

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }
CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES }
 Second Regular Session

H. No. 167
S. No. 1348

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7691

AN ACT EXPANDING THE JURISDICTION OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURTS, 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"

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

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

"SEC. 19. *Jurisdiction in civil cases.* – Regional Trial Courts shall exercise exclusive original jurisdiction:

"(1) In all civil actions in which the subject of the litigation is incapable of pecuniary estimation;

"(2) In all civil actions which involve the title to, or possession of, real property, or any interest therein, where the assessed value of the property involved exceeds Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000) or, for civil actions in Metro Manila, where such value exceeds Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000) except actions for forcible entry into and unlawful detainer of lands or buildings, original jurisdiction over which is conferred upon the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts;

"(3) In all actions in admiralty and maritime jurisdiction where the demand or claim exceeds One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000) or, in Metro Manila, where such demand or claim exceeds Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000);

"(4) In all matters of probate, both testate and intestate, where the gross value of the estate exceeds One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000) or, in probate matters in Metro Manila, where such gross value exceeds Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000);

"(5) In all actions involving the contract of marriage and marital relations;

"(6) In all cases not within the exclusive jurisdiction of any court, tribunal, person or body exercising jurisdiction of any court, tribunal, person or body exercising judicial or quasi-judicial functions;

"(7) In all civil actions and special proceedings falling within the exclusive original jurisdiction of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and of the Court of Agrarian Relations as now provided by law; and

"(8) In all other cases in which the demand, exclusive of interest, damages of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs or the value of the property in controversy exceeds One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000) or, in such other cases in Metro Manila, where the demand, exclusive of the abovementioned items exceeds Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000)."

SEC. 2. Section 32 of the same law is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 32. *Jurisdiction of Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts in Criminal Cases.* – Except in cases falling within the exclusive original jurisdiction of Regional Trial Courts and of the Sandiganbayan, the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts shall exercise:

"(1) Exclusive original jurisdiction over all violations of city or municipal ordinances committed within their respective territorial jurisdiction; and

"(2) Exclusive original jurisdiction over all offenses punishable with imprisonment not exceeding six (6) years irrespective of the amount of fine, and regardless of other imposable accessory or other penalties, including the civil liability arising from such offenses or predicated thereon, irrespective of kind, nature, value or amount thereof: *Provided, however,* That in offenses involving damage to property through criminal negligence, they shall have exclusive original jurisdiction thereof."

SEC. 3. Section 33 of the same law is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 33. *Jurisdiction of Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts in Civil Cases.* – Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts shall exercise:

"(1) Exclusive original jurisdiction over civil actions and probate proceedings, testate and intestate, including the grant of provisional remedies in proper cases, where the value of the personal property, estate, or amount of the demand does not exceed One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000) or, in Metro Manila where such personal property, estate, or amount of the demand does not exceed Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000), exclusive of interest, damages of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs, the amount of which must be specifically alleged: *Provided,* That interest, damages of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs shall be included in the determination of the filing fees: *Provided, further,* That where there are several claims or causes of actions between the same or different parties, embodied in the same complaint, the amount of the demand shall be the totality of the claims in all the causes of action, irrespective of whether the causes of action arose out of the same or different transactions;

"(2) Exclusive original jurisdiction over cases of forcible entry and unlawful detainer: *Provided,* That when, in such cases, the defendant raises the question of ownership in his pleadings and the question of possession cannot be resolved without deciding the issue of ownership, the issue of ownership shall be resolved only to determine the issue of possession; and

"(3) Exclusive original jurisdiction in all civil actions which involve title to, or possession of, real property, or any interest therein where the assessed value of the property or interest therein does not exceed Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000) or, in civil actions in Metro Manila, where such assessed value does not exceed Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000) exclusive of interest, damages of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses and costs: *Provided*, That in cases of land not declared for taxation purposes, the value of such property shall be determined by the assessed value of the adjacent lots."

SEC. 4. Section 34 of the same law is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 34. *Delegated Jurisdiction in Cadastral and Land Registration Cases.* – Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts may be assigned by the Supreme Court to hear and determine cadastral or land registration cases covering lots where there is no controversy or opposition, or contested lots where the value of which does not exceed One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000), such value to be ascertained by the affidavit of the claimant or by agreement of the respective claimants if there are more than one, or from the corresponding tax declaration of the real property. Their decisions in these cases shall be appealable in the same manner as decisions of the Regional Trial Courts."

SEC. 5. After five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, the jurisdictional amounts mentioned in Sec. 19(3), (4), and (8); and Sec. 33(1) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129 as amended by this Act, shall be adjusted to Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000). Five (5) years thereafter, such jurisdictional amounts shall be adjusted further to Three hundred thousand pesos (P300,000): *Provided, however*, That in the case of Metro Manila, the abovementioned jurisdictional amounts shall be adjusted after five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act to Four hundred thousand pesos (P400,000).

SEC. 6. All laws, decrees, and orders inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall be considered amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. The provisions of this Act shall apply to all civil cases that have not yet reached the pretrial stage. However, by agreement of all the parties, civil cases cognizable by municipal and metropolitan courts by the provisions of this Act may be transferred from the Regional Trial Courts to the latter. The executive judge of the appropriate Regional Trial Court shall define the administrative procedure of transferring the cases affected by the redefinition of jurisdiction to the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved, March 25, 1994.