featured and whose background will be discussed and described as well. These are the Senators who won during the 9 May 2016 national election who will also be subjected to the same qualifications as mentioned above, of which the first batch of Senators were subjected to. During the said election, 12 Senators also won and they are listed alphabetically based on their Last Names as follows: 1) Leila De Lima 2) Franklin Drilon 3) Sherwin Gatchalian 4) Richard Gordon 5) Risa Hontiveros 6) Panfilo Lacson 7) Emmanuel Pacquiao 8) Francis Pangilinan 9) Ralph Recto 10) Vicente Sotto III 11) Joel Villanueva and 12) Miguel Zubiri. They are the second batch of Senators who were evaluated and are the subject of this dissertation as well. However, among these 12 Senators, six of them did not qualify based on the second qualification mentioned above, that is, they must stand for re-election after six years. The six Senators who did not qualify, with their names listed in alphabetical order were 1) Franklin Drilon 2) Panfilo Lacson 3) Emmanuel Pacquiao 4) Francis Pangilinan 5) Ralph Recto and 6) Vicente Sotto III. Like the first batch of Senators, they did not stand for re-election as they were already barred in doing so, because they already maximized the

term limit for Senators as stipulated in Article VI, Section 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, and already mentioned in this chapter, Part 2, above. And so, only six of the 12 Senators qualified based on the second qualification mentioned above. Those who qualified with their Family Names listed in alphabetical order were 1) Liela De Lima 2) Sherwin Gatchalian 3) Richard Gordon 4) Risa Hontiveros 5) Joel Villanueva, and 6) Miguel Zubiri. These are the second batch of Senators, six of them whose background will be discussed and described in this section as well.

As for the Party-list groups, the background of the Representatives will not be discussed and described here because for practical reasons, there are more than a hundred of them and some, in fact most of them, are not known to outsiders because it is only the Party-list group members themselves, who know who their nominees for Representatives are. And in most cases, the names of the nominees are only revealed after the Party-list group wins a slot in an election. Furthermore, in the Philippine case, in the Party-list system of election, it is the name of the Party-list group that is elected during elections and not the Party-list Representative. Outsiders in most cases, are not privy as to the names of the Party-list group nominees, who will represent the group once it gets the required number of votes to merit representation. There are even cases when a previously announced Party-list Representative is replaced by the Party-list group itself, for some reasons or another. This makes the task of identifying, much more so describing, the background of Party-list Representatives, untenable if not impractical.

For reasons that Party-list groups represent and advance specific issues and concerns, which are apparent as reflected in their group names, suffice is to say that the voters already know the causes, the Party-list groups are advocating. In their publication materials and election taglines for instance, these causes or advocacies are in fact already highlighted. For example, in the election and publication materials of a Party-list group of seafarers, the picture of an anchor is featured, emblazoned with a fitting name to identify this sectoral group. In this way, voters already know the background of such specific group and therefore a description is no longer necessary. And this is true to most, if not all of the Party-list groups. This being said, the FLEs or OFWs like any other voters, more or less already know the background of the Party-list groups, before casting their votes.

## **2.1. First batch of Senators and their backgrounds**

### **2.1.1. Juan Edgardo Angara**

Juan Edgardo Angara is a scion of a well-known political family in the Province of Aurora, one of the provinces comprising Region 3 also called the Central Luzon Region. He is the son of Edgardo Angara and Gloria Manalang. His father, was a lawyer who obtained his law degree from the University of the Philippines (U.P.) School of Law and his Master of Law from the Michigan University School of Law. His father served as Senate President and was reputed to have the second longest tenure in the history of the Philippine Senate, serving four terms and a total of 23 years. Outside politics, he served as the President of the University of the Philippines, the country's premier university. Before he died on 17 May 2017, he was appointed by former President Duterte as the special envoy to the European Union. His mother, a former History teacher on the other hand, became Chairperson of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP).

Juan Edgardo Angara was born in Manila on 15 July 1972. He got his basic education from Xavier School, a Catholic school, founded and managed by the Jesuits, in San Juan, Metro, Manila. He later attended Douai School, an educational institution run by the Douai Abbey Benedictine Community at Woolhampton, England. He obtained his Bachelor of Science in International Relations degree from the London School of Economics. After this, he took up Bachelor of Laws and finished the degree at the U.P. School of Law, like his father. After obtaining his law degree from U.P., he continued to hone his legal knowledge and took up Master of Laws at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

The colorful political career of his father is matched by the equally-colorful political career of the son. He was first elected to public office as the representative of the Lone District of Aurora Province in 2004, where he succeeded his aunt, Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, a three-term representative of the province. Elected as the Aurora District Representative at the age of 31, Juan Edgardo Angara was one of the youngest lawmakers of the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress. Before becoming a District Representative, he worked in a number of companies or organizations, both in the public and private sector. In 1991, he worked at the Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company as a trainee, and in 1992, he became a News Reporter for the Philippine Star, one of the popular Philippine dailies. After this, he became an apprentice and member of the delegation in the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York City in 1994. From 2001 to 2003, he worked as an Associate

Attorney at the Angara, Concepcion, Cruz, Regata and Abello (ACCRA) law firm. As a member of the Bar, he taught at the New Era University School of Law in Quezon City and also at the Centro Escolar School of Law and Jurisprudence in Manila.

After serving as a District Representative of the Lone District of Aurora Province for three consecutive terms in 2004, 2007 and 2010, he tried his luck at the Senate by filing Senatorial candidacy during the 13 May 2013 Senatorial Election, when he won and placed sixth among 33 Senatorial candidates. After his first six-year term as Senator ended, he again filed for re-election during the 13 May 2019 Senatorial Elections and won. Angara is serving his last term as Senator, which will end in 2025. He is no longer eligible for re-election as he already maximized the two-term limit for Senators. When his Senate stint ends in 2025, he will have served 21 years as a lawmaker – nine years as District Representative and 12 years as Senator.

Juan Edgardo Angara hails from the Municipality of Baler, Aurora Province, one of the provinces comprising Region 3, also called the Central Luzon Region. Per April to September 2018 data of the PSA, this region is home to about 382,900 FLEs or OFWs. Among all regions in the country, this region is the one with the second highest number of FLEs or OFWs representing 14.3 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the national FLE or OFW total which stood at 2.3 million (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). Assuming that all the FLEs or OFWs coming from Region 3 or the Central Luzon Region numbering about 382,900 where Juan Edgardo Angara also comes from, voted for him during his re-election bid, during the 13 May 2019 Senatorial Elections, then his win from the FLE or OFW sector relative to the other Senatorial candidates would have been assured. But this was not the case, because during that election, he only got 8,468 total votes from the FLEs or OFWs (*see Table 19*) which number is far, far lower than the number of FLEs or OFWs coming from his home region, which is Region 3 or the Central Luzon Region. In Juan Edgardo Angra's case therefore, it follows that the commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, does not say much about the number of votes the latter gets from the FLEs or OFWs.

#### 2.1.2. Paolo Benigno Aquino IV

Paolo Benigno Aquino IV is a member of the politically well-known Aquino clan in the Philippines. He was born on 7 May 1977 to Paul Aquino and Melanie Aguirre-Aquino in Manila. His father, Paul Aquino was the son of Benigno Aquino, Sr. Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, is the first

cousin of former President Benigno Aquino III. Paul Aquino and Benigno Aquino, Jr., the father of former President Benigno Aquino III, are brothers.

He studied at the Ateneo de Manila Grade School from 1983 to 1991, graduating with first honor, and for this, he delivered the Valedictory Speech, during his graduation. He continued High School, at the Ateneo de Manila High School from 1991 to 1995, graduating as the Valedictorian of his batch. Then, he took up Bachelor of Science in Management Engineering from 1995 to 1999, at the Ateneo de Manila University and graduated Summa Cum Laude. He likewise studied Law at the Ateneo de Manila La School. After his studies in the Philippines, he went to the United States of America and studied at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, where he took up the Executive Education Program on Public Policy and Leadership, and finished the program in December 2008.

After his studies, he worked in a number of institutions, mostly in the private sector or in NGOs. For his work in the government, he served as the Chairperson of the National Youth Commission (NYC), which is the government's primary policy-making body for the Filipino youth. In the private sector, he served as Host of Breakfast, a youth-oriented morning talk show in Studio 23, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Network from April 2001 to July 2006. He also served as Host of Yspeak, a youth-oriented debate program on national television at the same TV network, the ABS-CBN Broadcasting Network, from July 2006 to February 2007.

From March 2006 to February 2013, Paolo Benigno Aquino IV worked as President of TAYO Foundation. This foundation conducts and implements the annual search for the most outstanding youth organization in the country. He likewise served as the Editor of Young Southeast Asia, which was the ASEAN 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book that focused on young achievers in the region which was published in December 2007. From June 2007 up to April 2012, he served as President of MicroVentures, Inc. After he served as President of the company, he then headed its social arm by serving as the President of the MicroVentures Foundation.

Paolo Benigno Aquino IV although born in Manila of the National Capital Region (NCR), his origins can also be traced to Tarlac Province in Region 3 or the Central Luzon Region, where his relatives established their political clout. It will be recalled for instance that, his paternal grandfather, Benigno Aquino Sr., served as the Representative of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Tarlac in 1919, and was re-elected to the same position in 1922 and 1925. His cousin, Benigno Aquino III, also

served as the Representative of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Tarlac, before becoming the 15<sup>th</sup> President of the Philippines on 30 June 2010, replacing Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The NCR where Quezon City is geographically located and is the place of residence of Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, is home to about 223,100 FLEs or OFWs which represents 9.7% (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the national total. This number alone can surely tilt the balance in his favor, assuming that a great number of these FLEs or OFWs will deliver their votes for Aquino IV, their fellow NCR resident. This is not to take into consideration yet, the number of FLEs or OFWs at 382,900 or 14.3 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the national total, coming from Region 3, or the Central Luzon Region, where Paolo Benigno Aquino IV can also trace his origin. The FLEs or OFWs coming from these two regions did not however vote favorably for Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, as he only got 4,808 votes (*see Table 19*) from the FLEs or OFWs in his re-election bid to the Senate, during the 13 May 2019 Elections. Plotting this against the combined number of FLEs or OFWs coming from NCR and Central Luzon at 606,000, this number of votes he got from the FLEs or OFWs is very, very low. It can be said that in Paolo Benigno Aquino III's case, there is no correlation between the commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, and the number of votes the latter got from the former.

### 2.1.3. Nancy Binay

Nancy Binay was born on 12 May 1973 to couple Jejomar Binay, Sr. and Elenita Binay. Her father was a former Mayor of Makati City from 1986 to 2010, and Vice President from 2010 to 2016. Her mother, Elenita, a physician by profession, also served as Mayor of Makati City from 1998 to 2001. The incumbent mayor of Makati City, Abegail Binay, is her sister while her brother Jejomar Binay, Jr. also served as Makati City Mayor from 2010 to 2015. Among the Binays, only Nancy, Anne and Joanna, did not serve yet as Mayor of Makati City. The Binay family is therefore well-known and active in local politics, especially in Makati City, that can be considered as their bailiwick.

Nancy Binay obtained both her elementary and secondary education from St. Scholastica's College in Manila. After graduation there, she pursued her Bachelor of Tourism degree at the University of the Philippines Diliman, where she graduated in 1997.

The husband of Nancy Binay, Jose Benjamen Angeles is a graduate of a business management course which he obtained from Pace University in New York City, United States of America. Jose Benjamen is a businessman dealing in construction and real estate sales and development. Nancy and Jose Benjamen are blessed with four children and the family resides in Barangay San Antonio, Makati City.

One of the advocacies of Nancy Binay concerns with programs for abandoned infants and children, underprivileged youths and unwed mothers. With this, she serves as one of the members of the Board of Trustees of Brighthalls Children Foundation, which mission is to offer temporary shelter for abandoned infants and children. The end goal of the Foundation is to give access to quality education to underprivileged youths. She also serves as the Executive Director of the Bigay Pagmamahal Foundation. Nancy Binay is also involved with the Serbisyong Tunay Foundation, which provides a host of services like free personal account insurance, medical treatment and burial assistance, to all Makati City residents.

While her mother was the Makati City Mayor, Nancy Binay served as her personal assistant. This gave her an important experience dealing with people from all walks of life, especially those from the City of Makati. Also, when her father was the Vice President and Chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), which is the highest government agency for housing (Calonzo, 2010), Nancy Binay served as personal assistant of his father in the day-to-day operations of the Office of the Vice President then. Her main function was to liaise between the Office of the Vice President and the HUDCC, of which both agencies were under the administrative supervision of her father.

During the 13 May 2013 Senatorial elections, Nancy Binay filed as a Senatorial candidate which she won, despite the fact that she did not have any prior formal experience of holding either an elective or appointive position in government.

Makati is one of the cities comprising the NCR of which 223,100 FLEs or OFWs originate from. This number is 9.7 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the FLE or OFW national total. Taking this number into account, Nancy Binay could have handily obtained a sizeable vote share from the FLE or OFW sector, even just those originating from the NCR. However, Nancy Binay just got 3,113 votes (*see Table 19*) from the FLEs or OFWs, the lowest number of votes from this sector among the seven of the first batch of Senators evaluated in this dissertation. Again, in Nancy Binay's case, it can be said that there is no correlation between the



commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, and the number of votes the latter got from the former.

#### 2.1.4. Joseph Victor Ejercito

Being the son of a former President, Joseph Victor Ejercito like many other Filipino politicians, had the advantage of easy name recall during elections. He is the son of former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada and Guia Gomez, a businesswoman and who also became Mayor of San Juan, Metro Manila for three consecutive terms from 2010 to 2019. The City of San Juan is geographically located within the NCR.

Joseph Victor Ejercito was born on 26 December 1969. He obtained both his elementary and secondary education from the Xavier School. In 1991, he obtained his baccalaureate degree in Political Science from the De La Salle University in Manila.

He first entered politics in 2001 when he was elected as the Mayor of San Juan. Joseph Victor served in this capacity from 2001 to 2010 or for three consecutive terms. After his third term as Mayor of San Juan, he ran unopposed as the Representative of the Lone District of San Juan.

In 2007, he was awarded the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award for Public Service and Governance, in his capacity as the Mayor of San Juan.

He is a Commissioned Reserved Officer of the Philippine Marine Corps with the rank of Major. He is also an adopted member of the '88 Maringal Class of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). The PMA is the premier military academy in the country for Filipinos aspiring to become officers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Joseph Victor Ejercito is a motorcycle enthusiast. For this, he is an advocate of the Philippine Motorcycle Tourism (PMT) program. During his free time, he plays golf and go on cycling.

He is married to Hyacinth Lotuaco with whom he has two male children – Julio Jose and Jose Emilio.

The City of San Juan is geographically located within the NCR, and is home to about 223,100 FLEs or OFWs or 9.7 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the national total. If the number of FLE or OFW votes have to be interpreted in the context of the commonality of the places of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and Joseph Victor Ejercito, and further assuming that

the former will vote for the latter, then obviously, a good number of FLEs or OFWs from the NCR where Joseph Victor Ejercito hails from, did not vote for him. He got a relatively low number of votes coming from the FLEs or OFWs at only 5,516 (*see Table 19*), when he ran for re-election to the Senate during the 13 May 2019 elections. In Joseph Victor Ejercito's case, there is no correlation between the commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, and the number of votes the latter got from the former.

#### 2.1.5. Aquilino Martin Pimentel III

The son of Aquilino Pimentel, Jr, and Lourdes Dela Llana Pimentel, Aquilino Martin Pimentel III was born on 20 January 1964, in Cagayan de Oro City in the island of Mindanao in southern Philippines.

He took up his kindergarten and elementary education at the Ateneo de Cagayan from 1969 to 1977 and his high school education at the Ateneo de Manila University High School from 1977 to 1981. For his college education, he finished a Bachelor of Science degree, Major in Mathematics at the Ateneo de Manila University and graduated in 1985. While at the university, he was a member of the Ateneo Chess Team. After graduating from the Ateneo, he pursued a Bachelor of Laws degree at the U.P. College of Law where he graduated in 1990. While pursuing Law at U.P., he was also a member of its Chess Team. In May 2012, he was conferred a Doctor of Humanities honorary degree by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and in June 2017, he was as well conferred a Doctor of Laws honorary degree by the University of the Philippines.

Aquilino Martin Pimentel III topped the Bar Examination, with a score of 89.85% and he was admitted to the Bar in 1991

As a law practitioner, he served as an Associate Attorney in a number of law firms, and some of these firms, he himself and his father helped establish. For one, he served as an Associate Attorney at the Aquilino G. Pimentel, Jr. and Associates Law Office from 1992 to 1998, the Pimentel Yusingco Pimentel Garcia Law Offices from 1998 to July 2002 and at the Pimentel Pacuribot Law Offices from July 2002 to 31 December 2004. He also worked with the National Youth Commission as a Commissioner representing Mindanao from 1995 to 1998.

In 1998, he served as the Legal Counsel of the Junior Chamber International (JCI) World Congress which was held in Manila. And from 1992 to 2004, he served as the General Legal Counsel of the Junior Chamber of the Philippines (JCP), and it is in this capacity when he wrote

the JCP Constitution. From 1995 up to the present, he has been a member of the Rotary Club of Manila and served as its President from 2005–2006.

As a lawmaker, Aquilino Martin Pimentel III visited a number of countries and observed how their lawmaking chambers work. On 19-23 April 2017, he made a parliamentary visit to Tokyo, Japan upon the invitation of the House of Councilors of that country. And on 20-25 October 2017, he also took a parliamentary visit to the United Kingdom (U.K.). Before this U.K. parliamentary visit, he first attended the 137<sup>th</sup> Interparliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg, Russia from 14-18 October 2017.

As a manifestation of his concern for the FLEs of OFWs, Aquilino Martin Pimentel III served as a Co-Anchor in one of the radio programs of DZXL 558, called Bantay OFW (Protect OFW) from April 2011 up to August 2011.

Cagayan de Oro City, the place of origin of Aquilino Martin Pimentel III is located in Region 10, or the Northern Mindanao Region. This region is home to 80,500 FLEs or OFWs and represents 3.5 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the FLE or OFW national total. Although the number of FLEs or OFWs originating from Region 10 or the Northern Mindanao Region is relatively small if the number of FLEs or OFWs in the different regions in the country is ranked from the highest to the lowest, this number could be high if all of them will singularly vote for a certain Senatorial candidate. Obviously however, many of them did not vote for Aquilino Martin Pimentel III, during his re-election bid in the 13 May 2019 Senatorial Elections, although he also hails from that region, as he only got 8,298 votes (*see Table 19*) from the FLEs or OFWs. This number of votes is relatively low taking into account the number of FLEs or OFWs originating from the Northern Mindanao Region, as this is only 13% of that number. In Aquilino Martin Pimentel III's case, there is no correlation between the commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, and the number of votes the latter got from the former.

#### 2.1.6. Grace Poe

Grace Poe is the adoptive daughter of National Artist Fernando Poe, Jr. and veteran actress Susan Roces, who are now both deceased. Her full name is Mary Grace Natividad Sonora Poe-Llamanzares. It is said that she was born on 3 September 1968 as this was also the day when she was found by a woman near the holy water font of Jaro Metropolitan Cathedral. As a foundling, Grace Poe was taken in by a woman named Sayong Militar, who later passed the girl to her friend

Tessie Ledesma Valencia, an unmarried and childless lady. Tessie Ledesma Valencia was an heiress of a sugar baron from Bacolod, Negros Occidental, in central Philippines.

Grace Poe has two half-siblings, believed sired by her father. One is actor Ronnian Poe, born to actress Anna Marin and the other is actress Lovi Poe, born to model Rowena Moran.

Just like any other child, Grace Poe also started school at a young age. In 1975, at age seven, she started taking her elementary education at the St. Paul College of Pasig. Seven years later in 1982, She transferred to Assumption College San Lorenzo, Makati City for her high school education. While in high school, she was a debater and consequently, a member of the school's debating team. After graduation from high school, she enrolled at U.P. Manila where she majored in development studies. As a freshman in U.P., she served as the Chairperson of the U.P. Manila College Freshman Assembly. For some reasons, she did not finish her studies at U.P., but afterwards, she transferred to Boston College, Massachusetts, U.S.A. where she graduated with a degree in Political Science.

On 27 July 1991, Grace Poe and Teodoro Miguel Daniel Vera Llamanzares tied the knot. Her husband is a natural-born Filipino who held American citizenship since birth. Their marriage is blessed with three children, Brian is the eldest, followed by the second child, Hanna, and the youngest child is Anika. From then on, she spent her life in Fairfax, Virginia, U.S.A., together with her family. While in the U.S.A., Grace Poe taught at the Montessori School of Cedar Lake, for about three years. After sometime, she left her teaching job and worked as a procurement liaison with the United States Geological Survey in 1998.

Having stayed in the U.S.A. for most of her adult life, she acquired U.S. citizenship by naturalization on 18 October 2001. After about nine years from obtaining her U.S. citizenship in October 2010, she renounced that citizenship, after reacquiring her Philippine citizenship. Like her husband Teodoro Miguel, Grace Poe is considered a natural-born Filipino citizen.

During the year 2003, Fernando Poe, Jr., Grace Poe's father decided to run for president against the incumbent president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Sometime during that period, Grace Poe came to the Philippines to help in the election campaign of her father. Despite their efforts, her father lost to the incumbent, with allegations of election fraud and irregularities. After the election later that year, Fernando Poe, Jr. suffered a stroke, and for that, he was rushed to the hospital. Because of this, Grace Poe came back to the Philippines again, just shortly after the death of her father on 14 December 2004. As she wanted to be with her mother Susan Roces, at that time

already widowed, Grace Poe and her family decided to come back to the Philippines for good on 8 April 2005.

After her return to the Philippines in 2005, Grace Poe involved herself in redeeming the unjust fate, her father went through because of alleged cheating and other election irregularities. For this, she served as the Convenor of *Kontra Daya* (Against Cheating), a Philippine election watchdog, which members include teachers, the clergy and some technology experts. She likewise became the Honorary Chairperson of the FPJ for President Movement (FPJPM). This is the same group which pressured her father to run for president during the 2003 Presidential Election.

On 10 October 2010, Grace Poe was appointed by then President Benigno Aquino as Chairperson of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB). After about a year at the MTRCB, she was re-appointed by Aquino III for another term on 23 October 2011. During her stint at the MTRCB, Grace Poe implemented new rating system for television programs, which she said, was designed to empower parents to exercise caution and vigilance with the viewing habits of their children (Cruz, 2011).

After serving at the MTRCB, Grace Poe ran for Senator during the 13 May 2013 Elections. Despite having no prior elective position held, she topped the election among the Senatorial candidates, garnering a total of about 20 million votes.

When Grace Poe returned for good to the Philippines on 8 April 2005, after having stayed in the U.S.A. with her family, for most of her adult life, she settled in the NCR, a place that counts about 223,100 FLE or OFW voters which is 9.7 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the total FLE or OFW voters nationwide. Looking at this number and plotting it against the number of votes she garnered from this sector during her re-election bid in the 13 May 2019 Elections, which was only 8,436 (*see Table 19*) votes, it can be said that the FLEs or OFWs did not vote in full force for Grace Poe. However, the number of votes she got was the second highest number of FLE or OFW votes any Senatorial candidate can garner in that election. This situation still negates the assumption that the Senatorial candidates coming from FLE or OFW-rich regions, will likewise garner relatively high votes from the FLE or OFW sector. In Grace Poe's case therefore, there is no correlation between the commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, and the number of votes the latter got from the former.

### 2.1.7. Cynthia Villar

The daughter of a longtime mayor of Las Piñas in the NCR, where the Aguilars are from, Cynthia Villar, formerly Cynthia Aguilar is perhaps the most FLE or OFW-friendly among the first batch of Senators whose backgrounds are being described in this section. She was born on 29 July 1950 in Muntinlupa, then a municipality of Rizal Province, but is now part of the NCR. Her parents were Felimon Aguilar, her father, who was a long-time mayor of Las Piñas, and congressman as well, and Lydia Ampaya, her mother. She has two siblings, Vergel Aguilar, a brother who also served as mayor of Las Piñas and Elizabeth A. Masangkay, a sister.

