

By: Representatives Snowden, Watson

To: Rules

## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 105

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE  
2 EXCEPTIONAL WORKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION  
3 ON ITS 12TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND DECLARING THE MONTH OF JUNE 2018  
4 AS ACCESS TO JUSTICE MONTH IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

5 WHEREAS, created by the Mississippi Supreme Court on June 28,  
6 2006, the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission, which was  
7 organized to develop a unified strategy to improve access to the  
8 civil courts for the poor, will celebrate the 12-year anniversary  
9 of its establishment throughout the month of June 2018, which is  
10 designated Mississippi Access to Justice Month in the State of  
11 Mississippi; and

12 WHEREAS, tasked to investigate the need for civil legal  
13 services to the poor in Mississippi, and to evaluate, develop and  
14 recommend policies, programs and initiatives which will assist the  
15 judiciary in meeting needs for civil legal services to the poor,  
16 the Access to Justice Commission is empowered to accomplish the  
17 following goals: to identify the current and future needs of the  
18 legal services community in providing access to justice to the  
19 poor in Mississippi; to develop and establish a strategic



20 statewide plan for the delivery of legal services to the poor in  
21 Mississippi; to develop strategies and ideas to increase resources  
22 and funding for access to justice in civil legal matters and make  
23 recommendations to appropriate entities to ensure that the  
24 resources and funding are applied to the areas and organizations  
25 of greatest need; to work to maximize the wise and efficient use  
26 of available resources, including development of local, regional  
27 and/or statewide systems that encourage the coordination of  
28 resources and funding; to develop and implement initiatives  
29 designed to expand civil access to justice; to work to reduce  
30 barriers to the justice system by addressing existing and proposed  
31 court rules, procedures and policies that affect access to justice  
32 for poor Mississippians; and to monitor and evaluate the  
33 effectiveness of the statewide system and services provided and  
34 periodically evaluate the progress made in fulfilling their  
35 respective responsibilities; and

36 WHEREAS, with approximately 695,000 people, which account for  
37 roughly a fifth of the state's population, living at or below  
38 poverty level, these individuals represent a smaller demographic  
39 of 1.3 million of the state's impoverished and working poor who  
40 qualify for civil legal aid; and

41 WHEREAS, with only one Legal Services lawyer for every 21,000  
42 eligible people, more than half of those seeking assistance from  
43 Legal Services in Mississippi are turned away and struggle to



44 represent themselves *pro se* in court with assistance of counsel,  
45 while others remain to have their matters heard at all; and

46 WHEREAS, the collaborative efforts of the Access to Justice  
47 Commission, the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project,  
48 chancellors, local bar associations, law students and community  
49 organizations have worked to provide free family law clinics to  
50 help meet the civil legal needs of low socioeconomic status; and

51 WHEREAS, periodic legal clinics staffed by volunteer lawyers  
52 have been developed as an effective means of providing assistance  
53 to low-income people, as well as *Pro Se* Days, which have been  
54 conducted in the 1st Chancery District, the 3rd Chancery District,  
55 the 5th Chancery District, the 9th Chancery District, the 10th  
56 Chancery District, the 11th Chancery District and in the 20th  
57 Chancery District; and

58 WHEREAS, in an effort to increase the availability of civil  
59 legal assistance, the Access to Justice Commission of the  
60 Mississippi Supreme Court is working to organize *Pro Se* clinics in  
61 every county in the state, with numerous civil legal clinics  
62 scheduled in June 2018 and afterwards across the state that will  
63 address family law matters and guardianships; and

64 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to highlight  
65 the efforts of all such organizations as the Mississippi Access to  
66 Justice Commission which strives to make a difference in justice  
67 for one, for all:



68           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
69 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING  
70 THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate the  
71 exceptional works of the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission  
72 on its 12-year anniversary and declare the month of June 2018 as  
73 Access to Justice Month in the State of Mississippi, and encourage  
74 its citizens to participate in observance.

75           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
76 furnished to the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission of the  
77 Supreme Court and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

