

By: Representative Fondren

To: Judiciary A

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1485

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "CASA CAPACITY GROWTH PROGRAM" WITHIN  
2 THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
3 THE PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CASA  
4 PROGRAMS TO RECEIVE FUNDS; TO PROVIDE FOR FUND DISTRIBUTION; TO  
5 AUTHORIZE THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS TO CONDUCT  
6 OVERSIGHT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the  
9 "CASA Capacity Growth Program Act."

10 **SECTION 2.** (1) There is hereby created within the  
11 Administrative Office of Courts, hereinafter referred to as  
12 "AOC", the "CASA Capacity Growth Program", hereinafter referred to  
13 as "the Program". The purpose of the Program is to provide  
14 financial support to Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)  
15 programs in Mississippi to enhance their capacity to serve abused  
16 and neglected children through a pass-through funding mechanism.

17 (2) The AOC shall administer the pass-through funding for  
18 the Program and shall be responsible for:

19 (a) Distributing funds to eligible CASA programs as  
20 provided in Section 4 of this act; and



(b) Monitoring the use of funds for compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

(3) The AOC may enter into an agreement with CASA Mississippi or another qualified entity to manage the distribution of funds and provide administrative support for the program. Such agreement may include a reasonable percentage of funds to cover administrative costs.

**SECTION 3.** To be eligible to receive funds under the Program, a CASA program must be a member in good standing with the National CASA/GAL Association.

**SECTION 4.** (1) Funds shall be distributed by the Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) to eligible CASA programs based on a formula that considers the following factors, but not limited to such factors, as follows:

(a) The number of children in custody in the program area; and

(b) The number of children served by the program; and

(c) The number of volunteers actively serving with the program.

(2) The Legislature recognizes the importance of maximizing the impact of state funds and encourages efforts by local CASA programs to secure additional funding from other sources. While a direct match is not required, programs are encouraged to demonstrate local support through in-kind contributions, volunteer



45 hours, and other fundraising efforts. This demonstration of local  
46 support shall be reported to the AOC annually.

47 **SECTION 5.** The AOC is authorized to promulgate rules and  
48 regulations necessary for the implementation of this act,  
49 including, but not limited to:

50 (a) Establishing reporting requirements for grant  
51 recipients; and

52 (b) Establishing procedures for the disbursement of  
53 funds.

54 **SECTION 6.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
55 and after July 1, 2025.

