



Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress  
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7323

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**Introduced by Representative John Geesnell “Baba” Yap**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to separate the territorial jurisdiction of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court, Branch 14 of Dauis-Panglao, and create individual Municipal Trial Courts for the Municipalities of Dauis and Panglao in the Seventh Judicial Region, Province of Bohol.

Section 11, Article III (*Bill of Rights*) of the 1987 Constitution provides that:

*“Section 11. Free access to the courts and quasi-judicial bodies and adequate legal assistance shall not be denied to any person by reason of poverty.”*

Further, Section 16 of the same Article states that: .

*“Section 16. All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies.”*

The Municipalities of Dauis and Panglao are the two towns located on Panglao Island, Province of Bohol. Currently, both towns are served by Municipal Circuit Trial Court (MCTC), Branch 14 in the Seventh Judicial Region, which covers the Province of Bohol. At present, there are only two Municipal Trial Courts in the province, located in the Municipalities of Loon and Calape.

During the past decade, Panglao Island has experienced exponential growth in tourism, commerce, and population. As of the May 2020 census, the Municipality of Panglao has a population of 39,839 residents and has been steadily increasing over the last twenty years. The 2020 total population of the municipality is 18,502 persons higher than its population in 2000 (*PSA Report 04 October 2022*). The Municipality of Dauis, on the other hand, has a population of 52,492, a higher number compared to the Municipalities of Calape and Loon, with 33,079 and 44,224, respectively.

Understandably, this growth in the population of Panglao Island has led to a corresponding increase in legal cases and judicial workload. These cases involve land disputes, commercial transactions, environmental violations, and tourism-related offenses.

Most recent data from the Supreme Court indicates that 241 cases are pending before the Dauis-Panglao MCTC. The increasing number of caseload results in the clogging of court dockets, causing delay in the resolution of cases, which is prejudicial to the litigants' right to a speedy disposition of their cases.

Recognizing this, both the *Sangguniang Bayan* of the Municipality of Panglao, through Board Resolution No. 306 Series of 2024, and the Municipality of Dauis, through Board Resolution No. 163 Series of 2024, have long appealed for legislative action to create separate Municipal Trial Courts for Dauis and Panglao, out of the existing MCTC, Branch 14.

Considering that the island of Panglao is a thriving area that was ranked as the 8<sup>th</sup> trending destination worldwide for 2025 by Skyscanner in their Travel Trends 2025 report, it plays a crucial role in driving Bohol's economic growth through real estate investments, commercial developments, and infrastructure projects. Its 2022 revenue reached P246.7 million, reflecting strong fiscal health.

For this purpose, it is recommended that the territorial jurisdiction of MCTC, Branch 14 of Dauis-Panglao be separated, and individual Municipal Trial Courts be created for Dauis and Panglao in the Seventh Judicial Region to ensure judicial efficiency, support peace, order, and regulatory enforcement amid growing tourism and economic activity. This will further elevate Panglao's status as Bohol's powerhouse attraction.

This proposed measure aims to restructure the court system's distribution in relation to the population to safeguard the people's right to free access to courts and to ensure a just and prompt adjudication of cases.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Geesnell', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

**JOHN GEESNELL “Baba” YAP**



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**AN ACT**  
**SEPARATING THE TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OF THE MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT, BRANCH 14 OF DAUIS-PANGLAO, CREATING INDIVIDUAL MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF DAUIS AND MUNICIPALITY OF PANGLAO IN THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION, PROVINCE OF BOHOL, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. The territorial jurisdiction of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court, Branch 14 of Dauis-Panglao in the Province of Bohol is hereby separated, and individual Municipal Trial Courts for the Municipality of Panglao and Municipality of Dauis shall be created in the Seventh Judicial Region, to be stationed on the Island of Panglao, Province of Bohol.

SEC. 2. The Supreme Court shall assign the respective branch numbers of the newly created branches of the Municipal Trial Court in the Seventh Judicial Region, Province of Bohol.

SEC. 2. All pending cases falling within the jurisdiction of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Dausis-Panglao shall be transferred to the newly-created individual Municipal Trial Courts for the Municipalities of Dausis and Panglao under this Act, and shall be tried and decided therein.

SEC. 3. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in coordination with the Secretary of Justice, shall immediately include in the program of the Supreme Court the operationalization of the newly-created Municipal Trial Courts in the Municipalities of Dausis and Panglao, Province of Bohol. 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.

SEC. 4. The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act, including appropriations for personnel services such as salaries, benefits, and emoluments for the judges and other court personnel, court operations under maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), and provisions for the Hall of Justice or courtroom to accommodate the judges and court staff, as well as funds necessary for the implementation of automatically created prosecutor positions pursuant to Republic Act (RA) No. 10071 and appointment of public attorneys pursuant to

RA 9406 resulting from the creation of this court, including appropriations for personnel services such as salaries, benefits, and emoluments for prosecutors and public attorneys, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. The funds necessary for the operation of the courts created under this Act shall be appropriated and released only upon the actual organization of the court and the appointment of its respective personnel.

SEC. 6. Sections 30 and 31 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. 7. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,