

AN ACT TO AMEND CERTAIN SECTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIX, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS *THE JUDICIARY ACT OF 1948*, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1404, September 09, 1955

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

SECTION 1. The second, third and ninth paragraphs of Action forty-nine of Republic Act Numbered Two hundred and ninety-six, as amended, are hereby further amended read as follows:

"SEC. 49. Judicial Districts.—Judicial districts for Court of First Instance in the Philippines are constituted as follows:

"The First Judicial District shall consist of the Provinces of Cagayan, Batanes, Isabela, and Nueva Vizcaya, and the subprovince of Apayao, Mountain Province;

"The Second Judicial District, of the Provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, City of Baguio, Mountain province, except the subprovince of Apayao, and La Union;

"The Eighth Judicial District, of the Province of Laguna, the City of San Pablo, the Province of Batangas, the City of Lipa, and the Provinces of Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro and Marinduque;"

SEC. 2. The first, second, third, sixth, seventh, eleventh, twelfth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth paragraphs of section fifty of Republic Act Numbered Two hundred and ninety-six, as amended, is further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 50. Judges of First Instance for Judicial Districts.—Six judges shall be commissioned for the First Judicial District. Two judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Cagayan, Batanes and the Subprovince of Apayao in the Mountain Province, and shall be known as judges of the first and second branches thereof, respectively, the judge of the First branch to preside also over the Court of First Instance of the subprovince of Apayao and the judge of the second branch to preside also over the Court of First Instance of Batanes; two judges shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Isabela, and shall be known as the judges of the first and second branches thereof; and two judges shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Nueva Vizcaya, to be known as the judges of the First and Second branches thereof.

"Eight judges shall be commissioned for the Second Judicial District. Two judges shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Ilocos Norte; two judges shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Ilocos Sur; one judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Abra; one judge shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of the City of Baguio and Mountain Province, except the subprovinces of Apayao, Kalinga, Bontoc and Ifugao; and two judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of La Union and the Subprovinces of Kalinga, Bontoc and Ifugao, and shall be known as judges of the First and Second branches thereof, respectively, the judge of the Second branch to preside also over the Courts of First Instance of the Subprovinces of Kalinga, Bontoc and Ifugao.

"Eight judges shall be commissioned for the Third Judicial District. Seven judges shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Pangasinan and shall be known as judges of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh branches thereof, respectively; the judges of the First and Second branches to preside over the Court of First Instance of Lingayen; the judges of the Third and Fourth branches to preside over the Court of First Instance of the City of Dagupan; the judge of the Fifth branch to preside over the Court of First Instance of Urdaneta; the judge of the Sixth branch to preside over the Court of First Instance of Tayug; and the Judge of the Seventh branch to preside over the Court of First Instance of Alaminos, Pangasinan. One judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Zambales.

"Twenty judges shall be commissioned for the Sixth Judicial District. They shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Manila and shall be known as judges of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth branches thereof, respectively.

"Eleven judges shall be commissioned for the Seventh Judicial District. Seven judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of the Province of Rizal, Quezon City and Pasay City and shall be known as judges of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh branches thereof, respectively; three judges shall preside over the courts of First Instance of the Province of Cavite and the Cities of Cavite and Tagaytay, and shall be known as Judges of the first, second, and third branches thereof, respectively; and one judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Palawan.

"Eight judges shall be commissioned for the Eleventh Judicial District. Two judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Capiz, Roxas City and Romblon and shall be known as judges of the first and second branches thereof, respectively; five judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of the Province of Iloilo and the City of Iloilo, and shall be known as judges of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth branches thereof, respectively; and one judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of the Province of Antique.

"Seven judges shall be commissioned for the Twelfth Judicial District. Five judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Occidental Negros and the City of Bacolod, and shall be known as judges of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth branches thereof, respectively; and two judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Oriental Negros, Dumaguete City and the Subprovince of Siquijor.

"Seven judges shall be commissioned for the Fourteenth Judicial District. Six judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of the Province of Cebu and the City of Cebu, and shall be known as judges of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth branches thereof, respectively; and one judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Bohol.

"Six judges shall be commissioned for the Fifteenth Judicial District. One judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Surigao; one judge shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Agusan and Butuan City; two judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Oriental Misamis, Cagayan de Oro and Bukidnon, and shall be known as judges of the first and second branches thereof, respectively; and two judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Lanao and the Cities of Dansalan and Iligan, and shall be known as judges of the first and second branches thereof.

