

By: Representatives Banks, Paden

To: Judiciary A;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1297

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 99-36-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 AUTHORIZE ONE ADDITIONAL VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR FOR THE
3 SEVENTH CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 99-36-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
6 amended as follows:

7 99-36-7. (1) (a) In addition to the full-time legal
8 assistants to the district attorney authorized by Section 25-31-5,
9 the district attorney in each circuit court district in this state
10 shall, subject to the approval of and upon the order of the senior
11 circuit court judge of the district, employ one (1) person to
12 serve at the will and pleasure of the district attorney as a
13 "victim assistance coordinator" who shall not be considered to be
14 a state employee.

15 (b) The District Attorney of the First Circuit Court
16 District and the District Attorney of the Seventh Circuit Court
17 District each may appoint one (1) additional victim assistance
18 coordinator, and the District Attorney of the Fourteenth Circuit



19 Court District, upon the approval of the boards of supervisors,
20 may appoint one (1) additional victim assistance coordinator,
21 subject to the approval of and upon the order of the senior
22 circuit court judge of the applicable district for a total of two
23 (2) victim assistance coordinators per district.

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

31 (3) The salary of the victim assistance coordinator shall
32 not exceed the salary authorized for criminal investigators in
33 Section 25-31-10, and shall be paid jointly by the counties
34 comprising the circuit court district, with each county paying a
35 pro rata share of the salary as determined by the senior circuit
36 court judge.

37 (4) The board of supervisors of any county, with the
38 approval of and upon the order of the senior circuit court judge
39 of the district wherein such county lies, may, in addition to any
40 victim assistance coordinator provided for in subsection (1) of
41 this section, create the position of county victim assistance
42 coordinator. The duty of the county victim assistance coordinator
43 shall be to cooperate with local law enforcement agencies, the



44 county attorney and the district attorney in assuring that a
45 victim, guardian or close relative is afforded the rights granted
46 by Section 99-36-5. Two (2) or more counties, by action of their
47 respective boards of supervisors, with the approval of and upon
48 the order of the senior circuit court judge of the district
49 wherein such counties lie, may join in establishing and
50 maintaining the position of victim assistance coordinator to serve
51 these counties. Any municipality, by action of its governing
52 authority, may participate in the establishment and maintenance of
53 a county victim assistance coordinator's office located within the
54 municipality.

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

62 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
63 and after July 1, 2018.

