The International Coalition for Overseas Filipinos' Voting Rights (ICOFVR)

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS

PASS THE ABSENTEE VOTING BILL NOW! PASS THE ABSENTEE VOTING BILL NOW!

- More than 7 million Filipinos overseas have, for the last 15 years, been denied their fundamental political right to vote in absentia in any of our political exercises.
- This denial we place squarely upon the shoulders of our national political leaders who, despite the explicit mandate of the 1987 Constitution for Congress to provide for a system of absentee voting, have since proceeded with an attitude made remarkable only by their inexcusable inaction, callous neglect or outright indifference.
- The right to vote in absentia, practiced by more than 40 countries, is not unique to the Philippines. But ours is a necessity made unique by the economic circumstances that compel a sizeable number of our citizenry to seek better opportunities abroad, yet remain politically marginalized, mute and powerless, even as they are hailed at every politically expedient turn as economic saviors for remitting billions of dollars a year.
- We are a citizenry no less informed of the political and economic realities obtaining in our homeland than those who remain. The realities that affect our country and our families affect us no less, demand that we neither be ignorant nor indifferent.
- We are a citizenry determined to elect only the best possible leaders and create an electorate free from the corrupting influence of guns, goons, gold and glamour. The distance that removes us physically from the political arena is the shield

we shall wield to create a compelling focus on platforms and issues.

We are a citizenry tired of being fed the same lame excuses; excuses made even lamer by the actions that exhibit neither sincerity, nor commitment.

The fear of fraud is a fear made fraudulent by the fact that the Filipinos overseas are beyond reach by the usual corrupt campaign practices and influences. It is a fear not resolved by denying the 7 million overseas Filipinos their right to vote. It is a fear addressed only by a manifestly sincere effort to craft and pass a good law.

After five Congresses, four Presidents and 15 tedious years, some 64 absentee voting bills have been filed, some rigorously debated in Congress. Through our local representatives, we have helped craft the bills now pending before both Houses, assiduously attended countless working group meetings and legislative consultations, in country and abroad. There we extensively discussed the pros and cons of specific provisions in light of the principles and procedures in other jurisdictions viewed against our peculiar political circumstances. We have sought the advice of numerous local and international experts on how to prevent systemic fraud, in principle and in practice, through the committed involvement of the overseas Filipino communities.

Our efforts have yielded an Absentee Voting Bill that now rots on the legislative shelf simply because some legislators choose to default on their duty to study the proposals, or make any, even as a sincere gesture towards crafting a truly good law!

- promises made even emptier by the predictability of their being broken as a matter of political habit. Every election time, politicians assure us that we will surely be able to vote. At no election since 1987 have we been able to. In August, 2001, Speaker Joe De Venecia, together with key House leaders, told a delegation of some 50 representatives of the overseas vote lobby that the House would surely pass its version before the December adjournment. Our solons promptly went their merry ways soon after the General Appropriations Act was passed. More recently, we have been assured, again, that the bill would be passed on, or before, June 6. "Don't worry; it will be passed."
- we shall not now simply watch, listen and wait much longer. We have been keenly watching, patiently listening for the last fifteen years. We shall not now allow our welfare and interests to be held perennial hostage to the parochial agenda of leaders and legislators more attuned to their political fortunes than to the future that we, even as powerless but convenient tools, help create by our labors.
- We shall now answer another promise, broken by further legislative inaction, with a promise of our own: We shall marshal all our resources in support only of the lawmakers willing to fight for us in Congress. We promise to actively boot out of office those obstructing the long overdue passage of the Absentee Voting Bill! And please do not forget that we will remember.

June 7 is Migrants Day

GIVE the 7 million Overseas Filipinos a reason to celebrate! PASS the Absentee Voting Bill before adjournment on June 6!

All signatories are those who have supported the absentee voting campaign through prior express support, active campaign involvement, endorsement of any of our online or offline petitions, or sponsorship of this ad.

