

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

Third Regular Session

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COMMITTEE REPORT NO. **2551**

Submitted by the Committee on Justice and the Committee on Appropriations on  
18 DEC 2012

Re: House Bill No. **6780**

Recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5583

Sponsors: Representatives Niel C. Tupas, Jr., Jocelyn S. Limkaichong, and Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez

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Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Justice and the Committee on Appropriations, to which was referred House Bill No. 5583, introduced by Representative Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez, entitled:

**'AN ACT  
CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL  
COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF LEYTE TO BE STATIONED AT THE  
CITY OF ORMOC, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14,  
PARAGRAPH (I) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980",  
AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"**

have considered the same and recommend that the attached House Bill No.  
**6780**, entitled:

'AN ACT  
CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL  
COURT IN THE EIGHT JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT  
THE CITY OF ORMOC, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, AMENDING FOR  
THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (I) OF BATAS  
PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY  
REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980", AS AMENDED, AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

be approved in substitution of HB No. 5583, with Representatives Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez, Niel C. Tupas, Jr., and Jocelyn S. Limkaichong, as authors thereof.



JOCELYN S. LIMKAICHONG  
Chairperson  
Committee on Appropriations

Respectfully submitted,



NIEL C. TUPAS, JR.  
Chairperson  
Committee on Justice

The Honorable  
The Speaker  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6780**

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Introduced by Representatives Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez, Niel C. Tupas, Jr.,  
and Jocelyn S. Limkaichong

---

AN ACT

CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE EIGHT JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT THE CITY OF ORMOC, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (I) 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. There is hereby created a branch of the Regional Trial  
2       Court in the Eight Judicial Region to be stationed at the City of Ormoc,  
3       Province of Leyte.

4       The Supreme Court shall assign the branch number of the newly-  
5       created Regional Trial Court branch in the Eight Judicial Region.

6       SEC. 2. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in coordination with  
7       the Secretary of the Department of Justice, shall immediately include in the  
8       Court's program the operationalization of the Regional Trial Court branch to  
9       be stationed in the City of Ormoc, Province of Leyte, the funding of which  
10      shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

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

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

8           Approved,

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

Fifteenth Congress  
Second Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 5583**

---

**Introduced by Honorable Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

In ancient times, the "King's peace" guaranteed the citizens of the realm just resolution of their disputes so as not to disrupt the existing political order. In today's democratic society, we have institutional frameworks for conflict resolution, foremost of which is the courts.

Justice, however, as a basic need of man, has been hampered by a number of factors in modern Philippine society. Even relatively simple cases have been known to languish in our courts due to moneyed interests, multi-layered appeals, and the clogging of the dockets of our courts.

For instance, the combined caseload of the two (2) existing branches of the Regional Trial Court in Ormoc City, Province of Leyte has been found to be 1,562, averaging 781 cases per branch. This is a far cry from the ideal or manageable ratio of 300-450 caseload for each branch. With judicial reforms towards the facilitation of the caseload of the courts taking a long time in the coming, the more immediate remedy would be to increase the number of courts so as to mitigate instances of "justice delayed" which is anathema to our administration of justice in the country.

In view therefore of the urgency of this bill, which seeks to create an additional branch of the Regional Trial Court in City of Ormoc, Province of Leyte, its early approval is most earnestly sought.

  
**LUCY MARIE TORRES-GOMEZ**

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

Fifteenth Congress  
Second Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 5583**

---

**Introduced by Honorable Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez**

---

**AN ACT**  
**CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL**  
**TRIAL COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF LEYTE TO BE**  
**STATIONED AT THE CITY OF ORMOC, AMENDING FOR THE**  
**PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (I) 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 the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

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

“Sec. 14. Regional Trial Courts. –

“x x x

“(i) [Thirty-three] THIRTY-FOUR Regional Trial Judges shall be commissioned for the Eight Judicial Region. There shall be:

