

By: Representatives Taylor, Sanders

To: Judiciary A;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 644

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 99-36-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 AUTHORIZE AN 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 Seventh Circuit Court
16 District may appoint one (1) additional victim assistance
17 coordinator for a total of two (2) victim assistance coordinators
18 per district. The District Attorney of the First Circuit Court



19 District may appoint * * * two (2) additional victim assistance
20 coordinators, and the District Attorney of the Fourteenth Circuit
21 Court District, upon the approval of the boards of supervisors,
22 may appoint * * * two (2) additional victim assistance
23 coordinators, subject to the approval of and upon the order of the
24 senior circuit court judge of the applicable district for a total
25 of * * * three (3) victim assistance coordinators per district.

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

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

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



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

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

64 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
65 and after July 1, 2023.

