

News Release
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Bello wants OWWA to manage unclaimed OFW terminal fees

Labor Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III yesterday reiterated his previous proposal that the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) manage all unrefunded terminal fees that have been collected from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

In a media briefing, Bello said he has asked the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) in February 21, 2017 to remit the unrefunded travel tax and terminal fees of OFWs to OWWA unless an efficient refund system is put in place.

Republic Act 8042 or the Migrant Workers' Act of 1995 as amended by Republic Act 10022 exempts Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) from paying travel tax and airport terminal fees. But on February 1, 2015, travel tax and terminal fees were included in the cost of plane tickets. For this, a refund system was implemented, although OFWs often complain about how time-consuming it is.

"While some OFWs are refunded of these travel tax and fees at the airport prior to their departure, most of them, however, are not refunded of the same either because of lack of awareness about this privilege or lack of material time to process their claim for refund at the airport," Secretary Bello III said in his letter to CAAP.

The automatic collection of the P550.00 terminal fee from OFWs was stopped when the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with airline companies on March 15, 2017. The MOA took effect on April 30, 2017.

The MIAA said OFWs may claim their terminal fee refund at the ground floor of the MIAA administration building, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm from Monday to Friday except during holidays by presenting the copy of their tickets with locator code, or reference and passport for identification.

Aside from OFWs, airline passengers whose flights were canceled may also avail of a refund.

According to the MIAA, more than P500 million have yet to be claimed by OFWs. The money is with the general fund of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) and no one can take it except the OFW-holders of airline tickets.

The MIAA also reported that some airline companies have not yet remitted to their office terminal fees previously collected from OFWs. Some of the airline companies have not yet submitted the list of passengers who qualify for the refund. /END

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