



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
House of Representatives
CONSTITUTION HILLS, QUEZON CITY

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5565



AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES IN THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN GENERAL SANTOS CITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Representative SHIRLYN L. BAÑAS-NOGRALES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Bill seeks to establish four (4) additional branches of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities (MTCC) in the Eleventh Judicial Region, with seats at General Santos City.

General Santos City, a highly urbanized city and the regional growth center of SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII), is presently served by only three (3) MTCC branches, all established in 1980 under Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, or *The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980*. At that time, the City’s population was only around 150,000, and its economy was primarily agricultural and fishery-based.

Four decades later, General Santos City has experienced significant socio-economic expansion. Based on the 2024 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the City recorded a total population of 722,059, representing more than a fourfold increase, and ranking among the highest growth rates in Mindanao’s major urban centers. Over the years, General Santos City has likewise transformed into a key industrial, commercial, and fisheries hub in Southern Mindanao, hosting more than 20,000 registered business establishments, numerous national and regional government offices, vital infrastructure, and several designated economic zones.

Moreover, the passage of Republic Act No. 11576, which expanded the jurisdiction of first-level courts, and the Revised Rules of Procedure for Small Claims Cases (A.M. No. 08-8-7-SC, as amended) have further increased case inflow. While these reforms aim to decongest the Regional Trial Courts, they have transferred a significant volume of cases to already overburdened three (3) MTCC branches.

This persistent congestion undermines the efficient administration of justice, erodes public confidence in the judiciary, and frustrates the constitutional right to a speedy disposition of cases guaranteed under Article III, Section 16 of the 1987 Constitution.

The proposed creation of four (4) additional MTCC branches will decongest existing dockets, ensure timely case disposition, and strengthen judicial access and efficiency in one

of Mindanao's fastest-growing cities. This measure is consistent with the Supreme Court's Strategic Plan for Judicial Innovations 2022–2027, which prioritizes docket decongestion and court capacity enhancement.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this Bill is earnestly sought.



SHIRLYN L. BAÑAS-NOGRALES



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
House of Representatives
CONSTITUTION HILLS, QUEZON CITY

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **5565**

AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES IN THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN GENERAL SANTOS CITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980", AS AMENDED

Introduced by Representative SHIRLYN L. BAÑAS-NOGRALES

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

SECTION 1. Four (4) additional branches of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities in the Eleventh Judicial Region are hereby created and stationed in General Santos City.

The Supreme Court shall assign the respective branch numbers for the newly created branches of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities.

SECTION 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 Municipal Trial Court in Cities in General Santos City.

SECTION 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.

SECTION 4. 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.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,