"Ten judges shall be commissioned for the Sixteenth Judicial District. Three judges shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of the Province of Davao and Davao City; two judges shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Cotabato, to be known as judges of the first and second branches thereof; one judge shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Occidental Misamis and Ozamis City; one judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Zamboanga del Norte; one judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Zamboanga del Sur; one judge shall preside over the Courts of First Instance of Zamboanga City and Basilan City; and one judge shall preside over the Court of First Instance of Sulu.

SEC. 3. Section fifty-one of Republic Act Numbered Two hundred and ninety-six, as amended, is further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 51. Detail of judge to another district or province.—Whenever a judge stationed in any province or branch of a court in a province shall certify to the Secretary of Justice that the condition of the docket in his court is such as to require the assistance of an additional judge, or when there is any vacancy in any court or branch of a court in a province, the Secretary of Justice may, in the interest of justice, with the approval of the Supreme Court and for a period of not more than three months for each time, assign any judge of any court or province whose docket permits his temporary absence from said court, to hold sessions in the court needing such assistance or where such vacancy exists. No judge so detailed shall take cognizance of any case when any of the parties thereto objects and the objection is sustained by the Supreme Court.

"Whenever a judge appointed or assigned in any province or branch of a court in a province shall leave the province by transfer or assignment to another court of equal jurisdiction without having decided a case totally heard by him and which was duly argued or opportunity given for argument to the parties or their counsel, it shall be lawful for him to prepare and sign his decision in said case anywhere within the Philippines and send the same by registered mail to the clerk of the Court to be filed in the court as of the date when the same was received by the clerk, in the same manner as if the judge had been present in the court to direct the filing of the judgment: Provided, however, That if a case has been heard only in part, the Supreme Court, upon petition of any of the parties to the case and the recommendation of the respective district judge, may also authorize the judge who has partly heard the case to continue hearing and to decide said case notwithstanding his transfer or appointment to another court of equal jurisdiction.

SEC. 4. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth paragraphs of section fifty-two of Republic Act Numbered Two hundred and ninety-six, as amended, are further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 52. Permanent stations of district judges.—The permanent station of judges of the Sixth Judicial District shall be in the City of Manila.

"In other judicial districts, the permanent stations of the judges shall be as follows:

"For the First Judicial District, the judge of the first branch of the Courts of First Instance of Cagayan, Batanes and the subprovince of Apayao in the Mountain Province, shall be stationed in the Municipality of Tuguegarao, Province of Cagayan, the judge of the second branch, in the Municipality of Aparri, same province; one judge shall be stationed in the Municipality of Ilagan, Province of Isabela; one judge shall be stationed at Cauayan, Isabela and two judges, in the Municipality of Bayombong, Province of Nueva Vizcaya.

"For the Second Judicial District, two judges shall be stationed in the Municipality of Laoag, Province of Ilocos Norte; two judges in the Municipality of Vigan, Province of Ilocos Sur; one judge in the City of Baguio; one judge, in the Municipality of Bangued, Province of Abra; and two judges, in the Municipality of San Fernando, Province of La Union.

"For the Third Judicial District, two judges shall be stationed in the Municipality of Lingayen, Province of Pangasinan; two judges shall be stationed in the City of Dagupan; one judge in the Municipality of Urdaneta, province of Pangasinan; one judge, in the Municipality of Tayug, and another in the Municipality of Alaminos, same province; and one judge in the Municipality of Iba, Province of Zambales.

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"For the Seventh Judicial District, the three judges of the first, second, and sixth branches of the Court of First Instance of Rizal shall be stationed in the Municipality of Pasig, Province of Rizal; those of the third and seventh branches, in Pasay City; and those of the fourth and fifth branches in Quezon City; one judge, in the

Municipality of Puerto Princesa, Province of Palawan; and three judges, in the City of Cavite.

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"For the Tenth Judicial District, three judges shall be stationed in the City of Naga, Province of Camarines Sur; two judges, in the Municipality of Legaspi, Province of Albay, one of whom shall also hold court in the Municipality of Virac, Province of Catanduanes, once a year for as long as the interest of justice requires but not exceeding six months a year; one judge, in the Municipality of Sorsogon, Province of Sorsogon; and one judge, in the Municipality of Masbate, Province of Masbate.

