



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. **399**



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

“An accused shall have the right to have a speedy, impartial and public trial”. This is just one of the constitutional guaranties protected under Article III, Section 14 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. This right is also recognized under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that “anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release”.

During the 2025 budget deliberation in the Senate, Senator Grace Poe reported that there are almost a million pending court cases in the Philippines. A staggering five hundred ninety-two thousand (592,000) of these are pending in Regional Trial Court and Municipal Trial Courts.¹ This means that more than 50% of congestion rate is found in first and second level courts. This also translates to 367% of overcrowding in Philippine prison facilities ².

The slow disposition of cases leads to overcrowding of prison facilities. The sheer number of court cases overwhelm the already exhausted resources of the judiciary. This leads to slow administration of justice not just for the accused but also to the victims and their families. In order to address these issues, this representation seeks to create additional trial courts to serve the constituents of the 2nd District of Davao Oriental. Once approved, these new courts will surely benefit the people of the said district by delivering fair and speedy justice. Hence, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO
Representative
2nd District, Davao Oriental

¹ PH courts have almost 1M unresolved cases. November 11, 2024. Bordey, Hana, GMA News, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/926720/ph-courts-have-almost-1m-unresolved-cases/story/>.

² Philippine jails overcrowded by 367% — COA. June 22, 2023. Chi, Cristina. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/06/22/2275793/philippine-jails-overcrowded-367-coa>.



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AN ACT

CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES IN THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF MATI, PROVINCE OF DAVAO ORIENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (L) AND SECTION 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS 'THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980', AS AMENDED

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

1 **SECTION 1.** Two (2) additional branches of the Regional Trial Court and two (2)
2 additional branches of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities in the Eleventh Judicial Region
3 are hereby created and stationed in the City of Mati, Province of Davao Oriental.

4
5 The Supreme Court shall assign the respective branch numbers for the newly created
6 branches of the Regional Trial Court and Municipal Trial Court in Cities.

7
8 **SEC. 2.** The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in coordination with the Secretary of the
9 Department of Justice, shall immediately include in the Court's program the
10 operationalization of the additional branches of the Regional Trial Court and Municipal
11 Trial Court in Cities in the City of Mati, Province of Davao Oriental.

12
13 **SEC. 3.** The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act, including appropriations
14 for personnel services such as salaries, benefits and emoluments for judges and court
15 personnel, court operations under maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE),

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 (l) and Section 29 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.