Cynthia Villar studied at the Muntinlupa Elementary School where she obtained her elementary education and graduated in 1962. Four years later in 1966, she graduated high school at the Philippine Christian University. After graduation from high school, she pursued her Bachelor of Business Administration degree at the University of the Philippines Diliman, and graduated in 1970. After she finished her undergraduate degree at U.P., she pursued her Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree at New York University in the U.S., where she graduated in 1972. After finishing her studies, Cynthia Villar worked in a host of institutions. For one, she worked as a Financial Analyst at the Phil. Shares Corporation. She also tested her mettle in the academe, when she taught at the Far Eastern University in Manila. Considering her meritorious achievements, the University of the Philippines Alumni Association (UPAA), recognized her as its Most Distinguished Alumna in 2017.

In 1975, Cynthia Villar and Manny Villar, whom she met at U.P., tied the knot. Their marriage is blessed with three children, who are now successful professionals. Paolo, the eldest child is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the publicly-listed Vista Land, a company engaged in real estate development, established by the Villar Family. The second child is Mark, who served as the Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) during the Duterte Administration. The youngest child is Camille, who is currently the Representative of the Lone District of Las Piñas.

As already hinted earlier, among the first batch of Senators whose backgrounds are being looked into in this part of the dissertation, Cynthia Villar is the one who is the most concerned and involved in undertakings concerning the FLEs or the OFWS. To reinforce this claim, in 1992, she established the Villar Foundation which is now called the Villar S.I.P.A.G. Sipag is a Filipino word which means industriousness, a trait the Villars want to portray to the Filipino people, as the

reason of their success. With this, Villar S.I.P.A.G undertakes programs and initiatives which are aimed at improving the life conditions of the people. Among its programs, there is the assistance to FLEs or OFWs including the yearly OFW and Family Summit. The last or most recent OFW and Family Summit was held on 10 November 2023 at The Tent, Vista Global South, C5 Road, Las Piñas City in the NCR. During the summit, a number of programs tailor-made to assist and empower FLEs or OFWs were held, like financial literacy and group sessions and discussions aimed at empowering FLEs or OFWs. During the sessions and discussions, FLEs or OFWs and members of their families, are taught how to wisely invest their hard-earned money. They are as well informed and given tips on how to avoid falling victims to human trafficking and online scams.

Spouses, children, parents and siblings of FLEs or OFWs may attend the OFW and Family Summit if they could present proof of their relations to an FLE or OFW. Registered participants to the summit may win raffle prizes like house and lot, in the Camella subdivisions of the Villars, motorcycle and Kabuhayan showcases from AllDay Home, a company owned and controlled by the Villars. These Kabuhayan showcases usually contain merchandise that FLEs or OFWs and members of their families, can utilize to start a business.

The case of Cynthia Villar in terms of her advocacy for the welfare of the FLE or OFW sector, outside her official legislative functions in Congress, is a reinforcement of the results of the problem that this dissertation wishes to find out, and that is the correlation of the electoral support in terms of quantity of votes coming from the FLEs or OFWs and the behavior of legislators in terms of the quantity of the legislations passed for the benefit of the FLEs or OFWs. Undoubtedly, the things she hears and experiences in the course of her dealings with the FLEs and OFWs during the OFW and Family Summits held regularly, as an important program of the Villar S.I.P.A.G., are used as stepping stones which could be officially integrated into the legislations she will craft so that their organization will be more responsive to the needs of the FLEs or OFWs.

Cynthia Villar hails from the NCR where about 223,100 FLEs or OFWs originate which is 9.7 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019) of the FLE or OFW national total. As can be gleaned from the FLE or OFW support for the other Senators whose backgrounds are described here, it appears that the number of FLEs or OFWs where the Senators originate, does not translate into actual votes for the Senators on account of the commonality of their places of origin. In other words, it does not follow that Senators coming from places or regions where FLEs or OFWs are

highly concentrated likewise garner relatively high votes from the FLEs or OFWs. Looking at the backgrounds of the other six Senators – Juan Edgardo Angara, Paolo Benigno Aguino IV, Nancy Binay, Joseph Victor Ejercito, Aquilino Martin Pimentel III and Grace Poe, in terms of the number of FLEs or OFWs in the different regions of the Philippines will reinforce this claim. Why is it for instance that Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Nancy Binay, Joseph Victor Ejercito and Grace Poe who all come from the same region like Cynthia Villar did not garner the same number of votes that Cynthia Villar garnered from the FLES or OFWs? Here, all these Senators come from the same region – NCR, yet they did not get the same or at least similar number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs that originate from the NCR. Why did Cynthia Villar get the highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs among them who all originate from the NCR? One thing can be pointed out that differentiates Cynthia Villar from the rest of the Senators in the first batch. That thing is her concern for the FLEs or OFWs. Among the seven Senators in the first batch being evaluated, it is Cynthia Villar who is the most active in promoting the welfare and interests of the FLEs or OFWs even outside the ambit of Congress. It can therefore be said that FLEs or OFWs vote for Senators based on their track record in helping them, and not simply because of the commonality of their places of origin.

Again, in the case of the first batch of Senators being evaluated in terms of their backgrounds, there is no correlation between the number of FLEs or OFWs in the regions and the number of votes of the Senators that originate from those regions. In simple terms, it does not follow that Senators coming from regions with high concentration of FLEs or OFWs will also garner high votes from the FLE or OFW sector in those regions.

## **2.2. Second batch of Senators and their backgrounds**

### **2.2.1. Leila De Lima**

Leila Norma Eulalia Josefa Magistrado De Lima is the full name of Leila De Lima. She was born on 27 August 1959 in Iriga City, Camarines Sur, which is geographically located in Region 5 or the Bicol Region, at the southern part of the main Philippine Island of Luzon. Leila De Lima finished her elementary education at La Consolacion Academy in Iriga City where she graduated at the top her class, being its Class Valedictorian. In 1980, she graduated from De La Salle University with a Bachelor of Arts degree major in History and Political Science. After this,



she studied and finished her Bachelor of Laws degree at the San Beda College of Law in 1985. Immediately after graduation from law school in 1985, she took the Bar Examination and placed 8<sup>th</sup> with a rating of 86.26 percent.

Leila De Lima is the eldest daughter of Vicente De Lima, a former Commissioner of the COMELEC and Norma Magistrado. She was married to Plaridel Bohol, her classmate at the San Beda College of Law with whom she had three children, Vincent Joshua, Israel and Jiro. Their marriage however was later annulled. One of Leila De Lima's aunts, Julie De Lima married Jose Maria Sison, the founder of the CPP, making him his uncle by marriage. Another aunt, Lilia De Lima, served as the Director General of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) starting in 1995 when she was appointed to the post by former President Fidel V. Ramos.

After graduating from law school, Leila De Lima worked as a Staff Member of Supreme Court Associate Justice Isagani Cruz from 1986 to 1989. After this, starting in 1990, she practiced as a private lawyer specializing in election law. From 1993 to 1995, she worked as the Secretary of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal. She also taught law at the San Beda College of Law from 2006 to 2007. Leila De Lima is considered as a human rights lawyer.

Leila De Lima served as the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) from 2008 to 2010 during the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Administration. Her term as CHR Chairperson during that time was marked by high profile cases such as the Davao Death Squad (DDS) involving then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte. In 2010, then President Benigno Aquino III invited her to be a member of his Cabinet as Justice Secretary, which invitation she accepted. She served in that capacity from 2010 up to 2016. Her stint as Justice Secretary also saw a number of high-profile cases such as the Manila Hostage Crisis when eight Hong Kong nationals were killed in a gun battle at the Rizal Park in Manila. This hostage crisis started when Police Officer Rolando Mendoza hijacked a bus carrying about 25 tourists and held them hostages. This situation forced the local police to respond and engage in a gun fight with Mendoza, which caused the death of the Hong Kong nationals who were among the tourists, caught in the crossfire.

In 2016, Leila De Lima ran as Senator and won by garnering more than 14 million votes making her land in the 12<sup>th</sup> position among several candidates. Also in that election, Rodrigo Duterte won as President. Here, it has to be recalled that when Leila De Lima was the Chairperson of the CHR from 2008 to 2010, she investigated cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the DDS which involved then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

Now as the President of the country, Duterte alleged on 17 August 2016 that Leila De Lima was having an affair with her driver Ronnie Dayan, whom Duterte also alleged as De Lima's collector of drug protection money when she was Justice Secretary from 2010 to 2016. This led to the filing of drug-related charges against Leila De Lima by the Duterte Administration on 17 February 2017. After about a week, an arrest warrant was issued against De Lima on 23 February 2017 for allegedly violating the drug trafficking law. The following day, 24 February 2017, Leila De Lima turned herself in to the authorities. The cases filed against De Lima had been broadcasted widely in the Philippines and many Filipinos heard about the cases filed against her. During the later course of her trial however, witnesses recanted their testimonies against Leila De Lima one after another. On 13 November 2023, after about six years in detention, the Muntinlupa Metropolitan Trial Court granted De Lima's petition for bail after paying a bond of Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000.00). After her release on bail, she spent a night in Quezon City. The following day, she went on a pilgrimage to the Our Lady of Manaoag Church in Pangasinan. On 15 November 2023, she reunited with her family in Iriga City, her hometown, where her bed-ridden mother is currently staying.

While in detention, Leila De Lima discharged her duties as a Senator. Even though she was in detention, she filed a number of legislative measures for the benefit of the FLEs or OFWs.

Iriga City in Camarines Sur is located in Region 5, or the Bicol Region. This region is home to 70,560 FLEs or OFWs which represents 3.6 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023) of the national FLE or OFW total. During the re-election bid of Senator Leila De Lima in the 9 May 2022 Elections, she only got 7,014 votes which is very low if plotted against the number of FLEs or OFWs originating from Region 5 or the Bicol Region where Leila De Lima also hails from. Here it can be deduced that the FLEs or OFWs from Region 5 or the Bicol Region, did not vote in full force for Leila De Lima, whom they share a common place of origin with. In Leila De Lima's case, it can be said that there is no correlation between the commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, and the number of votes the latter got from the former.

### 2.2.2. Sherwin Gatchalian

Sherwin Gatchalian was born on 6 August 1974 to William Gatchalian, his father who is a businessman and Dee Hua Ting, his mother, who served as the Director of Waterfront Philippines,

until the year 2000 when she was replaced by Elvira Ting. He has three brothers namely Kenneth, Rex and Wes, and he is the eldest of the four siblings. Sherwin Gatchalian completed his elementary and high school education at Grace Christian Academy in Quezon City in the 1980s. After graduating from high school, he went to the United States and studied at Boston University in Massachusetts, where he graduated with a degree in Finance and Operations Management in 1995. During the year 2023, he was awarded two honorary degrees, one was a Doctor of Education, honoris causa, by the Philippine Normal University and the other, a Doctor of Laws, honoris causa as well by the Bulacan State University.

Sherwin Gatchalian started his political career as the Representative of the First District of Valenzuela from 2001 to 2004. After serving one term in the House of Representatives, he ran as Mayor of Valenzuela City and served in that capacity for three consecutive terms of three years each, or a total of nine years, from 2004 to 2013. When his third term as Mayor of Valenzuela ended, as he cannot anymore run for another term because of term limit prohibitions, he again ran for Representative of the First District of Valenzuela City and won. So, he served in that capacity again from 2013 to 2016.

During the 9 May 2016 Elections, Sherwin Gatchalian ran as Senator and won in that election. When his term in the Senate ended after one term, he ran for re-election during the 9 May 2022 Elections and was re-elected for a second term as Senator.

Valenzuela City where Sherwin Gatchalian originates is a highly-urbanized city and part of the NCR or the National Capital Region. This region is home to 213,640 FLEs or OFWs which is 10.9 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023) of the FLE or OFW national total. When Gatchalian ran for re-election during the 9 May 2022 Elections, he only got 11,460 votes from the FLEs or OFWs which can be considered low if plotted against the number of FLEs or OFWs even just those originating from the NCR at 213,640. This election result points to the fact that many FLEs or OFWs from the NCR did not vote for Sherwin Gatchalian, despite the fact that he shares a common place of origin with them. It can be said that in Sherwin Gatchalian's case, there is no correlation between the commonality of the place of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate, and the number of votes the latter got from the former.

### 2.2.3. Richard Gordon

A prominent politician from Olongapo City, Zambales Province, Richard Gordon was born on 5 August 1945 to parents James L. Gordon and Amelia Gordon. His father was the first elected Mayor of Olongapo City who served in that capacity from 1963 until 1967 when his term was cut short because he was assassinated. Upon his death, Amelia succeeded him as Mayor of Olongapo until 1973. Gordon is married to Katherine Gordon, who served as Congresswoman of the First District of Zambales from 1988 to 1995, and together they have five children.

In 1958, Richard Gordon completed his elementary education at Lourdes Catholic School in Quezon City and Colegio de San Juna de Letran in Manila. After graduating from elementary school, he enrolled at the Ateneo de Manila High School and graduated in 1962. For his university studies, he stayed in Ateneo and pursued his Bachelor of Arts, Major in History and Government degree and graduated in 1966. In 1975, he completed his Bachelor of Laws degree at the U.P. College of Law. While studying in U.P., he became a member of the Upsilon Sigma Phi Fraternity and he was at one time also elected as Councilor of the U.P. Diliman University Student Council.

Richard Gordon held both elective and appointive posts in government. In 1971 Gordon was a Delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, and he was the youngest among the delegates. Then he served two consecutive terms as Mayor of Olongapo City or a total of six years from 1980 to 1986. In 1992, he again ran as candidate for Mayor of Olongapo City and he won. During the same year, he was also appointed by former President Fidel Ramos as the Chairman of the of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). However, under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, elected officials are prohibited from holding appointive positions in public office. In this connection, the Supreme Court of the Philippines ruled that Ricard Gordon must choose which position he must keep. Gordon chose to keep his position as Chairman of the SBMA and vacating his elective post as Olongapo City Mayor, thus becoming the first Chairman of the SBMA. During his stint as Chairman of the SBMA, he was able to transform Subic into a world class investment destination. Because of Gordon's leadership, many companies chose Subic as the center of their operations. FedEx for instance established their Asian regional hub in Subic. In the following years after Gordon's assumption as Chairman of the SBMA, Subic experienced remarkable economic transformation. At one time, more than 200 companies have invested \$1.6 billion, where Japanese and Taiwanese industrial parks manufacture a variety of products from computer motherboards to

armored personnel carriers, by which their total exports reached \$63 million during the first 10 months of 1996 (Mydans, 1996).

In January 2001, Gordon actively participated in the Second EDSA Revolution which resulted to the overthrow of Joseph Estrada from the presidency. Estrada's predecessor, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, appointed him as Secretary of Tourism, on 24 January 2001. In his capacity as Tourism Secretary, he was elected Commissioner of East Asia and the Pacific at the World Tourism Organization in 2002. The following year, he was as well elected as Chairman of the Asia Pacific Travel Association.

On 1 December 2009, Ricard Gordon and Bayani Fernando, former Mayor of Marikina City and Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman, announced their intention to run for President and Vice President, respectively during the 2010 Presidential Elections. They filed their Certificate of Candidacy during the afternoon on that same day. Unfortunately, the tandem did not succeed, and they failed to clinch the posts.

In recognition of his sterling work as a public servant, Gordon was bestowed a number of awards both local and international. For one, he clinched the TOYM Award. At one time he was also bestowed The Outstanding Filipinos (TOFIL) Award. As an alumnus of U.P., he was awarded the University of the Philippines Most Outstanding Alumnus in Public Service and the Most Outstanding Alumnus award, which is reputed as the highest award that is given out by the U.P. Law Alumni Association. In 2015, he was awarded the Lifetime National Volunteer Achievement Award by the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency, and he was the sole recipient of the award during that year. He likewise received the three highest awards from the Red Cross, one is the Aurora Aragon Quezon Medal, the Silver Humanitarian Service Cross Award and the Golden Humanitarian Cross Award. Some foreign awarding bodies also bestowed awards on Richard Gordon. The Japanese Red Cross awarded him the Red Cross Golden Humanitarian Award. Aisaweek on the other hand, awarded him the 20 Great Asians of the Future, while the Japanese newspaper, Asahi Shimbun bestowed on him its Young Leaders of Asia Award.

Olongapo City where Richard Gordon originates is a highly urbanized city in Region 3 or the Central Luzon Region. This place is home to 260,680 FLEs or OFWs. This number represents 13.3 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023) of the FLE or OFW national total. During the 9 May 2022 Senatorial Elections when Richard Gordon filed for re-election, he only got 8,574 votes from the FLEs or OFWs. This number of votes is low if plotted against the number of FLEs

or OFWs in Region 3 of the Central Luzon Region. It can therefore be argued that the FLEs or OFWs in Region 3 or the Central Luzon Region, did not vote in full force for Richard Gordon, although the Senator shares a common place of origin with them. So, the commonality of the place of origin between the voters, in this particular case, the FLEs or the OFWs and the candidate in his case the Senator, has no correlation.

#### 2.2.4. Risa Hontiveros

The daughter of a lawyer father and a business executive mother, Risa Hontiveros was born on 24 February 1966 in Manila. When she was still young her family moved from Manila to Merville Park, Parañaque which is still part of the NCR.

Risa Hontiveros finished her elementary education in 1979 at St. Scholastica College Manila. After finishing her elementary education, she pursued her secondary education at the same school. After she graduated high school, Risa Hontiveros studied at the Ateneo de Manila University where she graduated *cum laude* with the degree, Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences. While in Ateneo, she was active in the Student Council where she participated in advocacies for peace and justice. Prior to entering politics, she worked as a television journalist and news anchor. As a dedicated worker and peace advocate, she earned several awards. In 1994, she received the Golden Dove Award for Best Female Newscaster. At one time, the TOYM Award was also bestowed on her for her peace advocacy. She was also recognized by the Philippine Jaycees because of her service being a member of the Government Panel for Peace Talks. In 2005, Risa Hontiveros, together with 27 Filipina women, was nominated to be a recipient of the Nobel Prize, for her advocacy about the rights of the workers.

Risa Hontiveros started her political career by involving herself with groups she shared similar convictions, especially in uplifting the marginalized sectors of society. During the 2004 National Elections, she was the third nominee of the Akbayan Party-list group, the other two nominees being Etta Rosales who later became the Chairperson of the CHR and Mayong Aguja who became Board Director of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS). Risa Hontiveros, had been very vocal in promoting equality, justice and human rights especially among the ranks of the marginalized.

While she was already a Party-list Representative for Akbayan, she spoke openly in the halls of Congress about the Hello Garci Scandal, wherein then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

allegedly cheated her way to the presidency by talking to COMELEC Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in order to rig the 2004 election results. Her activism caused her some brief imprisonment. On 8 March 2006 for instance, she was arrested while leading a lightning rally to call for the ouster of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo during the occasion of International Women's Day, and was brought to Camp Caringal in Quezon City without an arrest warrant (Andraneda et. al., 2006). Hontiveros speaks her mind and does not hide anger or displeasure. She has carried on her progressive party's brand of toughness (Magsambol, 2023). The Akbayan Party-list which counts Risa Hontiveros as one of its members is an activist organization and "proud of it" and that "vehemently condemns torture, assassinations and other violent acts that undermine human rights and freedoms regardless if whoever commits it" (Refugee Review Tribunal Australia, 2007). It has affiliate groups representing workers, government employees, women workers, peasants, migrant workers, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community (Remollino, 2007).

In October 1990, Risa Hontiveros and Francisco Baraquel, a police officer and Captain in the Philippine Constabulary, tied the knot. Their marriage produced four children – Kiko, the eldest son is a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Legal Management from the Ateneo de Manila University, Issa, finished the degree, Bachelor of Arts and Media Studies, Ianna finished Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and the youngest Sinta is currently a student taking up Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center (UERMMMMC). Her husband died in 2005 of heart attack due to severe asthma.

Risa Hontiveros hails from the NCR that is home to 213,640 FLEs or OFWs which is 10.9 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023) of the FLE or OFW national total. During her re-election bid in the 9 May 2022 National Elections, she only got 10,540 votes from the FLEs or OFWs which is low if plotted against the number of FLEs or OFWs who originate from the NCR. This points to the fact that the commonality of the place of origin of Risa Hontiveros and the FLEs or OFWs which is the NCR, cannot be said as a factor that influenced the later to vote for the former, during the 9 May 2022 National Elections.

#### 2.2.5. Joel Villanueva

Born on 2 August 1975, in Bocaue, Bulacan Province, Joel Villanueva is the son of Evangelist and politician Brod. Eddie Villanueva and Adoracion Jose-Villanueva. His father, Brod

Eddie Villanueva is the founder of Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide. The full name of Joel Villanueva is Emmanuel Joel Jose Villanueva. He is married to Gladys Cruz-Villanueva and their marriage is blessed with two children – Jaden Villanueva and Gwyn Villanueva.

In 1996 Joel Villanueva graduated from the University of Santo Tomas (U.S.T.) in Manila with the degree Bachelor of Science in Commerce major in Economics. After graduating from U.S.T., he studied at Harvard University in the United States and two years later in 1998, he graduated with the degree, Master in Business Administration.

Like many Filipinos, Joel Villanueva is a basketball enthusiast, and rightly so, he plays the game quite well. While still young, his interest and passion for basketball can already be mirrored in him. In 1992, he represented the NCR that topped the Palarong Pambansa basketball event, and in 1994, he also played for the Philippines team during the Southeast Asian Basketball Association and the PH Youth Team in the Asian Basketball Championship. He was as well a part of the UST Tigers that won back-to-back titles during the University Athletic Association of the Philippines in 1994 and 1995 (Caluag, 2015).

Joel Villanueva's political career started when he became Representative of CIBAC Party-list from 2002-2010. At that time, he was the youngest member of the House of Representatives when he assumed office at age 26. After his stint in the House of Representatives, he was appointed as the Director General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) by then President Benigno Aquino III. It was during his stint at TESDA when he came to prominence as he overhauled the agency, and made it a viable option for the Filipinos, especially the youth, to gain practical education and training, that boost their qualifications when they apply for work both locally and overseas. For this, he earned the monicker, "TesdaMan". He toyed on this name in 2016 when he ran as Senatorial candidate in 2016 and won.

Bocaue, Bulacan where Joel Villanueva hails from is part of Region 3 or the Central Luzon Region. This place is home to 260,680 FLEs or OFWs which is 13.3% (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023) of the FLE or OFW national total. When Joel Villanueva ran for re-election during the 9 May 2022 Elections, he only got 9,277 votes from the FLEs or OFWs. This actual number of votes can be considered low if plotted against the number of FLEs or OFWs coming from Region 3 or the Central Luzon Region where Joel Villanueva also originates. With this election result, it can be said that the FLEs or OFWs where Joel Villanueva originates, did not vote in full force for him during his Senatorial re-election bid in 2022. Again, in the case of Joel



Villanueva, it can be argued that there is no correlation between the commonality of the places of origin of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidate and the number of votes the Senatorial candidate will get from the FLEs or OFWs. Here, the assumption that Senatorial candidates coming from places or regions where there are great number of FLEs or OFWs will get more votes from the FLEs or OFWs is not validated.

#### 2.2.6. Miguel Zubiri

A resident of Malaybalay City, Bukidnon Province in Mindanao, Miguel Zubiri was born in Makati City in the NCR on 13 April 1969. His father, Jose Maria Rubin Zubiri is from Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental Province and his mother Maria Victoria Ocampo Fernandez is from Libon, Albay Province. He is married to Audrey Tan, a commercial model and they tied the knot during the third week of December 2005 (Lo, 2005). Their marriage is blessed with three children – Adriana, Juanmi and Santi.

