

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City**

13th Congress of the Philippines

First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2920

Introduced by Hon. Arthur Y. Pingoy, Jr., M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill provides for the establishment of an additional branch of the Regional Trial Court in Surallah, Province of South Cotabato and appropriate funds for its operation and maintenance.

The Branch 26 of the Regional Trial Court in Surallah, South Cotabato was first established as a single-sala on March 1983, with jurisdiction over seven (7) municipalities in the Province of South Cotabato namely: Tantaran, Banga, Surallah, T'boli, Lake Sebu, Sto. Niño, and Norala. It likewise exercises administrative supervision over three (3) Municipal Circuit Trial Courts namely: the Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Banga-Tantaran, the Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Surallah-Lake Sebu and the Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Norala-T'boli-Sto.Niño.

Aside from being a court of general jurisdiction, RTC, Branch 26, as a single-sala court is automatically designated as a Family Court having exclusive original jurisdiction over criminal cases involving minors, or when one more of the victims is a minor at the time of the commission of the offense, petitions for guardianship, custody of children, adoption, annulment of marriage, declaration of nullity, legal separation, support of children, paternity suits and cases involving child abuse.

As of December 31, 2003, the number of cases pending before RTC, Branch 26 Surallah, South Cotabato totals to 865 criminal and civil cases. Based on the number of cases received and the number of case disposals during the ensuing six (6) month period, January to June 2004, the number of pending cases is still rising despite the average disposal of 18 cases a month. Hence, there is an urgent need to provide for an additional branch of the RTC in Surallah to unclog the dockets of Branch 26 with numerous cases and improve the disposition and administration of justice in the entire province.

In view of the foregoing considerations, the approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.


ARTHUR Y. PINGOY, JR., M.D.

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

13th Congress of the Philippines

First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2920

Introduced by Hon. Arthur Y. Pingoy, Jr., M.D.

AN ACT

ESTABLISHING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
BRANCH IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1981 AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

SECTION 1. Section 14, Paragraph (I) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended,
otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1981, is hereby amended to
read as follows:

"SEC. 14. Regional Trial Courts

X X X

(I) **FORTY-TWO** [forty-one] Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for
the Eleventh Judicial Region. There shall be:

X X X

"**ELEVEN** (Ten) branches with seats for the Province of South Cotabato and the City of General Santos, with seats at General Santos City, Koronadal, Surallah, Alabel, and Polomolok; and"

SECTION 2. The Supreme Court shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 3. The amount necessary to carry-out the provisions of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the Supreme Court under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the operation and maintenance of the newly established court branch shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,