

By: Smith (39th)

To: Judiciary B;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 693

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A SPECIAL FUND TO BE KNOWN AS THE
2 MISSISSIPPI CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE FUND; TO DESIGNATE
3 ORGANIZATIONS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDS THEREFROM; AND FOR RELATED
4 PURPOSES.

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

6 SECTION 1. (1) There is hereby created in the State
7 Treasury a special fund designated as the Civil Legal Assistance
8 Fund into which shall be deposited such money as may be
9 appropriated by the Legislature. The funds shall be administered
10 by the Supreme Court through the Administrative Office of Courts.
11 The fund shall consist of monies made available therefor by the
12 Legislature through appropriation or other means, and the
13 Administrative Office of Courts may also accept monies from any
14 public or private source for deposit into the fund. Money
15 remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse
16 into the State General Fund, and any interest earned from the
17 investment of monies in the fund shall be deposited to the credit
18 of the funds. Money in the fund shall be utilized by the
19 Administrative Office of Courts to provide legal representation
20 for poor persons in civil matters as determined by the Supreme
21 Court.

22 (2) All monies shall be allocated to only those

23 organizations providing legal services to low income
24 Mississippians, specifically those eligible to receive funds from
25 the Legal Services Corporation Washington, D.C.

26 (3) The monies appropriated shall be distributed to eligible
27 legal services programs based on the percentage of poverty
28 population within the program service area, consistent with the
29 formula used by the Legal Services Corporation.

30 (4) Recipients of funds shall have the following duties:

31 (a) To develop, operate, and administer programs within
32 their respective service areas that provide free legal services to
33 indigent clients involved in civil matters;

34 (b) To report annually to the Supreme Court, through
35 the Administrative Office of Courts, on its activities, including
36 providing a copy of its annual audit that accounts for the use of
37 the funds; and

38 (c) To refund annually all unused or uncommitted funds.

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