Miguel Zubiri finished his elementary and high school education at the Colegio de San Agustin Makati. After graduating from high school, he pursued his college education and graduated with the degree Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness Management from the University of the Philippines Los Banos in 1990. After this, he then obtained a Master of Environment and National Resources Management degree from the University of the Philippines Open University. Because of his achievements in public service, the Presidential Award was conferred on him by the University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association (UPLBAA). With this, Senator Juan Edgardo Angara filed Senate Resolution No. 194, in order to give honor and recognition to his colleague, Miguel Zubiri for such a sterling and meritorious feat.

As a Senator, Miguel Zubiri is an Arnis enthusiast. His passion for this sport commenced when he was still young at 16 years old. Through practice and constant engagement with fellow Arnis enthusiasts, he perfected the sport. In fact, he can be considered a world-class Arnis practitioner for in 1989, he won Gold Medal at the First Arnis World Championships by beating his American opponent Jeff Finder (Mangubat, 2020). With his love for Arnis, Miguel Zubiri is the current Chairman of the Philippine Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (PEKAF) which is the governing body for Arnis as sports in the Philippines. PEKAF is a member of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) and the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF).

After Miguel Zubiri finished his studies at U.P.L.B., he served as the Chief of Staff of his father who was then the Representative of the Third District of Bukidnon from 1995 to 1998. As his father was then finishing his third and final term as Representative, and therefore cannot run and contest for that same position anymore, Miguel Zubiri ran for that seat to be vacated by his father, and he handily won in that 1998 Congressional Elections. He remained as the Representative of the Third District of Bukidnon for three consecutive terms, until 2004, for a total of nine years. After serving for three consecutive terms or a total of nine years as Representative of the Third District of Bukidnon, Miguel Zubiri decided and ran for Senator during the 14 May 2007 Elections. In that election, 12 Senators have to be elected and Miguel Zubiri narrowly clinched the 12<sup>th</sup> slot beating his closest rival Aquilino Martin Pimentel III, for the 12<sup>th</sup> and last slot.

Malaybalay City in Bukidnon Province is geographically located within Region 10 or the Northern Mindanao Region. This region is home to 62,720 FLEs or OFWs or 3.2 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023) of the FLE or OFW national total. During the 9 May 2022 Elections when Miguel Zubiri ran for re-election, he got 15,083 votes from the FLEs or OFWs. Plotting this number of votes to the total number of FLEs or OFWs who call Region 10 or Northern Mindanao their home region, it can be said that there were many FLEs or OFWs who did not vote for Miguel Zubiri, their fellow resident from Region 10 or the Northern Mindanao Region. Those who voted for him is only 24 percent of the total number of FLEs or OFWs from Region 10 or the Northern Mindanao Region, and those who did not vote for him constitutes 76 percent or slightly more than three-fourths of the total FLEs or OFWs from Region 10 or the Northern Mindanao Region. In the particular case of Miguel Zubiri therefore, although he got the highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs among the Senators being evaluated, for the 9 May 2022 National Elections, it can be argued, as in the case of the other Senators, that the commonality of the places of origins of the FLEs or OFWs and the Senatorial candidates cannot be said as a factor that can determine the number of votes a Senatorial candidate could garner from the FLE or the OFW sector.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Filipino labor emigrants as voters**

The overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs have been allowed to exercise their right of suffrage, for the first time during the 10 May 2004 Elections. Since this was the first ever election in the history of the country, when they were allowed to vote, there was a noticeably low number of those who registered to participate in that political exercise. There were only 356,000 overseas Filipinos who registered to vote (Urbanski, 2009), and this number is relatively low if plotted against the total number of overseas Filipinos during that period which stood at 1.06 million (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2005). The low turnout of voter registrants was obviously due to some administrative problems. But as subsequent elections were held, the conduct of such political exercises served as learning platforms if only to carry out a more improved system of doing such undertakings in the future. However, even with the drive to change the system for the better, there are still problems that the COMELEC, and other government agencies mandated to conduct the elections, have to contend with.

#### **1. Legal basis of overseas Filipinos' right of suffrage**

On 13 February 2003, a law allowing FLEs or OFWs to exercise their right of suffrage was approved by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. This law is known by its long title as An Act Providing for a System of Overseas Absentee Voting by Qualified Citizens of the Philippines Abroad, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes. This legislation is also called Republic Act No. 9189 (R. A. No. 9189).

From the point of view of the legislators during the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, which lasted from July 2001 until June 2004, who were instrumental in crafting this piece of legislation, such is their way of paying back to the FLEs or OFWs, for keeping the country's economy running over the last years and now welcome them to participate in making the political processes more meaningful (Clapano and Villanueva, 2003). For some legislators, the FLEs or OFWs like any other Filipino citizen must be accorded the right to vote, wherever they are located. In fact, legislators like Loren Legarda believed that the FLEs or OFWs have long been disenfranchised of their right to vote as pointed out by Clapano and Villanueva (2003), and through Republic Act No. 9189, or the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Act, that right is now bestowed on them.

As defined in Republic Act No. 9189 (2003), absentee voting refers to the process by which qualified citizens of the Philippines abroad exercise their right to vote. For this purpose, the qualifications of prospective voters are spelled out in Section 4 of the Act. As stipulated in this section, the right to vote is extended to all citizens of the Philippines abroad, who are not otherwise disqualified by law, at least 18 years of age on the day of the elections. And they may vote for President, Vice President, Senators and Party-list representatives (Republic Act No. 9189, 2003) only. They cannot vote for district representatives and other local officials. The ballot for the OAV is tailor-made for the purpose, and is different from the ballots used in elections conducted in the Philippines. Because of this, first time overseas absentee voters, who are used to the usual system of voting in the Philippines often get confused, which sometimes result to their ballots to be considered as stray votes, as many do not and cannot follow the tedious and at times not-so-clear voting instructions.

Under Republic Act No. 9189, disqualifications of voters are also specifically provided. Generally, these disqualifications are the same as those who are voting in the Philippines. Disqualified to vote, are those insane, previously declared incompetent, by authorities in the Philippines or abroad and those who were convicted of crimes punishable by imprisonment of not less than one year. Also, overseas Filipinos who are citizens of other countries and those who pledged allegiance to a foreign government are likewise disqualified to vote (Republic Act No. 9189, 2003).

A disqualification provision which caused overseas Filipinos to back out from participating in overseas voting, especially during the first year of the implementation of Republic Act No. 9189, is the one requiring permanent residents or Filipino immigrants to execute an affidavit that they will return to the Philippines not later than three years upon the approval of their voter registration, as stipulated in Section 5, No. 4 of this Act. For obvious reasons, many Filipinos who are permanent residents abroad, especially those in the U.S., have to weigh their options whether to register, vote and go back to the Philippines before three years after registration or do not register, do not vote and continue to live in their countries of permanent residence. The Center for Migrant Advocacy (2011) actually pointed this out, as one of the reasons why there was a low turn-out of overseas absentee voter registrants for the first election on May 10, 2004, concomitant with the implementation of the Overseas Absentee Voting Law, or Republic Act No. 9189. In order to address this problem, Francis Escudero, Koko Pimentel, Ramon Revilla, Jr. and Manny Villar

filed Senate Bill No. 3312 aimed at amending Republic Act No. 9189, during the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines. This bill, became a law as Republic Act No. 10590 otherwise known as An Act Amending R.A. No. 9189 Otherwise Known as the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2013, and was approved by Benigno Aquino III on May 27, 2013. One of the salient amendatory provisions of Republic Act No. 10590 which directly concerns overseas Filipinos is Section 3 which amends Section 4 of Republic Act No. 9189, by including national referenda and plebiscites as additional political exercises in which overseas Filipinos can participate. Another very important amendatory provision of Republic Act No. 10590 is Section 4 which amends Section 5 of Republic Act No. 9189 by striking out altogether No. 4, of this particular Section, which requires permanent residents and immigrants to execute an affidavit that they will return to the Philippines within three years after they register as an overseas absentee voter (Republic Act No. 9189, 2003).

With the approval of Republic Act No. 10590 signed by Benigno Aquino on 27 May 2013, amending Republic Act No. 9189 which was then approved by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on 13 February 2003, FLEs or OFWs can now vote also in referenda and plebiscites. Furthermore, Filipino immigrants or permanent residents abroad can now register and vote without requiring them to return back to the Philippines after their voter registration, and after actually voting in the national elections.

## **2. Processes, practices and problems on overseas voting**

The conduct of overseas voting is a relatively new undertaking by the Philippine government. This had been made possible by the initiatives of legislators during the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress in 2003. As a new initiative, the overseas absentee voting process is not yet practiced with precision and obvious problems and lapses still remain as part of the undertaking. The good thing however is that, lawmakers recognized these problems early on. When Republic Act No. 9189 was put to actual test in 2004 for instance, Loren Legarda, one of the lawmakers who was instrumental for its passage into law, acknowledged that “the implementation of Republic Act No. 9189 may still need fine-tuning, but this can be done during its actual implementation (Clapano and Villanueva, 2003).

During the first conduct of overseas absentee voting in 2004, there were several problems encountered associated with its implementation. The COMELEC tasked with its overall implementation was obviously in a state of confusion on how to implement it which contributed to the glitches. One of the problems pointed out by election observers was the measly number of

overseas voter registrants. This problem was partly due to the short period allotted for voter registration, because COMELEC was confused and did not have a very definite plan on how to go about with the overseas voter registration process. At first, it announced that the overseas voter registration was from 1 July to September 2003, or a period of three months. Later on, however, it changed the timeframe for voter registration to only two months from 1 August to September 2003. This change of the duration of the overseas voter registration is contained in COMELEC Resolution No. 6183 stating that the period for filing of application for registration or certification as overseas absentee voters and applications to vote in absentia is from 1 August 2003 up to 30 September 2003 (Commission on Elections, 2003). The reason it gave is the application of the same rules and procedures for both those registering in the Philippines and those registering overseas. Since local registration is held only for two months, then overseas voter registration must also be held only for two months. But then, the COMELEC, in doing so, failed to take into consideration, the special circumstances of the FLEs or OFWs.

The living circumstances of FLEs or OFWs when they are overseas, in which it is not so easy for them to go out of their places of work anytime they desire, can be a real issue to be considered when looking at the low turnout of FLEs or OFWs voter registrants. In fact, this problem has been recurring since the very start. For example, during the 2004 Elections there was already difficulty of personal registration, especially those who live far from the embassies and consulates, limited off days of FLEs or OFWs, cost considerations, security risks for some prospective registrants and the disqualification of overseas Filipinos from registration unless they submit a Declaration of Intent to Return (Center for Migrant Advocacy, 2011).

During the subsequent elections when FLEs or OFWs participated, there were still some glitches associated with voter registration and these are pretty understandable given the circumstances of the overseas Filipinos.

The problems associated with the conduct of the overseas absentee voting do not only manifest during the voter registration but also during the voting period itself. Aware of these problems, the COMELEC adjusted their rules and resolved to make it as easy and as convenient as possible so that FLEs or OFWs can vote. With the realities on the ground, the COMELEC somehow adjusted the voting procedures for the FLEs or OFWs. For instance, locally, the election is held for only one day but for overseas voting, FLEs or OFWs are given one month to cast their

votes. This is a practical step because some FLEs or OFWs can only take a day off from work once a month. Added to this, there are also those who are far from voting centers set up by the Philippine Government, which are usually in Philippine embassies, consulates and missions.

In this connection, another feature of the overseas absentee voting is the manner how FLEs or OFWs may vote. In Section 16, No. 7 of Republic Act No. 9189, there are two possible modes by which FLEs or OFWs can vote and these are voting in person at Philippine embassies and consulates and voting by mail (Senate Electoral Tribunal, n.d.)

## Chapter 5

### Discussion of findings

This part of the dissertation explains the findings and results of the data gathered in relation to the main concern of this study, whether there is a linkage between legislation and votes. Here, the linkage will be shown and explained whether the Senators and Representatives of party-list groups who filed, authored or sponsored more legislative measures also garner more or higher votes from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs. In this connection, the independent variable pointed out in Chapter 1, Part 1, of this dissertation with the title Theoretical and conceptual framework, which is the expected reward the legislators wish to achieve, and quantified by the votes of the FLEs or OFWs, is plotted against the number of legislative measures the individual lawmakers, filed, authored or sponsored. This is on the consideration that the legislators are naturally single-minded seekers of re-election (Mayhew, 1974), in which they consider the realization of this expected reward, which is re-election, that can be made possible by the additional votes of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs, to be of great value or importance which is called Valence (*see Figure 1*). The legislators' desire to achieve this imagined and satisfying reward or Valence is the independent variable that influences the behavior of legislators to strive and work harder by filing, authoring or sponsoring more legislative measures that seek to promote the interests and welfare of overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs, which is the dependent variable.

For lawmakers in the Philippines, re-election as a satisfying reward can be realized when they will get additional votes from the FLEs or OFWs during elections. The votes from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs, which can be considered just a modest number if plotted against the total number of Filipino voters, can certainly tilt the difference in favor of a lawmaker who will be favored by the overseas Filipino voters. In order to get their votes therefore, these lawmakers do their best to craft legislative measures that will directly benefit not only the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs but also members of their families left behind, on the thought that the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs will consider such performance of the legislators, during elections when they cast their votes.



The data gathered for analysis are legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored by Senators and Party-list Representatives starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress from 22 July 2013 up to the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress that ended in 1 June 2022. The time frame for the data that are included in the interpretation spans nine years. Within this time frame two national elections were observed, the 13 May 2019 and the 9 May 2022 national elections. These two elections show how the Senators and the Party-list groups fared given their performance as to the number of legislative measures they filed, authored and sponsored concerning FLEs or OFWs.

## **1. Legislations on labor emigration**

This section discusses the bills, resolutions and laws that have something to do with overseas labor employment, including the lawmakers who filed, sponsored and authored such measures. All bills, resolutions and laws from the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress starting from 22 July 2013 up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress on 1 June 2022, will be covered here regardless of the progress of the measures, whether the bills filed have become laws or are still pending in the different committees in Congress. What is given importance by this dissertation is the initiative of the lawmaker involved in coming up with such measures, for in doing so, the concern to advance the interests and welfare of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs is already apparent by the mere filing of the measure. Certainly, in doing so, the lawmaker involved has the interests and welfare of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs in mind. This concern is especially given importance here, in order to observe, whether there is a correlation between the concern of lawmakers, by filing, authoring or sponsoring more legislative measures promoting the interests and welfare of overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs, and the number of votes these lawmakers garner from them. In other words, it will be observed whether the lawmakers who authored more legislative measures also got higher or more votes from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs than those who authored lesser number of legislative measures.

For emphasis, legislative measures included in this dissertation are those filed, sponsored and authored by Senators starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress which convened on 22 July 2013 and those filed, sponsored and authored by Party-list Representatives starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress which convened on 25 July 2016. The reason for the difference of the start of reckoning period for the lawmakers' performance in the two chambers of Congress is that, Senators and Party-list

Representatives from party-list groups, do not have the same length of tenure of office. In this case, the term of office immediately preceding a lawmaker's filing of candidacy for re-election, is used as the reckoning period for the lawmaker's performance in Congress.

Additionally, it has to be noted here that legislative measures initiated by lawmakers before July 2013, but were signed into law after this date, are not included. Consequently, only filers, authors and sponsors of legislative measures after July 2013 up to June 2022, are given credits and are evaluated for such initiatives. With this, co-sponsors are not given credits because in some cases in the Senate, Senators who vote affirmatively for a bill to become a law are made co-sponsors. So, strictly speaking, only the sponsor – the one who delivered the Sponsorship Speech in the respective chamber is given credit as the initiator of the legislative measure. This case especially happens when a legislative measure is passed from one chamber to the other chamber for concurrence.

There are also cases when a number of versions of a bill are filed before such a bill becomes a law. In this case, the credit for the reckoning of a law is given to the lawmaker or lawmakers whose version of the bill was approved into law by the President of the Philippines. In most cases however, when the final version of a bill for the president's signature is approved during the Third Reading, when no amendment of the bill is already allowed during this stage, almost all lawmakers who proposed similar versions of the final version of the bill, already signed it as authors.

As there are a lot of legislative measures filed, sponsored and authored in Congress, the manner how such measures were debated, interpellated and passed were just minimally taken into account, like for cross-checking purposes, data and entry verification only. There is simply no time to go into the details like checking how such legislative debates unfolded for each legislative measure which number ranges from 3,000 to 15,000 during each Congress in both chambers. For this reason, only legislative measures and their filers, sponsors and authors are made part as data for this dissertation, regardless of the degree of participation of the lawmakers during the deliberation concerning the measure. This is also a means to give equal consideration to all lawmakers. A Senator during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress for example, had been detained in a military camp and therefore was not free to join in the deliberations of the Senate. However, this particular Senator filed legislative measures from detention.

## **1.1. The Senate**

### **1.1.1. The 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines (July 2013 – June 2016)**

During the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, a total of 3,227 bills were filed by the Senators, that is in the Upper House or Senate, and 44 of these bills (*see Table 8*) seek to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs. This represents 1.36 percent of the total.

Of the 44 bills that seek to promote the interests and welfare of FLEs or OFWs, four of these bills became laws. These four bills are Senate Bill No. 2043 which became Republic Act No. 10635, Senate Bill No. 2835 which became Republic Act No. 10706, Senate Bill No. 2955 which became Republic Act No. 10801 and Senate Bill No. 2968 which became Republic Act No. 10683.

The 16th Congress can be said as an FLE or OFW-friendly Congress not only because of the number of bills filed and laws passed that promote FLEs or OFWs' interests and welfare, but also because, there were several Senators who can be counted as FLE or OFW advocates, if the number of measures they filed, and the manner and circumstances how they filed them are indicators. For instance, a first term legislator, Joseph Victor Ejercito, authored three FLE or OFW-related bills in a day on 16 October 2013 (*see Table 8*). As it is natural for people to be driven with passion and vigor when doing a thing for the first time, Senators cannot be an exception.

Cynthia Villar, a greenhorn Senator in 2013, authored the highest number of bills, that promote the interests and welfare of overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs. She authored a total of 14 bills (*see Chart 2, Table 8 or Table 10*) in which five of these bills were authored by her alone and nine bills were authored with other Senators. The bills she authored alone are Senate Bill No. 31, Senate Bill No. 32, Senate Bill No. 305, Senate Bill No. 507 and Senate Bill No. 1998. The bills she authored with other Senators on the other hand are Senate Bill No. 24, Senate Bill No. 1708, Senate Bill No. 2043, Senate Bill No. 2068, Senate Bill No. 2627, Senate Bill No. 2835, Senate Bill No. 2913, Senate Bill No. 2955 and Senate Bill No. 2968. Apparently, she had her hands full during her early stint at the Senate, filing four of her single-authored bills in July 2013, the first month of the opening of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress. Two of these bills, Senate Bill No. 31 and Senate Bill No. 32, were filed on the same day, the first of July (*see Table 8*), which was the first month of the First Session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The next best performing Senator is Jinggoy Estrada who authored nine bills (*see Chart 2, Table 8 or Table 10*), four of which he filed as a single author and the five of which he filed with other Senators. The four bills he filed as a single author are Senate Bill No. 1638, Senate Bill No.

1678, Senate Bill No. 1966 and Senate Bill No. 2037. The five bills he authored with other Senators on the other hand are Senate Bill No. 21, Senate Bill No. 24, Senate Bill No. 2043, Senate Bill No. 2955 and Senate Bill No. 2968.

The third best performing Senators in so far as the number of authored bills is concerned are Juan Edgardo Angara, and Joseph Victor Ejercito with seven bills each (*see Chart 2, Table 8 or Table 10*). Juan Edgardo Angara filed two bills as a single author which are Senate Bill No. 1955, and Senate Bill 1986, and filed five bills with other Senators which are Senate Bill No. 2043, Senate Bill No. 2627, Senate Bill No. 2835, Senate Bill No. 2955 and Senate Bill 2968. Joseph Victor Ejercito on the other hand filed four bills as a single author. Among the four bills, three of which were filed on the same day, 16 October 2013 (*see Table 8*). These three bills are Senate Bill No. 1854, Senate Bill No. 1858 and Senate Bill No. 1861. The fourth bill he filed as a single author is Senate Bill No. 1235. Additionally, he authored Senate Bill No. 2043, Senate Bill No. 2955 and Senate Bill No. 2968 with other Senators.

Loren Legarda, Grace Poe and Ralph Recto are the fourth best performing Senators with five authored bills each (*see Chart 2, Table 8 or Table 10*). Legarda authored three of these bills alone which are Senate Bill No. 350, Senate Bill No. 673 and Senate Bill No. 679. For Senate Bill No. 2043 and Senate Bill No. 2915, she authored these with other Senators. Grace Poe for her part authored three bills alone and these are Senate Bill No. 1215, Senate Bill No. 1421 and Senate Bill No. 2162. In addition, she authored two bills with other Senators and these are Senate Bill No. 2043 and Senate Bill No. 2968. Meanwhile Ralph Recto authored one bill alone and this is Senate Bill No. 1215. For the four other bills which are Senate Bill No. 2043, Senate Bill No. 2913, Senate Bill No. 2955 and Senate Bill No. 2968, he authored these with other Senators.

Nancy Binay, Koko Pimentel, Ramon Revilla and Antonio Trillanes follow as the fifth best performing Senators in so far as the number of authored bills is concerned with four each (*see Chart 2, Table 8 or Table 10*). Binay authored one bill alone which is Senate Bill No. 2782 and she authored three additional bills with other Senators which are Senate Bill No. 2043, Senate Bill no. 2068 and Senate Bill No. 2968. Koko Pimentel for his part authored two bills alone and these are Senate Bill No. 2757 and Senate Bill No. 2927. The two other bill he authored are with other Senators and these are Senate Bill No. 2043 and Senate Bill No. 2968. Ramon Revilla authored two bills alone and these are Senate Bill No. 273 and Senate Bill No. 951. He however authored two bills with other Senators which are Senate Bill No. 21 and Senate Bill No. 2043. Meanwhile,

Antonio Trillanes authored two bills alone and these are Senate Bill No. 829 and Senate Bill No.1147. In addition, he authored Senate Bill No. 2043 and Senate Bill No. 2955 with other Senators.

Miriam Defensor Santiago, Francis Escudero and Lito Lapid are the sixth best performing Senators and each authored three bills (*see Chart 2, Table 8 or Table 10*). Miriam Defensor Santiago authored the two bills alone which are Senate Bill No. 3017 and Senate Bill No. 3160. She however authored one bill with other Senators which is Senate Bill No. 2968. For his part, Francis Escudero authored one bill alone and this bill is Senate Bill No. 423. In addition, he authored two other bills, Senate Bill No, 2043 and Senate Bill No. 2968 with other Senators. Lito Lapid on the other hand authored two bills alone which are Senate Bill No. 1080 and Senate Bill No. 1278. For the third bill, Senate Bill No. 2043, he authored this with other Senators.

The seventh best performing Senators in so far as the number of authored bills is concerned are Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Alan Peter Cayetano, Franklin Drilon and Sergio Osmeña with two each (*see Chart 2, Table 8 or Table 10*). Three of these Senators authored the same two bills with other Senators and these bills are Senate Bill No. 2043 and Senate Bill No. 2968. Franklin Drilon on the other hand authored the two bills with other Senators. These bills are Senate Bill No. 1708 and Senate Bill No. 2043.

The following Senators are the least performing ones as each authored but a single bill, which is Senate Bill No. 2043 with other Senators. They are Pia Cayetano, Juan Ponce Enrile, Teofisto Guingona, Gregorio Honasan, and Vicente Sotto III.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. did not author any bill in relation with FLES or OFWs during his stint as Senator of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress from July 2013 to June 2016.

In terms of resolutions, there were 1,757 filed by Senators and 30 of these resolutions envision to address the immediate needs and concerns of the FLEs or OFWs. These 30 resolutions represent 1.70 percent of the total.

A resolution does not need to be submitted to the President for signature therefore it has no effect of law. Although a resolution has no effect of law, a government agency concerned oftentimes obliges when it is issued to them for action by either house of Congress. So, in effect a resolution can immediately address a problem or a concern, and in many instances in the past, the issuance of a resolution had been resorted to by Senators to extend help to FLEs or OFWs in order to immediately resolve their problems or concerns.