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Friends in Manila • Platform-Denmark • PSAP, The
Netherlands • SEC-CRB - Saudi Electric Company, Central Region Branch • ABB (Asea Brown Boveri) Employees Association Country Contract Workers International (ABB-OCW), Riyadh Saudi Arabia • ABQAI Q CCRM - Saudi Arabia • Advanz Corporation • AFW • Aikido Spirit Int'l Martial Arts (ASPIMA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • AIUP • AkbayanCiti-zens' Action Party, Manila • AkbayanCitizens' Action Party, Philippines • Akbayan! Citizens' Action Party, Athens Chapter, Greece • Alab Katipunan, Philippines • Alab. Bayanihan - The Netherlands • All Filipino Bas ketball Association (AFBA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • All ino Community & Sports Commission (AFSCOM), ii Arabia • All Filipino Table Tennis Association (AFTTA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • All Workers Alliance Trade Union (AWATU-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, TUCP) • All-Filipino Community Sports Commis pines, 1009) • Alliance of Hocano Organisations in Athens, Greece • Alliance of Migrant Workers and Advocates to Amend RA 8042 (AMEND) (advocacy network of 14 organizations) • Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL), Philippines • Al-Maarefa Int'l School - PTA (AMIS-PTA) • ALNI Philippines • Alpha Phi Omega Riyadh Alumni Association (APORAA) • Alpha Sigma Phi (ASPHI) • Alterlaw, Philippines • ALU-TUCP • Amistad-Associacion de las Mujeres Filipinos, Apostleship of the Sea-Manila (AOS) • APSOTEU – TUCP • Association of Cabalen Expats (ACE) • Assoiation of Cavitenos in Saudi Arabia (ACSA) • Asso ciation of Cavitenos in Saudi Arabia (ACSA) * ASSociation of Filipino Civil Engineers (AFCE) * Association of Filipino Tennis Players (AFTPA) * Association of Filipinos in Austria • Association of Honggos of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Inc. (AIM), USA Association of Maguindanaos in Riyadh • Association of Ranao Engineers and Architects (AREA) • Association of Sea-Based and Land-based Workers sociation of Unified Talents and Integrated Expatri Babaylan - Philippines Women's Network in Europe Babaylan, Switzerland • Babaylan, United Kingdom abtain Group-SAMAFIE-ABG, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia Bacolod City Govt Employees Union (BCGEU) Bagong Bicol Saro nin Jeddah (BBSJ) • Balik Kalikasan, Rivadh, Saudi Arabia • BAR Multi Purpose coperative (BMPCO), Rivadh, Saudi Arabia • Basket ball Association in Saudi Oger (BASO) • Basketball Association of Riyadh (BAR) • Basketball Players Association (BPLAS), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Batangas Association, Encino, California • Batangas Brotherhood International (BBI) • Bayanihan - Philippine Women's Centre, Netherlands • Bayanihan Center for Filiping Migrants, Denmark • Belig ti I locano Ditoy Saudi Arabia (BISA) • Bicol Anom of Dubai and Northern Emirates • Bicol Expatriate in Saudi Arabia (BESA) • Bicol Saro nin Riyadh (BSR) • Bicolano Expatriates in Saudi Arabia (BERSA) • Bicolano Expats in Riyadh Cooperative (BERCO), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Bicolano Expats in Riyadh Games and Amusement Board (BERGAB) • tial Arts Association (BLACK PYTHON) • Bohol Leyte OFW Cooperative . Boholano Community in Jeddah (BCJ) • Bol-Anong Calapenhon sa Rivadh (BCSR) BUKABIN • Buklod Kabataan Binhi (Sangkap-Buhay)
(BUKABIN) • Buklod Sining Art Group, Riyadh, Saud Arabia • Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP) • Bulacan Migrant Workers Assn • Businessmen's Group in Jeddah (BGJ) • Caballeros de Dimas-Alang Inc., San Francisco, USA • Capampangan Alay sa Capwa (CAPWA) • CarCanMadCarLan, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon (CALABARZON) • CBCP-Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and I tinerant People Cebuano Speaking Org in Saudi Arabia (CSOSA) • Center for Overseas Workers (COW), Philippines •

