

By: Senator(s) Walls

To: Judiciary

SENATE BILL NO. 2553

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 99-36-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATORS SHALL BE STATE
3 EMPLOYEES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

7 99-36-7. (1) (a) In addition to the full-time legal
8 assistants to the district attorney authorized by Section 25-31-5,
9 the district attorney in each circuit court district in this state
10 shall, subject to the approval of and upon the order of the senior
11 circuit court judge of the district, employ one (1) person to
12 serve at the will and pleasure of the district attorney as a
13 "victim assistance coordinator" who shall * * * be considered to
14 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 subject to the approval of and upon the order of the
18 senior circuit court judge of the district for a total of two (2)
19 victim assistance coordinators.

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

27 (3) The salary of the victim assistance coordinator shall
28 not exceed the salary authorized for criminal investigators in
29 Section 25-31-10 * * *.

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

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

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