

By: Senator(s) Hamilton

To: Judiciary

SENATE BILL NO. 2494

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 11-7-13, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT NO PARENT WHO HAS ABANDONED A CHILD SHALL BE AWARDED
3 DAMAGES FOR WRONGFUL DEATH OF THAT CHILD; AND FOR RELATED
4 PURPOSES.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 11-7-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 11-7-13. Whenever the death of any person shall be caused by
9 any real, wrongful or negligent act or omission, or by such unsafe
10 machinery, way or appliances as would, if death had not ensued,
11 have entitled the party injured or damaged thereby to maintain an
12 action and recover damages in respect thereof, or whenever the
13 death of any person shall be caused by the breach of any warranty,
14 express or implied, of the purity or fitness of any foods, drugs,
15 medicines, beverages, tobacco or any and all other articles or
16 commodities intended for human consumption, as would, had the
17 death not ensued, have entitled the person injured or made ill or
18 damaged thereby, to maintain an action and recover damages in
19 respect thereof, and such deceased person shall have left a widow
20 or children or both, or husband or father or mother, or sister, or
21 brother, the person or corporation, or both that would have been
22 liable if death had not ensued, and the representatives of such
23 person shall be liable for damages, notwithstanding the death, and
24 the fact that death was instantaneous shall in no case affect the
25 right of recovery. The action for such damages may be brought in
26 the name of the personal representative of the deceased person for
27 the benefit of all persons entitled under the law to recover, or

28 by widow for the death of her husband, or by the husband for the
29 death of the wife, or by the parent for the death of a child, or
30 in the name of a child, or in the name of a child for the death of
31 a parent, or by a brother for the death of a sister, or by a
32 sister for the death of a brother, or by a sister for the death of
33 a sister, or a brother for the death of a brother, or all parties
34 interested may join in the suit, and there shall be but one (1)
35 suit for the same death which shall ensue for the benefit of all
36 parties concerned, but the determination of such suit shall not
37 bar another action unless it be decided on its merits. In such
38 action the party or parties suing shall recover such damages
39 allowable by law as the jury may determine to be just, taking into
40 consideration all the damages of every kind to the decedent and
41 all damages of every kind to any and all parties interested in the
42 suit.

43 This section shall apply to all personal injuries of servants
44 and employees received in the service or business of the master or
45 employer, where such injuries result in death, and to all deaths
46 caused by breach of warranty, either express or implied, of the
47 purity and fitness of foods, drugs, medicines, beverages, tobacco
48 or other articles or commodities intended for human consumption.

49 Any person entitled to bring a wrongful death action may
50 assert or maintain a claim for any breach of expressed warranty or
51 for any breach of implied warranty. A wrongful death action may
52 be maintained or asserted for strict liability in tort or for any
53 cause of action known to the law for which any person,
54 corporation, legal representative or entity would be liable for
55 damages if death had not ensued.

56 In an action brought pursuant to the provisions of this
57 section by the widow, husband, child, father, mother, sister or
58 brother of the deceased, or by all interested parties, such party
59 or parties may recover as damages property damages and funeral,
60 medical or other related expenses incurred by or for the deceased

61 as a result of such wrongful or negligent act or omission or
62 breach of warranty, whether an estate has been opened or not. Any
63 amount, but only such an amount, as may be recovered for property
64 damage, funeral, medical or other related expenses shall be
65 subject only to the payment of the debts or liabilities of the
66 deceased for property damages, funeral, medical or other related
67 expenses. All other damages recovered under the provisions of
68 this section shall not be subject to the payment of the debts or
69 liabilities of the deceased, except as hereinafter provided, and
70 such damages shall be distributed as follows:

71 Damages for the injury and death of a married man shall be
72 equally distributed to his wife and children, and if he has no
73 children all shall go to his wife; damages for the injury and
74 death of a married woman shall be equally distributed to the
75 husband and children, and if she has no children all shall go to
76 the husband; and if the deceased has no husband or wife, the
77 damages shall be equally distributed to the children; if the
78 deceased has no husband, nor wife, nor children, the damages shall
79 be distributed equally to the father, mother, brothers and
80 sisters, or such of them as the deceased may have living at his or
81 her death. If the deceased have neither husband, nor wife, nor
82 children, nor father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother, then
83 the damages shall go to the legal representative, subject to debts
84 and general distribution, and the fact that the deceased was
85 instantly killed shall not affect the right of the legal
86 representative to recover. All references in this section to
87 children shall include descendants of a deceased child, such
88 descendants to take the share of the deceased child by
89 representation. There shall not be, in any case, a distinction
90 between the kindred of the whole and half blood of equal degree.
91 The provisions of this section shall apply to illegitimate
92 children on account of the death of the mother and to the mother
93 on account of the death of an illegitimate child or children, and

94 they shall have all the benefits, rights and remedies conferred by
95 this section on legitimates. The provisions of this section shall
96 apply to illegitimate children on account of the death of the
97 natural father and to the natural father on account of the death
98 of the illegitimate child or children, and they shall have all the
99 benefits, rights and remedies conferred by this section on
100 legitimates, if the survivor has or establishes the right to
101 inherit from the deceased under Section 91-1-15.

102 Any rights which a blood parent or parents may have under
103 this section are hereby conferred upon and vested in an adopting
104 parent or adopting parents surviving their deceased adopted child,
105 just as if the child were theirs by the full blood and had been
106 born to the adopting parents in lawful wedlock.

107 In no event shall any parent who has abandoned a child be
108 awarded damages under the provisions of this section for the
109 wrongful death of that child. For the purposes of this section,
110 "abandonment" means having had no voluntary contact with the child
111 for one (1) year.

112 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
113 and after July 1, 2001.