

**Republic of the Philippines**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
*First Regular Session*

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2655**



**INTRODUCED BY REP. JB BERNOS**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Section 16, Article III of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides: "All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies." However, due to perennial clogging of the court dockets in the country, this constitutional right has become illusory to many Filipinos.

As of February 2019, there are three (3) Regional Trial Court branches in Abra: two (2) in the Municipality of Bangued and one (1) in the Municipality of Bucay. There is also one (1) unorganized branch in Bangued. As the highest trial courts in the country, the RTC branches in Abra are important in resolving legal conflicts within its jurisdiction, but the growing population of the Province resulted to growing political, social, and economic interactions among its inhabitants, which may lead to a sharp rise in the number of court litigations and disputes. In the past three (3) years, these branches have seen a sharp increase in the cases handled by the RTC branches in the Province of Abra, primarily due to land-related disputes and to the anti-illegal drug campaign of the administration of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. In addition, owing to the geographic features of the Province, people have to travel long distances to reach courthouses in the provincial capital town of Bangued. Hence, establishing an additional branch will give our constituents a nearer option for their legal needs, lessening the workload on the already existing branches and facilitating swift resolution of cases.

The lack of available court salas crates a serious backlog of cases that immensely contributes to the delay in the administration of justice. Furthermore, the Province of Abra has produced a number of professionals in the legal services sector, who could benefit from the opportunities arising from the establishment of another RTC branch. They will be able to hone their skills and be in the service of their fellow Abreños in need of immediate legal

services and speedy resolution of their cases. Hence, this Bill seeks to create one (1) additional branch of the Regional Trial Court in the Province of Abra, to be located in the Municipality of La Paz, where it will be able to cater to municipalities in the western areas of the Province of Abra.

In view of the foregoing and in the interest of expeditious, fair, and impartial delivery of justice to the People of Abra, approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.



**REP. JB BERNOS**  
Lone District, Abra

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**AN ACT**  
**CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL**  
**COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF ABRA TO BE STATIONED IN THE**  
**MUNICIPALITY OF LA PAZ, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE**  
**PURPOSES SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (A) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG.**  
**129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT**  
**OF 1980”, AS AMENDED AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

- 1 **SECTION 1.** One (1) additional branch of the Regional Trial Court to be stationed in  
2 the Municipality of La Paz, Province of Abra is hereby created in the First Judicial  
3 Region.
- 4 The Supreme Court shall assign the branch number for the newly created Regional  
5 Trial Court.
- 6 **Sec. 2.** The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in coordination with the Secretary of  
7 the Department of Justice, shall immediately include in the Court's program the  
8 implementation of this Act. The funding therefore shall likewise be included in the  
9 annual General Appropriations Act. The funds necessary for the operation of the  
10 Courts herein created shall be appropriated and released only upon the actual  
11 organization of the Courts and the appointment of its personnel.



1 **Sec. 3.** Section 14 (a) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as "The Judiciary  
2 Reorganization Act of 1980", as amended, and all other laws, rules, and regulations,  
3 which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed, or modified  
4 accordingly.

5 **Sec. 4.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the  
6 Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

7 Approved.