Table 8. Bills authored by Senators of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and date of filing in chronological order

No.	Name of bill	Author of the bill	Date of filing
1	Senate Bill No. 21	Jinggoy Estrada and Ramon Revilla, Jr	1 July 2013
2	Senate Bill No. 24	Jinggoy Estrada and Cynthia Villar	1 July 2013
3	Senate Bill No. 31	Cynthia Villar	1 July 2013
4	Senate Bill No. 32	Cynthia Villar	1 July 2013
5	Senate Bill No. 273	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	2 July 2013
6	Senate Bill No. 305	Cynthia Villar	2 July 2013
7	Senate Bill No. 350	Loren Legarda	3 July 2013
8	Senate Bill No. 432	Francis Escudero	4 July 2013
9	Senate Bill No. 507	Cynthia Villar	8 July 2013
10	Senate Bill No. 673	Loren Legarda	9 July 2013
11	Senate Bill No. 679	Loren Legarda	9 July 2013
12	Senate Bill No. 721	Ralph Recto	10 July 2013
13	Senate Bill No. 829	Antonio Trillanes	16 July 2013
14	Senate Bill No. 951	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	18 July 2013
15	Senate Bill No. 1080	Lito Lapid	23 July 2013
16	Senate Bill No. 1147	Antonio Trillanes	29 July 2013
17	Senate Bill No. 1215	Grace Poe	6 August 2013
18	Senate Bill No. 1235	Joseph Victor Ejercito	6 August 2013
19	Senate Bill No. 1278	Lito Lapid	13 August 2013
20	Senate Bill No. 1421	Grace Poe	29 August 2013
21	Senate Bill No. 1638	Jinggoy Estrada	11 September 2013
22	Senate Bill No. 1678	Jinggoy Estrada	16 September 2013
23	Senate Bill No. 1708	Franklin Drilon and Cynthia Villar	18 September 2013
24	Senate Bill No. 1854	Joseph Victor Ejercito	16 October 2013
25	Senate Bill No. 1858	Joseph Victor Ejercito	16 October 2013
26	Senate Bill No. 1861	Joseph Victor Ejercito	16 October 2013
27	Senate Bill No. 1955	Juan Edgardo Angara	26 November 2013
28	Senate Bill No. 1966	Jinggoy Estrada	27 November 2013
29	Senate Bill No. 1986	Juan Edgardo Angara	27 November 2013
30	Senate Bill No. 1998	Cynthia Villar	4 December 2013
31	Senate Bill No. 2037	Jinggoy Estrada	11 December 2013
32	Senate Bill No. 2043	22 Senators of the 16 <sup>th</sup> Congress, excluding Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. and Miriam Defensor Santiago	16 December 2013
33	Senate Bill No. 2068	Nancy Binay and Cynthia Villar	20 January 2014
34	Senate Bill No. 2162	Grace Poe	4 March 2014
35	Senate Bill No. 2627	Juan Edgardo Angara and Cynthia Villar	3 February 2015
36	Senate Bill No. 2757	Koko Pimentel	7 May 2015
37	Senate Bill No. 2782	Nancy Binay	25 May 2015
38	Senate Bill No. 2835	Juan Edgardo Angara and Cynthia Villar	9 June 2015
39	Senate Bill No. 2913	Ralph Recto and Cynthia Villar	24 August 2015
40	Senate Bill No. 2927	Koko Pimentel	2 September 2015
41	Senate Bill No. 2955	Jinggoy Estrada, Cynthia Villar, Loren Legarda, Ralph Recto, Antonio Trillanes, Joseph Victor Ejercito, Juan Edgardo Angara	17 September 2015
42	Senate Bill No. 2968	Sergio Esmeña III, Ralph Recto, Francis Escudero, Jinggoy Estrada, Grace Poe, Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Miriam Defensor Santiago, Alan Peter Cayetano, Nancy Binay, Joseph Victor Ejercito, Juan Edgardo Angara, Cynthia Villar, Koko Pimentel	28 September 2015
43	Senate Bill No. 3107	Miriam Defensor Santiago	25 January 2016
44	Senate Bill No. 3160	Miriam Defensor Santiago	28 January 2016

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Of the 30 resolutions filed, Miriam Defensor Santiago was the Senator who filed the highest number with 11 (*see Chart 2, Table 9 and Table 10*), This accounted for 37 percent of the total resolutions concerning FLEs or OFWs that were filed. The resolutions she filed are Resolution No. 48, Senate Resolution No. 61, Senate Resolution No. 88, Senate Resolution No. 166, Senate Resolution No. 993, Senate Resolution No. 1007, Senate Resolution No. 1168, Senate Resolution No. 1189, Senate Resolution No. 1250, Senate Resolution No. 1534 and Senate Resolution No. 1683. She sparingly filed these resolutions over a three-year period – 4 in 2013, 2 in 2014 and 5 in 2015 (*see Table 9*).

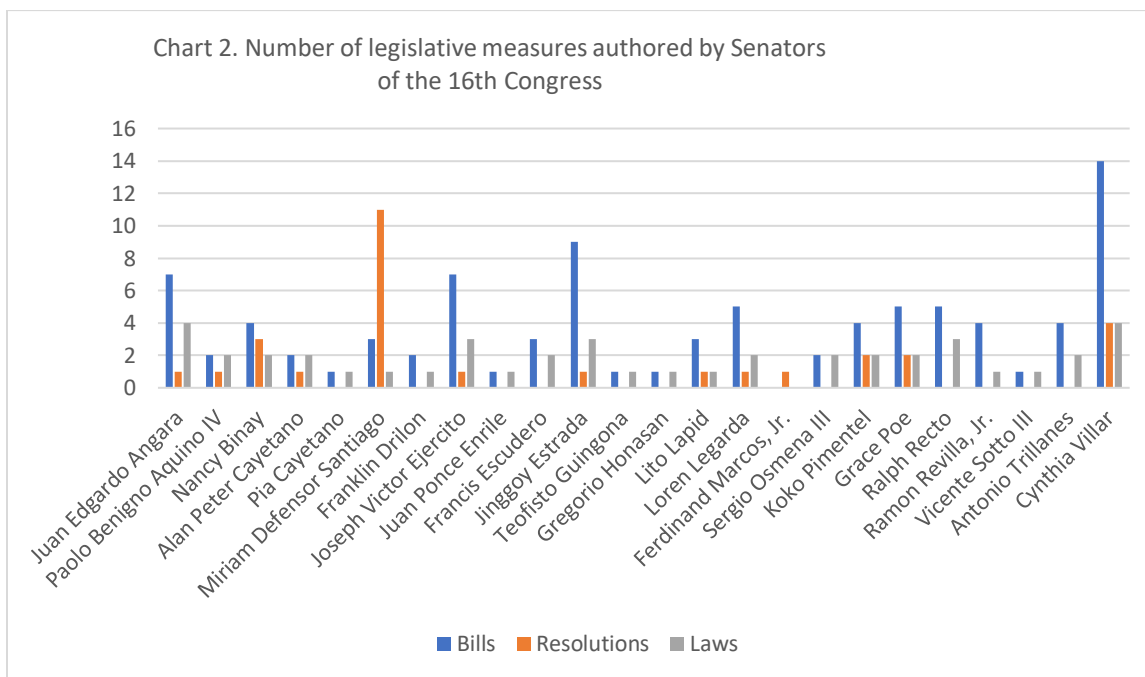
Table 9. Resolutions authored by Senators of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and date of filing in chronological order

No.	Name of the resolution	Author of the resolution	Date of filing
1	SR No. 2	Grace Poe	1 July 2013
2	SR No. 22	Loren Legarda	8 July 2013
3	SR No. 32	Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.	8 July 2013
4	SR No. 48	Miriam Defensor Santiago	15 July 2013
5	SR No. 61	Miriam Defensor Santiago	18 July 2013
6	SR No. 88	Miriam Defensor Santiago	22 July 2013
7	SR No. 166	Miriam Defensor Santiago	1 August 2013
8	SR No. 448	Lito Lapid	20 January 2014
9	SR No. 500	Nancy Binay	13 February 2014
10	SR No. 570	Koko Pimentel	12 March 2014
11	SR No. 641	Joseph Victor Ejercito	8 May 2014
12	SR No. 732	Alan Peter Cayetano	19 June 2014
13	SR No. 928	Grace Poe	22 September 2014
14	SR No. 931	Cynthia Villar	23 September 2014
15	SR No. 932	Cynthia Villar	23 September 2014
16	SR No. 993	Miriam Defensor Santiago	30 October 2014
17	SR No. 1007	Miriam Defensor Santiago	12 November 2014
18	SR No. 1065	Nancy Binay	17 December 2014
19	SR No. 1168	Miriam Defensor Santiago	10 February 2015
20	SR No. 1189	Miriam Defensor Santiago	18 February 2015
21	SR No. 1226	Koko Pimentel	10 March 2015
22	SR No. 1242	Juan Edgardo Angara	17 March 2015
23	SR No. 1250	Miriam Defensor Santiago	19 March 2015
24	SR No. 1533	Nancy Binay	24 August 2015
25	SR No. 1534	Miriam Defensor Santiago	24 August 2015
26	SR No. 1536	Paolo Benigno Aquino IV	24 August 2015
27	SR No. 1549	Jinggoy Estrada	26 October 2015
28	SR No. 1610	Cynthia Villar	6 October 2015

29	SR No. 1683	Miriam Defensor Santiago	16 December 2015
30	SR No. 1727	Cynthia Villar	2 February 2016

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Cynthia Villar is the second Senator who filed the highest number of resolutions with four (see Chart 2, Table 9 or Table 10). These resolutions are Senate Resolution No. 931, Senate Resolution No. 932, Senate Resolution No. 1610 and Senate Resolution No. 1727. Cynthia Villar filed the first two resolutions on the same day, the 23 of September 2014 (see Table 9).



Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

The third best performing Senator in terms of resolutions filed is Nancy Binay with three (see Chart 2, Table 9 or Table 10). These are Senate Resolution No. 500, Senate Resolution No. 1065 and Senate Resolution No. 1533.

The fourth best performing Senators are Koko Pimentel and Grace Poe authoring two each (see Chart 2, Table 9 or Table 10). Koko Pimentel authored Senate Resolution No. 570 and Senate Resolution No. 1226. Grace Poe on the other hand authored Senate Resolution No. 2 and Senate Resolution No. 928.



The least performing Senators in so far as the number of authored resolution is concerned, with only one resolution authored are Juan Edgardo Angara who authored Senate Resolution No. 1242, Paolo Benigno Aquino IV who authored Senate Resolution No. 1536, Alan Peter Cayetano who authored Senate Resolution No. 732, Joseph Victor Ejercito who authored Senate Resolution No. 641, Jinggoy Estrada who authored Senate Resolution No. 1549, Lito Lapid who authored Senate Resolution No. 448, Loren Legarda who authored Senate Resolution No. 22 and Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. who authored Senate Resolution No. 32 (*see Chart 1, Table 9 or Table 10*).

The following Senators did not file any resolution. They are Pia Cayetano, Franklin Drilon, Juan Ponce Enrile, Francis Escudero, Teofisto Guingona, Gregorio Honasan, Sergio Osmeña, Ralph Recto, Ramon Revilla, Jr., Vicente Sotto III and Antonio Trillanes.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress from July 2013 to June 2016, there were four important laws passed. One of the laws passed was Republic Act No. 10635 or An Act Establishing the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) as the Single Maritime Administration Responsible for the Implementation and Enforcement of the 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers as Amended and International Agreements or Covenants Related Thereto (Republic Act No. 10635, 2014). The second law passed was Republic Act No. 10706 or An Act Protecting Seafarers Against Ambulance Chasing and Imposition of Excessive Fees, and Providing Penalties Therefor (Republic Act No. 10706, 2015). The third law passed was Republic Act No. 10801 or An Act Governing the Operations and Administration of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) (Republic Act No. 10801, 2016). The fourth law passed was Republic Act No. 10863 or An Act Modernizing the Customs and Tariff Administration (Republic Act No. 10863, 2016). All these four laws were approved by Benigno Aquino III.

Concerning Republic Act No. 10635, its importance to the Philippine seafaring industry is undeniable. Before the passage of this law, Filipino seafarers have to go to different government offices to process their papers like licenses, certifications and other related documents needed for deployment onboard vessels. After the passage of the law however, they now only have to go to MARINA for their specific concerns, which practically will help them save time, and other resources. And since MARINA is mandated by law, to be the single maritime institution, that will be responsible for the country's compliance to the standards on international seafaring, this will give a boost to the Filipino seafarers and the Philippines seafaring industry in general, which in

many audits in the past, was found out as not complying with international maritime safety standards (Santos, 2022). The institution of MARINA through the passage of Republic Act No. 10635 is therefore a big boost, though locally, for the Philippines which is the world’s largest provider of seafarers (Cahiles-Magkilat, 2021, Hand, 2021) and one of the “first 30” ILO countries to demonstrate the commitment to ensuring decent work for seafarer and a level playing field for quality shipowners (Philippine Ratification Marks Global Milestone for Decent Work for Seafarers, 2012)

Table 10. Breakdown of legislative measures authored by Senators of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress

No.	Name of Senator	Bills	Total Bills	Resolutions	Total Res'ns	Laws	Total Laws	Grand Total
1	Juan Edgardo Angara	SB No. 1955, SB No. 1986, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2627, SB No. 2835, SB No. 2955, SB No. 2968	7	SR No. 1242	1	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10706 RA No. 10801 RA No. 10863	4	12
2	Paolo Benigno Aquino IV	SB No. 2043, SB No. 2968	2	SR No. 1536	1	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10863	2	5
3	Nancy Binay	SB No. 2043, SB No. 2088, SB No. 2782, SB No. 2968	4	SR No. 500, SR No. 1065, SR No. 1533	3	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10863	2	9
4	Alan Peter Cayetano	SB No. 2043, SB No. 2968	2	SR No. 732	1	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10863	2	5
5	Pia Cayetano	SB No. 2043	1	0	0	RA No. 10635	1	2
6	Miriam Defensor Santiago	SB No. 2968, SB No. 3107, SB No. 3160	3	SR No. 48, SR No. 61, SR No. 88, SR No. 166, SR No. 993, SR No. 1007, SR No. 1168, SR No. 1189, SR No. 1250, SR No. 1534, SR No. 1683	11	RA No. 10863	1	15
7	Franklin Drilon	SB No. 1708, SB No. 2043	2	0	0	RA No. 10635	1	3
8	Joseph Victor Ejercito	SB No. 1235, SB No. 1854, SB No. 1858, SB No. 1861, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2955, SB No. 2968	7	SR No. 641	1	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10801 RA No. 10863	3	11
9	Juan Ponce Enrile	SB No. 2043	1	0	0	RA No. 10635	1	2
10	Francis Escudero	SB No. 432, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2968	3	0	0	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10863	2	5
11	Jinggoy Estrada	SB No. 21, SB No. 24, SB No. 1638, SB No. 1678, SB No. 1966, SB No. 2037, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2955, SB No. 2968	9	SR No. 1549	1	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10801 RA No. 10863	3	13
12	Teofisto Guingona	SB No. 2043	1	0	0	RA No. 10635	1	2
13	Gregorio Honasan	SB No. 2043	1	0	0	RA No. 10635	1	2
14	Lito Lapid	SB No. 1080, SB No. 1278, SB No. 2043	3	SR No. 448	1	RA No. 10635	1	5
15	Loren Legarda	SB No. 350, SB No. 673, SB No. 679, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2955	5	SR No. 22	1	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10801	2	8
16	Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.	0	0	SR No. 32	1	0	0	1
17	Sergio Osmena III	SB No. 2043, SB No. 2968	2	0	0	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10863	2	4
18	Koko Pimentel	SB No. 2043, SB No. 2757, SB No. 2927, SB No. 2968	4	SR No. 570, SR No. 1226	2	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10863	2	8
19	Grace Poe	SB No. 1215, SB No. 1421, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2162, SB No. 2968	5	SR No. 2, SR No. 928	2	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10863	2	9
20	Ralph Recto	SB No. 721, SB No. 2043, SB 2913, SB No. 2955, SB No. 2968	5	0	0	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10801 RA No. 10863	3	8

21	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	SB No. 21, SB No. 273, SB No. 951, SB No. 2043	4	0	0	RA No. 10635	1	5
22	Vicente Sotto III	SB No. 2043	1	0	0	RA No. 10635	1	2
23	Antonio Trillanes	SB No. 829, SB No. 1147, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2955	4	0	0	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10801	2	6
24	Cynthia Villar	SB No. 24, SB No. 31, SB No. 32, SB No. 305, SB No. 507, SB No. 1708, SB No. 1998, SB No. 2043, SB No. 2068, SB No. 2627, SB No. 2835, SB No. 2913, SB No. 2955, SB No. 2968	14	SR No. 931, SR No. 932, SR No.1610, SR No. 1727	4	RA No. 10635 RA No. 10706 RA No. 10801 RA No. 10863	4	22

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Republic Act No. 10706 is another important law that addresses the concerns of Filipino seafarers, as this prohibits or penalizes cases of ambulance chasing. Ambulance chasing is a popular term in the seafaring world. This refers to the action of people, especially members of the bar, who go after or literally chase clients, like seafarers who sustained injuries or who developed job-related diseases, during their employment, by promising to file cases in their behalf, against their employers or manning agencies, for a fee. The legal term for this is barratry (Roberts, 2023). Since seafarers can claim relatively high compensation for job-related injuries and diseases developed during employment, seafarers are sought-after clients by lawyers. However, after some bad precedents, such practice of the members of the legal profession is now outlawed by Republic Act No. 10706. Why then do lawmakers illegalized this practice? Part of the answer can be due to the fact that in most cases, when the monetary claims from employers or manning agencies are realized, the lion share of the amount usually goes to the lawyer, and the seafarer who in the first place should claim the benefits are just given a paltry share of the amount by the lawyer, who facilitated the claim. Not only this, ambulance chasers in most cases often jack up to the highest amount of claim possible, for which most employers acquiesce but with reservations. In such scenarios, employers who are subjected to such unscrupulous practice by lawyers, sometimes no longer hire Filipino seafarers, for fear of being subjected to the same practice in the future. For instance, Silverio (2023) pointed out that in the 2021 review of the International Maritime Employers Council (IMEC), it was found out that there had been a small decline in the share of global supply for Filipino seafarers in favor of Indian seafarers, which reason is attributable to ambulance chasing cases that plague the Philippine seafaring industry. This is obviously a bad precedent that Republic Act No. 10706 tries to address.

The third law approved during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, Republic Act No. 10801 or An Act Governing the Operations and Administration of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

(OWWA) is also very important because, this means more benefits for FLEs or OFWs. With this law, there is already a budget for the operations and maintenance of OWWA which shall be included in the annual GAA or General Appropriations Act (Republic Act No. 10801, 2016). Before the approval of this law, the OWWA had to exist on its internal funds which means that this has to be sourced from the contribution of the FLEs or OFWs which is pegged at US\$25 per FLE or OFW and good for two years. Now that this law is already approved, the mandated OWWA contributions of FLEs or OFWs will now be exclusively spent on the provisions of benefits for the members.

The fourth law approved during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress that has something to do with overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs was Republic Act No. 10863 or An Act Modernizing Customs and Tariff Administration. This law is important to the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs because this protects them and their personal effects whenever they send *balikbayan* boxes to the Philippines. Furthermore, they can save on duties and taxes whenever they will send *balikbayan* boxes back home. Republic Act No. 10863 stipulates that *balikbayan* boxes shall be exempt from applicable duties and taxes, provided that such boxes will only contain personal and household effects and shall neither be of commercial quantity and the value of which shall not exceed One Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P150,000.00) (Republic Act No. 10863, 2016).

### 1.1.2. The 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines (July 2016 – June 2019)

During the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, a total of 2,235 bills were filed by the Senators. Out of this total, 33 bills (*see Table 11*) seek to promote the interests and welfare of FLEs or OFWs, or 1.48 percent of the total. For resolutions, a total of 1,062 were filed and out of this total, 12 resolutions (*see Table 12*) were filed concerning FLEs or OFWs or 1.13 percent of the total.

Table 11. Bills authored by Senators of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and date of filing in chronological order

No.	Name of bill	Author of the bill	Date of filing
1	Senate Bill No. 109	Richard Gordon	30 June 2016
2	Senate Bill No. 146	Cynthia Villar	30 June 2016
3	Senate Bill No. 157	Joseph Victor Ejercito Nancy Binay	30 June 2016
4	Senate Bill No. 167	Grace Poe	30 June 2016
5	Senate Bill No. 192	Manny Pacquiao Richard Gordon Koko Pimentel Sherwin Gatchalian Cynthia Villar	30 June 2016

6	Senate Bill No. 244	Loren Legarda	4 July 2016
7	Senate Bill No. 314	Juan Edgardo Angara Joel Villanueva Nancy Binay	4 July 2016
8	Senate Bill No. 429	Loren Legarda	19 July 2016
9	Senate Bill No. 536	Antonio Trillanes	19 July 2016
10	Senate Bill No. 648	Paolo Benigno Aquino IV	20 July 2016
11	Senate Bill No. 795	Ralph Recto	21 July 2016
12	Senate Bill No. 875	Grace Poe	26 July 2016
13	Senate Bill No. 881	Grace Poe	26 July 2016
14	Senate Bill No. 886	Joseph Victor Ejercito	26 July 2016
15	Senate Bill No. 904	Joseph Victor Ejercito	26 July 2016
16	Senate Bill No. 943	Juan Edgardo Angara Joel Villanueva	1 August 2016
17	Senate Bill No. 961	Leila De Lima	1 August 2016
18	Senate Bill No. 1151	Nancy Binay	19 September 2016
19	Senate Bill No. 1179	Joseph Victor Ejercito	3 October 2016
20	Senate Bill No. 1282	Joel Villanueva	14 December 2016
21	Senate Bill No. 1365	Richard Gordon Cynthia Villar Ralph Recto Joseph Victor Ejercito Loren Legarda Juan Edgardo Angara Joel Villanueva Grace Poe Alan Peter Cayetano	7 March 2017
22	Senate Bill No. 1421	Ralph Recto	2 May 2017
23	Senate Bill No. 1435	Alan Peter Cayetano	4 May 2017
24	Senate Bill No. 1445	Koko Pimentel	10 May 2017
25	Senate Bill No. 1659	Nancy Binay	22 January 2018
26	Senate Bill No. 1819	Joel Villanueva Loren Legarda Juan Edgardo Angara Sherwin Gatchalian	24 May 2018
27	Senate Bill No. 1885	Nancy Binay	25 July 2018
28	Senate Bill No. 1957	Nancy Binay	29 August 2018
29	Senate Bill No. 1974	Nancy Binay	3 September 2018
30	Senate Bill No. 1996	Risa Hontiveros	11 September 2018
31	Senate Bill No. 2032	Risa Hontiveros	26 September 2018
32	Senate Bill No. 2101	Paolo Benigno Aquino IV	15 November 2018
33	Senate Bill No. 2162	Koko Pimentel	21 January 2019

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Among the 24 Senators during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, Juan Edgardo Angara and Joel Villanueva are the two top performing Senators in so far as the number of authored legislative measures is concerned. Juan Edgardo Angara authored four bills and four resolutions (*see Table 11 and Table 12*), in which two of the bills were filed with other Senators and were approved into laws, or a total of 10 legislative measures (*see Table 13*). One of the bills he authored with other Senators was Senate Bill No. 1365 and became Republic Act No. 10928. This law extends the validity of Philippine Passports from five years to 10 years. This will translate as a big help to

FLEs or OFWs because with the approval of this law, they will save time, money and effort compared to the system before when the validity of Philippine Passports was only for five years. The supposed Passport Application Fee after five years, under the old system, will now be saved since the Philippine Passport is already valid for 10 years. The other bill he authored with other Senators was Senate Bill No. 1819 and this became a law as well, called Republic Act No. 11299. This law amends Republic Act No. 8042. As an amendment, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 11299 inserts paragraph e, to Section 23 of Republic Act No. 8042, thus:

*Section 2. A new paragraph (e) is hereby inserted in Section 23 of Republic Act 8042, as amended, to read as follows:*

*“(e) Department of Social Welfare and Development. – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall deploy Social Welfare Attachés in countries with large concentration of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), as determined in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The Social Welfare Attaché shall possess the minimum qualifications set by the Civil Service Commission and the preferred qualifications prescribed by the DSWD (Republic Act No. 11299, § 2, para. E, 2018).*

Since there are a lot of documented problems encountered by FLEs or OFWs in their places of work, ranging from maltreatment of employers to family problems at home, the services of Social Welfare Attachés to FLEs or OFWs in their host countries will surely be a welcome development.

