

By: Senator(s) Nunnelee

To: Judiciary, Division B

SENATE BILL NO. 2879

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 97-5-3 AND 99-1-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE
2 OF 1972, TO REVISE THE CRIMINAL STATUTE FOR NONPAYMENT OF CHILD
3 SUPPORT TO INCREASE THE APPLICABLE AGE OF THE CHILD, EXTEND THE
4 STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS, PROVIDE FOR THE VENUE OF SUCH ACTIONS AND
5 CREATE A PRESUMPTION OF ABILITY TO PAY UPON PROOF OF A SUPPORT
6 ORDER; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 **SECTION 1.** Section 97-5-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
9 amended as follows:

10 97-5-3. Any parent who shall desert or willfully neglect or
11 refuse to provide for the support and maintenance of his or her
12 child or children, including the natural parent of an illegitimate
13 child or children wherein paternity has been established by law or
14 when the natural parent has acknowledged paternity in writing,
15 while said child or children are under the age of twenty-one (21)
16 years shall be guilty of a felony and, on conviction thereof,
17 shall be punished for a first offense by a fine of not less than
18 One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Five Hundred Dollars
19 (\$500.00), or by commitment to the custody of the Department of
20 Corrections not more than five (5) years, or both; and for a
21 second or subsequent offense, by a fine of not less than One
22 Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) nor more than Ten Thousand Dollars
23 (\$10,000.00), or by commitment to the custody of the Department of
24 Corrections not less than two (2) years nor more than five (5)
25 years, or both, in the discretion of the court. A presumption of
26 desertion, neglect or nonsupport shall be established by a support
27 obligation and a statement of arrearages. The local venue for
28 this offense shall be either in the county where (a) the support
29 obligation was obtained, (b) the custodial parent resides, (c) the

30 child or children reside, or (d) where the noncustodial parent
31 resides.

32 **SECTION 2.** Section 99-1-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
33 amended as follows:

34 99-1-5. A person shall not be prosecuted for any offense,
35 with the exception of murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault,
36 kidnapping, arson, burglary, forgery, counterfeiting, robbery,
37 larceny, rape, embezzlement, obtaining money or property under
38 false pretenses or by fraud, felonious abuse or battery of a child
39 as described in Section 97-5-39, touching or handling a child for
40 lustful purposes as described in Section 97-5-23, sexual battery
41 of a child as described in Section 97-3-95(1)(c) or (d) or
42 exploitation of children as described in Section 97-5-33, or
43 desertion or nonsupport of a child as described in Section 97-5-3
44 unless the prosecution for such offense be commenced within two
45 (2) years next after the commission thereof, but nothing contained
46 in this section shall bar any prosecution against any person who
47 shall abscond or flee from justice, or shall absent himself from
48 this state or out of the jurisdiction of the court, or so conduct
49 himself that he cannot be found by the officers of the law, or
50 that process cannot be served upon him.

51 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
52 and after July 1, 2004.