PRESS RELEASE
2020 July 28

Morente thanks PRRD for urging Congress to pass new Immigration law

MANILA, Philippines - Bureau of Immigration (BI) Commissioner Jaime Morente thanked President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for urging Congress in his State of the Nation (SONA) on Monday to pass a law that will modernize the agency and replace the country's antiquated Philippine Immigration Act of 1940.

"We are elated and gratified upon hearing the President exhorting our lawmakers to pass a new Philippine Immigration Law. That measure is already long overdue," Morente said in a statement.

He noted that it was the first time in recent memory that a President asked Congress to pass a new Immigration law in his SONA.

"We have no recollection if any of his predecessors have publicly expressed their support for a new Immigration law during their SONAs. Only President Duterte has done that and we in the Bureau are very grateful for his support," the BI chief said.

Morente thus appealed to members of Congress to heed the President's call by finally prioritizing consideration of pending bills designed to reorganize and modernize the BI.

"We are hopeful that with the President's support our senators and congressmen would finally see the urgency to pass a new Immigration law for our country. This should have been done a long time ago," he added.

The President’s SONA speech was also welcomed by officers of the BI employees' union Buklod-CID and Immigration Officers Association of the Philippines, Inc. (IOAP).

They decried that the present Immigration act, which was passed during the US Commonwealth period, is no longer attuned to present realities and should be replaced with a new law that will not only modernize the BI but also equipped it with stronger powers to thwart the entry of unwanted aliens and implement programs that will draw more foreign tourists and investors into the country.

Buklod-CID and IOAP also urged Congress to upgrade the salary scales of Immigration personnel in order to prevent corruption and professionalize the agency's rank and file.

Further, they said the current salary grades and take home pay of BI employees are far lower than those of their counterparts from other frontline government agencies.