gress) (CCGA) • Central Mindanao University Employees Association (CMUEAI- NCGEWC – PGEA) • CFMW International, Amsterdam • CFMW-Italya, Italy • Christ the King, Greece • Christian Coalition for Good Governance (CCGG), Philippines • Circulo Ti Ilongo sa Saudi Arabia (CISA) • CLO • Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP)
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Society (EXPATS), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Executive
Council (OFW Congress) (EXECON) • Expatriate Darters of Saudi Arabia (EDSA) • Exultrade Business Center, Makati City • Federation of Filipino Organisations in the Nederland (FFON) • Federation of Free Workers - Labor Solidarity Movement (FFW-LSM) • Federation of Free Workers (FFW) • Federation of Arabia (FEMAS) • Federation of Pilipino-American Chambers of Commerce, (FPACC) • FFW-TSPICEU • FilCar International, Ontario, Canada • Filipino American Society of Architects and Engineers - San Francisco • Filipino Bas ketball Association (FBA) • Filipino Christian Bayanihan in Italy, Italy • Filipino Community in Norway • Filipino Community in Yanbu (FILCOYAN) • Filipino Community of Riyadh Al-Mishary Hospital (FILCOM-MISHARY) • Filipino Confederation of Basketball Referees (FCBR), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Filinino Dental Association in Saudi Arabia (FILDASA) Filipino Expatriates Society (FES), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia Filipino Florists Assn. In Saudi Arabia (FIL-FLORA) Filipino Golfers Association (FGA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia Filipino Golfers Club (FGC), Rivadh, Saudi Arabia Filipino International Martial Arts Brotherhood, Inc (FIMAB) • Filipino Int'l. Martial Arts Brotherhood, Inc Overseas Bowlers of Riyadh (FOBR) • Filipino Overseas Reps for Consumer and Ethical Prod and Services (FORCEPS), Rivadh, Saudi Arabia • Filipino Parish (Parroquia Immaculada Concepcion y Lorenzo Ruiz Spain • Filipino Photographers Guild (FPG), Riyadh Saudi Arabia • Filipino Retirees & Employees Over-seas Movement (FREOM) • Filipino Women's Council. Italy • Filipino Youth Network in Europe (FYNE) • Flying Tigers International Martial Arts Organiza tion, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Fortune Medicare OCW' Association (FMOA) • Fourth Watch International Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Friends of Overseas Filipin Singapore, Manila, The Netherlands • FWR - TUCP • Gabay ng Manggagawangg Pilipino, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Gabay-OFW • Geneva Forum, Switzerland • Gintong Alay for Culture and Arts (GACA) • Global Alliance of Filipinos for Filipinos, USA • Grupo I longgo