As to resolutions, Juan Edgardo Angara authored four, three of which he filed alone which are Senate Resolution No. 103, Senate Resolution No. 450 and Senate Resolution No. 638. The fourth resolution is Senate Resolution No. 676 which he filed with other Senators (*see Table 12*).

Joel Villanueva also authored 10 legislative measures – five bills, three resolutions and two bills (*see Chart 3 and Table 13*) which became laws. Among the five bills – one of these, Senate Bill No. 1282 was filed by him as a single author. However, he authored Senate Bill No. 314, Senate Bill No. 943, Senate Bill No. 1365, and Senate Bill No. 1819 with other Senators. The two bills he filed with other Senators and became laws are Senate Bill No. 1365 which became Republic Act No. 10928 that extends the validity of Philippine Passport from five years to 10 years and Senate Bill No. 1819 which became Republic Act No. 11299 that creates the Office of Social Welfare Attaché. Together with other Senators, Juan Edgardo Angara and Joel Villanueva, the best performing Senators during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress filed the same two bills which became laws. The

three resolutions that Joel Villanueva authored are Senate Resolution No. 6 which he authored alone. He however authored Senate Resolution No. 631 and Senate Resolution No. 676 with other Senators (*see Table 12*).

The second top performing Senator in so far as the number of authored legislative measures is concerned is Nancy Binay with seven bills and two resolutions (*see Chart 3 and Table 13*). She authored five bills alone which are Senate Bill No. 1151, Senate Bill No. 1659, Senate Bill No. 1885, Senate Bill No. 1957 and Senate Bill No. 1974. Meanwhile, she authored Senate Bill No. 157 and Senate Bill No. 314 with other Senators (*see Table 11*). Nancy Binay likewise authored two resolutions (*see Table 12*). These are Senate Resolution No. 627 which she authored alone and Senate Resolution No. 676 which she authored with 18 other Senators.

Table 12. Resolutions authored by Senators of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and date of filing in chronological order

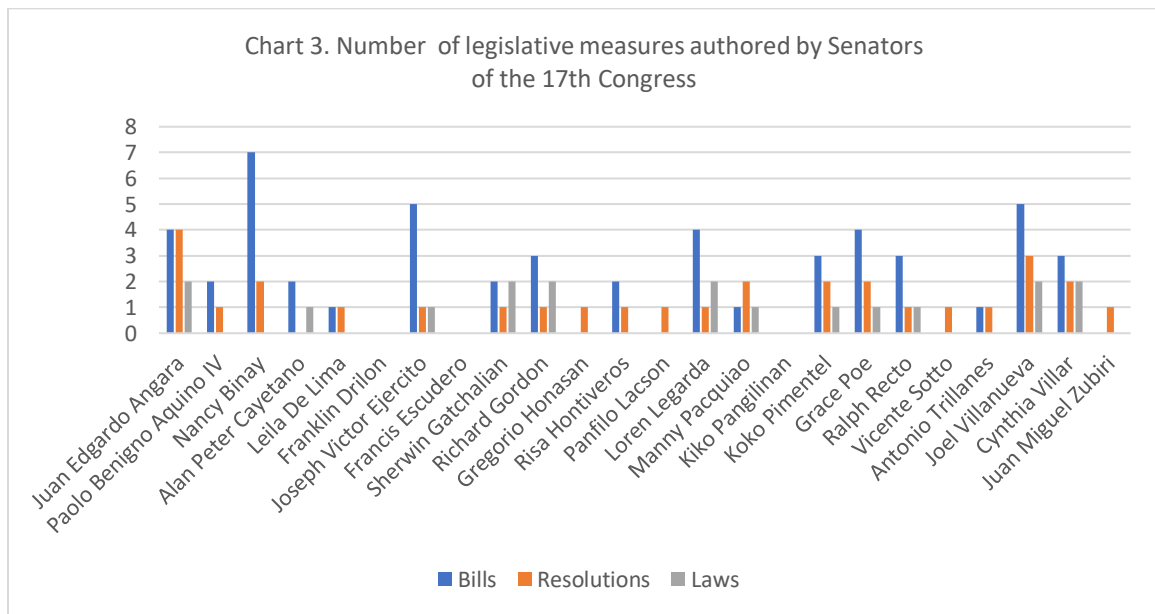
No.	Name of the resolution	Author of the resolution	Date of filing
1	SR No. 6	Joel Villanueva	30 June 2016
2	SR No. 103	Juan Edgardo Angara	15 August 2016
3	SR No. 114	Koko Pimentel	25 August 2016
4	SR No. 316	Grace Poe	7 March 2017
5	SR No. 350	Cynthia Villar	2 May 2017
6	SR No. 450	Juan Edgardo Angara	1 August 2017
7	SR No. 452	Leila De Lima	1 August 2017
8	SR No. 626	Manny Pacquiao	13 February 2018
9	SR No. 627	Nancy Binay	14 February 2018
10	SR No. 631	Joel Villanueva	14 February 2018
11	SR No. 638	Juan Edgardo Angara	19 February 2018
12	SR No. 676	Koko Pimentel Manny Pacquiao Antonio Trillanes Juan Edgardo Angara Paolo Benigno Aquino IV Nancy Binay Joseph Victor Ejercito Sherwin Gatchalian Richard Gordon Gregorio Honasan Risa Hontiveros Panfilo Lacson Loren Legarda Grace Poe Ralph Recto Vicente Sotto Joel Villanueva Cynthia Villar Juan Miguel Zubiri	7 March 2018

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Joseph Victor Ejercito, Loren Legarda, Grace Poe and Cynthia Villar are the third top performing Senators based on the number of legislative measures authored, with seven each (*see Table 13*).

Joseph Victor Ejercito filed three bills as a single author and these are Senate Bill No. 886, Senate Bill No. 904 and Senate Bill No. 1179. Additionally, he authored two bills with other Senators and these are Senate Bill No. 157 and Senate Bill No. 1365 (*see Table 11*). Senate Bill No. 1365 became a law which is Republic Act No. 10928. As already mentioned, this law extends the validity of Philippine Passport from five years to 10 years. As to resolution, he authored one with 18 other Senators and that is Senate Resolution No. 676 (*see Table 12*).

Loren Legarda likewise authored seven legislative measures – four bills, one resolution and two laws (*see Chart 3 and Table 13*). Concerning bills, there are two which she authored alone, and these bills are Senate Bill No. 244 and Senate Bill No. 429. On the other hand, she authored Senate Bill No. 1365 with other Senators (*see Table 11*). This bill became a law, Republic Act No. 10928 which extends the validity of Philippine Passport from five years to 10 years. The other bill which she authored with other Senators is Senate Bill No. 1819 which became a law as well, Republic Act No. 11299 or the law that creates the Office of the Welfare Attaché. In addition to this, she authored one resolution, Resolution No. 676 with 18 other Senators.



Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>



Grace Poe also authored seven legislative measures with four bills, two resolutions and one law (*see Table 13*). Among the four bills, she authored three alone, and these are Senate Bill No. 167, Senate Bill No. 875 and Senate Bill No. 881. She filed the last two bills on the same day on 26 July 2016 (*see Table 11*). In addition, she authored a fourth bill, Senate Bill No. 1365 with other Senators. As for resolutions, she authored two (*see Table 12*), one as a single author which is Senate Resolution No. 361 and the second with other Senators which is Senate Resolution No. 676. Grace Poe is one of the authors of Republic Act No. 10928. This law extends the validity of Philippine Passport from five years to 10 years.

Table 13. Breakdown of legislative measures authored by Senators of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress

No.	Name of Senator	Bills	Total Bills	Resolutions	Total Res'n s	Laws	Total Laws	Grand Total
1	Juan Edgardo Angara	SB No. 314, SB No. 943, SB No. 1365, SB No. 1819,	4	SR No. 103, SR No. 450, SR No. 638, SR No. 676	4	RA No. 10928, RA No. 11299	2	10
2	Paolo Benigno Aquino IV	SB No. 648, SB No. 2101	2	SR No. 676	1	0	0	3
3	Nancy Binay	SB No.157, SB No. 314, SB No. 1151, SB No. 1659, SB No. 1885, SB No. 1957, SB No. 1974	7	SR No. 627, SR No. 676	2	0	0	9
4	Alan Peter Cayetano	SB No. 1365, SB No. 1435	2	0	0	RA No. 10928	1	3
5	Leila De Lima	SB No. 961	1	SR No. 452	1	0	0	2
6	Franklin Drilon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Joseph Victor Ejercito	SB No. 157, SB No. 886, SB No. 904, SB No. 1179, SB No. 1365	5	SR No. 676	1	RA No. 10928	1	7
8	Francis Escudero	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Sherwin Gatchalian	SB No. 192, SB No. 1819	2	SR No. 676	1	RA No. 11227, RA No. 11299	2	5
10	Richard Gordon	SB No. 109, SB No. 192, SB No. 1365	3	SR No. 676	1	RA No. 11227, RA No. 10928	2	6
11	Gregorio Honasan	0	0	SR No. 676	1	0	0	1
12	Risa Hontiveros	SB No. 1996, SB No. 2032	2	SR No. 676	1	0	0	3
13	Panfilo Lacson	0	0	SR No. 676	1	0	0	1
14	Loren Legarda	SB No.244, SB No.429, SB No. 1365, SB No. 1819	4	SR No. 676	1	RA No. 10928, RA No. 11299	2	7
15	Manny Pacquiao	SB No. 192	1	SR No. 626, SR No. 676	2	RA No. 11227	1	4
16	Francis Pangilinan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Koko Pimentel	SB No. 192, SB No. 1445, SB No. 2162	3	SR No. 114, SR No. 676	2	RA No. 11227	1	6
18	Grace Poe	SB No. 167, SB No. 875, SB No. 881, SB No. 1365	4	SR No. 316, SR No. 676	2	RA No. 10928	1	7
20	Ralph Recto	SB No. 795, SB No. 1365, SB No. 1421	3	SR No. 676	1	RA No. 10928	1	5
	Vicente Sotto	0	0	SR No. 676	1	0	0	1
21	Antonio Trillanes	SB No. 536	1	SR No. 676	1	0	0	2
22	Joel Villanueva	SB No. 314, SB No. 943, SB No. 1282, SB No. 1365, SB No. 1819	5	SR No. 6, SR No. 631, SR No. 676	3	RA No. 10928, RA No. 11299	2	10
23	Cynthia Villar	SB No. 146, SB No. 192, SB No. 1365	3	SR No. 350, SR No. 676	2	RA No. 11227, RA No. 10928	2	7
24	Juan Miguel Zubiri	0	0	SR No. 676	1	0	0	1

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Another Senator who performed well is Cynthia Villar. It will be recalled that she is the best performing Senator in the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress. During the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress however, she only finished third by authoring three bills, two resolutions and two laws, or a total of seven legislative measures (*see Table 13*). Among these bills, she filed Senate Bill No. 146 as a single author. In addition, she authored two bills with other Senators. These two bills are Senate Bill No. 192 and Senate Bill No. 1365, and both became laws which are Republic Act No. 11227 and Republic Act No. 10928 respectively. Republic Act No. 11227 mandates for the publication of a Handbook for FLEs or OFWs, aimed at guiding them in their migration journey so as to minimize problems along the way. Republic Act No. 10928 on the other hand, extend the validity of the Philippine Passport from five years to 10 years. Additionally, Cynthia Villar authored two resolutions (*see Table 12*). These resolutions are Senate Resolution No. 350 which she authored alone, and Senate Resolution No. 676 which she authored with 18 other Senators.

The fourth best performing Senators with six legislative measures each of them filed are Richard Gordon and Koko Pimentel.

Richard Gordon authored three bills (*see Table 11*). These bills are Senate Bill No. 109 which he authored alone and Senate Bill No. 192 and Senate Bill No. 1365 which he authored with other Senators. He likewise authored one resolution (*see Table 12*) with other Senators which is Senate Resolution No. 676. Richard Gordon is also one of the authors of two laws which are Republic Act No. 11227 and Republic Act No. 10928. Republic Act No. 11227 mandates for the publication of a Handbook for FLEs or OFWs while Republic Act No. 10928 extends the validity of Philippine Passport from five years to 10 years.

Koko Pimentel for his part authored three bills, two resolutions and one law (*see Table 13*). He authored two bills alone which are Senate Bill No. 1445 and Senate Bill No. 2162. Additionally, he authored Senate Bill No. 192 with other Senators (*see Table 11*). Aside from bills, he likewise authored two resolutions (*see Table 12*). These resolutions are Senate Resolution No. 114 which he authored alone and Senate Resolution No. 676 which he authored with other Senators. Koko Pimentel is one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11227 which mandates for the publication of a Handbook for FLEs or OFWs, aimed at empowering them while they are employed overseas.

The fifth best performing Senators with five legislative measures each one of them filed are Sherwin Gatchalian and Ralph Recto.

Sherwin Gatchalian authored two bills, one resolution and two laws (*see Table 11*). For the bills, he authored both with other Senators which are Senate Bill No. 192 and Senate Bill No. 1819. Additionally, he also authored one resolution with other Senators and that is Senate Resolution No. 676 (*see Table 12*). Sherwin Gatchalian is an author of two laws, Republic Act No. 11227 and 11299. Republic Act No. 11227 creates the Office of the Welfare Attaché, while Republic Act No. 11299 mandates the publication of a Handbook for FLEs or OFWs.

Ralph Recto for his part authored three bills, one resolution and one law (*see Table 13*). He filed two bills as a single author which are Senate Bill No. 795 and Senate Bill No. 1421. For the third Bill, he authored this with other Senators which is Senate Bill No. 1365 (*see Table 11*). He also authored one resolution with other Senators and that is Senate Resolution No. 676 (*see Table 12*). Furthermore, Ralph Recto is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 10928 which extends the validity of the Philippine passport from five years to 10 years.

The sixth best performing Senator is Manny Pacquiao who authored four legislative measures which include one bill, two resolutions and one law (*see Table 13*). He authored one bill, Senate Bill No. 192 with other Senators (*see Table 11*). In addition to this, he also authored two resolutions, one of these is Resolution No. 626 which he authored alone and Resolution No. 676 (*see Table 12*) which he authored with other Senators. Manny Pacquiao is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11227 or the law that creates the Office of the Welfare Attaché.

Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Alan Peter Cayetano and Risa Hontiveros rank as the seventh best performing Senators with three legislative measures each one of them filed (*see Table 13*).

Paolo Benigno Aquino IV authored two bills alone which are Senate Bill No. 648 and Senate Bill No. 2101 (*see Table 11*). He likewise authored one resolution with other Senators which is Resolution No. 676 (*see Table 12*).

Meanwhile, Alan Peter Cayetano authored one bill alone and that is Senate Bill No. 1435 while he authored the other bill, Senate Bill No. 1365 with other Senators (*see Table 11*). Alan Peter Cayetano is one of the authors of Republic Act No. 10929 or the law that extends the validity of the Philippine passport from five years to 10 years.

Risa Hontiveros for her part, authored two bills alone and these are Senate Bill No. 1996 and Senate Bill No. 2032 (*see Table 11*). She also authored one resolution with other Senators and that is Senate Resolution No. 676 (*see Table 12*).

The eighth best performing Senators are Leila de Lima and Antonio Trillanes with two legislative measures each of them authored (*see Table 13*).

Leila De Lima authored Senate Bill No, 961 alone (*see Table 11*) and she likewise authored Senate Resolution No. 452 alone (*see Table 12*).

Antonio Trillanes for his part authored one bill alone which is Senate Bill No. 536 (*see Table 11*) and he authored Senate Resolution No. 676 with other Senators (*see Table 12*).

The Senators who filed the least number of legislative measures are Gregorio Honasan, Panfilo Lacson, Vicente Sotto III and Miguel Zubiri. They are all authors of Senate Resolution No. 676 with other Senators (*see Table 12 and Table 13*).

Franklin Drilon, Francis Escudero and Kiko Pangilinan meanwhile did not file any legislative measure (*see Table 13*) during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **1.1.3. The 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines (July 2019 – June 2022)**

During the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, a total of 2,524 bills were filed by the Senators. Out of this total, 35 bills (*see Table 14*) seek to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs representing 1.38 percent of the total. As for resolutions, 1,022 were filed and from this total, 17 resolutions (*see Table 15*) were filed concerning the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs, representing 1.66 percent of the total.

Among the Senators of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, Nancy Binay, Risa Hontiveros, Ramon Revilla, Jr. and Joel Villanueva are the top performers with nine legislative measures each of them authored.

Nancy Binay authored six bills, in which three of these bills she authored alone which are Senate Bill No. 566, Senate Bill No. 975 and Senate Bill No. 1369. The three other bills which she authored with other Senators are Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 (*see Table 14*). Aside from the six bills, she also authored two resolutions alone and these

are Senate Resolution No. 420 and Senate Resolution No. 514 (*see Table 15*). Furthermore, she is one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641, or the law that created the DMW, a cabinet-level office under the Executive Branch.

Table 14. Bills authored by Senators of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress and date of filing in chronological order

No.	Name of bill	Author of the bill	Date of filing
1	Senate Bill No. 73	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	1 July 2019
2	Senate Bill No. 92	Koko Pimentel	1 July 2019
3	Senate Bill No. 141	Cynthia Villar	2 July 2019
4	Senate Bill No. 149	Joel Villanueva	2 July 2019
5	Senate Bill No. 202	Bong Go Francis Tolentino	2 July 2019
6	Senate Bill No. 300	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	8 July 2019
7	Senate Bill No. 317	Grace Poe	10 July 2019
8	Senate Bill No. 357	Risa Hontiveros	11 July 2019
9	Senate Bill No. 384	Manny Pacquiao	11 July 2019
10	Senate Bill No. 407	Imee Marcos	11 July 2019
11	Senate Bill No. 438	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	15 July 2019
12	Senate Bill No. 461	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	15 July 2019
13	Senate Bill No. 566	Nancy Binay	17 July 2019
14	Senate Bill No. 593	Ralph Recto	17 July 2019
15	Senate Bill No. 631	Francis Pangilinan	22 July 2019
16	Senate Bill No. 683	Koko Pimentel	22 July 2019
17	Senate Bill No. 787	Risa Hontiveros	25 July 2019
18	Senate Bill No. 801	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	29 July 2019
19	Senate Bill No. 937	Grace Poe	20 August 2019
20	Senate Bill No. 975	Nancy Binay	28 August 2019
21	Senate Bill No. 997	Manny Pacquiao	2 September 2019
22	Senate Bill No. 1094	Lito Lapid	2 October 2019
23	Senate Bill No. 1233	Ronald Dela Rosa Nancy Binay Joel Villanueva Cynthia Villar Manny Pacquiao Franklin Drilon Win Gatchalian Bong Go Risa Hontiveros Panfilo Lacson Lito Lapid Imee Marcos Francis Pangilinan Vicente Sotto III Francis Tolentino	12 December 2019
24	Senate Bill No. 1323	Migz Zubiri	4 February 2020
25	Senate Bill No. 1363	Manny Pacquiao	18 February 2020
26	Senate Bill No. 1369	Nancy Binay	19 February 2020
27	Senate Bill No. 1745	Joel Villanueva	28 July 2020
28	Senate Bill No. 1782	Imee Marcos	20 August 2020
29	Senate Bill No. 1848	Joel Villanueva	23 September 2020
30	Senate Bill No. 1949	Bong Go	14 December 2020
31	Senate Bill No. 2110	Ronald Dela Rosa	24 March 2021
32	Senate Bill No. 2234	Koko Pimentel Cynthia Villar	May 25, 2021

		Bong Go Francis Tolentino Imee Marcos Bong Revilla Ralph Recto Manny Pacquiao Migz Zubiri Joel Villanueva Ronald Dela Rosa Richard Gordon Franklin Drilon Sonny Angara Nancy Binay Win Gatchalian Risa Hontiveros Panfilo Lacson Kiko Pangilinan Grace Poe Vicente Sotto III	
33	Senate Bill No. 2264	Koko Pimentel	1 June 2021
34	Senate Bill No. 2357	Migz Zubiri	23 August 2021
35	Senate Bill No. 2369	Juan Edgardo Angara Ramon Revilla, Jr. Risa Hontiveros Nancy Binay Joel Villanueva Migz Zubiri Manny Pacquiao Cynthia Villar Bong Go Leila De Lima Win Gatchalian	26 August 2021

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Risa Hontiveros, a lady Senator like Nancy Binay also authored nine legislative measures consisting of five bills, three resolutions and one law (*see Table 16*). For the bills, she authored two of these alone which are Senate Bill No. 357 and Senate Bill No. 787. Meanwhile, Senate Bill No. 445, Senate Bill No. 631 and Senate Bill No. 731 are the ones which she authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*). Also, she authored three resolutions alone and these are Senate Resolution No. 445, Senate Resolution No. 631 and Senate Resolution No. 731 (*see Table 15*). She is as well one of the authors of a law which is Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Ramon Revilla, Jr. like Nancy Binay and Risa Hontiveros also authored nine legislative measures and these are seven bills, one resolution and one law (*see Table 16*). Among the seven bills, he authored five of them alone, and these are Senate Bill No. 73, Senate Bill No. 300, Senate Bill No. 438, Senate Bill No. 461 and Senate Bill No. 801. The other two bills are Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 which he authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*). The resolution he authored alone is Senate Resolution No. 448 (*see Table 15*). Ramon Revilla, Jr. is also one of the authors of a law which is Republic Act No. 11641. This law created the DMW.

Joel Villanueva is another senator who authored nine legislative measures with six bills, two resolutions and one law (*see Table 16*). For the bills, he authored three of them alone which

are Senate Bill No. 149, Senate Bill No. 1745 and Senate Bill No. 1848. For the other three bills, he authored these with other Senators, and these are Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 (*see Table 14*). Meanwhile, Senate Resolution No. 1233, Senate Resolution No. 2234 and Senate Resolution No. 2369 are the three which he authored with other Senators. Joel Villanueva also authored two resolutions alone and these are Senate Resolution No. 234 and Senate Resolution No. 286 (*see Table 15*). He is as well one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Coming in second as to the highest number of legislative measures authored with seven each are Bong Go and Manny Pacquiao.

Bong Go authored five bills, one resolution and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored one bill alone which is Senate Bill No. 1949. For the other four bills, he authored these with other Senators which are Senate Bill No. 202, Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 (*see Table No. 14*). He also authored Senate Resolution No. 5 with Ronald Dela Rosa (*see Table 16*). Bong Go is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Manny Pacquiao on the other hand authored six bills and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored three bills alone which are Senate Bill No. 384, Senate Bill No. 997 and Senate Bill No. 1363. The three other bills are Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2269 which he authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*). He is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641, the law that created the DMW.

The third best performing Senators as to the number of legislative measures authored are Imee Marcos, Grace Poe and Miguel Zubiri with six each.

