

By: Turner, Johnson (38th), Carlton

To: Judiciary;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2517

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A SPECIAL FUND TO BE KNOWN AS THE
2 MISSISSIPPI CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE FUND AND 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) Monies appropriated to the fund may be used to promote
31 increased participation by the private bar in the delivery of
32 legal services to the indigent through the Mississippi Volunteer
33 Lawyers Project.

34 (5) Recipients of funds shall have the following duties:

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

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

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

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