in Saudi Arabia (GISA) • Guardians International Brotherhood, Inc. (GUARDIANS) • Hospital Employ-ees Alliance Towards Health (HEALTH), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Hospitals Invitational Team Tennis Tourna ment (HITT), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia IloiloMigrantWork ers (IMW-CC) • Indang Cavite Cooperative Overseas(ICCO), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • InfoSystems Saudi Arabia • Institute for Political & Electoral Reforms (IPER), Philippines • Institute of Computer Engineers in Riyadh (ICE-R) • Institute of Integrated Elecrical Engineers of The Philippines Central Region Chapter (IIEE-CRCSA), Rlyadh, Saudi Arabia • Institute on Church and Social Issues (ICSI) • Integrated Institute of Electrical Engineers - Eastern Province (HEE-EP) • INTERCEDE, Toronto, Canada • Inter-Hospital Sports Team Tournaments (HOSTT) • Interna itional Coalition on Overseas Filipinos' Voting Rights (ICOFVR-KSA), Saudi Arabia • International Kuntaw Federation (Riyadh Chapter) • Inter-Social Cultural Welfare Organization (ISWO), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Int'l Phil. School - PTA (IPSR-PTA) • Intl. Scuba Divers and Anglers Assn • IPAO • IPSR Parents and Teach ers Association (PTA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Iriga City Overseas Workers Association (ICOWA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • ITO • Jeddah Assn of Fil. Engineers and Architects • Jose Panganiban Expatriates (JPEX), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Kaagapay, Cotabato City • Kababayan. The Netherlands • Kabuhayan poperatiba ng Kapatirang Manggagawa (KKKM) yadh, Saudi Arabia • Kaibigan ng OCWs, Philippines Kaibigan, Inc., U.S. (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut area) • KAKAMMPI (Kapisanan ng mga Kamag-anak ng Migranteng Manggagawang Pilipino) • Kalayaan, United Kingdom • Kalinga ng Manggagawang Pilipino (KAMPI), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Kalipunan ng Manggagawang Cavite (KAMACA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Kalipunan ng Manggagawang Pilipino sa Industrial Area (KALMAPI), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Kaliwat Bol-Anon, Rivadh, Saudi Arabia • Kamao, Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) • KAMAPI • Kanlungan Cen ter Foundation, Philippines • Kanlungan Filipino Con-sortium (Bahay Kubo, Pinoy Forum, Lingap, Philippine Re-source Centre) – United Kingdom • Kapatiran sa Gitnang Silangan (KGS), Riyadh • Kapisanan Anak Kawit (KAANAK), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Kapisanan ng mga Filipino sa Groningen, The Netherlands • Kapit Lakas • Kapitbahayan, The Netherlands • KASAPI Congress • Western Region • KASAPI Congress, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia • Kasapi Youth, Greece • KASAPI -Hellas, Greece • Kasimanwa, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • Katilingban Sang Mga I longgo, United Arab Emirates Katingban sang Mga Honggo, united Arab Emirates
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 Kauswagan OFW Cooperative (KOFWC) • King Tier
 Taekwondo, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • KMPI • Knights
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- Region VII (representing 20 major organizations in the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska) • National Greening Movement Foundation (NGMF) National Home Mortgage Finance Employees Asso National Home Mortgage Finance Employees Asso-ciation (CIU) • Network Opposed to Violence Against Women Migrants (NoVA) (organizational network of 15 women organizations) • NUPP – TUCP • Obrero Pilipino • OCW Association (OCWA), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • OFW Bank, Kuwait • OFW Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OFWCCI), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • OFW Congress Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia • OFW CONGRESS , KSA • OFW Congress-Riyadh, KSA • OFW Cooperative, Eastern Province, KSA • OFW Credit Cooperative, KSA • OFW Investors Society (OFWINS) • OFW Printers Association in Saudi Arabia (OPRASA) • OFW Protect, Philippines • OFW Riyadh on (OFWSCOM) • OFWC - EP • OFWNet Founda • OFWs-Cabalen • OFW-Vote E-Group/ Over seas Filipinos Worldwide - Global • Order of the Knights of Rizal (OKOR) • P&P Multi-Purpose Coop, Riyadh, KSA • P. Laguna Workers Association, Riyadh KSA • PACIWU –TUCP • PADAYON • Pag-asa • Pagkakaisa at Unawaan ng mga Organisasyon (PUNO), Riyadh, KSA • Palarong Pilipino Sports Commission, Riyadh • Pangamponga Baloi Brotherhood Association (PBBA), Riyadh, KSA • Pangasinan Saudi Investors (PSI-MPC) • Pangasinan Saudi Workers Assn (PSWA) • Panthers Int'i Martial Arts Associa-tion, Inc. (PIMAF) • Paring Bol-anon Worldwide, San Francisco, US • Party for Overseas Workers' Empow-erment and Reintegration (POWER) • Pasali Cooperative, Nederland • PBBA Multi-Purpose Coopera tive, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • PCUP Employees Associa tion (PEA. Cebu) – PSLink • Peasants Fund, QC, Philip pines • Peoples' Global Exchange (PGX), Philippine PETAGS, Riyadh • PGEA • Phil Centennial Org of Ph tographers (PHILCOP), Riyadh • Phil Community of Mass Media (PHILCOMM), Rivadh • Phil Internation Multi-Purpose Cooperative (PICO), Riyadh • Phil Karate Dijitsu International (PHILKAD), Riyadh, KSA • Phil Martial Arts and Combat Association (PHILMACA)
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Overseas Association) • MMOFU (Merchant Marine Over

seas Filipino Union) • MORIATO DIWEN • Movement

For the Advancement of Student Power (MASP), Philippines • Movement to Help Eradicate Rape and Other Female Abuses (MOTHER), Riyadh • MPGEU • MPSTA • Munting Nayon, Greece • NACUSIP — TUCP •

NaFFAA - U.S. (NaFFAA, the biggest federation of Filipino organizations in the US with 3,000 affiliate members) •

NARDEEN, Riyadh • NaRS, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia • National Federation of Filipino-American Associations