“x x x

“[Thirteen] FOURTEEN branches (Branches VI to [XVIII] XIX) for the province of Leyte, the sub-province of Biliran, and the cities of Ormoc and Tacloban, Branches VI and IX with seats at Tacloban City, Branch X at Abuyog, Branch XI at Calubian, [Branch] BRANCHES XII AND XIX at Ormoc City, Branch XIII at Carigara, Branch XIV at Baybay, Branch XV at Burauen, Branch XVI at Naval, Branch XVII at Palompon, and Branch XVIII at Hilongos;

“x x x”

SEC. 2. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in coordination with the Secretary of the Department of Justice, shall immediately include in the Court's program the operationalization of the additional branch of the Regional Trial Court in the Province of Leyte, with station at the City of Ormoc, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,



Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

November 20, 2012

**HON. NIEL C. TUPAS, JR.**  
*Chairperson*  
Committee on Justice

COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE  
Cuty  
11/22 11:05 AM

Dear *Chairperson Tupas*:

Please be informed that the Committee on Appropriations in its meeting held today at Conference Rooms 3 and 4, Ramon V. Mitra Building, approved to report out the following bills:

1. Substitute Bill to House Bill Nos. 182 and 183, titled "AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES FOR THE PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA TO BE STATIONED IN SAN JOSE CITY (2), THE SCIENCE CITY OF MUNOZ (2), AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF RIZAL, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SEC. 14, PARAGRAPH (C), SECTION 29, AND SECTION 30 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
2. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 750, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF BULACAN TO BE STATIONED IN SAN JOSE DEL MONTE CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SEC. 14, PARAGRAPH (C) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG 129, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
3. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 899, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF CEBU TO BE STATIONED IN DANA O CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (H) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG 129, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
4. Substitute Bill to House Bill Nos. 1422 and 1423, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE ISLAND GARDEN CITY OF SAMAL, AND A MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF STO. TOMAS, DAVAO DEL NORTE, AMENDING FOR THE

PURPOSE SEC. 14, PARAGRAPH (L) AND SECTION 129, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ACT OF 1980', AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

5. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 1906, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE THIRD JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ORIENTAL TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ORIENTAL FOR THE PURPOSE SEC. 14, PARAGRAPH (K) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
6. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 4968, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE THIRD JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT THE CITY OF MEYCAUAYAN, PROVINCE OF BULACAN, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (C) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
7. House Bill No. 5341, titled "AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL REGIONAL TRIAL COURT BRANCHES IN THE PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON TO BE STATIONED (2) AT THE CITY OF MALAYBALAY AND (1) AT THE CITY OF VALENCIA, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION FOURTEEN (14), PARAGRAPH (K), OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
8. House Bill No. 5335, titled "AN ACT CREATING TWO ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT THE CITY OF LUCENA, PROVINCE OF QUEZON, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
9. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 5583, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE EIGHT JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT THE CITY OF ORMOC, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (I) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980' AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
- ✓ 10. House Bill No. 5597, titled "AN ACT CREATING TWENTY-TWO (22) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION FOR QUEZON CITY, WITH SEATS THEREAT, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
- ✓ 11. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 5837, titled "AN ACT CREATING FOURTEEN (14) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND SEVEN (7) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT FOR THE PROVINCE OF TARLAC, TO BE STATIONED AT TARLAC CITY, AND AT THE MUNICIPALITIES OF PANIQUI, CAPAS, CAMILING, VICTORIA-LA PAZ, CONCEPCION, STA. IGNACIO-SAN CLEMENTE, MONCADA AND GERONA, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (C), SECTION 29 AND SECTION 30 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY

REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980' AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";

12. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 2306, titled "AN ACT CREATING FIVE (5) ADDITIONAL METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT BRANCHES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION, TO BE STATIONED IN MAKATI CITY, METRO MANILA, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 27 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980 AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
13. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 3372, titled "AN ACT CREATING TWO ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN THE EIGHT JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED AT THE CITY OF CALBAYOG, PROVINCE OF WESTERN SAMAR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980' AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
14. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 2958, titled "AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF ISABELA, TO BE STATIONED IN CAUAYAN CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (B) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
15. House Bill No. 4670, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT TO BE STATIONED AT THE CITY OF GUIHULNGAN, PROVINCE OF NEGROS ORIENTAL, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (H), OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980' AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
16. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 4708, titled "AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL REGIONAL TRIAL COURT BRANCHES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION, TO BE STATIONED IN PARAÑAQUE CITY, METRO MANILA, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (D) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980 AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
17. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 4719, titled "AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES (MTCC) IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEZON TO BE STATIONED AT LUCENA CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 30 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE 'JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
18. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 5566, titled "AN ACT CREATING FIVE (5) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND TWO ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION, TO BE STATIONED IN MALABON CITY, METRO MANILA, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (D) AND SECTION 27 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR";
19. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 5839, titled "AN ACT CREATING FIVE (5) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND FIVE (5) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

JUDICIAL REGION, TO BE STATIONED IN PASAY CITY, METRO MANILA, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (D) AND SECTION 27 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"; and

20. Substitute Bill to House Bill No. 6418, titled "AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BONGABONG, AND FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF BANSUD, BULALACAO, GLORIA AND MANSALAY, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF ORIENTAL MINDORO, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (E) AND SECTION 30 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

with omnibus amendment to the proposed appropriations provisions as follows:

Delete the last sentence which reads as follows:

THE FUNDS NECESSARY FOR THE OPERATION OF THE COURT HEREIN CREATED SHALL BE APPROPRIATED AND RELEASED ONLY UPON THE ACTUAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COURT AND THE APPOINTMENT OF ITS PERSONNEL.

It was also moved that the title of House Bill No. 5837 be amended to reflect the correct name of the place from STA. IGNACIO – SAN CLEMENTE, MONCADA AND GERONA TO STA. IGNACIA – SAN CLEMENTE, MONCADA AND GERONA.

Very truly yours,

  
**JOCELYN S. LIMKAICHONG**  
Chairperson  
Committee on Appropriations

cc: Rep. Joseph Gilbert F. Violago  
Rep. Arturo B. Robes  
Rep. Ramon "Red" H. Durano VI  
Rep. Antonio F. Lagdameo, Jr.  
Rep. Yevgeny Vincent B. Emano  
Rep. Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica  
Rep. Florencio T. Flores, Jr.  
Rep. Irvin M. Alcala  
Rep. Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez  
Rep. Jorge "Bolet" Banal  
Rep. Enrique M. Cojuangco  
Rep. Susan A. Yap  
Rep. Godofredo V. Arquiza  
Rep. Mel Senen S. Sarmiento  
Rep. Napoleon S. Dy  
Rep. Edwin L. Olivarez  
Rep. Josephine Veronique R. Lacson-Noel  
Rep. Imelda Calixto-Rubiano  
Rep. Reynaldo V. Umali

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE HELD ON 14 AUGUST 2012 AT CONFERENCE ROOM NOS. 9 & 10, R.V. MITRA BLDG, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, QUEZON CITY**

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**INVITED GUESTS / RESOURCE PERSONS:**

DEPUTY COURT ADMINISTRATOR ANTONIO EUGENIO, JR. – OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR, SUPREME COURT (OCA-SC)  
 P/C.SUPT. CHRISTOPHER LAXA – PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP)  
 ATTY. ARNALDO DIZON – PRESIDENT, INTEGRATED BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES – TARLAC  
 MR. JOHN MANALASTAS – ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, NEWS PRODUCTION – GMA 7  
 ATTY. ROY IBAY – SMART/SUN CELLULAR  
 ATTY. MICHAEL URETA – PLDT  
 ATTY. ALEXANDER GOZON – GLOBE TELECOM

**I. Call to Order:**

Hon. Niel C. Tupas, Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Justice, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**II. Roll Call:**

Upon the duly seconded motion of Hon. Lucy Gomez, the roll call was dispensed with.

**III. Preliminary Remarks:**

After acknowledging the presence of some House members in the meeting, Hon. Tupas informed the body that the first part of the meeting's agenda will deal with House Bills on the Creation of Court Salas and those proposing an Anti-Stalking Act. Thereafter, he said the Justice Committee will adjourn and reconvene to meet in a joint meeting with the Committee on Government Reorganization to deliberate on the measures regarding the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC).

