

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

House Bill No. **4318**



Introduced by Representative ERIC G. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Judiciary serves as the pillar of justice in society, ensuring that the rights of every citizen are protected and that disputes are resolved fairly and efficiently. However, access to justice remains a challenge in areas where courts are overburdened with caseloads, resulting in delays in the resolution of cases. This proposed measure seeks to address this concern by creating one (1) additional branch of the Municipal Trial Court (MTC) in the Municipality of La Trinidad, Province of Benguet, under the First Judicial Region. By doing so, this measure aims to strengthen the capacity of the justice system and make the delivery of justice faster and more accessible to the people.

The filing of this bill is anchored on the growing demand for a more efficient and responsive delivery of justice in La Trinidad and its neighboring municipalities. Benguet's capital town continues to experience rapid population growth, urbanization, and increased economic activity, resulting in mounting pressure on its existing trial courts. Court dockets in La Trinidad have become increasingly congested, leading to delays in the disposition of criminal, civil, and other cases under their jurisdiction. Through establishing an additional MTC branch, this bill seeks to decongest existing courts, expedite case resolution, and ensure more accessible judicial services, especially to residents who currently endure long waits and the burden of travel for legal proceedings.

In fact, according to the Supreme Court's Annual Report (2023), it shows that trial courts in Benguet, particularly in La Trinidad, have consistently been among the most heavily burdened in the First Judicial Region. Several Municipal Trial Court branches have reported case backlogs that exceed their adjudication capacities, especially for cases involving minor criminal offenses, civil claims, and violations of special laws. La Trinidad, as the administrative, commercial, and educational hub of Benguet, continues to attract new residents and businesses, further increasing the demand for judicial services. Given these realities, the creation of an additional court branch is both timely and necessary to uphold the people's right to a fair and speedy trial.

Once enacted, this bill will authorize the establishment of an additional MTC branch in La Trinidad, with its operational expenses – including salaries, benefits, and court facilities – to be funded through the annual General Appropriations Act. The Supreme Court, in coordination with the Department of Justice, will oversee the implementation and operationalization of this new court branch. It is expected to significantly reduce the case backlog, improve court efficiency, and enhance the accessibility of legal services for Benguet residents.

It is also worth noting that this proposed measure was already approved by the House of Representatives during the 19th Congress and is currently pending deliberation in the Senate. This reflects the strong and continuing recognition of the need for immediate judicial reform to address the growing demands of La Trinidad and its surrounding communities. Moreover, this bill proposes to amend Section 30 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, also known as “The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980,” to create an additional Municipal Trial Court branch in La Trinidad, Benguet.

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



HON. ERIC G. YAP

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AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LA TRINIDAD, PROVINCE OF BENGUET, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 30 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 Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. One (1) additional branch of the Municipal Trial Court in the First Judicial 2 Region is hereby created in the Municipality of La Trinidad, Province of Benguet. The Supreme Court shall assign the branch number for the newly created branch of the Municipal 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 Municipal Trial Court in the Municipality of La Trinidad, Province of Benguet.

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 (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 30 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,