

By: Representatives Holland, Mitchell

To: Judiciary A; County Affairs

HOUSE BILL NO. 718

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE USE OF INTERPRETERS AND
2 TRANSLITERATORS IN ALL COURTS OF THE STATE; TO AMEND SECTION
3 99-17-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY TO THE PROVISIONS
4 OF THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** (1) The director shall establish a program to
7 facilitate the use of interpreters and transliterators in all
8 courts of the State of Mississippi.

9 (2) (a) The director shall prescribe the qualifications of
10 and certify persons who may serve as certified interpreters and
11 transliterators in all courts of the State of Mississippi in
12 bilingual proceedings and proceedings involving the hearing
13 impaired, whether or not also speech impaired.

14 (b) The director shall maintain a current master list
15 of all interpreters and transliterators certified by him and shall
16 report annually to the Supreme Court on the frequency of requests
17 for and the use and effectiveness of the interpreters and
18 transliterators.

19 (3) In all state court bilingual proceedings and proceedings
20 involving the hearing impaired, whether or not also speech
21 impaired, the presiding judicial officer, with the assistance of
22 the director, shall utilize the services of a certified
23 interpreter or transliterator to communicate verbatim all spoken
24 words or signs, illustrating alphabetical letters or words, in
25 American Sign Language, signed English, or spoken English.

26 (4) All state courts shall maintain on file in the office of
27 the clerk of the court a list of all persons who have been
28 certified as interpreters or transliterators by the director in



29 accordance with the certification program established pursuant to
30 this section.

31 (5) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise
32 requires:

33 (a) "Deaf person" means a person with a hearing loss so
34 great as to prevent his understanding language spoken in a normal
35 tone;

36 (b) "Director" means the Director of the Administrative
37 Office of the Courts.

38 (6) Interpreters and transliterators shall be paid a
39 reasonable compensation, as set by the court, payable out of the
40 county treasury.

41 **SECTION 2.** Section 99-17-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
42 amended as follows:

43 99-17-7. In criminal cases, the court may utilize an
44 interpreter or transliterator as provided in Section 1 of this act
45 when necessary, sworn truly to interpret, and allow him a
46 reasonable compensation, as set by the court, payable out of the
47 county treasury.

48 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
49 and after July 1, 2002.

