

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4995



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The persistent congestion of cases in the Regional Trial Courts (RTC) of the Eighth Judicial Region, particularly in the Province of Southern Leyte, has long impeded the prompt administration of justice. To address this challenge, this measure proposes the creation of one additional branch of the RTC to be stationed in the Municipality of Sogod, Southern Leyte.

It is noteworthy that similar legislative initiatives have previously been introduced, notably by former Southern Leyte Lone District Representative Roger Mercado, seeking to establish additional RTC branches in both the Municipality of Sogod and Maasin City. These proposals were approved by the House of Representatives and transmitted to the Senate during the 18th and 19th Congresses. However, their passage was ultimately overtaken by the electoral calendars of 2022 and 2025, respectively. This bill adopts, in part, the substance of those earlier measures, but now focuses specifically on the immediate establishment of an RTC branch in Sogod to directly respond to the urgent need for accessible and efficient judicial services in the municipality.

The creation of additional RTC branches in other key cities of Leyte, such as Baybay, Ormoc, and Tacloban, has recently been enacted through Republic Act Nos. 12033, 12048, and 12036, respectively. These legislative precedents underscore the continuing necessity to expand judicial capacity in the region to ensure the expeditious resolution of cases and uphold the constitutional right to a speedy trial.

The immediate enactment of this measure will not only decongest existing court dockets but will also enhance public access to justice and reinforce public confidence in the Philippine judicial system, particularly in Southern Leyte.

In view of the foregoing, and in the spirit of SERBISYONG TINUORAY (genuine public service), the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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AN ACT

CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SOGOD, PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(I) 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. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Sogod RTC Branch Act."

SECTION 2. Creation of an Additional Regional Trial Court Branch. — There is hereby created one (1) additional branch of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in the Eighth Judicial Region, to be stationed in the Municipality of Sogod, Province of Southern Leyte.

The Supreme Court shall assign the branch number for the newly created RTC branch.

SECTION 3. Operationalization and Implementation. — 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 RTC branch in the Municipality of Sogod, Province of Southern Leyte. The Supreme Court shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act and, if warranted, the realignment of seats of existing branches and their territorial jurisdiction.

SECTION 4. Appropriations. — 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, as well as funds necessary for the implementation of automatically-created prosecutor positions pursuant to Section 13 of Republic Act No. 10071, otherwise known as the "Prosecution Service Act of 2010," and the appointment of public attorneys pursuant to Section 7 of Republic Act No. 9406, otherwise known as the "Act Reorganizing and Strengthening the Public Attorney's Office (PAO)," resulting from the creation of this court, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. 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.

SECTION 5. Amendment and Repeal of Inconsistent Laws. — Section 14(i) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as "The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980," as amended, and all other laws, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,