Imee Marcos authored four bills. Two of these are Senate Bill No. 407 and Senate Bill No. 1782 which she authored alone while Senate Bill No. 1233 and Senate Bill No. 2234 are the two which she authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*). Ime Marcos authored Senate Resolution No. 269 alone (*see Table 15*) and she is as well one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Grace Poe authored three bills and three laws. Two of these bills are Senate Bill No. 317 and Senate Bill No. 937 which she authored alone. For the third bill, Senate Bill No. 2234, she authored this with other Senators (*see Table 14*). Among the Senators in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, Grace Poe stands out as the one who authored and/or sponsored three laws (*see Table 16*). She is one of

the authors of Republic Act No. 11641, the law that created the DMW. Also, she is the sponsor of two laws Republic Act No. 11760 and Republic Act No. 11761, the laws that created an extension office of MARINA in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur in Northern Philippines and the law that converted the satellite office of the MARINA located in Maasin City, Southern Leyte in the Visayas, into an extension office, respectively. These two laws which she sponsored originated from the House of Representatives which were sent to the Senate for the concurrence of the Senators. The other Senators are made so-sponsors of these two laws but Grace Poe was the one who sponsored these measures and she delivered the sponsorship speeches in the Senate on behalf of these laws.

Table 15. Resolutions authored by Senators of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress and date of filing in chronological order

No.	Name of the resolution	Author of the resolution	Date of filing
1	SR No. 5	Bong Go Ronald Dela Rosa	2 July 2019
2	SR No. 130	Francis Tolentino	10 September 2019
3	SR No. 202	Richard Gordon	5 November 2019
4	SR No. 234	Joel Villanueva	9 December 2019
5	SR No. 286	Joel Villanueva	14 January 2020
6	SR No. 296	Imee Marcos	23 January 2020
7	SR No. 417	Franklin Drilon	26 May 2020
8	SR No. 420	Nancy Binay	26 May 2020
9	SR No. 426	Leila De Lima	27 May 2020
10	SR No. 445	Risa Hontiveros	11 June 2020
11	SR No. 448	Ramon Revilla, Jr	15 June 2020
12	SR No. 497	Leila De Lima	17 August 2020
13	SR No. 514	Nancy Binay	7 September 2020
14	SR No. 631	Risa Hontiveros	1 February 2021
15	SR No. 731	Risa Hontiveros	24 May 2021
16	SR No. 856	Francis Tolentino	23 August 2021
17	SR No. 958	Ralph Recto	7 December 2021

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Francis Tolentino also authored six legislative measures with three bills two resolutions and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored all the three bills with other Senators. These are Senate Bill No. 202, Senate Bill No. 1233 and Senate Bill No. 2234 (*see Table 14*). Meanwhile he authored the two resolutions alone which are Senate Resolution No. 130 and Senate Resolution No. 856 (*see Table 15*). He is as well one of the authors of Republic Act 11641 or the law that created the DMW.



Miguel Zubiri likewise authored six legislative measures with five bills and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored two bills alone and these are Senate Bill No. 1323 and Senate Bill No. 2357. The other three bills are Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 which he authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*). He is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

The fourth best performing Senators as to the number of legislative measures authored is concerned are Ronald Dela Rosa, Koko Pimentel and Cynthia Villar with five each.

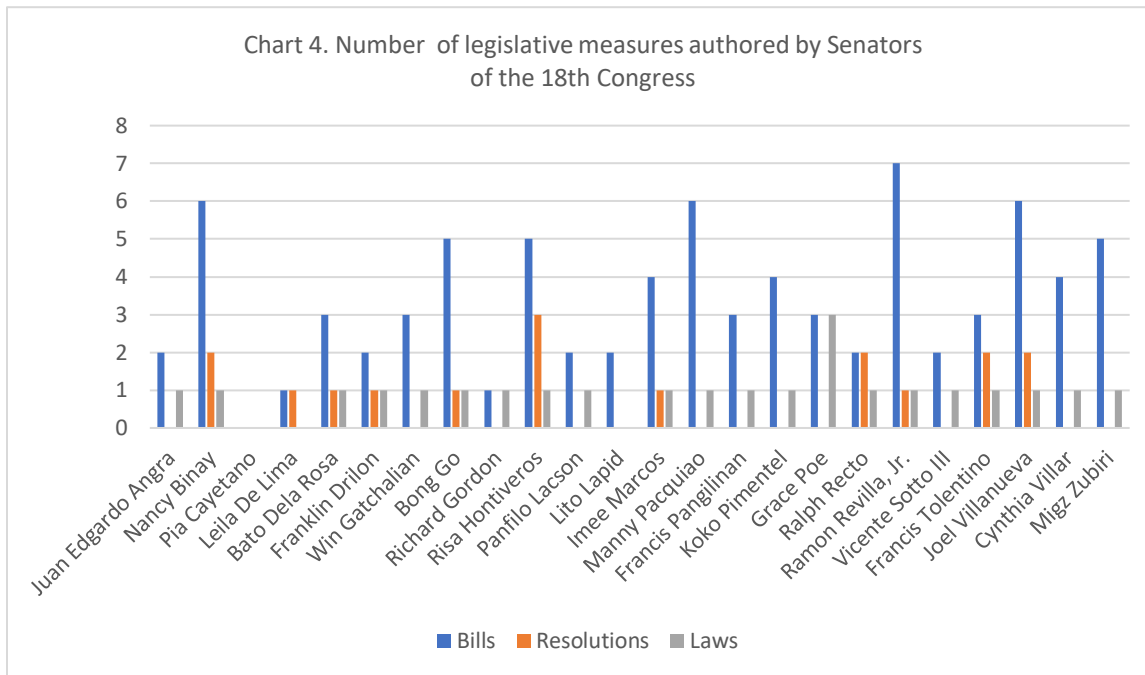
Ronald Dela Rosa authored three bills, one resolution and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored one bill alone which is Senate Bill No. 2110. For Senate Bill No. 1233 and Senate Bill No. 2234, these he authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*). He authored one resolution with Bong Go and this is Senate Resolution No. 5 (*see Table 15*). Ronald Dela Rosa is also one of the authors of Republic Act 11641, the law that created the DMW.

Koko Pimentel for his part authored four bills and one law (*see Table 16*). For the bills, he authored three of these alone and these are Senate Bill No. 92, Senate Bill No. 683 and Senate Bill No. 2264. He however authored Senate Bill No. 2234 with other Senators (*see Table 14*). Koko Pimentel is likewise one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641. This law created the DMW.

Cynthia Villar meanwhile authored four bills. She authored one of these bills alone which is Senate Bill No. 141. On the other hand, she authored Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 with other Senators (*see Table 14*). She is also one of the authors of a law, Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

The fifth best performing Senators as to the number of legislative measures authored is concerned are Franklin Drilon, Win Gatchalian, Francis Pangilinan and Ralph Recto with four each.

Franklin Drilon authored two bills, one resolution and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored the two bills with other Senators which are Senate Bill No. 1233 and Senate Bill No. 2234 (*see Table 14*). Meanwhile he authored one resolution alone which is Senate Resolution No. 417 (*see Table 15*). Franklin Drilon is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law creating the DMW.



Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Win Gatchalian meanwhile authored three bills and one law (*see Table 16*). The three bills are Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 which he authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*). He is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Francis Pangilinan for his part authored three bills and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored one bill alone and that is Senate Bill No. 631. He however authored the two other bills with other Senators. These bills are Senate Bill No. 1233 and Senate Bill No. 2234 (*see Table 14*). Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW also counts Franklin Pangilinan as one of its authors.

Ralph Recto authored two bills, one resolution and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored one of the bills alone and this is Senate Bill No. 593. He however authored Senate Bill No. 2234 with other Senators (*see Table 14*). Ralph Recto is also one of the authors of the law creating the DMW or Republic Act 11641.

The sixth best performing Senators as to the number of legislative measures authored is concerned are Juan Edgardo Angara, Leila De Lima, Panfilo Lacson, Vicente Sotto III and Richard Gordon with three each.

Table 16. Breakdown of legislative measures authored by Senators of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress

No.	Name of Senator	Bills	Total Bills	Resolutions	Total Res'ns	Laws	Total Laws	Grand Total
1	Juan Edgardo Angara	SB No. 2234, SB No. 2369	2	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	3
2	Nancy Binay	SB No. 566, SB No. 975, SB No. 1233, SB No. 1369, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2369	6	SR No. 420, SR No. 514	2	RA No. 11641	1	9
3	Pia Cayetano	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Leila De Lima	SB No. 2369	1	SR No. 426, SR No. 497	2	0	0	3
5	Ronald Dela Rosa	SB No. 1233, SB No. 2110, SB No. 2234	3	SR No. 5	1	RA No. 11641	1	5
6	Franklin Drilon	SB No. 1233, SN No. 2234	2	SR No. 417	1	RA No. 11641	1	4
7	Win Gatchalian	SB No. 1233, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2369	3	0	0	RA No. 1164	1	4
8	Bong Go	SB No. 202, SB No. 1233, SB No. 1949, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2364	5	SR No. 5	1	RA No. 11641	1	7
9	Richard Gordon	SB No. 2234	1	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	2
10	Risa Hontiveros	SB No. 357, SB No. 787, SB No. 1233, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2369	5	SR No. 445, SR No. 631, SR No. 731	3	RA No. 11641	1	9
11	Panfilo Lacson	SB No. 1233, SB No. 2234	2	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	3
12	Lito Lapid	SB No. 1094, SB No. 1233	2	0	0	0	0	2
13	Imee Marcos	SB No. 407, SB No. 1233, SB No. 1782, SB No. 2234	4	SR No. 296	1	RA No. 11641	1	6
14	Manny Pacquiao	SB No. 384, SB No. 997, SB No. 1233, SB No. 1363, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2369	6	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	7
15	Francis Pangilinan	SB No. 631, SB No. 1233, SB No. 2234	3	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	4
16	Koko Pimentel	SB No. 92, SB No. 683, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2264	4	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	5
17	Grace Poe	SB No. 317, SB No. 937, SB No. 2234	3	0	0	RA No. 11641, RA No. 11760, RA No. 11761	3	6
18	Ralph Recto	SB No. 593, SB No. 2234	2	SR No. 202, SR No. 958	2	RA No. 11641	1	4
19	Ramon Revilla, Jr.	SB No. 73, SB No. 300, SB No. 438, SB No. 461, SB No. 801, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2369	7	SR No. 448	1	RA No. 11641	1	9
20	Vicente Sotto III	Sb No. 1233, SB No. 2234	2	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	3
21	Francis Tolentino	SB No. 202, SB No. 1233, SB No. 2234	3	SR No. 130, SR No. 856	2	RA No. 11641	1	6
22	Joel Villanueva	SB No. 149, SB No. 1233, SB No. 1745, SB No. 1848, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2369	6	SR No. 234, SR No. 286	2	RA No. 11641	1	9
23	Cynthia Villar	SB No. 141, SB No. 1233, Sb No. 2234, SB No. 2369	4	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	5
24	Miguel Zubiri	SB No. 1233, SB No. 1323, SB No. 2234, SB No. 2357, SB No. 2369	5	0	0	RA No. 11641	1	6

Source: Senate of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/>

Juan Edgardo Angara authored two bills and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored the two bills, Senate Bill No. 2234 and Senate Bill No. 2369 with other Senators (*see Table 14*). He is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Leila De Lima authored one bill and two resolutions (*see Table 16*). She authored Senate Bill No. 2369 with other Senators (*see Table 14*). She meanwhile authored two resolutions alone. These resolutions are, Senate Resolution No. 426 and Senate Resolution No. 497 (*see Table 15*).

Panfilo Lacson on the other hand authored two bills and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored Senate Bill No. 1233 and Senate Bill 2234 with other Senators (*see Table 14*). He is also one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Vicente Sotto III also authored two bills and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored Senate Bill No. 1233 and Senate Bill No. 2234 with other Senators (*see Table 14*). He is likewise counted as one of the authors of Republic Act No. 11641 or the law that created the DMW.

Richard Gordon for his part authored one bill, one resolution and one law (*see Table 16*). He authored Senate Bill No. 2234 with other Senators (*see Table 14*) but authored one resolution, Senate Resolution No. 202 alone (*see Table 15*). He is also one of the authors of the law creating the DMW or Republic Act No. 11641.

The Senator who authored the fewest number of legislative measures is Lito Lapid. He only authored two bills (*see Table 16*). One of these bills is Senate Bill No. 1094 which he authored alone and the other one is Senate Bill No. 1233 which he authored with other Senators (*see Table 14*).

Meanwhile, Pia Cayetano did not author any legislative measure concerning the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress.

## **1.2. The House of Representatives**

This section will discuss the number of legislative measures authored by Party-list Representatives starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress in July 2016 up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress in June 2022. The timeframe for the reckoning of the legislative measures for the House of Representatives spans six years. Like what have been done with the Senators, the Party-list Representatives on behalf of the Party-list groups they are representing, will be evaluated in two batches.

### 1.2.1. The 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines (July 2016 – June 2019)

The first batch of Party-list groups which will be evaluated are those who won during the 9 May 2016 Elections and filed for re-election after three years during the 13 May 2019 Elections. The reckoning period as to the performance of the Party-list groups here will be three years from July 2016 to June 2019 which exactly fits to the timeframe of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress.

After the 9 May 2016 Elections, 46 Party-list groups (*see Table 17*) were proclaimed by the COMELEC (Adel, 2016) to have at least one representative in the Lower House.

Now, these 46 Party-list groups will be evaluated as to their performance from July 2016 to June 2019, taking into account the number of legislative measures their representatives authored in the Lower House.

For the period July 2016 to June 2019, there were 9,216 bills authored by the members of the House of Representatives. Out of these bills, 48 aim to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs and authored by Representatives of the different Party-list groups. Furthermore, there were 2,666 resolutions and out of this total, 48 seek to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs which were also authored by the Representatives of the Party-list groups. Noticeably, there were a number of bills and resolutions that seek to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs authored by District Representatives but these were not included in the count of legislative measures for this dissertation. The reason for this is that, Representatives of legislative districts are not a concern of this dissertation, because the FLEs or OFWs cannot vote for them during elections.

Table 17. Breakdown of legislative measures authored by Party-list groups during the 17th Congress (July 2016 – June 2019)

No.	Name of Party-list group	No. of bills authored	No. of resolutions authored	No. of laws authored	Total of legislative measures authored
1	AKO BICOL	HB05685, HBO6461, HB06649, HB08151, HB08172	HR00042, HR01340	0	7
2	GABRIELA	HB01790, HB01791, HB01792, HB08110	HR00462, HR00540, HR00541, HR00625, HR01025, HR01056, HR01708, HR01830	RA11227	13
3	1-PACMAN	HB00288, HB02153, HB04767, HB05543, HB09202	HR00250	RA10928	7
4	ACT-TEACHERS	HB04767	HR00462, HR00625, HR01025, HR01708	RA10928	6
5	SENIOR CITIZENS	HB08110, HB08908, HB09025, HB09032	0	RA11227, RA11299	6
6	KABAYAN	HB04767, 06649	HROO250, HR00807	RA10928	5
7	AGRI	HB04767	0	RA10928	2
8	PBA	HB01356, HB04767, HB05685, HB08908, HB09202	0	RA10928, RA11299	7

9	BUHAY	HB05197, HB05685, HB06649, HB09025	0	0	4
10	ABONO	HB04767	HR00250	RA10928	3
11	AMIN	HB04767	HR00250	RA10928	3
12	COOP-NATCCO	HB04767, HB05685, HB06649	HR00250	RA10928	5
13	AKBAYAN	HB04360, HB04767, HB05685, HB06649	HR00250, HR00807	RA10928	7
14	BAYAN MUNA	0	HR00625, HR01025, HR01708	0	3
15	AGAP	0	0	0	0
16	AN WARAY	0	0	0	0
17	CIBAC	0	0	0	0
18	AAMBIS-OWA	HB05685, HBHB06649, HB09025	0	0	3
19	KALINGA	HB02791, HB04767	HR02347	RA10928	4
20	A TEACHER, INC.	HB04767, HB05685	HR01485	RA10928	4
21	YACAP	0	HR00250	0	1
22	DIWA	HB00078, HB00673, HB00674, HB00744, HB03255, HB03262, HB04767, HB04986, HB05685, HB08565, HB08574	0	RA10928	12
23	TUCP	HB04525, HB05685, HB06649, HB09025	0	0	4
24	ABANG LINGKOD	HB04767, HB09025, HB09032	0	RA10928	4
25	LPGMA	HB04767	0	RA10928	2
26	ALONA	0	0	0	0
27	1-SAGIP	HB03737, HB03746	0	0	2
28	BUTIL	HB04767	HR00250	RA10928	3
29	ACTS-OFW	HB00192, HB00193, HB01301, HB01302, HB02330, HB04603, HB04767, HB05197, HB05499, HB05585, HB06649, HB08110, HB08588, HB09025, HB09202	HR00013, HR00014, HR00063, HR00250, HR00552, HR00558, HR00609, HR00660, HR00693, HR00694, HR01071, HR01118, HR01135, HR01276, HR01444, HR01500, HR01617, HR01704, HR01976, HR02000, HR02015, HR02035, HR02183	RA10928, RA11227	40
30	ANAK PAWIS	0	HR00625, HR01025	0	2
31	ANG KABUHAYAN	0	0	0	0
32	ANGKLA	HB00457, HB01028, HB05685, HB06519, HB06649, HB08110, HB08151, HB08172, HB08908, HB09025, HB09032	HR00264, HR01485, HR01652, HR01749, HR01750, HR01829, HR02048, HR02291, HR02292	RA11227, RA11299	22
33	MATA	HB04767, HB05685, HB06649, HB09025, HB09202	HR00250	RA10928	7
34	1-CARE	0	HR00250	0	1
35	ANAC-IP	HB04767	0	RA10928	2
36	ABS	0	0	0	0
37	KABATAAN	HB09025, HB09032	HR00462, HR00625, HR01025, HR01708	0	6
38	BH (BAGONG HENERASYON)	HB04767	0	RA10928	2
39	AASENSO	HB04767, HB05685, HB08110, HB08151, HB08172, HB09025	HR00172, HR00250	RA10928, RA11227	10
40	SBP	HB04767	HR00250	RA10928	3
41	MAGDALO	HB05470, HB08414, HB08908, HB09202	HR01076	RA11299	6
42	1-ANG EDUKASYON	HB01439, HB04767, HB06006, HB09202	HR00250, HR01477	RA10928	7
43	MANILA TEACHERS	HB04767	HR00250	RA10928	3
44	KUSUG TAUSUG	0	HR02347	0	1
45	AANGAT TAYO	0	HR00250	0	1
46	AGBIAG	HB04767	HR00250	RA10928	3

Source: House of Representatives of the Philippines <https://www.congress.gov.ph/legis/>

It will be noted that among the 46 Party-list groups, the one which authored the highest number of legislative measures is the ACTS- OFW Party-list group with 40 (*see Table 17*). This Party-list is an alliance of OFW groups. With this, its advocacy centers on the promotion of the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs around the world, the sector it claims to represent. On the other hand, the party-list group which authored the second highest number of legislative measures is the ANGKLA Party-list group with 22 (*see Table 17*). Angkla is a Tagalog word which means anchor. With the anchor as its organizational symbol in many of its promotional materials, the advocacy of the group fittingly centers on safeguarding and promoting the interests and welfare of the Filipino seafarers. The contents of the legislative measures its Representative authored in Congress is an indicator of this advocacy. GABRIELA is the Party-list group which authored the third highest number of legislative measures with 13 (*see Table 17*). As can be gleaned from its initiatives in the past, Gabriela tilt to the promotion of women's rights and welfare. Because of this, it cannot dissociate itself from promoting the rights and welfare of female OFWs, and this is shown in the number of legislative measures the group promoted and authored in Congress. Meanwhile DIWA is the Party-list group which authored the fourth highest number of legislative measures with 12 (*see Table 17*). Diwa is a Filipino word which means spirit in English and to its credit, a lot of initiatives concerning the promotion of workers' interests and welfare, including FLEs or OFWs had been advanced by the group in the past. AASENSO is the Party-list group which authored the fifth highest number of legislative measures with 10 (*see Table 17*). Its name AASENSO is a Filipino word which means will prosper or prosperity in English. AASENSO Party-list can also be said as a group that takes unto itself the promotion of the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs as an important advocacy.

Meanwhile, other Party-list groups which authored less than 10 legislative measures (*see Table 18 and Table 22*) concerning the FLEs or OFWs are PBA with eight, AKO BICOL, 1-PACMAN, AKBAYAN, MATA and 1-ANG EDUKASYON with seven each, ACT-TEACHERS, SENIOR CITIZENS, KABATAAN and MAGDALO with six each, KABAYAN and COOP-NATCCO with five each, BUHAY, AMIN, KALINGA, A TEACHERS, INC., TUCP and ABANG LINGKOD with four each, ABONO, BAYAN MUNA, AAMBIS-OWA, BUTIL, SBP, MANILA TEACHERS and AGBIAG with three each, AGRI, LPGMA, 1-SAGIP, ANAK PAWIS, ANAC-IP and BH (BAGONG HENERASYON) with two each, and YACAP, 1-CARE and KUSUG TAUSUG with one each.

The following party-list groups meanwhile, did not author any legislative measure related to the concerns of FLEs or OFWs during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, AGAP, AN WARAY, CIBAC, ALONA, ANG KABUHAYAN and ABS (*see Table 18 and Table 22*).

### **1.2.2. The 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines (July 2019 - June 2022)**

The Party-list groups that will be evaluated here are those which won during the 13 May 2019 Elections. This will be the second batch of Party-list groups which will be evaluated as to their performance in the House of Representatives in terms of the number of legislative measures they authored from July 2019 to June 2022, a period of three years which also fits exactly to the timeframe of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress. The results of the 9 May 2022 Elections as to the number of votes each of these Party-list groups garnered from the FLEs or OFWs, will be plotted against the number of legislative measures each of these Party-list groups authored during this Congress, in order to see whether there is a correlation between the performance of legislators and the number of votes they garnered from the FLEs or OFWs during the 9 May 2022 Elections.

The Party-list groups, 51 in all (*see Table 18*) were proclaimed winners by the COMELEC (Tomacruz, 2019). Each of the Party-list group will be evaluated as to the number of legislative measures authored during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress from July 2019 to June 2022.

As can be observed, some of the Party-list groups during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress also served during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 17 and Table 18*) which means they were reelected during the 13 May 2019 Elections. But just the same, all these 51 Party-list groups will be evaluated according to the number of legislative measures each one authored in the House of Representatives during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress from July 2019 to June 2022.

For the period from July 2019 to June 2022, there were 10,856 bills authored by the members of the House of Representatives. Out of these bills, 44 aim to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs and authored by Representatives of the different Party-list groups. In addition to this, there were 2,680 resolutions and out of this total, 21 seek to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs. There were bills and resolutions that seek to promote the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs authored by Representatives of legislative districts but these were not included in the count. As already mentioned, the reason for this is that, Representatives of legislative districts are not a concern of this dissertation, because the FLEs or OFWs cannot vote for them during elections.



