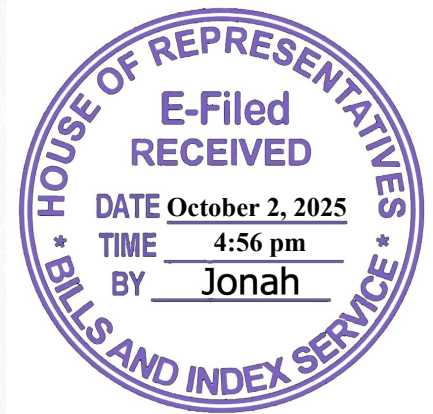




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5108**



Introduced by
REPRESENTATIVE DAVID "JAY-JAY" C. SUAREZ

AN ACT
CREATING ADDITIONAL DIVISIONS IN THE COURT OF APPEALS,
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF COURT OF APPEALS JUSTICES FROM SIXTY-
NINE (69) TO SEVENTY- EIGHT (78), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS
PAMBANSA BILANG 129, AS AMENDED OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, APPROPRIATING

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The effective, swift and judicious dispensation of justice is one of the benchmarks of political modernization. Without it, chaos and anarchic elements will rule the day and plunge society into a jungle of lawlessness. The presence of formal structures to ensure the application of the rule of law among the populace, on the other hand, will most certainly deter the commission of unlawful acts and subordinate everyone to abide by the legal covenants of society.

In a country like the Philippines, the wheel of justice is often perceived as moving at a snail's pace. The existing divisions of the Court of Appeals are frequently burdened with heavy caseloads, leading to delays in case disposition and prolonging the delivery of justice. To address this, the Court of Appeals strictly enforces case flow management to monitor and control the progress of pending cases, as well as ensure equitable distribution of workload among justices to prevent case congestion in particular divisions.

This proposed legislative measure seeks to add three additional divisions to the Court of Appeals, each comprising three members. These additional divisions and members will significantly enhance the institution's capacity to handle the growing volume of cases filed before it. With the appellate docket increasing due to population growth, expanded jurisdiction, and rising litigation, the Court of Appeals will be better able to distribute cases evenly, reduce backlogs, and resolve appeals more promptly. This structural enhancement not only improves judicial efficiency but also reinforces the institutional mandate of providing litigants with speedy and accessible justice, thereby fostering greater public trust and confidence in the judiciary.

Hence, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

DAVID "JAY-JAY" C. SUAREZ
2nd District, Province of Quezon



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JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Section 1. Section 3, Chapter 1 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 129, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 3. Organization. – There is hereby created a Court of Appeals which shall consist of a Presiding Justice and seventy-seven (77) Associate Justices who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines. The Presiding Justice shall be so designated in his appointment, and the Associate Justices shall have precedence according to the dates of their respective appointments or, when the appointments of two or more of them shall bear the same date, according to the order in which their appointments were issued by the President. Any member who is reappointed to the Court after rendering service in any other position in the government shall retain the precedence to which he was entitled under his original appointment, and his service in the court shall, for all intents and purposes, be considered as continuous and uninterrupted.

Section 2. Section 4, Chapter 1 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 129, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 4. Exercise of Powers and Functions. – The Court of Appeals shall exercise its powers, functions, and duties through twenty-six (26) divisions each composed of

three (3) members. The Court may sit en banc for the purpose of exercising administrative, ceremonial, or other non-adjudicatory functions."

Section 3. Section 10, Chapter 1 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 129, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 10. Place of Holding Sessions. – The Court of Appeals shall have its permanent stations as follows:

"The first seventeen (17th) Divisions shall be stationed in the City of Manila for cases coming from the Third (3rd) to the Fifth (5th) Judicial Regions;

"The Eighteenth (18th), Nineteenth (19th), and Twentieth (20th) Divisions shall be stationed in the City of Cebu for cases coming from the Sixth (6th), Seventh (7th), and Eighth (8th) Judicial Regions;

"The Twenty-first (21st), Twenty-second (22nd), and Twenty-third (23rd) Divisions shall be stationed in the City of Cagayan de Oro for cases coming from the Ninth (9th) and Tenth (10th) Judicial Regions;

"The Twenty-fourth (24th) Division shall be stationed in the City of Vigan for cases coming from the First (1st) and Second (2nd) Judicial Regions; and

"The Twenty-fifth (25th) and Twenty-sixth (26th) Divisions shall be stationed in the City of Davao for cases coming from the Eleventh (11th) and Twelfth (12th) Judicial Regions.

"Whenever demanded by public interest or whenever justified by an increase in case load, the Supreme Court, upon its own initiative or upon recommendation of the Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeals, may authorize any division of the Court to hold sessions periodically or for such periods and at such places as the Supreme Court may determine for the purpose of hearing and deciding cases.

"Trials or hearings in the Court of Appeals must be continuous and must be completed within three (3) months unless extended by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Section 4. *Funding.* – The amounts necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

Section 5. Upon the effectivity of this Act, all pending cases, except those which have been submitted for resolution, shall be referred to the proper division of the Court of Appeals.

Section 6. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to allow the transfer, except in cases of temporary assignment, of any member of the Court of Appeals to any place or station without such member's written consent, or to undermine the security of tenure of its members as provided

in the Constitution, or alter the seniority in the Court of Appeals in accordance with existing laws.

Section 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision thereof not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, letters of instruction, executive orders, rules, or regulations, or any part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,