**IV. Deliberation Proper:**

**A. Creation of Additional Court Salas:**

The following measures seek to create additional court salas, to wit:

- HB No. 182 re: 2 RTC / 2 MTC ( San Jose City, Nueva Ecija) by Rep. J. Violago
- HB No. 183 re: 2 RTC (Science City of Muñoz and Rizal - Nueva Ecija) by Rep. J. Violago
- HB No. 750 re: 1 RTC (San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan) by Rep. A. Robes
- HB No. 899 re: 1 RTC (Danao City, Cebu) by Rep. R. Durano
- HB No. 1422 re: 1MTC (Sto. Tomas, Davao del Norte) by Rep. A. Lagdameo
- HB No. 1423 re: 1 RTC (Island Garden City of Samal, Davao del Norte ) by Rep. A. Lagdameo
- HB No. 1906 re: 1 RTC (Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental) by Rep. Y. Emano
- HB No. 4968 re: 1 RTC (Meycauayan, Bulacan) by Rep. L. Villarica
- HB No. 5341 re: 3 RTC (Malaybalay and Valencia, Bukidnon) by Rep. F. Flores
- HB No. 5535 re: 2 RTC (Lucena City, Quezon) by Rep. I. Alcala
- HB No. 5583 re: 1 RTC (Ormoc City, Leyte) by Rep. L. Gomez
- HB No. 5597 re: 22 MTC (Quezon City, Metro Manila) by Rep. J. Banal
- HB No. 5837 re: 14 RTC & 7 MTC (Tarlac City, Paniqui, Capas, Camiling, Concepcion, Victoria-La Paz, Sta. Ignacio-San Clemente, Moncada & Gerona - Tarlac) by Reps. E. Cojuangco and S. Yap

Upon observing that many of the authors were not present to sponsor their respective measures, the Chair nonetheless said that he will relax the Committee's policy that only those bills, whose

authors are present, will be taken up since this meeting was the first after the impeachment hearings. He requested Justice Antonio Eugenio, Jr., Deputy Court Administrator of the Supreme Court, to comment on the proposals for the creation of additional court salas.

The Deputy Court Administrator said that legislative measures seeking to create new courts are always welcome and added that the basis of the number of court salas proposed to be created was the recommendation of the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA). Asked by the Chair if the proposal under House Bill No. 5597, authored by Hon. Jorge Banal, for the creation of 22 additional Municipal Trial Court (MTC) branches was recommended by the OCA, Justice Eugenio answered in the affirmative.

Meanwhile, Hon. Susan Yap, one of the authors of HB No. 5837, gave her sponsorship speech where she emphasized the urgent need to create additional court salas in her area because of the huge backlog of cases in the courts' docket. Her statement was backed up by Mr. Arnaldo Dizon, President of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) –Tarlac, who said that upon coordination with the judges of Tarlac, there is a backlog of 6,000 cases still pending in the courts.

Upon hearing this, Justice Eugenio commented that the ideal caseload target is 300 cases for the RTCs and 500 cases for the MTCs. Given the huge number of cases in the Tarlac courts, he said the creation of new courts is imperative.

For her part, Hon. Gomez, author of HB No. 5583, said that her bill seeks the creation of an additional RTC branch in Ormoc, Leyte in order to decongest the dockets of the 2 existing RTC branches. She stressed that these 2 branches, Branch 12 and Branch 235, have a caseload of 774 and 769 cases, respectively.

Similarly, Hon. Linabelle Ruth Villarica, author of HB No. 4968, proposed for the creation of an additional RTC branch in Meycauayan, Bulacan citing the 12,330 cases pending in the courts' dockets as the basis for such proposal. She added that while the seat of the proposed new branch will be in Meycauayan, the court will service the judicial needs of 4 other towns in Bulacan.

