

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

18<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2423**



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Introduced by REP. GLONA G. LABADLABAD

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

This proposed bill was initially filed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and seeks to create two (2) additional branches of Regional Trial Court and one (1) branch of Municipal Trial Court in Cities in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Zamboanga del Norte, amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the "Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980."

These courts shall be distributed as follows:

|                           |                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Municipality of Sindangan | - one (1) Regional Trial Court            |
| City of Dipolog           | - one (1) Regional Trial Court            |
| City of Dipolog           | - one (1) Municipal Trial Court in Cities |

Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, which took effect on August 14, 1981, created six branches of Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) in Zamboanga del Norte (five in Dipolog City and one in the Municipality of Sindangan) and two branches of Municipal Trial Court in Cities (MTCC) in Dipolog City.

From 1981 to 2019, or more than thirty-eighth (38) years, the population in Zamboanga del Norte and Dipolog City have more than doubled. The number of cases filed with, and pending before, the courts in these areas have increased significantly throughout the years. Yet the number of courts remain stagnant.

The five (5) current branches of RTCs in Zamboanga del Norte have a combined caseload of 3,321 as of December 2016, or 664 per branch. This number exceeds the manageable caseload of 300 for second-level courts as recommended by the Supreme Court's Office of the Court Administrator (OCA). To decongest court dockets, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines Zamboanga del Norte Chapter recommends the creation of three (3)

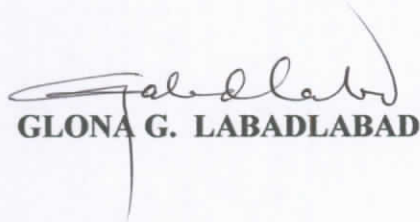
additional branches of RTCs in the First District and one (1) additional branch in the Second District.

Moreover, the RTC of the Municipality of Sindangan has a caseload of 606 as of December 2016. Thus, the creation of an additional branch is also needed.

Furthermore, the combined caseload of the two branches of MTCCs in Dipolog City is 1,377 or 689 per branch as of December 2016. This number exceeds the manageable level of 500 cases per OCA's recommendation.

Article III, Section 16, of the 1987 Philippine Constitution guarantees that "All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies." But with the continued clogging of the court dockets in the Second Legislative District of Zamboanga del Norte, the attainment of this constitutional right remains elusive unless more courts are created.

For the above reasons, urgent approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT

CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, WITH STATIONS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SINDANGAN AND THE CITY OF DIPOLOG, AND ONE (1) BRANCH OF MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES, WITH STATION IN THE CITY OF DIPOLOG, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980" AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. Two (2) branches of Regional Trial Court, with stations in the Municipality of Sindangan and the City of Dipolog, respectively, and one (1) branch of Municipal Trial Court in Cities, with station in Dipolog City, are hereby created in the Ninth Judicial Region.

SEC. 2. The Chief Justice of Supreme Court, in coordination with the Secretary of the Department of Justice, shall immediately include in the Court's program the operationalization of the abovementioned additional two (2) Regional Trial Court branches and one (1) Metropolitan Trial Court in Cities branch.

SEC. 3. The amount necessary for the creation of the aforementioned courts shall be funded out of the appropriations for the Judiciary. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its operation and maintenance shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 4. Sections 14 (j) and 29 of Batas Pambansa Blg.129, otherwise known as “The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980”, as amended, as well as other laws, rules and regulations that may be inconsistent herewith, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*