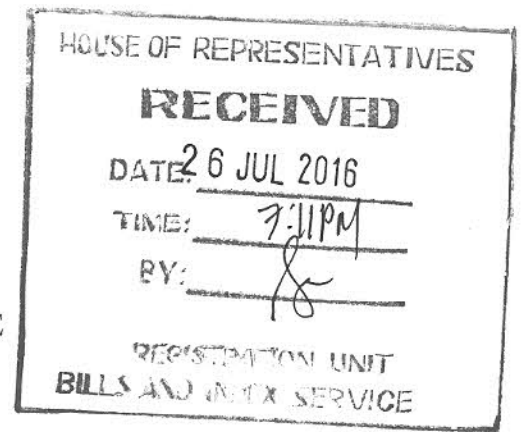


SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE
H. No. 1953



Introduced by Representative **VILMA SANTOS-RECTO**
6th District of Batangas

AN ACT
EXTENDING THE VALIDITY PERIOD OF THE PHILIPPINE PASSPORT,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS THE "PHILIPPINE PASSPORT ACT OF 1996"

Explanatory Note

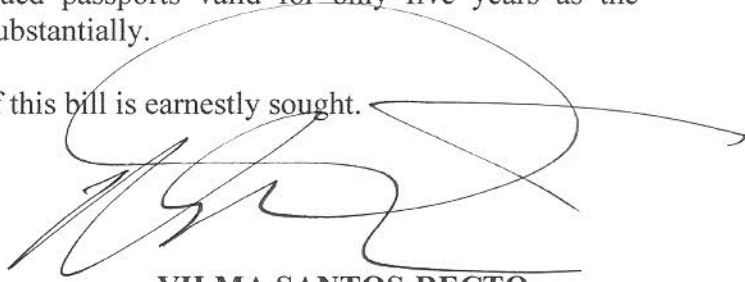
The Philippine passport, a tangible proclamation of the citizenship of a Filipino, is a document that is superior to all others. Republic Act No. 8239, or the Philippine Passport Act of 1996, was enacted to uphold the inviolable constitutional right of Filipinos to travel—guaranteed in Chapter III, Section 6 of the 1987 Constitution. The Philippine passport, a declaration of one's right to travel, is accorded the highest respect by its holder such that damage to its integrity and validity is a serious crime that can be penalized.

Over the years, the Philippine passport and its acquisition has evolved to become more readily accessible to Filipinos. With the enactment of R.A. No. 8239, machine readable-ready passports were introduced. However, it took over a decade for the current e-Passport to be introduced. The current passport, now up to par with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards applied uniformly throughout the world, introduced modernized security features and made travel more convenient for Filipinos. Apart from this, the Department of Foreign Affairs has made the passport even more accessible with the introduction of the online appointment system and the decentralization of the consular office to make application easier throughout the country.

This bill seeks to minimize the burden for new passport applicants, particularly Overseas Filipinos Workers (OFWs) who need to secure a passport for employment. Most OFWs are allowed to return to the Philippines for two weeks to a month, and the processing of applications and renewal of passports can take from ten to fifteen days—not including the number of days an applicant has to wait for an appointment. This period might be too short for OFWs and could be detrimental to employment opportunities. In order to ease the hardship of OFWs and minimize the cost of securing employment, this measure proposes to extend the validity period of the Philippine passport from five years to ten years.

A ten-year passport validity will support the increased mobility of Filipinos and uphold their constitutional right to travel. It will also result in greater convenience to adult passports holders, as they will need to renew their passports less frequently. In accordance with international conventions, minors will be issued passports valid for only five years as the physical appearance of children could change substantially.

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

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

VILMA SANTOS-RECTO

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE

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

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 10 of Republic Act No. 8239 is amended to read as follows:

2 "Sec. 10. Validity. – Regular passports issued under this Act shall be valid for a
3 period of [five (5)] **TEN (10)** years: *Provided, however,* That the issuing authority
4 may limit the period of validity to less than five (5) years; whenever [in the
5 national economic interest or political stability of the country such restriction is
6 necessary:] **THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEEMS THAT**
7 **NATIONAL SECURITY, PUBLIC SAFETY OR PUBLIC HEALTH SO**
8 **REQUIRES OR WHENEVER THE APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING**
9 **DOCUMENTS APPEAR INADEQUATE TO ESTABLISH FILIPINO**
10 **CITIZENSHIP AND THE TRAVEL IS FOR A COMPELLING REASON**
11 **AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT:** *Provided, finally,*
12 That a new passport may be issued to replace one which validity has expired, the
13 old passport being returned to the holder after cancellation.

14 **SEC. 2. Implementing Rules and Regulations** – The Department of Foreign Affairs shall,
15 within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, revise and reform the implementing
16 guidelines of Republic Act No. 8239.

17 **SEC. 3. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or portions
18 thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

19 **SEC. 4. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication
20 in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in the *Official Gazette*.

Approved,