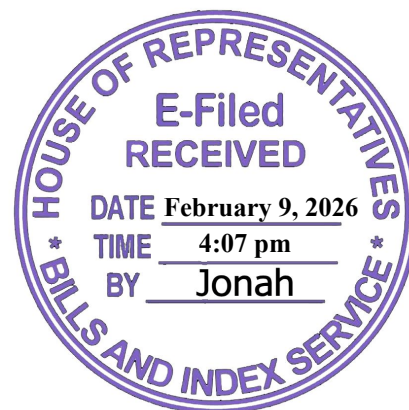


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7689



Introduced by **HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Municipality of Bato in the Province of Camarines Sur, is among the fastest-growing municipalities in the Rinconada area. Its steady population increase, expanding economic activities, and growing social mobility have resulted in a corresponding rise in legal disputes and court-related matters. Despite these developments, the Municipality of Bato does not have its own first-level court and remains under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court (MCTC) of Nabua-Bato.

At present, court services for both municipalities are centralized in Nabua. This arrangement has resulted in logistical constraints and undue burdens on litigants, witnesses, law enforcement personnel, and other justice sector stakeholders, particularly those coming from Bato. Although the distance between the two municipalities may appear manageable, the recurring need to travel poses real and persistent difficulties for ordinary citizens, especially farmers, daily wage earners, students, senior citizens, and individuals with limited mobility and financial means. These conditions contribute to delays in proceedings, reduced participation in hearings, and diminished access to justice.

At the same time, the Municipality of Nabua itself has experienced substantial population growth and an expanding volume of cases. The continued operation of a single circuit court serving two growing municipalities has led to increasing docket congestion, stretching the court's capacity to effectively and promptly resolve disputes. This situation clearly demonstrates that both Bato and Nabua now require their own stand-alone Municipal Trial Courts to adequately address the demands of their respective jurisdictions.

The establishment of a separate Municipal Trial Court (MTC) in the Municipality of Bato, alongside the conversion of the existing MCTC into a Municipal Trial Court with seat in Nabua, will substantially decongest court dockets, improve case management, and ensure faster, more efficient, and more localized delivery of judicial services. This structural reform will allow each municipality to address its unique legal needs and population realities more effectively.

Section 16, Article III of the 1987 Constitution guarantees that all persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies. When court access is constrained by distance or when case backlogs persist due to limited judicial capacity, this constitutional right is undermined.

The creation of stand-alone Municipal Trial Courts in the Municipalities of Bato and Nabua in the Province of Camarines Sur is therefore a necessary and urgent measure to strengthen access to justice, uphold constitutional guarantees, and bring judicial services closer to the people.

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



HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

Republic of the Philippines
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7689

Introduced by **HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE**

AN ACT CONVERTING THE EXISTING MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT OF NABUA-BATO INTO A MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT WITH SEAT AT THE MUNICIPALITY OF NABUA, AND CREATING A SEPARATE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF BATO, ALL SITUATED IN THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR, IN THE FIFTH JUDICIAL REGION, 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 House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. The existing Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Nabua-Bato, Camarines Sur is hereby converted into a Municipal Trial Court with seat at the Municipality of Nabua.

A separate Municipal Trial Court with seat at the Municipality of Bato is also hereby created.

SECTION 2. All cases pending in the Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Nabua-Bato, Camarines Sur shall be transferred to the proper Municipal Trial Court created herein and shall be tried and decided therein.

SECTION 3. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is hereby authorized to create new and additional positions, to make changes in assignments of personnel, and to effect such reorganization as may be necessary to fully implement this Act: *Provided*, that the same shall neither diminish the salaries and other benefits nor undermine the security of tenure of the incumbent judge and personnel of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court of Nabua-Bato.

SECTION 4. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in coordination with the Secretary of the Department of Justice, shall immediately include the funds necessary to fully operationalize the courts created by this Act in the Annual General Appropriations Act. The funds necessary for the operation of the courts herein created shall be appropriated and released only upon the actual organization of the courts and the appointment of its personnel.

SECTION 5. Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as “The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980”, as amended, and all other laws, executive orders, and rules and regulations which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,