

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6288



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE WILFREDO S. CAMINERO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 10544¹ created two (2) new Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) in the Seventh Judicial Region with seats in the Municipality of Argao in Cebu. The new courts, denominated as Branches 93 and 94, are in the organizational stage with the request for Notice of Organization, Staffing and Compensation Action (NOSCA) submitted with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). The Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) opened the application for these positions. With these new courts, the Second District of Cebu will have five RTCs, four (4) in the Municipality of Argao and one (1) in the Municipality of Oslob.

Argao is a first class municipality, the first town of the Second District that is closest to Cebu City. It has an area of 191.50 sq. km. comprising of forty five (45) *barangays* and with a population of 69,503 as of 2010. On the other hand, Oslob is a fourth class municipality famous for its whale sharks or *buntandings*. It has an area of 134.8 sq. km composed of 21 *barangays* and with a population of 26,116 as of 2010. It is the town next to Santander, which is the southernmost town of Cebu.

An amendment to R.A. No. 10544 is hereby proposed to transfer the seat of one (1) of the two (2) new RTCs from the Municipality of Argao to the Municipality of Dalaguete. Argao and Dalaguete are neighboring towns less than 100 kilometers away from Cebu City. Dalaguete is also a first class municipality. It is second to Argao in terms of land area (155 sq. km.), the number of *barangays* (35), and population (63, 239 as of 2010). Dalaguete is also known as the Vegetable Basket of the Province of Cebu.

¹ It originated as House Bill No. 6862 and was signed into law on May 15, 2013.

Clearly, Dalaguete is next to Argao in terms of socio- economic importance in the Second District.

The proposed amendment which will transfer one (1) of the two (2) new RTC salas from Argao to Dalaguete will promote access to, and improve the administration of, justice.

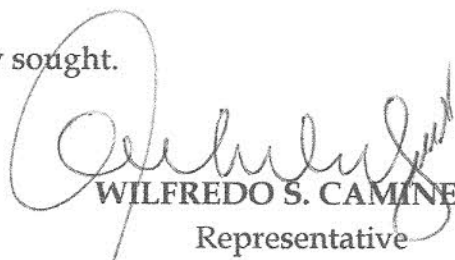
First - it will result in the reduction of the caseload of the Argao RTCs making it more manageable for the judges therein because the jurisdiction of Argao RTCs will be further divided between Argao and Dalaguete.

Second - it will shorten the travel time of the litigants coming from the middle part of the Second District and whose cases would fall under the jurisdiction of Dalaguete because they need not travel all the way to Argao to file or attend to their cases.

Third - it will solve space constraints and save money for the government. Currently, the two (2) RTCs in Argao are housed in the Hall of Justice, a 2-storey Spanish type building which also houses the Public Attorney's Office, the Office of the Prosecutor, and the Philippine Mediation Center. The remaining available space at the Argao Hall of Justice can accommodate only one (1) courtroom with the attached staff room and Judge's chamber. On the other hand, the Dalaguete Hall of Justice can accommodate a courtroom, a staff room and Judge's chambers. Thus, transferring one sala to Dalaguete will obviate the need for the Supreme Court and/or the Local Government of Argao to reconfigure the current Hall of Justice or, worse, lease office space outside of Argao Hall of Justice.

As discussed above, the proposed amendment will promote access to justice and improve its administration and save money and time of the litigants and the government.

Thus, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


WILFREDO S. CAMINERO
Representative
2nd District, Cebu

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AN ACT
TRANSFERRING THE SEAT OF A NEW REGIONAL TRIAL COURT FROM THE
MUNICIPALITY OF ARGAO, PROVINCE OF CEBU TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF
DALAGUETE, PROVINCE OF CEBU, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION
1 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10544 AND FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Section 1 of Republic Act No. 10544 entitled "An Act Creating Two (2) Additional Branches of the Regional Trial Court in the Seventh Judicial Region to be Stationed at the Municipality of Argao, Province of Cebu" is hereby amended to read as follows:

One (1) additional Regional Trial Court branch for Argao, Cebu and another Regional Trial Court branch for Dalaguete, Cebu, with seats thereat, are hereby created in the Seventh Judicial Region.

SECTION 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 implementation of this Act. The funding therefor shall likewise be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The funds necessary for the operation of the Courts herein created shall be appropriated and released only upon the actual organization of the Courts and the appointment of its personnel.

SECTION 3. Section 14(h) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as "The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980", as amended, as well as other provisions that may be inconsistent herewith, are hereby deemed repealed, modified and/or further amended.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect within fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved.