

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHJM 4015

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON TRADE, TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, MARCH 31, 1993

Brief Description: Requesting the Philippines to keep its consulate open.

SPONSORS: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, Wineberry, Leonard, Johanson, Wang, Chandler, Miller, Wood, Shin, Quall, Rayburn, J. Kohl, Kessler, Dyer and Anderson)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Skratek, Chairman; Sheldon, Vice Chairman; Bluechel, Deccio, Erwin, M. Rasmussen, and Williams.

Staff: Midori Okazaki (786-7444)

Hearing Dates: March 31, 1993

BACKGROUND:

In February, the Philippine government announced that it will close its Seattle consulate, along with 11 other diplomatic posts around the world, by June 30, 1993. The Philippine government is implementing this cost-cutting measure due to an economy crippled by a \$29 billion foreign debt, the closure of United States military bases, and political instability.

The Philippines is a major buyer of Washington wheat and other agricultural products. The Philippines also exports many products to Washington State, including electronics and clothing, and has a nearly \$300 million trade surplus with the state.

SUMMARY:

The Washington State Senate and House of Representatives request that the U.S. State Department encourage the Philippine government to keep its Seattle consulate open and to consider downsizing staff and office space to cut costs.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

Washington State has a long history of ties with the Philippines. The Philippine Consulate in Seattle has served the Filipino community in the Pacific Northwest since 1947. It is an important contact point with the Philippines for Filipino-Americans and has been an avenue for local relief efforts in response to disasters such as the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. The consulate also is a facilitator of major trade activity. The memorial supports other efforts by the state to keep the Seattle consulate open.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Veloria, prime sponsor; Ralph Munro, Secretary of State (pro); Vincent Lawsin, Ellen Abellera, Filipino Community of Seattle (pro); Frank Palisoc, Filipino Political Action Group of Washington (pro)