

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 72



Introduced by **Hon. Bernadette S. Barbers**

AN ACT
CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC) IN SURIGAO DEL NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (K) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY ACT OF 1980"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 2nd District of Surigao del Norte is composed of 11 municipalities and one city with a total population of 398,544.¹ As of the present, there are only two (2) Regional Trial Courts serving the 2nd District of Surigao del Norte, particularly RTC Branch 29 and RTC Branch 30. RTC Branch 32, while it may have catered several cases for Surigao del Norte, is actually a court for the Province of Dinagat Islands. As of the present, the caseload of the stated RTCs are as follows:

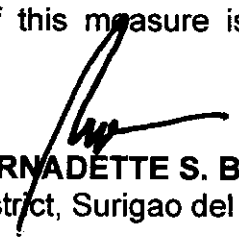
RTC Branch 29	–	716 active cases 550 Criminal Cases 166 Civil Cases
RTC Branch 30	–	1,180 active cases 794 Criminal Cases 214 Civil Cases 69 Special Proceedings Cases 109 Land Cases
RTC Branch 32	–	1,205 active cases 754 Surigao del Norte Cases 451 Dinagat Cases

The pronounced disparity of the number of RTCs vis-à-vis the number of inhabitants attributes as the main factor in the congestion of cases. Consequently, the heavy caseload leads to the delay in the resolution of those cases.

It is fitting to recall the provision of Sec. 16, Art. III of the 1987 Constitution which states "*(a) all persons shall have the right to the speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies.*" However, with the present caseload of the existing RTCs in the 2nd District of Surigao del Norte, there is a seeming impossibility to abide by the stated constitutional mandate. The maxim "*JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED*" holds a special implication.

¹ Based on 2020 census

All of the foregoing considered, the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



HON. BERNADETTE S. BARBERS
2nd District, Surigao del Norte

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

SECTION 1. Three (3) additional branches of the Regional Trial Court in the Tenth Judicial Region are hereby created and stationed in the Province of Surigao del Norte, as follows:

1. Two (2) branches in the City of Surigao; and
2. One (1) branch in the Municipality of Claver.

The Supreme Court shall assign the respective branch numbers for the newly created branches 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 branches of the Regional Trial Court in the City of Surigao and in the Municipality of Claver, Province of Surigao del Norte.

SEC. 3. The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act, including appropriations for personnel services such as salaries, benefits, and emoluments for judges and court personnel, court operations under maintenance and other operating expenses, and provisions for Halls of Justice or courtrooms to accommodate judges and court staff, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 4. Section 14 (k) 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. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,