

AN ACT REQUIRING COURTS TO GIVE PREFERENCE TO CRIMINAL CASES WHERE THE PARTY OR PARTIES INVOLVE ARE INDIGENTS.

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6033, August 04, 1969

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

SECTION 1. Any provision of existing law to the contrary notwithstanding and with the exception of habeas corpus and election cases and cases involving detention prisoners, and persons covered by Republic Act Numbered Four thousand nine hundred eight, all courts shall give preference to the hearing and/or disposition of criminal cases where an indigent is involved either as the offended party or accused. The trial in these cases shall commence within three days from date of arraignment and no postponement of the hearings shall be granted except on the ground of illness of the accused or other similar justifiable grounds. City and provincial fiscals and courts shall forthwith conduct the preliminary investigation of a criminal case involving an indigent within three days after its filing and shall terminate the same within two weeks.

SEC. 2. As used in this Act, the term "indigent" shall refer to a person who has no visible means of income or whose income is insufficient for the subsistence of his family, to be determined by the fiscal or judge, taking into account the members of his family dependent upon him for subsistence.

SEC. 3. An indigent who is the offended party, respondent or an accused in a criminal case and who desires to avail of the preference granted under this Act shall file a sworn statement of the fact of his being indigent and the said sworn statement shall be sufficient basis for the court or fiscal to give preference to the trial and disposition of such criminal case.

SEC. 4. Any willful or malicious refusal on the part of any fiscal or judge to carry out the provisions of this Act shall constitute sufficient ground for disciplinary action which may include suspension or removal.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, August 4, 1969.

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