

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 426

Introduced by Honorable ERICO BASILIO A. FABIAN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Bill proposes the creation of four additional branches of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities (MTC) and four additional branches of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in the City of Zamboanga.

Presently, and based on B.P. Blg. 129 ("The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980"), Zamboanga City has only six RTC branches and four MTC branches [Sec. 14(j), Sec. 29]. In 1991, when R.A. 7154 was approved, increasing the number of Regional Trial Courts in the 9th Judicial Region, which includes the City of Zamboanga, from 24 to 30, two additional branches were allotted to the Province of Zamboanga del Sur and none to Zamboanga City.

This Bill was first filed by this representation on September 28, 2004 as H. B. No. 3048 during the 13th Congress and was again filed on July 24, 2007 as H.B. 1298 during the 14th Congress. It was referred to the Committee on Justice, where it was pending upon adjournment of the 13th and 14th Congresses.

Zamboanga City is a highly urbanized city and is the center of commerce, industry, transportation, and communications in Western Mindanao (Region IX). The headquarters of the Southern Command are located in the city and the national government's regional offices operated therefrom. It has two legislative districts resulting from the enactment of R.A. 9269, approved on March 19, 2004. There are 98 barangays constituting the city which has a land area of 148,338.49 hectares, and a population of 601,794,000 as of the year 2000, according to the National Statistics Office. Twenty four years ago, in 1980, when B.P. Blg. 129 was approved, Zamboanga City had a population of 343,722,000, or only half of its year 2000 population. The number of people in the city continues to rise, with the NSO reporting an average annual growth rate of 2.18% (Western Mindanao).

With the increase of population through the years, the number of cases continues to grow and now clog the dockets of the six RTC and four MTC branches. Since 1983 up to August 2004, a total of 20,968 have been filed with the Regional Trial Court in Zamboanga City, 12,683 of which being criminal in nature. Presently, there is a total of 3,503 cases pending with the RTC. For the same 21-year period, a total of 12,586 criminal cases have been filed with the Municipal Trial Court. The existing 6 RTC branches and 4 MTC branches are clearly inadequate to handle the total case load. Hence, there is a need to allocate additional court branches in Zamboanga City, as herein proposed.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this Bill is earnestly requested.

ERICO BASILIO A. FABIAN
Zamboanga City

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AN ACT
AMENDING SECTIONS 14 (j) AND 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980

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

SECTION 1. Section 14, paragraph (j) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"(j) Thirty-**FOUR** Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Ninth Judicial Region. There shall be:"

"Two branches for the Province of Basilan, with seats at Isabela;

"Three branches with seats thereat for the Province of Sulu, with seats at Jolo, Parang, and Siasi;

"Two branches with seats thereat for the Province of Tawi-Tawi, with seats at Bongao and Sapa-Sapa;

"Eight branches with seats thereat for the Province of Zamboanga del Norte and the Cities of Dipolog and Dapitan, with seats at Dipolog City, Sindagan, Siocon, and Liloy; and

"[Fifteen] **NINETEEN** branches with seats thereat for the Province of Zamboanga del Sur and the Cities of Pagadian and Zamboanga, with **TEN (10)** seats at Zamboanga City, **AND THE REMAINING SEATS AT** Pagadian City, Molave, San Miguel, Ipil, and Aurora."

SEC. 2. Section 29 of the same law is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"Section 29. Municipal Trial Courts in cities. – In every city which does not form part of a Metropolitan area, there shall be a Municipal Trial Court with one branch, except as hereunder provided:

- Two branches for Laoag City;
- Four branches for Baguio City;
- Three branches for Dagupan City;
- Five branches for Olongapo City;
- Three branches for Cabanatuan City;
- Two branches for San Jose City;
- Three branches for Angeles City;
- Two branches for Cavite City;
- Two branches for Batangas City;
- Two branches for Lucena City;
- Three branches for Naga City;
- Two branches for Iriga City;
- Three branches for Legaspi City;
- Two branches for Roxas City;
- Four branches for Iloilo City;
- Seven branches for Bacolod City;
- Two branches for Dumaguete City;
- Two branches for Tacloban City;

Eight branches for Cebu City;
Three branches for Mandaue City;
Two branches for Tagbilaran City;
Two branches for Surigao City;
Two branches for Butuan City;
Five branches for Cagayan de Oro City;
Seven branches for Davao City;
Three branches for General Santos City;
Two branches for Oroquieta City;
Three branches for Ozamis City;
Two branches for Dipolog City;
[Four] **EIGHT** branches for Zamboanga City;
Two branches for Pagadian City; and
Two branches for Iligan City."

SEC. 3. The four additional branches of the Municipal Trial Court in cities for Zamboanga City shall be numbered consecutively as Branches V, VI, VII, and VIII.

SEC. 4. The amount needed to carry out the provisions of this Act is hereby authorized to be appropriated in the Government Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved.