

20 FEB 18 A9 :15

**SENATE S.B. No. 1359**

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Introduced by **Senator Richard J. Gordon**

**AN ACT  
FURTHER EXPANDING THE JURISDICTION OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL  
COURTS, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS IN CITIES, MUNICIPAL TRIAL  
COURTS, AND MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURTS, AMENDING FOR THE  
PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE  
"JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED**

The Court Management Office of the Office of the Court Administrator reported that at the end of 2017, there were 19,832 civil cases pending with the first level courts. In 2018, there was an inflow of 47,442 cases and an outflow of 45,457 civil cases. By the end of 2018, there were 21,169 pending civil cases.

With regard to the second level courts, at the end of 2017 there were 117,785 pending civil cases. In 2018, there was an inflow of 68,457 civil cases and an outflow of 65,363 civil cases. By the end of 2018, there were 108,484 pending civil cases.

Based on the data, this shows that the first level courts have a lower number of pending cases at the end of the year compared to that of the second level courts.

Given this, to help de-clog the dockets of the second level courts and to increase the number of cases that can be covered by the simpler procedures (Revised Rules Small Claims and Revised Rules on Summary Procedure) covered by the first level courts, this Bill seeks to increase the jurisdictional threshold of the first level courts. Thus the passage of this Bill is earnestly sought.

  
**RICHARD J. GORDON**  
Senator

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**COURTS, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS IN CITIES, MUNICIPAL TRIAL**  
**COURTS, AND MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURTS, AMENDING FOR THE**  
**PURPOSE 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 assemble*

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 19 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the  
2 "Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980," As Amended, is hereby amended to read as  
3 follows:

4 "Section 19. *Jurisdiction of the Regional Trial Courts in Civil Cases.* –  
5 Regional Trial Courts shall exercise exclusive original jurisdiction:

6 xxx

7 (2) In all civil actions which involve the title to, or possession of, real  
8 property, or any interest therein, where the assessed value exceeds Four  
9 Hundred Thousand Pesos (P400,000.00), except for forcible entry into and  
10 unlawful detainer of lands or buildings, original jurisdiction over which is  
11 conferred upon the Metropolitan Trial Courts, and Municipal Trial Courts  
12 in Cities, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts;

13 (3) In all actions in admiralty and maritime jurisdiction where the demand  
14 or claims exceed Two Million Pesos (P2,000,000.00);

15 (4) in all matters of probate, both testate and intestate, where the gross  
16 value of the estate exceeds Two Million Pesos (P2,000,000.00);

17 xxx

1 (8) In all other cases in which the demand, exclusive of interest, damages  
2 of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses and costs or the  
3 value of the property in controversy exceeds Two Million Pesos  
4 (P2,000,000.00)."

5 **SEC. 2.** Section 33 of the same law is hereby amended to read as follows:

6 "Section 33. *Jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts in*  
7 *Cities, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts in Civil Cases. –*  
8 *Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts in Cities, Municipal Trial Courts, and*  
9 *Municipal Circuit Trial Courts shall exercise:*

10 (1) Exclusive original jurisdiction over civil actions and probate proceedings,  
11 testate and intestate, including the grant of provisional remedies in proper  
12 cases, where the value of the personal property, estate, or amount of the  
13 demand does not exceed Two Million Pesos (P2,000,000.00), exclusive of  
14 interest, damages of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and  
15 costs, the amount of which must be specifically alleged: *Provided*, That  
16 interest damages of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and  
17 costs shall be included in the determination of the filing fees: *Provided*,  
18 *further*, That where there are several claims or causes of actions between  
19 the same or different parties, embodied in the same complaint, the amount  
20 of the demand shall be the totality of the claims in all the causes of action,  
21 irrespective of whether the causes of action arose out of the same or  
22 different transactions;

23  
24 xxx

25  
26 (3) Exclusive original jurisdiction in all civil actions involve title to, or possession  
27 of, real property, or any interest therein where the assessed value of the  
28 property does not exceed Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (P400,000.00)  
29 exclusive on interest, damage of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation  
30 expenses and costs: *Provided*, That in cases of land not declared for taxation  
31 purposes, the value of such property shall be determined by the assessed  
32 value of the adjacent lots.

33 (4) Exclusive original jurisdiction in admiralty and maritime actions where the  
34 demand or claim does not exceed Two Million Pesos (P2,000,000.00).

35 **SEC 3.** Five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act and every five (5) years thereafter,  
36 the jurisdictional amounts mentioned in Sec. 19 (2), (3), (4) and (8), and Sec. 33 (1),  
37 (3) and (4) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended by this Act, shall be increased  
38 by One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00).

1 **SEC 4.** The provisions of this Act shall apply to all civil cases that have not yet reached  
2 the pre-trial stage. However, by agreement of all the parties, civil cases cognizable by  
3 the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts in Cities, Municipal Trial Courts,  
4 and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts by the provisions of this Act may be transferred from  
5 the Regional Trial Courts to the latter. The Supreme Court shall define the  
6 administrative procedure for the transfer of cases affected by the redefinition of  
7 jurisdiction to the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts in Cities, Municipal  
8 Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts.

9 **SEC 5. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional,  
10 the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions thereof

11 **SEC 6. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, and orders inconsistent with the  
12 provisions of this Act shall be considered amended or modified accordingly.

13 **SEC. 7. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its  
14 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general  
15 circulation.

16 *Approved,*