

By: Representative Watson

To: Judiciary B;  
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 915

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 9-21-43, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 REQUIRE EACH CIRCUIT AND CHANCERY COURT TO REMIT FIFTEEN DOLLARS  
3 OF ANY MONIES IT COLLECTS FROM CRIMINAL AND CIVIL ACTIONS TO THE  
4 CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE FUND; TO REQUIRE MONIES SO REMITTED TO THE  
5 CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE FUND TO BE ALLOCATED TO THE MISSISSIPPI  
6 CENTER FOR LEGAL SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 **SECTION 1.** Section 9-21-43, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
9 amended as follows:

10 9-21-43. (1) There is hereby created in the State Treasury  
11 a special fund designated as the Civil Legal Assistance Fund.  
12 The \* \* \* fund shall be administered by the Supreme Court through  
13 the Administrative Office of Courts. The Administrative Office of  
14 Courts may also accept monies from any public or private source  
15 for deposit into the fund. Money remaining in the fund at the end  
16 of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and  
17 any interest earned from the investment of monies in the fund  
18 shall be deposited to the credit of the \* \* \* fund.

19 (2) All monies shall be allocated to only those  
20 organizations providing legal services to low income



21 Mississippians. Furthermore, no monies from this fund shall be  
22 expended to provide legal services in matters currently prohibited  
23 by the Legal Services Corporation, Washington, D.C., and no funds  
24 shall be expended on persons who are not financially eligible to  
25 receive legal services as directed by the Legal Services  
26 Corporation, Washington, D.C.

27 (3) The monies appropriated shall be distributed to eligible  
28 legal services programs based on the percentage of poverty  
29 population within the program service area, consistent with the  
30 formula used by the Legal Services Corporation.

31 (4) Monies appropriated to the fund may be used to promote  
32 increased participation by the private bar in the delivery of  
33 legal services to the indigent through the Mississippi Volunteer  
34 Lawyers Project.

35 (5) Recipients of funds shall have the following duties:

36 (a) To develop, operate and administer programs within  
37 their respective service areas that provide free legal services to  
38 indigent clients involved in civil matters;

39 (b) To report annually to the Supreme Court, through  
40 the Administrative Office of Courts, on its activities, including  
41 providing a copy of its annual audit that accounts for the use of  
42 the funds; and

43 (c) To refund annually all unused or uncommitted funds.

44 (6) Each circuit and chancery court shall remit Fifteen  
45 Dollars (\$15.00) of any monies the court collects from a criminal



46 or civil action to the Civil Legal Assistance Fund to be allocated  
47 to the Mississippi Center for Legal Services.

48       **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
49 and after July 1, 2024.

