

AN ACT CREATING CIRCUIT CRIMINAL COURTS TO TRY AND DECIDE CERTAIN CRIMINAL CASES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 5179, September 08, 1967

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

SECTION 1. In each of the sixteen judicial districts for the Courts of First Instance as presently constituted, there is hereby created a Circuit Criminal Court with limited jurisdiction, concurrent with the regular court of first instance, to try and decide the following criminal cases falling under the original and exclusive jurisdiction of the latter:

- (a) Crimes committed by public officers, crimes against persons and crimes against property as defined and penalized under the Revised Penal Code, whether simple or complex with other crimes;
- b. Violations of Republic Act No. 3019, otherwise known as the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, and Republic Act No. 1379; and
- c. Violations of sections 3601, 3602, and 3604 of the Tariff and Customs Code and sections 174, 175 and 345 of the National Internal Revenue Code.

SEC. 2. The judges of the Circuit Criminal Courts herein created shall be appointed by the President with the consent of the Commission on Appointments, and shall have the same qualifications, rank, compensations and privileges, and shall be subject to the same restrictions or disabilities, as the judges of the Courts of First Instance. They shall hold office during good behavior and may be suspended or removed only in the manner and upon the same grounds as the judges of the Courts of First Instance.

SEC. 3. The provisions of all laws and the Rules of Court relative to the judges of the Courts of First Instance and the trial, disposition and appeal of criminal cases therein shall be applicable to the circuit judge and the cases cognizable by them insofar as they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. The Circuit Criminal Courts may hold sessions anywhere within their respective districts: Provided, however, That cases shall be heard within the province where the crime subject of the offense was committed: And provided, further, That when the interest of justice so demands, with prior approval of the Supreme Court, cases may be heard in a neighboring province within the district. The provincial governments concerned shall provide the Circuit Criminal Courts with adequate office space.

SEC. 5. The Secretary of Justice shall designate from among the personnel of the Courts of First Instance of the province where any of the circuit criminal courts is holding session those who shall act as personnel of the latter court and, as such, shall be subject to the order of the Circuit Judge: Provided, however, That nothing in this section shall preclude the Secretary of Justice from appointing such permanent personnel of each circuit criminal court as may be necessary.

SEC. 6. Criminal cases cognizable by the Circuit Criminal Courts herein created which are pending in, and have been partly tried by, the Courts of First Instance as of the date of the approval of this Act shall continue to be tried

and decided by the latter. As far as practicable, the trial of cases in the Circuit Criminal Courts, once commenced, shall be continuous until terminated and the judgment shall be rendered within thirty days from the time the case is submitted for decision.

Unless inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, the Circuit Criminal Courts shall have the same powers as those conferred by the Judiciary Act and the Rules of Court upon the regular Courts of First Instance, insofar as may be necessary to carry their jurisdiction into effect,

SEC. 7. Whenever necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act, the Secretary of Justice may, with the approval of the Supreme Court and for a period of not more than three months, assign any Circuit Judge to hold sessions in, and try cases pertaining to, another judicial district to assist in the disposition of criminal cases therein. No judge so assigned shall take cognizance of any case where any of the parties thereto objects and the objection is sustained by the Supreme Court.

SEC. 8. For administrative purposes, the Circuit Criminal Courts shall be under the supervision of the Department of Justice.

SEC. 9. Such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act during the fiscal year 1966-1967, including the salaries of complementary personnel and those needed for operating expenses and equipment, are hereby appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Henceforth, the same shall be included in the annual general appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, September 8, 1967.

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