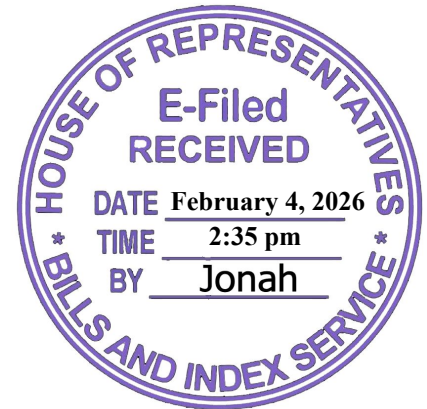


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7614



Introduced by **HON. KATHRYN JOYCE F. GORRICETA, M.D.**
and **HON. LORENZ R. DEFENSOR**

AN ACT
CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE SIXTH JUDICIAL REGION, WITH SEATS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SANTA BARBARA, PROVINCE OF ILOILO, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (G) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980,” AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right of every citizen to timely and meaningful access to justice is a fundamental constitutional guarantee. Courts must therefore be not only impartial and competent, but also reasonably accessible to the people they serve.

This bill seeks to create two (2) additional branches of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in the Sixth Judicial Region, with seats in the Municipality of Santa Barbara, Province of Iloilo, in order to address a long-standing gap in judicial infrastructure in the Second Legislative District of the Province of Iloilo.

At present, the Second Legislative District of Iloilo is the only legislative district in the province without a Regional Trial Court physically located within its territorial jurisdiction. As a result, all RTC cases originating from the Second District are filed, heard, and tried in the RTC branches located in Iloilo City, which serve as the nearest RTC stations for the district.

These RTC branches in Iloilo City are among the most heavily subscribed courts in the province, handling a high volume of cases not only from Iloilo City itself but also from surrounding municipalities, including those belonging to the Second Legislative District. The continued inflow of cases from outside the city has significantly contributed to docket congestion, extended trial calendars, and delays in the resolution of cases.

The absence of an RTC within the Second District has caused substantial inconvenience to litigants, witnesses, lawyers, and court personnel who are compelled to travel to Iloilo City to attend hearings, trials, and other judicial proceedings. This entails additional transportation expenses, loss of productive time, and logistical burdens, particularly for indigent litigants, senior citizens, and residents of more remote municipalities. These difficulties often result in postponed hearings and protracted litigation.

Moreover, the concentration of RTC cases from the Second District in Iloilo City places undue strain on existing judicial resources and undermines the efficient administration of justice. The persistent congestion of these courts runs counter to the constitutional mandate that all persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases under Article III, Section 16 of the 1987 Constitution.

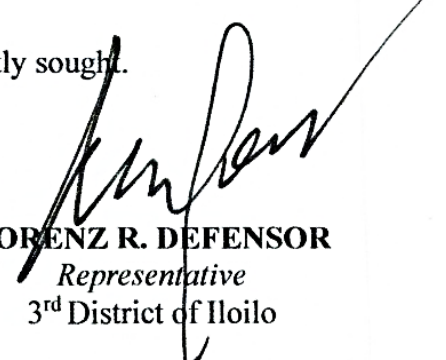
The creation of two (2) additional Regional Trial Court branches in the Municipality of Santa Barbara, strategically located within the Second Legislative District, will decentralize court services, ease the heavy caseload of RTC branches in Iloilo City, and ensure a more balanced distribution of judicial resources within the province. By bringing the courts closer to the people, this measure will promote timely case disposition, enhance administrative efficiency, strengthen coordination with local government units and justice-sector institutions, and ultimately reinforce public confidence in the justice system.

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



KATHRYN JOYCE F. GORRICETA, M.D.

Representative
2nd District of Iloilo



LORENZ R. DEFENSOR

Representative
3rd District of Iloilo

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7614

Introduced by **HON. KATHRYN JOYCE F. GORRICETA, M.D.**
and **HON. LORENZ R. DEFENSOR**

AN ACT

CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE SIXTH JUDICIAL REGION, WITH SEATS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SANTA BARBARA, PROVINCE OF ILOILO, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (G) OF 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 House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Creation of Additional Regional Trial Court Branches.* Two (2) additional branches of the Regional Trial Court in the Sixth Judicial Region are hereby created, with seats in the Municipality of Santa Barbara, Province of Iloilo, specifically within the Municipal Hall Complex, GMTD Street, Zone 1, Poblacion, or such other suitable government-owned facility within the municipality as may be designated by the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court shall assign the respective branch numbers for the newly created Regional Trial Court branches.

SEC. 2. *Operationalization of the Courts.* 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 two (2) additional branches of the Regional Trial Court in the Municipality of Santa Barbara, Province of Iloilo.

The amount necessary for the operation of the courts herein created shall be appropriated and released only upon the organization of the courts and the appointment of their personnel.

SEC. 3. *Appropriations.* The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act, including appropriations for personnel services such as salaries, benefits, and emoluments of judges and court personnel, maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), and provisions for courtrooms or Halls of Justice to accommodate judges and court staff, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 4. *Amendment and Repealing Clause.* Section 14 (g) 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.

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

Approved,