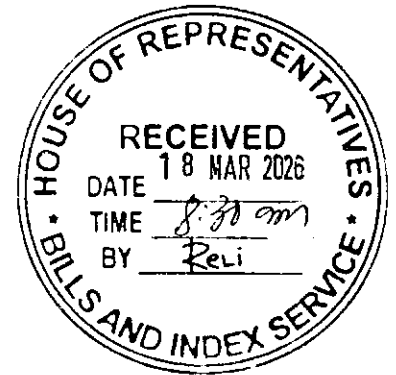


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

House Bill No. 8645



Introduced by **Hon. ELEANOR C. BULUT-BEGTANG**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to create an additional Regional Trial Court in the Second Judicial Region to be stationed in the Municipality of Kabugao, Province of Apayao.

The Province of Apayao is comprised of seven municipalities, namely: Calanasan, Conner, Flora, Luna, Kabugao, Pudtol, and Sta. Marcela, with a total population of 126,587 based on the 2024 census.

Currently, there is only one Regional Trial Court (RTC) in the province, specifically, RTC Branch XXVI stationed in the Municipality of Luna, which serves the entire province. The geographical topography of Apayao and the presence of only one RTC in the province pose significant challenges to party-litigants who are required to travel for hours to reach the court, incurring additional expenses for transportation, meals, and accommodation, while also sacrificing valuable time and effort that could otherwise be spent on their personal and professional pursuits.

To address these concerns, this representation, together with the local government unit and stakeholders, propose the establishment of an additional RTC in the Municipality of Kabugao, Apayao. This strategic location will cover the municipalities of Calanasan, Conner, and Kabugao, while the existing RTC Branch XXVI will cover the municipalities of Luna, Flora, Pudtol, and Sta. Marcela. This will significantly reduce the distance and travel time for litigants, resulting in savings on transportation costs and effort, ultimately facilitating easier access to the courts.

Further, the creation of this additional RTC will contribute to upholding every Filipino's Constitutional right to a speedy disposition of their cases, equal protection under the law, free access to the courts, and adequate legal assistance. It will also address the poor court-to-population ratio, scarce resources, and other challenges facing the Judiciary, as outlined in the Strategic Plan for Judicial Innovations (2022-2027), thereby enabling the Judiciary to deliver speedy and equal justice for all.

In view of the foregoing and in the interest of expeditious, effective, and efficient administration of justice, the immediate passing of this bill is earnestly sought.


ELEANOR C. BULUT-BEGTANG
Representative
Lone District of Apayao

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

House Bill No. **8645**

Introduced by **Hon. ELEANOR C. BULUT-BEGTANG**

**AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
IN THE SECOND JUDICIAL REGION, TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY
OF KABUGAO, PROVINCE OF APAYAO, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (B) OF BATAS
PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY
REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980", AS AMENDED**

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

SECTION 1. One additional branch of the Regional Trial Court in the Second Judicial Region is hereby created to be stationed in the Municipality of Kabugao, Province of Apayao.

The Supreme Court shall assign the respective branch number for the newly created branch of the Regional Trial Court.

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 branch of Regional Trial Court in the Province of Apayao.

SECTION 3. The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act, including appropriations for personnel services such as salaries, benefits and emoluments for the judge 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 14 (b) of Batas Pambansa Bilang 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,