Table 18. Breakdown of legislative measures authored by Party-list groups during the 18th Congress (July 2019 – June 2022)

No.	Name of Party-list group	No. of bills authored	No. of resolutions authored	No. of laws authored	Total legislative measures authored
1	ACT-CIS	HB01540, HB01541, HB02319, HB03282, HB05832, HB06610, HB07802, HB08057, HB10802	HR0172	RA11641	11
2	BAYAN MUNA	HB05043, HB06588, HB07271, HB07802, HB08057, HB10629	HR00827, HR00875, HR00844, HR00885, HR00887, HR01065, HR01095, HR01169, HR01702, HR02475, HR02554	0	17
3	AKO BICOL	HB00084	0	0	1
4	CIBAC	HB03216, HB03217, HB05832, HB07418, HB08057, HB10629, HB10802,	0	RA11641	8
5	ANG PROBINSYANO	HB05832, HB07451, HB07454, HB08057, HB09281	0	RA11641	6
6	1-PACMAN	HB05258, HB05832, HB07802, HB07951, HB10802	HR01095	RA11641	7
7	MARINO	HB02318, HB05142, HB05832, HB08778, HB06779, HB07802, HB08057, HB08562, HB08563, HB08564, HB09457, HB10802	HR00842, HR01344, HR01702, HR02367	RA11641	17
8	PROBINSYANO AKO	1HB05483	0	0	1
9	SENIOR CITIZENS	0	HR01027	0	1
10	MAGSASAKA	HB10629	0	0	1
11	APEC	HB07802, HB07951, HB10629	0	0	3
12	GABRIELA	HB05043, HB06588, HB07271, HB07802, HB08057	HR00827, HR00885, HR01065, HR01095, HR01169	0	10
13	AN WARAY	0	0	0	0
14	COOP-NATCCO	HB07802	0	0	1
15	ACT TEACHERS	HB05043, HB06588, HB07271, HB07802, HB07951, HB08057	HR00827, HR00885, HR01065, HR01095, HR01169	0	11
16	PHILRECA	HB10629	0	0	1
17	AKO BISAYA	0	0	0	0
18	TINGOG SINIRANGAN	HB03274, HB05832	0	RA11641	3
19	ABONO	0	0	0	0
20	BUHAY	0	0	0	0
21	DUTERTE YOUTH	0	0	0	0
22	KALINGA	HB10629	0	0	1
23	PBA	HB07802, HB07951, HB10802	0	0	3
24	ALONA	HB02850, HB05832	0	RA11641	3
25	RECOBODA	HB10629	0	0	1
26	BH (BAGONG HENERASYON)	0	0	0	0
27	BAHAY	0	0	0	0
28	CWS	HB05832	0	RA11641	2
29	ABANG LINGKOD	HB00530, HB05832, HB06610, HB07802	0	RA11641	5
30	A TEACHER	HB05832	0	RA11641	2
31	BHW	HB10629	0	0	1
32	SAGIP	HB00150	0	0	1
33	TUCP	HB05256, HB06610, HB07802, HB07951, HB08057, HB10802	HR00420, HR00641, HR00642, HR00844, HR01095, HR01344, HR01702, HR02009	RA11641	15
34	MAGDALO	0	0	0	0
35	GP	HB05832, HB07951	0	RA11641	3
36	MANILA TEACHERS	HB05832, HB07802, HB07951	0	RA11641	4
37	RAM	HB04165, HB05832	0	RA11641	3

38	ANAKALUSUGAN	HB05832, HB10629	0	RA11641	3
39	AKO PADAYON	HB05832, HB07802, HB07951	0	RA11641	4
40	AAMBIS-OWA	HB05832, HB07802, HB07951	0	RA11641	4
41	KUSUG TAUSUG	0	0	0	0
42	DUMPER PTDA	0	0	0	0
43	TGP	HB05832	0	RA11641	2
44	PATROL	HB05832	0	RA11641	2
45	AMIN	HB05832	0	RA11641	2
46	AGAP	HB05832	0	RA11641	2
47	LPGMA	0	0	0	0
48	OFW FAMILY	HB03939, HB05832, HB06610, HB06921, HB07802, HB10802	1HR01702	RA11641	8
49	KABAYAN	HB04065, HB07802, HB07951	HR01650	RA11641	5
50	DIWA	HB00272, HB00277, HB00851, HB05832, HB08057	0	RA11641	6
51	KABATAAN	HB05043, HB06588, HB07271, HB07802, HB07951, HB08057	HR00827, HR00885, HR01065, HR01095, HR01169, HR01702	0	12

Source: House of Representatives of the Philippines <https://www.congress.gov.ph/legis/>

It can be gathered from Table 18 that the Party-list group BAYAN MUNA and MARINO authored the highest number of legislative measures at 17 each. BAYAN MUNA authored six bills and 11 resolutions while MARINO authored 12 bills, four resolutions and one law. BAYAN MUNA is a Filipino word which means country first or nation first in English. The organization is seen by many as a left-leaning group sympathetic to the communist movement in the country. In the past, it had been accused of helping or financing the armed insurgency being waged by the NPA or the New People's Army (Lalu, 2022), which is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). MARINO is a Filipino word which means marine or mariner in English. The group claims to be a Party-list representing the Filipino seafarers.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines or TUCP comes in with the second highest number of legislative measures authored with 15. It authored six bills, eight resolutions and one law (*see Table 18*). Coming in third is KABATAAN, a Filipino word which means children in English with 12 legislative measures authored, consisting of six bills and six resolutions (*see Table 18*). ACT TEACHERS and ACT-CIS come in fourth with 11 legislative measures that each authored. ACT TEACHERS is a Party-list that claims to represent the teachers and it authored six bills and five resolutions. ACT-CIS on the other hand which is an acronym that stands for Anti-Crime and Terrorism Community Involvement and Support, authored nine bills, one resolution and one law (*see Table 18*). Meanwhile, GABRIELA comes in fifth with 10 legislative measures authored consisting of five bills and five resolutions.

As reflected in Table 18, the following Party-list groups authored less than 10 legislative measures. CIBAC and OFW FAMILY authored eight each. CIBAC authored seven bills and one law while OFW FAMILY authored six bills, one resolution and one law. 1-PACMAN authored seven, with five bills, one resolution and one law. For its part, ANG PROBINSYANO authored six, with five bills and one law. DIWA authored six legislative measures consisting of five bills and one law. ABANG LINGKOD authored five, consisting of four bills and one law. Meanwhile KABAYAN also authored five legislative measures of three bills, one resolution and one law. MANILA TEACHERS on the other hand authored four legislative measures of three bills and one law. AKO PADAYON also authored four legislative measures consisting of three bills and one law. This is also the same with AAMBIS-OWA which authored three bills and one law or a total of four legislative measures. Next come APEC, TINGOG SINIRANGAN, PBA, ALONA, GP, RAM and ANAKALUSUGAN authoring three legislative measures each. APEC authored three bills, TINGOG SINIRANGAN authored two bills and one law, PBA authored three bills. Meanwhile ALONA, GP, RAM and ANAKALUSUGAN all authored the same number of legislative measures, with two bills and one law each.

CWS, A TEACHER, TGP, PATROL, AMIN and AGAP authored two legislative measures each consisting of one bill and one law.

For their part, the following authored one bill each, AKO BICOL, PROBINSYANO AKO, SENIOR CITIZENS, COOP-NATCCO, PHILRECA, KALINGA, RECOBODA, BHW and SAGIP, while MAGSASAKA authored one resolution.

Meanwhile, the following party-list groups did not file any legislative measure concerning FLEs or OFWs during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, AN WARAY, AKO BISAYA, ABONO, BUHAY, DUTERTE YOUTH, BH (BAGONG HENERASYON), BAHAY, MAGDALO, KUSUG TAUSUG, DUMPER PTDA and LPGMA. These Party-list groups obviously have their specific advocacies wherein they also advanced the interests and welfare of the respective sectors they claim to represent. And rightly so, they cannot be faulted for that.

## **2. Performance of legislators**

### **2.1. Senators**

The reckoning period for the performance of Senators is from July 2013 up to June 2022. There were two batches of Senators evaluated. The first batch of Senators were those who won during the 13 May 2013 Elections. For this batch the reckoning period of their performances is from July 2013 up to June 2019 or a period of six years. The second batch of Senators were those who won during the 9 May 2016 Elections. For this second batch, the reckoning period is from July 2016 up to June 2022 also a period of six years.

There were twelve Senators who were elected to the Senate during the 13 May 2013 Elections and they joined the other 12 Senators elected during the 10 May 2010 Elections. There are 24 Senators comprising the Philippine Senate, at any given time. So, again for emphasis, the 24 Senators who comprised the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines were the 12 Senators elected during the 10 May 2010 Elections and the 12 Senators who were elected during the 13 May 2013 Elections.

Concerning their performances, the Senators are subjected to the same length of time, that is six years, in order to assess their legislative performances objectively. After six years when they ran for re-election, their performances in the polls were assessed, in order to see whether or not the Senators who filed, sponsored or authored more legislative measures also got more votes from the FLEs or OFWs.

The 12 Senators elected during the 13 May 2013 elections were the first batch assessed as to their performances plotted against the votes that they garnered from the FLEs or OFWs (*see Table 19*). These 12 Senators with their surnames alphabetically listed here are Senator Sonny Angara, Senator Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Senator Nancy Binay, Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, Senator Joseph Victor Ejercito, Senator Francis Escudero, Senator Gregorio Honasan, Senator Loren Legarda, Senator Koko Pimentel, Senator Grace Poe, Senator Antonio Trillanes and Senator Cynthia Villar. These Senators are assessed as to their performance during the 13 May 2019 Elections. The assessment is based on the number of legislative measures they filed, authored or sponsored in the Senate against the number of votes they garnered from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs.

As already hinted earlier, the assessment was done in a manner by giving every Senator a level playing field, that is by subjecting them to the same standards so as to come up with an objective result. First, time element is taken into consideration here. This means that the assessment period should be the same length of time, which is six years for all the 12 Senators elected during the 13 May 2013 Elections. For this reason, the number of legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored by each Senator from July 2013 up to June 2019, a period of six years will be summed up, and the total legislative measures then represents the Senator's performance. Second, they must stand for re-election after six years in office, as such election will be the basis of evaluating them concerning the number of votes they garnered from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs. However, among the 12 Senators whose names are mentioned in the preceding paragraph, only seven of them are similarly situated based on the two standards just mentioned. For this reason, only these seven Senators will be assessed at the same time – Juan Edgardo Angara, Paolo Benigno Aquino VI, Nancy Binay, Joseph Victor Ejercito, Koko Pimentel, Grace Poe and Cynthia Villar. These seven are first-term Senators, meaning, this is the first time they ran for the Senate as lawmakers, and therefore qualified to run for re-election. Therefore, at the end of 6 years, they were assessed after the results of the 13 May 2019 Elections came out.

The cases of the other five Senators – Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero, Gregorio Honasan, Loren Legarda and Antonio Trillanes, who also won in the 13 May 2013 National Elections, were not assessed together with the other seven Senators simply because they did not stand for re-election during the 13 May 2019 National Elections and for this reason, there is no basis to assess their electoral performance. The reason why they did not stand for re-election during the 13 May 2019 National Elections is that, all of them are barred by law to run for re-election because they already maximized the two consecutive terms allowed for them to serve office, for no Senator shall serve for more than two consecutive terms (Philippine Constitution of 1987, art. VI, § 4, 1987). So, upon the expiration of their two-term stint as Senators, as a stopgap measure, most of them ran and filed candidacy for other elective posts while others engaged in some other professional undertakings. Alan Peter Cayetano ran as representative of Taguig City, Francis Escudero ran as Governor of Sorsogon Province, Gregorio Honasan served as the Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Loren Legarda ran as representative of the Lone District of Antique, and Antonio Trillanes taught at the College of Public Administration of the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

After assessing the performance of the seven Senators - Juan Edgardo Angara, Paolo Benigno Aquino VI, Nancy Binay, Joseph Victor Ejercito, Koko Pimentel, Grace Poe and Cynthia Villar, there is a general pattern that those who filed, authored or sponsored higher number of legislative measures, also got higher votes from the overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs.

Among the seven Senators, Cynthia Villar filed, authored or sponsored the highest number of legislative measures with 29 – 22 during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and seven during the 17th Congress (*see Table 10 and Table 13*). Among the seven Senators being assessed, she also got the highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs with 11,977 votes (*see Table 19*), when she ran for re-election during the 13 May 2019 Elections. The performance of Cynthia Villar as a first term Senator is quite impressive and with this, she can be considered as a true promoter of FLEs or OFWs' interests and welfare. Aside from his official work in the Senate by filing legislative measures for the benefit of the FLEs or OFWs, Cynthia Villa is the founding Chairperson of the Villar Social Initiative for Poverty Alleviation and Governance (Villar SIPAG) a non-profit NGO, in which helping OFWs is one of its advocacies. In the website of Villar SIPAG, its concern for OFWs can be felt in the heading of its webpage, stressing the statements, a kind of motto which states, *“One less child on the street. One less person without a job. One less family without a home. One less Filipino stranded overseas. Means one more Filipino saved from poverty.”* One of the various programs of the Villar SIPAG concerns assistance to OFWs. There is no wonder then that Cynthia Villar takes the issue of FLEs or OFWs by heart and this shows in her performance at the Senate. For the part of the seafarers, Cynthia Villar is very instrumental in the passage of Republic Act No. 10706 or An Act Protecting Seafarers and other Workers Against Ambulance Chasing and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof. Her firm resolve for the passage of this law can be gleaned from her efforts in filing two bills of similar titles, Senate Bill No. 2627 and Senate Bill No. 2835 which she filed together with Juan Edgardo Angara on 3 February 2015 and 9 June 2015 respectively (*see Table 8*). Refiling a bill sends home the message of the urgency of the measure being advanced, although there could be some other practical reasons in doing so. But then, with her performance during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, Cynthia Villar can be said as a true promoter of the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs.

The pattern observed in Cynthia Villar's case in which she got the highest number of legislative measures filed, authored and sponsored thereby getting the highest number of votes

from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs can also be seen in the case of Juan Edgardo Angara who had the second highest number of legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored with 22 – 12 during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and 10 during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 10 and Table 13*). Among the seven Senators being assessed, he also got the second highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs with 8,468 votes (*see Table 19*) during the 13 May 2019 Elections. As already mentioned, Juan Edgardo Angara, like Cynthia Villar is also a firm advocate of FLEs or OFWs' interests and welfare. Together with Cynthia Villar, they filed two bills, Senate Bill No. 2627 on 3 February 2015 and Senate Bill No. 2835 on 9 June 2015 (*see Table 8*), which no doubt hastened the signing of Republic Act No. 10706, or the law that penalizes ambulance chasing or barratry, by former President Benigno Aquino III on 26 November 2015. Juan Edgardo Angara can also be said as a promoter of the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs.

The cases of Joseph Victor Ejercito and Nancy Binay who got the third highest number of legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored with 18 each – nine during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and nine during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress for Binay, and 11 during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and seven during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress for Ejercito (*see Table 10 and Table 13*), somehow deviate from the pattern. This can especially be said in the case of Nancy Binay because among the seven of them being assessed, she got the lowest number of votes from FLEs or OFWs with only 3,113 votes (*see Table 19*). Joseph Victor Ejercito on the other hand got the fifth highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs with 5,516 (*see Table 19*).

The case of Grace Poe to some extent also follows the general pattern, which is closely similar to that of Cynthia Villar and Juan Edgardo Angara. Although she has the fourth highest number of legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored with 16 – nine during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and seven during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 10 and Table 13*) she got the third highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs with 8,436 votes (*see Table 19*).

Koko Pimentel's case is similar to that of Grace Poe. He has the fifth highest number of legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored with 14 – eight during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and six during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 10 and Table 15*). For this, he got the fourth highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs with 8,298 (*see Table 19*). The case of Paolo Benigno Aquino VI is an exact conformity to the pattern like that of Cynthia Villar and Juan Edgardo Angara. He has the sixth highest number of legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored with eight – five

during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress and three during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 10 and Table 13*) and he likewise got the sixth highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs with 4,808 (*see Table 19*).

Table 19. The first batch of seven Senators evaluated with the number of legislative measures authored and the number of votes garnered from the overseas Filipinos

Names of Senators in alphabetical order	Number of legislative measures authored from July 2013 to June 2016	Number of legislative measures authored from July 2016 to June 2019	Total legislative measures authored from July 2013 to June 2019	Rank as to legislative measures authored from July 2013 to June 2019	Votes from overseas Filipinos during the 13 May 2019 Elections	Rank as to votes from overseas Filipinos during the 13 May 2019 Elections
Juan Edgardo Angara	12	10	22	2	8,468	2
Paolo Benigno Aquino IV	5	3	8	6	4,808	6
Nancy Binay	9	9	18	3	3,113	7
Joseph Victor Ejercito	11	7	18	3	5,516	5
Koko Pimentel	8	6	14	5	8,298	4
Grace Poe	9	7	16	4	8,436	3
Cynthia Villar	22	7	29	1	11,977	1

Sources: Senate of the Republic of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/> and the COMELEC <https://comelec.gov.ph/>

So, from this data concerning the first batch of Senators evaluated, it can somehow be interpreted that those who filed more legislative measures also got higher votes from the FLEs or OFWs. Since the case of Nancy Binay largely deviates from the pattern, there could definitely be other factors or variables at play when FLEs or OFWs cast their votes for some Senators.



Meanwhile, the second batch of 12 Senators elected during the 13 May 2019 Elections will likewise be evaluated as to the number of legislative measures they filed, plotted against the number of votes they garnered from the overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs, during the 9 May 2022 National Elections. These 12 Senators are those who won during the 9 May 2016 Elections - Leila De Lima, Franklin Drilon, Sherwin Gatchalian, Richard Gordon, Risa Hontiveros, Panfilo Lacson, Manny Pacquiao, Francis Pangilinan, Ralph Recto, Vicente Sotto, Joel Villanueva and Juan Miguel Zubiri. The reckoning period of their performance is from July 2016 after winning the 9 May 2016 Elections, up to June 2022 which is also a period of six years.

For this batch of Senators, three are not qualified for re-election because of term limit prohibition, they are Franklin Drilon, Ralph Recto and Vicente Sotto III. And then, among the nine remaining Senators who are qualified for re-election, three ran for higher office, Panfilo Lacson for President, Manny Pacquiao also for President and Francis Pangilinan for Vice President. So, these six Senators are not included in the evaluation because, there is no way how they will be evaluated in the same way by using the same standards as that for the other six remaining Senators. For this reason, only the six remaining Senators will be evaluated here. They are Leila De Lima, Win Gatchalian, Richard Gordon, Risa Hontiveros, Joel Villanueva and Miguel Zubiri.

Among the six Senators who will be evaluated, Joel Villanueva ranked first as to the number of legislative measures authored with 19 - 10 during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and nine during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 13 and Table 16*). His case deviates from the pattern for he only garnered 9,277 votes from the overseas Filipinos. Among the six Senators being evaluated, this number of votes ranks fourth only (*see Table 20*).

Risa Hontiveros, the next best performing Senator in so far as the number of legislative measures is concerned, authored a total of 12 - three during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and nine during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 13 and Table 16*). As to the number of votes garnered, she got 10,540 (*see Table 20*) which is the third highest number of votes among the six of them being evaluated. With this, it can be interpreted that her case conforms close to the pattern.

Win Gatchalian ranks third among the six Senators being evaluated as to the number of legislative measures authored for a total of nine - five during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and four during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 13 and Table 16*). With this performance, he got 11,460 votes (*see Table 20*) from the FLEs of OFWs which is ranked second among the six Senators evaluated. His case

is similar to that of Risa Hontiveros which can also be interpreted as conforming close to the pattern.

Table 20. The second batch of six Senators evaluated with the number of legislative measures authored and the number of votes garnered from the overseas Filipinos

Names of Senators in alphabetical order	Number of legislative measures authored from July 2016 to June 2019	Number of legislative measures authored from July 2019 to June 2022	Total legislative measures authored from July 2016 to June 2022	Rank as to legislative measures authored from July 2016 to June 2022	Votes from overseas Filipinos during the 9 May 2022 Elections	Rank as to votes from overseas Filipinos during the 9 May 2022 Elections
Leila De Lima	2	3	5	6	7,014	6
Win Gatchalian	5	4	9	3	11,460	2
Richard Gordon	6	2	8	4	8,574	5
Risa Hontiveros	3	9	12	2	10,540	3
Joel Villanueva	10	9	19	1	9,277	4
Miguel Zubiri	1	6	7	5	15,083	1

Sources: Senate of the Republic of the Philippines <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/> and the COMELEC <https://comelec.gov.ph/>

The case of Richard Gordon is a bit similar to that of Risa Hontiveros and Win Gatchalian, which can also be interpreted as conforming closely to the pattern. He authored a total of eight legislative measures - six during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and two during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 13 and Table 16*). With this number of legislative measures, he ranks fourth among the six Senators and the votes he garnered from the FLEs or OFWs, at 8,574 ranks fifth (*see Table 20*) among the six senators being evaluated.

The case of Miguel Zubiri can be said as a major deviation from the pattern. He ranks fifth as to the number of legislative measures by having authored a total of seven legislative measures - one during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and six during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 13 and Table 16*). Yet

with this legislative performance, he got the highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs with 15,083 (*see Table 20*).

Among the six Senators being evaluated here, the only case that conforms exactly to the pattern is that of Leila De Lima. She ranks sixth as to the number of legislative measures authored with five - two during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and three during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (*see Table 13 and Table 16*). As to the number of votes she garnered from the OFWs, she likewise ranks sixth among the six of them being evaluated with 7,014 (*see Table 20*).

On the part of the Senators, the pattern that those who authored more legislative measures likewise garner higher number of votes from the overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs can be validated, although not in a very exact or precise fashion. In most of the cases of the Senators in both of the two batches evaluated, the observation that the lawmakers who authored more legislative measures also garner higher votes from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs is validated. There are slight deviations of course and these are pretty understandable. During elections, there are many things being considered by voters and these factors are obviously part of the election process that certainly determine the results of the elections.

## **2.2. Party-list Representatives**

In this section, the performances of Party-list Representatives on behalf of their respective Party-list groups will be evaluated. There were two batches of Party-list Representatives evaluated and the reckoning period is from July 2016 up to June 2022. Since the term of office of a Party-list Representative is only three years, the reckoning period of Party-list Representatives' performances will only be three years as well. So, the reckoning period for the performances of the first batch of Party-list Representatives is from July 2016 up to June 2019. Meanwhile, the reckoning period for the performances of the second batch of Party-list Representatives is from July 2019 up to June 2022.

For the first batch of Party-list Representatives observed, it can be said that in most of the cases, the expectation that the high number of legislative measures will likewise result to high number of votes from overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs is not convincingly established. Certainly, there could be some other reasons how and why the overseas Filipinos including the

FLEs or OFWs choose the party-list groups they vote for. In other words, unlike the case of the lawmakers in the Senate, wherein the quantity of legislative measures more or less mirrors the number of votes they garnered from the FLEs or OFWs, this pattern cannot be convincingly observed among the Party-list groups. What can be safely said here is that, majority of the Party-list groups which got high votes from the FLEs or OFWs authored at least one legislative measure, except for CIBAC which did not author any legislative measure, yet it garnered the second highest number of votes from FLEs or OFWs at 720 (*see Table 21*).

ACTS-OFW the Party-list group which authored the highest number of legislative measures at 40 only got 515 votes (*see Table 21*), which is the fourth highest number of votes garnered by any Party-list group during the 13 May 2019 Elections. ANGKLA which authored the second highest number of legislative measures at 22 got a very low number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs at only 46 votes (*see Table 21*). Meanwhile, GABRIELA which authored the third highest number of legislative measures at 13, got 406 votes (*see Table 21*) from the FLEs or OFWs which is the sixth highest number of votes to be garnered by any Party-list group among the 46 under observation. The case of DIWA is similar to that of ANGLKA. DIWA which authored the fourth highest number of legislative measures at 12 garnered only 21 (*see Table 21*) votes from the FLEs or OFWs which can be considered very low compared with other Party-list groups with their respective legislative performances taken into account. AASENSO in which its Representative authored the fifth highest number of legislative measures at 10, only garnered 10 votes (*see Table 21*) from the FLEs or OFWs. This number of votes is likewise low like that of ANGKLA and DIWA.

The pattern that the high number of legislative measures authored by lawmakers will also translate into high votes from overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs during election is likewise slightly observable in the second batch of Party-list groups under observation. It will be noted that the Party-list groups which authored 10 or more legislative measures landed in the top 7 Party-lists which also garnered the highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs (*see Table 22*). BAYAN MUNA which authored the highest number of legislative measures at 17 got only 390 votes (*see Table 22*) from the FLEs or OFWs.

