

By: Senator(s) Gordon, Walls

To: Judiciary

SENATE BILL NO. 2098

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 99-36-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
 2 PROVIDE THAT VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATORS SHALL BE CLASSIFIED AS
 3 STATE EMPLOYEES; TO DELETE THE PROVISION REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE
 4 SENIOR CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE
 5 COORDINATORS AND THE PROVISION REQUIRING VICTIM ASSISTANCE
 6 COORDINATORS TO BE PAID JOINTLY BY THE COUNTIES COMPRISING THE
 7 CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

57 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
58 and after July 1, 2001.