After the 3 authors made their sponsorship speeches and responded to some queries, Hon. Gomez moved for the omnibus approval of all the bills proposing for the creation of additional court salas which was duly seconded by Hon. David Kho. The motion was carried.

Hon. Yap manifested that an amendment be made in her bill, providing for 1 RTC branch each for Capas and Concepcion, Tarlac.

In reply to the inquiry of Hon. Villarica regarding the budget for the creation of the new court salas, the Chair explained the process involved in considering the funding provisions of bills proposing the same. He however emphasized that usually, it is up to the bill's author to follow up the funding but added that there are sufficient funds for the creation of necessary court salas. He also added that in similar bills approved by the Senate earlier on, the upper chamber introduced an amendment to the funding provision of court sala bills which provides that "funds necessary for the operation of the newly-created court shall be appropriated and released only upon the actual organization of the court and appointment of its personnel."

### **B. Anti – Stalking Act:**

The Committee next deliberated on HB Nos. 3367, 5099 and 6114 respectively authored by Hons. Salvador Escudero III, Diosdado Arroyo and Irwin Tieng, proposing an Anti – Stalking Act.

Before giving the floor to Hon. Tieng, the Chair reminded the guests and resource persons to attend the Committee's meetings when invited to, otherwise, a subpoena may be issued to compel their attendance to the meeting. The Chair gave this stern reminder after he was informed that there was no representative from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to attend the meeting despite being sent an invitation.

For his part Hon. Tieng manifested that his bill's explanatory note will serve as his sponsorship speech and added that he is open to any amendments that the Committee may propose for his measure.

Citing the Anti-Stalking laws of the United States, the Chair mentioned that the enactment of said laws in that country were fairly recent and was brought about as a result of the death of a celebrity, Rebecca Schaeffer, who was stalked and killed by her assailant. In the Philippines, however, he said there is yet no law on stalking and only a civil action for damages under Article 26 of the Civil Code is what is applicable in the country.

The Chair asked Hon. Tieng if his bill will apply to media men who may, through a series of acts such as repeated texting, e-mails, phone calls, cause emotional stress to the person they are covering. In response, Hon. Tieng said if the court finds that the series of acts cause untoward stress on the person, then the court may issue a protection order against them.

Asked for his comments, Deputy Court Administrator Eugenio opined that if the stalking undertaken by the media is legitimate, will the bill not contravene freedom of the press? A similar sentiment was expressed by Atty. Alexander Gozon of Globe who said the measure may be construed as a restraint on the freedom of expression.

Admitting that they perform the acts mentioned by the Chair, Mr. John Manalastas, assistant vice president of GMA 7's news production, nonetheless asked if the work of media men can be an exception. The Chair assured him in such a case, the rights of media practitioners will be protected.

Atty. Roy Ibay of Smart/Sun Cellular said that they are only responsible for the sending and receiving of the message and do not have any part in the content which passes through the system.

Meanwhile, P/C. Supt. Christopher Laxa of the Philippine National Police expressed the agency's support for the measure and informed the body that they filed cases similar to stalking but were only classified as unjust vexation. He added that the PNP had also entertained 10 cases of cyberstalking.

After the discussions, Hon. David Kho made a motion for the approval of the measures and for the creation of a technical working group that will consolidate the 3 bills. The motion was carried and the Chair announced that the bills were approved in principle, subject to amendment and consolidation by a technical working group to be composed of the authors of the 3 bills, Hon. Kho, representatives of the DOJ, PNP, NBI, and the media sector.

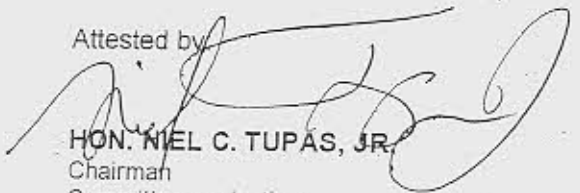
#### **V. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.

Prepared by:

  
**ATTY. NARCISA H. GUEVARRA**  
 Committee Secretary  
 Committee on Justice

Attested by:

  
**HON. NIEL C. TUPAS, JR.**  
 Chairman  
 Committee on Justice