

By: Moak

To: Judiciary A;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 153

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 * * * employ one (1) person to serve at the will and
11 pleasure of the district attorney as a "victim assistance
12 coordinator" who shall * * * be considered to be a state employee.

13 (b) The District Attorney of the First Circuit Court
14 District may appoint one (1) additional victim assistance
15 coordinator subject to the approval of and upon the order of the
16 senior circuit court judge of the district for a total of two (2)
17 victim assistance coordinators.

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

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

27 Section 25-31-10 * * *.

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

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

53 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
54 and after July 1, 2000.