

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1837



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ADRIAN MICHAEL A. AMATONG

EXPLANATORY NOTE

“Justice delayed is justice denied.” For this reason, the Constitution provided that “All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies.” In order to comply with this constitutional mandate, it is therefore imperative that the State increases the number of its courts to meet the increasing number of cases being filed and to improve the administration of justice.

To date, while there is a Municipal Circuit Trial Court (MCTC) for the Municipalities of Labason, Gutalac, and Kalawit in Zamboanga del Norte stationed in the Municipality of Labason, there is no Regional Trial Court (RTC) in Labason. If a case gets decided by the MCTC Labason-Gutalac-Kalawit, they have to go to another municipality, the Municipality of Liloy, where the RTC is located to appeal their cases.

Moreover, the nearby RTC of Liloy is swamped with cases. In 2019, there are a total of 1100 pending and newly filed cases in the RTC of Liloy, which is more than double the manageable level of 300 cases as recommended by the Office of the Court Administrator of the Supreme Court. Worse, only 382 out of the 1100 cases were decided or resolved by the RTC of Liloy that year. Moreover, in the whole Ninth Judicial Region, Regional Trial Courts have a total of 16,459 pending cases as of December 31, 2019, with a disposition rate of only 39%, per the 2019 Judiciary Annual Report of the Supreme Court.

The lack of an RTC in Labason where the clients can conveniently appeal their cases from the MCTC and the high caseload of the nearest RTC in Liloy invariably results to a slow dispensation of justice and the erosion of the people’s trust in our justice system. To solve these problems, this bill seeks to create an additional branch of RTC in the Ninth Judicial Region, to be stationed in the Municipality of Labason, Province of Zamboanga del Norte.

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


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AN ACT
CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE NINTH JUDICIAL REGION
TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LABASON, PROVINCE OF
ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(J) OF BATAS PAMBANSA
BLG. 129, AS AMENDED, 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. One (1) additional branch of the Regional Trial Court in the Ninth Judicial Region is hereby created and stationed in the Municipality of Labason, Province of Zamboanga del Norte.

The Supreme Court shall assign the branch number for the newly created branch of the Regional Trial Court.

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 Municipality of Labason, Province of Zamboanga del Norte. 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.

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

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,