

107TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 521

To amend the Organic Act of Guam for the purposes of clarifying the local judicial structure of Guam.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 7, 2001

Mr. UNDERWOOD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

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## A BILL

To amend the Organic Act of Guam for the purposes of clarifying the local judicial structure of Guam.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. JUDICIAL STRUCTURE OF GUAM.**

4 (a) JUDICIAL AUTHORITY; COURTS.—Section 22(a)  
5 of the Organic Act of Guam (48 U.S.C. 1424(a)) is  
6 amended to read as follows:

7 “(a) (1) The judicial authority of Guam shall be vest-  
8 ed in a court established by Congress designated as the  
9 ‘District Court of Guam’, and a judicial branch of Guam  
10 which shall constitute a unified judicial system and include

1 an appellate court designated as the ‘Supreme Court of  
2 Guam’, a trial court designated as the ‘Superior Court of  
3 Guam’, and such other lower local courts as may have  
4 been or shall hereafter be established by the laws of Guam.

5 “(2) The Supreme Court of Guam may, by rules of  
6 such court, create divisions of the Superior Court of Guam  
7 and other local courts of Guam.

8 “(3) The courts of record for Guam shall be the Dis-  
9 trict Court of Guam, the Supreme Court of Guam, the  
10 Superior Court of Guam (except the Traffic and Small  
11 Claims divisions of the Superior Court of Guam) and any  
12 other local courts or divisions of local courts that the Su-  
13 preme Court of Guam shall designate.”.

14 (b) JURISDICTION AND POWERS OF LOCAL  
15 COURTS.—Section 22A of the Organic Act of Guam (48  
16 U.S.C. 1424–1) is amended to read as follows:

17 “SEC. 22A. (a) The Supreme Court of Guam shall  
18 be the highest court of Guam and shall—

19 “(1) have original jurisdiction over proceedings  
20 necessary to protect its appellate jurisdiction and su-  
21 pervisory authority and such other original jurisdic-  
22 tion as the laws of Guam may provide;

23 “(2) have jurisdiction to hear appeals over any  
24 cause in Guam decided by the Superior Court of

1 Guam or other courts established under the laws of  
2 Guam;

3 “(3) have jurisdiction to issue all orders and  
4 writs in aid of its appellate, supervisory, and original  
5 jurisdiction, including those orders necessary for the  
6 supervision of the judicial branch of Guam;

7 “(4) have supervisory jurisdiction over the Su-  
8 perior Court of Guam and all other courts in Guam;

9 “(5) hear and determine appeals by a panel of  
10 three of the justices of the Supreme Court of Guam  
11 and a concurrence of two such justices shall be nec-  
12 essary to a decision of the Supreme Court of Guam  
13 on the merits of an appeal;

14 “(6) make and promulgate rules governing the  
15 administration of the judiciary and the practice and  
16 procedure in the courts, including procedures for the  
17 determination of an appeal en banc; and

18 “(7) govern attorney and judicial ethics and the  
19 practice of law in Guam, including admission to  
20 practice law and the conduct and discipline of per-  
21 sons admitted to practice law.

22 “(b) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of  
23 Guam—

24 “(1) shall preside over the Supreme Court un-  
25 less disqualified or unable to act;

1           “(2) shall be the administrative head of, and  
2           have general supervisory power over, all depart-  
3           ments, divisions, and other instrumentalities of the  
4           judicial branch of Guam; and

5           “(3) may issue such administrative orders on  
6           behalf of the Supreme Court of Guam as necessary  
7           for the efficient administration of the judicial branch  
8           of Guam.

9           “(c) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of  
10          Guam, or a justice sitting in place of such Chief Justice,  
11          may make any appropriate order with respect to—

12           “(1) an appeal prior to the hearing and deter-  
13           mination of that appeal on the merits; or

14           “(2) dismissal of an appeal for lack of jurisdic-  
15           tion or failure to take or prosecute the appeal in ac-  
16           cordance with applicable laws or rules of procedure.

17          “(d) Except as granted to the Supreme Court of  
18          Guam or otherwise provided by this Act or any other Act  
19          of Congress, the Superior Court of Guam and all other  
20          local courts established by the laws of Guam shall have  
21          such original and appellate jurisdiction over all causes in  
22          Guam as the laws of Guam provide, except that such juris-  
23          diction shall be subject to the exclusive or concurrent ju-  
24          risdiction conferred on the District Court of Guam under  
25          section 22 of this Act.

1       “(e) The qualifications and duties of the justices and  
2 judges of the Supreme Court of Guam, the Superior Court  
3 of Guam, and all other local courts established by the laws  
4 of Guam shall be governed by the laws of Guam and the  
5 rules of such courts.”.

6       (c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—(1) Section 22B of  
7 the Organic Act of Guam (48 U.S.C. 1424–2) is  
8 amended—

9           (A) by inserting “which is known as the Su-  
10 preme Court of Guam,” after “appellate court au-  
11 thorized by section 22A(a) of this Act,”; and

12           (B) by striking “Natural Resources” and in-  
13 serting “Resources”.

14       (2) Section 22C(a) of the Organic Act of Guam (48  
15 U.S.C. 1424–3(a)) is amended by inserting “which is  
16 known as the Supreme Court of Guam,” after “appellate  
17 court authorized by section 22A(a) of this Act,”.

18       (3) Section 22C(d) of the Organic Act of Guam (48  
19 U.S.C. 1424–3(d)) is amended—

20           (A) by inserting “, which is known as the Su-  
21 preme Court of Guam,” after “appellate court pro-  
22 vided for in section 22A(a) of this Act”; and

23           (B) by striking “taken to the appellate court”  
24 and inserting “taken to such appellate court”.

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