

By: Senator(s) Rayborn

To: Judiciary

SENATE BILL NO. 2224

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 99-36-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATORS SHALL BE PAID FROM
3 STATE FUNDS; TO PROVIDE THAT SUCH COORDINATORS SHALL BE STATE
4 EMPLOYEES; TO CLARIFY THE EMPLOYMENT PROCESS; AND FOR RELATED
5 PURPOSES.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

7 SECTION 1. Section 99-36-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 99-36-7. (1) (a) In addition to the full-time legal
10 assistants to the district attorney authorized by Section 25-31-5,
11 the district attorney in each circuit court district in this state
12 shall * * * employ one (1) person to serve at the will and
13 pleasure of the district attorney as a "victim assistance
14 coordinator" who shall * * * be considered to be a state employee.

15 (b) The District Attorney of the First Circuit Court
16 District may appoint one (1) additional victim assistance
17 coordinator * * * for a total of two (2) victim assistance
18 coordinators.

19 (2) The duty of the victim assistance coordinator is to
20 ensure that a victim, guardian of a victim, or close relative of a
21 deceased victim is afforded the rights granted victims, guardians
22 and relatives by Section 99-36-5. The victim assistance
23 coordinator shall work closely with appropriate law enforcement
24 agencies, prosecuting attorneys, the state and the judiciary in
25 fulfilling that duty.

26 (3) The salary of the victim assistance coordinator shall
27 not exceed the salary authorized for criminal investigators in

28 Section 25-31-10 * * *.

29 (4) The board of supervisors of any county, with the
30 approval of and upon the order of the senior circuit court judge
31 of the district wherein such county lies, may, in addition to any
32 victim assistance coordinator provided for in subsection (1) of
33 this section, create the position of county victim assistance
34 coordinator. The duty of the county victim assistance coordinator
35 shall be to cooperate with local law enforcement agencies, the
36 county attorney and the district attorney in assuring that a
37 victim, guardian or close relative is afforded the rights granted
38 by Section 99-36-5. Two (2) or more counties, by action of their
39 respective boards of supervisors, with the approval of and upon
40 the order of the senior circuit court judge of the district
41 wherein such counties lie, may join in establishing and
42 maintaining the position of victim assistance coordinator to serve
43 these counties. Any municipality, by action of its governing
44 authority, may participate in the establishment and maintenance of
45 a county victim assistance coordinator's office located within the
46 municipality.

47 (5) Any district attorney, county board of supervisors or
48 governing authority of a municipality which has established or is
49 participating in the maintenance of an office of victim assistance
50 coordinator may apply through the Governor's Office of State and
51 Federal Programs for a grant under the federal "Victims of Crimes
52 Act of 1984" (Public Law 98-473) to be used in the continued
53 operation of the victim assistance program.

54 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
55 and after July 1, 1999.