"For the Eleventh Judicial District, one judge shall be stationed in Roxas City; one judge, in the Municipality of Calivo, Province of Capiz; one judge, in the City of Iloilo, one judge, in the Municipality of Guimbal, Province of Iloilo, one judge, in the Municipality of Santa Barbara, same province, one judge, in the Municipality of Pototan, same province, and one judge, in the Municipality of Ajuy, also of the same province; and one judge, in the Municipality San Jose de Buenavista, Province of Antique.

"For the Twelfth Judicial District, five judges shall be stationed in the City of Bacolod; and two judges, in the City of Dumaguete.

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"For the Fourteenth Judicial District, six judges shall be stationed in the City of Cebu; and one judge, in the Municipality of Tagbilaran, Province of Bohol.

"For the Fifteenth Judicial District, one judge shall be stationed in the Municipality of Surigao, Province of Surigao; the judge of the first branch of the Courts of First Instance of Oriental Misamis, Cagayan de Oro City and Bukidnon shall be stationed in the City of Cagayan de Oro, and the judge of the second branch, in the Municipality of Malaybalay, Province of Bukidnon; the judge of the first branch of the Courts of First Instance of Lanao and the Cities of Dansalan and Iligan shall be stationed in the City of Dansalan, and the Judge of the second branch, in the City of Iligan; and one judge, in the City of Butuan.

"For the Sixteenth Judicial District, three judges shall be stationed in the City of Davao; the first branch of the Court of First Instance of Cotabato shall be stationed in the Municipality of Cotabato while the second branch shall be stationed in the Municipality of General Santos, Province of Cotabato; one judge in the Municipality of Oroquieta, Province of Occidental Misamis; one judge in the Municipality of Dipolog, Province of Zamboanga del Norte; one judge in the Municipality of Pagadian, Province of Zamboanga del Sur; one judge in the City of Zamboanga; and one judge in the Municipality of Jolo, Province of Sulu."

SEC. 5. The first, tenth and eleventh subparagraphs of the second paragraph of section fifty-four of Republic Act Numbered Two hundred and Ninety-six, as amended, are further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 54. Places and time for holding court.—

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"First Judicial District: At Santo Domingo de Basco Province of Batanes, on the first Tuesday of March each year. A special term of court shall also be held once year, in the municipalities of Ballesteros and Tuao, both of the province of Cagayan.

"Fifteenth Judicial District: At Cantilan, Province of Surigao, on the first Tuesday of August of each year; a special term of court shall also be held once a year in either the Municipality of Tandag or the Municipality of Hinatuan, Province of Surigao, in the discretion of the district judge; at Mambajao, Province of Oriental Misamis, on the first Tuesday of March of each year. A special term of court shall, likewise, be held, once a year, either in the Municipality of Talisayan or in the Municipality of Gingoog, Province of Oriental Misamis, in the discretion of the district judge. The judge of the second branch of the Courts of First Instance of Oriental

Misamis, Cagayan de Oro City and Bukidnon shall also hold court in Cagayan de Oro City and/or Oriental Misamis whenever the interest of justice so requires. A special term of Court shall be held at any time of the year at the Municipality of Baroy, Province of Lanao.

"Sixteenth Judicial District: Terms of court shall be held in the Municipality of Sindangan, Province of Zamboanga del Norte, on the dates to be fixed by the district judge; at the City of Basilan, at least four times a year on dates to be fixed by the district judge; and at Baganga and Mali, Province of Davao, terms of court shall be held at least once a year on dates to be fixed by the district judge."

SEC. 6. All the present district judges shall continue as such, but if any district judge is commissioned for the courts of first instance of two provinces or cities, and a separate district judge has been provided for herein for one of such courts, or one province or city is removed from the jurisdiction of his court and grouped with another or city, and in the latter event a new province or is grouped with the remaining province or city of the pier jurisdiction of his court, such district judge shall have the option to select the court over which he shall continue to preside and notify the President of his selection within a reasonable time. If the number of branches in any court of first instance has been increased, the district judge presiding over any branch thereof in a particular place shall continue to preside over such branch notwithstanding a change in its number under the provisions of this Act, unless such district judge affected by the increase prefers to preside over the new branch, in which event he shall be given such preference to be exercised in the same manner as hereinbefore provided without the necessity of a new appointment.

SEC. 7. The sum of four hundred twenty thousand pesos or so much thereof as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Act is hereby appropriated out of any funds of the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, September 9, 1955.

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