Table 21. The Party-list groups of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress (July 2016 – June 2019) with the number of legislative measures they authored ranked from the highest to the lowest and the number of votes they garnered from the overseas Filipinos

No.	Name of Party-list group	No. of legislative measures authored	No. of votes garnered from FLES or OFWs during the 13 May 2019 Elections
1	ACTS-OFW	40	515
2	ANGKLA	22	46
3	GABRIELA	13	406
4	DIWA	12	21
5	AASENSO	10	10
6	AKO BICOL	7	153
7	1-PACMAN	7	51
8	PBA	7	36
9	AKBAYAN	7	236
10	MATA	7	12
11	1-ANG EDUKASYON	7	87
12	ACT TEACHERS	6	217
13	SENIOR CITIZENS	6	478
14	KABATAN	6	68
15	MAGDALO	6	548
16	KABAYAN	5	185
17	COOP-NATCO	5	76
18	BUHAY	4	165
19	KALINGA	4	162
20	A TEACHER, INC.	4	115
21	TUCP	4	33
22	ABANG LINGKOD	4	13
23	ABONO	3	27
24	AMIN	3	33
25	BAYAN MUNA	3	839
26	AAMBIS-OWA	3	12
27	BUTIL	3	55
28	SBP	3	51
29	MANILA TEACHERS	3	15
30	AGBIAG	3	33
31	AGRI	2	55
32	LPGMA	2	9
33	1-SAGIP	2	198
34	ANAKPAWIS	2	43
35	ANAK-IP	2	19
36	BH	2	167
37	YACAP	1	102
38	1-CARE	1	12
39	KUSUG TAUSUG	1	25
40	AANGAT TAYO	1	110
41	AN WARAY	0	75
42	AGAP	0	35
43	CIBAC	0	720
44	ALONA	0	12
45	ANG KABUHAYAN	0	16

46	ABS	0	12
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Sources: House of Representatives of the Philippines <https://www.congress.gov.ph/legis/>  
and the COMELEC <https://comelec.gov.ph/>

In this batch, MARINO is the Party-list group that authored the second highest number of legislative measures at 15. For this, it garnered 403 votes from the FLEs or OFWs (*see Table 22*).

TUCP is a case that greatly deviates from the expected pattern. Although it authored the second highest number of legislative measures like that of MARIANO, at 15, it only garnered a measly number of 21 votes from the FLEs or OFWs (*see Table 22*). This is a very low number of votes relative to the performances of the other Party-list groups in this batch, particularly for example if their performances will be compared to that of MARINO.

KABATAAN Party-list which authored the third highest number of legislative measures at 12 garnered 334 votes (*see Table 22*) from the FLEs or OFWs. The case of KABATAAN is similar to that of MARINO.

For its part, ACT TEACHERS authored 11 legislative measures thereby landing at fourth place. When it comes to votes it garnered from the FLEs or OFWs, it got 309 (*see Table 22*). This performance is similarly comparable to that of MARINO and KABATAAN.

ACT-CIS is the Party-list group which authored the fifth highest number of legislative measures at 10 and for this, it garnered the highest number of votes from the FLEs or OFWs at 2,191 (*see Table 22*) among all the Party-list groups under observation in this batch. Meanwhile, GABRIELA, another Party-list group which authored the same number of legislative measures as that of ACT-CIS, therefore positioning it also at fifth place with 10 legislative measures, only garnered 1,011 votes (*see Table 22*) from the FLEs or OFWs which is even a little lower than half of the votes garnered by ACT-CIS.

Other noticeable deviations from the expected pattern, are the cases of DUTERTE YOUTH Party-list and the MAGDALO Party-list. Although the two Party-list groups did not even author legislative measures concerning the interests and welfare of the FLEs or OFWs, yet they got 972 and 527 votes respectively. This is similar to the case of CIBAC in the first bath of Party-list groups observed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress wherein it also did not author any legislative measures concerning

the interests and welfare of FLEs or OFWs, yet it garnered the second highest number of votes from that sector.

Table 22. The Party-list groups of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (July 2019 – June 2022) with the number of legislative measures they authored ranked from the highest to the lowest and the number of votes they garnered from the overseas Filipinos

No.	Name of Party-list group	No. of legislative measures authored	No. of votes garnered from FLES of OFWs during the 9 May 2022 Elections
1	BAYAN MUNA	17	390
2	MARINO	15	403
3	TUCP	15	21
4	KABATAAN	12	334
5	ACT TEACHERS	11	309
6	ACT-CIS	10	2,191
7	GABRIELA	10	1,011
8	CIBAC	6	656
9	OFW FAMILY	6	669
10	I-PACMAN	5	56
11	KABAYAN	5	225
12	ANG PROBINSYANO	4	107
13	DIWA	4	44
14	APEC	3	39
15	PBA	3	68
16	ABANG LINGKOD	3	124
17	TINGOG SINIRANGAN	2	1,325
18	ALONA	2	18
19	MANILA TEACHERS	2	66
20	RAM	2	19
21	AKO PADAYON	2	17
22	AAMBIS-OWA	2	38
23	AKO BICOL	1	250
24	PROBINSYANO AKO	1	59
25	SENIOR CITIZENS	1	643
26	MAGSASAKA	1	511
27	COOP-NATCO	1	146
28	PHILRECA	1	48
29	KALINGA	1	273
30	RECOBODA	1	5
31	BHW	1	39
32	I-SAGIP	1	443
33	GP	1	15
34	ANAKALUSUGAN	1	79
35	AN WARAY	0	132
36	AKO BISAYA	0	89
37	ABONO	0	75
38	BUHAY	0	135
39	DUTERTE YOUTH	0	972
40	BH	0	198
41	BAHAY	0	15
42	CWS	0	21
43	A TEACHER, INC.	0	115
44	MAGDALO	0	527
45	KUSUG TAUSUG	0	18
46	DUMPER PTDA	0	167
47	TGP	0	111
48	PATROL	0	136
49	AMIN	0	25

50	AGAP	0	124
51	LPGMA	0	62

Sources: *House of Representatives of the Philippines* <https://www.congress.gov.ph/legis/>  
and the *COMELEC* <https://comelec.gov.ph/>

So far, interpreting the data gathered from the Senate and from the House of Representatives, in so far as the number of legislative measures authored by the lawmakers during the specific timeframes plus the data gathered from the COMELEC in so far as the number of votes of the overseas Filipinos or FLEs or OFWs, during the last two elections are concerned, it appears that there are other factors at play that are considered by overseas Filipinos when they cast their votes for the Senators and Party-list Representatives. The assumption that if lawmakers will exert more effort in terms of authoring more legislative measures for the interest and welfare of the overseas Filipinos, including FLEs or OFWs will also garner higher votes from the overseas Filipinos is only partly true, and in this dissertation, this assumption depends on which group of lawmakers are being observed.

From the observation and the interpretation of data on the part of the two batches of Party-list groups, the mechanics is a lot different. Unlike in the Senate, in the House of Representatives, the Party-list groups which authored the highest number of legislative measures did not get the highest number of votes from the overseas Filipinos which include the FLEs or OFWs. So, the assumption that lawmakers who author more legislative measures will garner more votes from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs is not validated. The cases of CIBAC during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress from July 2016 to June 2019, among the first batch of lawmakers observed and that of DUTERTE YOUTH and MAGDALO during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress from July 2019 to June 2022 among the second batch of lawmakers observed, especially reinforce this observation. These specific Party-list groups did not author any legislative measures whatsoever, yet they got pretty high votes from the overseas Filipinos.

As to the concern whether the Party-list groups which were re-elected became more active or not, in terms of filing more legislative measures during their succeeding term, it can be observed that some become more active, some remain the same while some become less active (*see Table 21 and Table 22*).



Those who become more active are the Representative of ACT Teachers who filed six legislative measures during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress but filed 11 legislative measures during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress or an increase of five legislative measures; Representative of Kabataan who filed six legislative measures during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress but filed 12 legislative measures during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress or an increase of six legislative measures; Representative of TUCP who filed four legislative measures during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress but filed 15 legislative measures during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress or an increase of 11 legislative measures; Representative of Bayan Muna who filed three legislative measures during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and filed 17 legislative measures during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress or an increase of 14 legislative measures; Representative of Cibac who did not file any legislative measure during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress but filed six legislative measures during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress and Representative of Alona who, like that of Cibac did not file any legislative measures during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress but filed two legislative measures during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is interesting to note that aside from TUCP, Cibac and Alona, the rest of these good performing Party-list Representatives of ACT Teachers, Kabataan and Bayan Muna are often branded by the government as left-leaning or are red-tagged as being supportive of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA).

Kabayan Party-list group through its Representative maintained the same level of enthusiasm, by filing the same number of legislative measures both during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and the 18 Congresses at five. This situation is also true to An Waray and Agap which Representatives did not file any legislative measures both during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, despite their Party-list group being re-elected.

The rest of those re-elected Party-list groups became less active by filing fewer legislative measures during the succeeding term. These Party-list groups are: Gabriela who filed 13 legislative measures during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and only 10 during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, Diwa from 12 legislative measures to four, Ako Bicol from seven during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress to only one in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1-Pacman from seven to five, PBA from seven to three, Senior Citizens from six to one, Magdalo from six to zero, Coop Natco from five to one, Buhay from four to zero, Kalinga from four to one, A Techer, Inc. from four to zero, Abang Lingkod from four to three, Abono from three to zero, Amin from three to zero, Aambis Owa from three to two, Manila Teachers from three to two,

LPGMA from two to zero, 1-Sagip from two to one, BH from two to zero, and Kusug Tausug from one to zero,

## Chapter 6

### Interpretation of the linkage between legislations and votes

The linkage between legislations and votes is established in academic literatures. This linkage has been pointed out by describing lawmakers, like for instance that of the U.S. as single-minded seekers of re-election because Members of Congress in the U.S. do things that can possibly propel them to be re-elected, and one of these activities is credit-claiming (Mayhew, 1974). Hager explained credit claiming by citing an example which is very similar to what has been investigated in this dissertation. Members of Congress in the U.S. she says can take credit for sponsoring or co-sponsoring legislation that was enacted into law because it is evident that they played a significant role in these activities (Hager, 2018). Obviously, sponsoring or co-sponsoring a legislation is done by a lawmaker so that she or he will be re-elected into office through the maximization of votes. Obviously, the number of votes is certainly a very important consideration for lawmakers who want to be re-elected. This line of thought, concerning vote maximization on the part of the candidates or lawmakers, can be further understood by taking into account, the Wilson Matrix as pointed out and discussed in Section 2, Chapter 1 of this dissertation. This can be especially explained by the concept of Entrepreneurial Politics wherein the benefits are widely distributed, or the many rather than the few win the benefits (Wilson, 2021). As self-interested individuals who wish to continue in office, Senators and Party-list groups through their Representatives craft laws that will benefit most people who can be potential voters. Those who garner more votes are always at an advantage compared to those who garner low or few votes.

In the case between the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs and the OFWs and the Congress of the Philippines, particularly in the case of the Senators, the linkage is also established, as already hinted in Chapter 5. In this Chapter, in order to show and interpret the linkage, I have designed tables specific for this study, in order to describe whether a specific Party-list group got high number of votes, modest number of votes or low number of votes (*see Table 23 and Table 25*). After this, the adjectival interpretation of votes is plotted against the number of legislative measures filed in which tables specific for this study are as well designed, in order to describe whether a specific Party-list Representative filed few, modest or many legislative measures (*see Table 24 and Table 26*). The use of such tables is done in order to establish and define or describe

the linkage between legislations and votes, especially in the case of the Party-list groups and their Representatives

Table 23. Table for interpreting the vote performance of the first batch of Party-list Representatives during the 13 May 2019 Elections

Range of votes	Adjectival interpretation
0 - 279	Low number of votes
280 – 559	Modest number of votes
560 – 839	High number of votes

The entries in the tables (*see Table 23, Table 24, Table 25 and Table 26*) are designed based on the highest number of votes (*see Table 23 and Table 25*) garnered by the Party-list group and on the highest number of legislative measures authored (*see Table 24 and Table 26*) by the Party-list group for the batch under evaluation. The highest number of votes and the highest number of legislative measures were used as the maximum benchmarks, wherein each is independently divided by three, in order to delineate or come up with the three categories in every table. In the case of *Table 24* for instance, since the highest number of legislative measures authored in the first batch is 40 which is that of ACTS – OFW (*see Table 21*), this has been used as the maximum benchmark, divided by three, which produces the quotient 13, hence the three numerical entries with the corresponding adjectival interpretations (*see Table 24*). The same method is used for *Table 23, Table 25 and Table 26*.

Table 24. Table for interpreting the quantity of legislative measures authored by the first batch of Party-list Representatives

No. of legislative measures authored	Adjectival interpretation
0 - 13	Few
14 - 26	Modest
27 - 40	Many

For the first batch of Party-list groups evaluated, ACTS-OFW authored many legislative measures (*see Table 21 and Table 24*) and it got modest number of votes (*see Table 21 and Table 23*) from overseas Filipinos. ANGKLA for its part authored many legislative measures (*see Table*

21 and Table 24) yet it got low number of votes (*see Table 21 and Table 23*) from the overseas Filipinos. GABRIELA, SENIOR CITIZENS and MAGDALO which authored few legislative measures (*see Table 21 and Table 24*) garnered modest number of votes (*see Table 21 and Table 23*) from the overseas Filipinos.

Meanwhile, DIWA, AASENSO, AKO BICOL, 1-PACMAN, PBA, AKBAYAN, MATA, 1-ANG EDUKASYON, ACT TEACHERS, KABAYAN, KABATAAN, COOP-NATCO, BUHAY, KALINGA, A TEACHER, INC., TUCP, ABANG LINGKOD, ABONO, AMIN, AAMBIS-OWA, BUTIL, SBP, MANILA TEACHERS, AGBIAG, AGRI, LPGMA, 1-SAGIP, ANAKPAWIS, ANAK-IP, BH, YACAP, 1-CARE, KUSUG-TAUSUG, AANGAT TAYO, AN WARAY, AGAP, ALONA, ANG KABUHAYAN and ABS all suffered the same fate, wherein all of which authored few legislative measures (*see Table 21 and Table 24*) and correspondingly got low number of votes from overseas Filipinos (*see Table 21 and Table 23*).

BAYAN MUNA and CIBAC have totally different performances. For their part, they authored few legislative measures (*see Table 21 and Table 24*), and yet despite this, they garnered high number of votes (*see Table 21 and Table 23*) from the overseas Filipinos. In fact, for this batch, BAYAN MUNA garnered the highest number of votes from the overseas Filipinos despite the fact that it only authored few legislative measures that promote overseas Filipinos’ interests and welfare.

For the second batch of Party-list groups evaluated, BAYAN MUNA, MARINO, TUCP, KABATAAN and ACT TEACHERS authored many legislative measures (*see Table 22 and Table 26*) yet they garnered low number of votes (*see Table 22 and Table 25*) from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs.

Table 25. Table for interpreting the vote performance of the second batch of Party-list Representatives during the 9 May 2022 Elections

Range of votes	Adjectival interpretation
0 – 730	Low number of votes
731 – 1463	Modest number of votes
1464 – 2191	High number of votes

ACT-CIS authored a modest number of legislative measures (*see Table 22 and Table 26*) but garnered high number of votes (*see Table 22 and Table 25*) from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs. Meanwhile GABRIELA which also authored a modest number of legislative measures (*see Table 22 and Table 26*) correspondingly got a modest number of votes (*see Table 22 and Table 25*) from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs. CIBAC and OFW FAMILY for their parts also authored a modest number of legislative measures (*see Table 22 and Table 26*), but they got low number of votes (*see Table 22 and Table 25*) from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs.

Table 26. Table for interpreting the quantity of legislative measures authored by the second batch of Party-list Representatives

No. of legislative measures authored	Adjectival interpretation
0 – 5	Few
6 – 10	Modest
11 – 17	Many

TINGOG SINIRANGAN and DUTERTE YOUTH both authored few numbers of legislative measures (*see Table 22 and Table 26*), yet they got modest number of votes (*see Table 22 and Table 25*) from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs.

All the other Party-list groups in the second batch authored few numbers of legislative measures (*see Table 22 and Table 26*) and they as well correspondingly garnered low number of votes (*see Table 22 and Table 25*) from the overseas Filipinos, including FLEs or OFWs. The Party-list groups included with such a performance are 1-PACMAN, KABAYAN, ANG PROBINSYANO, DIWA, APEC, PBA, ABANG LINGKOD, ALONA, MANILA TEACHERS, RAM, AKO PADAYON, AAMBIS-OWA, AKO BICOL, PROBINSYANO AKO, SENIOR CITIZENS, MAGSASAKA, COOP-NATCO, PHILRECA, KALINGA, RECOBODA, BHW, SAGIP, GP and ANAKALUSUGAN.

Such a performance is also true with AN WARAY, AKO BISAYA, ABONO, BUHAY, BH, BAHAY, CWS, A TEACHER, MAGDALO, KUSUG TAUSUG, DUMPER PTDA, TGP, PATROL, AMIN, AGAP and LPGMA. These last 16 party-list groups did not author any

legislative measures yet they still managed to garner votes from overseas Filipinos, though low in number (*see Table 22 and Table 25*).

In the case of Senators, the linkage between legislation and votes is very evident. In both of the batches of Senators evaluated, it can be established that in most cases, the high number of legislative measures authored or sponsored is linked to the number of votes garnered from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLs or OFWs.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Summary and conclusions**

The Philippines is one of the top labor exporting countries. With this, many Filipinos can be found in almost every country in the world, doing jobs, from the menial ones as housekeepers and caretakers in most parts of Asia like in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan to the managerial ones as quality control experts, surveyors, timekeepers and personnel managers in factories in Taiwan, and construction companies in the Middle East and Africa.

Filipino labor emigration has been institutionalized starting in the 1970's during the time of former President Marcos, Sr., although traces of labor emigration from the country can already be documented before this time. Marcos Sr. formally unleashed the tempo of labor emigration of Filipinos when he issued Presidential Decree No. 442 otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines in 1974. Under this decree, the OEDB and the OSB were created which then institutionalized the employment of Filipinos overseas, both as land-based and sea-based workers.

One of the reasons floated by the government why overseas employment had been resorted to in the 1970's was the unavailability of jobs in the country. The relatively high unemployment rate had been given as the reason for this, which then saw an answer in the Middle East during the oil boom in that region around this time. However, it can be argued that the local unemployment situation was just a convenient reason advanced by the government, because there is evidence that even with the lowering of the unemployment rate, it still continued to allow and send Filipino workers abroad. With this, the government stated that overseas employment is just a temporary solution to the unemployment problem. This then implies that when the unemployment situation improves, overseas employment will just be a secondary option when jobs at home are available. Although the government claimed that overseas employment was conceived as a temporary solution to the unemployment problem, there are intervening developments which convinced the people that overseas employment has to continue. Economic crises that hit the country from time to time can be culprits. In fact, the government acknowledged in many instances that overseas Filipino workers help the country weather such crisis through their remittances. The Filipino families of these FLEs or OFWs who are relatively less affected during biting economic difficulties, brought about by economic crises, may certainly favor the status quo rather than any plan to deregulate overseas employment. At times, government deregulation of overseas employment is itself an anathema for some Philippine leaders. The idea of deregulating



government's role in overseas employment had been floated in 1995 during the Fidel Ramos Administration but subsequent Administrations subdued the plans. Therefore, the framing of overseas employment by the government as temporary just does not carry any sensible and logical weight.

The labor emigration phenomenon concomitantly brings with it costs and benefits both to the government and families of the FLEs or OFWs. The costs associated with this phenomenon are many to mention and the most apparent that perhaps every family with an FLE or OFW member experience is the social cost. Separation of family members especially among mothers and young children certainly affects the fiber that a normal family supposedly must enjoy. This is not to mention the many cases of abuse that happen in the places of work of these FLEs or OFWs, ranging from withholding of identification documents by employers to physical assault, rape and even murder. A lot of FLEs or OFWs did not already see and experience a happy homecoming because they came home in coffins, lifeless of course, to the utter sorrow of their family members left behind. The benefit on the other hand is the economic aspect of the phenomenon that generates hard currency for the country in terms of the remittances of the FLEs or OFWs. And this, the government wants to insure, as it included a stipulation in the Labor Code specifically Article 22, that remittances of foreign exchange earnings are mandatory.

With the important place of the labor emigration phenomenon in public and academic discourses in the Philippines, this dissertation investigated the linkage between legislations and votes. This dissertation tried to probe whether there is a correlation between the quantity of legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored by the Senators and Party-list Representatives and the quantity of votes they garner from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs. This is on the consideration that as self-interested individuals who want to get an expected reward for their activities in Congress, the Senators and Party-list Representatives file, author or sponsor as many legislative measures as they can to catch the attention of the overseas Filipino voters, and that overseas Filipinos as rational voters will take into account the things being done by lawmakers to help them, in terms of initiating legislative measures aimed at advancing and promoting their interests and welfare.

To go about this study, data from the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippine Congress in terms of the legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored by the

Senators and the Party-list Representatives and from the COMELEC in terms of the votes garnered by these lawmakers from the overseas Filipinos, including FLEs or OFWs were collated.

There were about 25,385 legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored by members of the House of Representatives from July 2016 to June 2022 and among these legislative measures 160 were filed, authored or sponsored by Party-list Representatives that seek to promote the interests and welfare of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs. In the Senate on the other hand, there were a total of 11,356 legislative measures filed, authored or sponsored by Senators from July 2013 to June 2022, and out of these legislative measures 180 seek to promote the interests and welfare of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs. In addition to this, there were two elections looked into as part of the data, and these are the 13 May 2019 Elections and the 9 May 2022 Elections.

This dissertation found out that for Senators, the correlation can be established that those who filed, authored or sponsored more legislative measures also garner higher votes from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs. There are however much fewer cases when this pattern is not absolutely true which means that other factors are certainly at play which the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs take into account when they cast their votes during elections.

On the part of the Party-list groups, it was found out that the correlation between the quantity of legislative measures filed, authored and sponsored by these groups and the votes the Party-list groups garner from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs is not absolutely established. There are cases when Party-list groups who author more legislative measures garner relatively high votes from the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs and there are cases as well when Party-list groups which did not even file, author or sponsor any legislative measure, garnered high votes just the same from the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs. Again, with such a result, it can be argued that there are other factors at play which are taken into account by overseas Filipinos, including FLEs or OFWs when they cast their votes for Party-list groups.

This dissertation concludes that the voting pattern of overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs differs depending on whom or which they are voting for. As rational voters, in voting for the Senators, they are circumspect and pay more attention to the performance of legislators when they cast their votes. This can be seen in the result of the investigation wherein those Senators who filed, authored or sponsored more laws also garnered higher votes from overseas Filipinos,

including the FLEs or OFWs. On the part of the Party-list groups, the number of choices they are confronted with during elections - 134 Party-list group candidates (Commission on Elections, 2019) during the 13 May 2019 Elections for example, can be a factor that may influence or cause why there are relatively lower number of votes for some Party-list groups because the choices of the overseas Filipinos, including the FLEs or OFWs are many and varied. Unlike in the case of the Senators, wherein overseas Filipinos, including FLEs or OFWs are only going to elect from few choices – 62 candidates (Commission on Elections, 2019) for instance during the 13 May 2019 Elections, the votes of individual Senators are much higher compared to the votes garnered by the Party-list groups.

As the correlation between the performance of Party-list groups, through their representatives and the votes they got from the overseas Filipinos including FLEs or OFWs is not clearly and convincingly established in this present study, a further investigation on this specific aspect of the Filipino migration process will surely be a welcome endeavor. Certainly, there are other factors to be taken into account, aside from the performance of Party-list Representatives in terms of the number of legislative measures they filed, in order to earn the votes of the overseas Filipinos including the FLEs or OFWs. This can be an appropriate guide or point of departure for any future research. Therefore, as an attempt to complement the findings of this dissertation, the backgrounds of legislators, especially the Senators were discussed in Section 3, Chapter 3, in order to see whether Senators coming from places where FLEs or OFWs are in great numbers, consequently get high votes from the FLEs or OFWs, during elections. It turned out however that this is not the case. As already mentioned, there are obviously other factors at play which influence FLEs or OFWs to vote for Senators and Party-list groups. With this in mind, this dissertation will give a future direction as to how, what to consider and what research method to use in order to find out the causal relations between the legislators' behavior and the votes they get from FLEs or OFWs. The future research questions that have to be asked may include as to what factors or characteristics FLEs or OFWs are looking for in legislators in order to merit their votes. And in order to get primary data, the research method may include interview with legislators from both houses of Congress and the FLEs or OFWs.

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