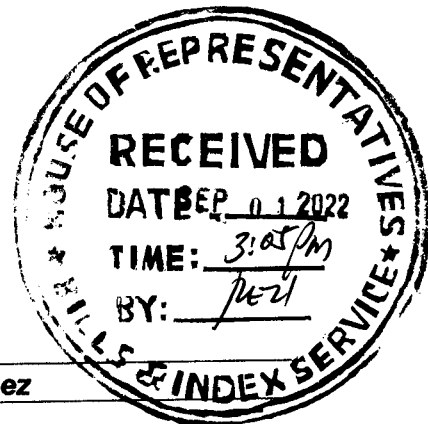


NINETEENTH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez

House Resolution No. 332

A RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO UNDERTAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO REQUEST THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA INCLUDE THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY'S GUAM-CNMI VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Homeland Security's nonimmigrant Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program allows any qualified passport holder from one of 12 pre-approved nations to enter the unincorporated U.S. Territory of Guam and/or the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) visa-free and to stay for up to 45 days for business or pleasure;

WHEREAS, the list of nations approved for participation in the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program include Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom;

WHEREAS, visa-waiver status countries must first be designated as "program countries" by the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the U.S. Secretary of State;

WHEREAS, the criteria for a "program country" designation stresses passport security, a nonimmigrant visa refusal rate below three per centum (3%), as well as reciprocal visa waivers for U.S. passport holders;

WHEREAS, the Philippine passport now ranks as the world's 77th most powerful with access to 66 nations without a visa, up five spots from calendar year 2021;

WHEREAS, each Philippine ePassport contains an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) microchip to store information securely and help protect against safety threats and identity theft;

WHEREAS, the Philippines' nonimmigrant B-visa refusal rate in the U.S. has improved to 24.40% for Fiscal Year 2019, compared to 32.49% for Fiscal Year 2020;

WHEREAS, according to an October 12, 2021 U.S. Congressional Research Service Visa Waiver Program report, "Under statute, the Secretary of Homeland Security has the authority to waive the nonimmigrant visa refusal rate requirement";

WHEREAS, every qualified foreign passport holder wishing to enter Guam or the CNMI is required admission not in excess of 45 days, admission only to Guam and/or the CNMI, and to complete a signed Form I-736 and a signed Form I-94, but is not required to maintain an electronic travel authorization;

WHEREAS, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) reports that the Philippines is on a trajectory to reach upper-middle-income status by the end of calendar year 2022;

WHEREAS, Guam Visitors Bureau statistics indicate that the individual spending habits of Filipinos who visit Guam often exceed those of visitors from the Guam visitor industry's primary source markets of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan;

WHEREAS, upwards of 70,000 Filipinos residing in Guam beckon their families to visit them and hundreds of H-2B visa workers now residing in Guam also wish to be visited by their families;

WHEREAS, U.S. passport holders have long been allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa,

WHEREAS, the Philippines and the United States remain friendly defense allies and trade partners for the purpose of mutual freedom and security,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives to urge the Department of Foreign Affairs to undertake a concerted effort to request that the President of the United States of America include the Republic of the Philippines in the United States Department of Homeland Security's Guam-CNMI visa waiver program.

Adopted,


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