

By: Representative Ford

To: Judiciary B

HOUSE BILL NO. 848

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 25-32-71, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 WHICH CREATES THE MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC DEFENDER TASK FORCE AND
3 PRESCRIBES ITS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; TO EXTEND THE DATE OF
4 REPEAL FOR ONE YEAR; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 25-32-71, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 25-32-71. (1) There is created the Mississippi Public
9 Defender Task Force which shall be composed of eleven (11) members
10 as follows:

11 (a) The President of the Mississippi Public Defender
12 Association, or his designee;

13 (b) The President of the Mississippi Prosecutors
14 Association, or his designee;

15 (c) A representative of the Administrative Office of
16 Courts;

17 (d) A representative of the Mississippi Supreme Court;

18 (e) A representative of the Conference of Circuit
19 Judges;

20 (f) A representative of the Mississippi Attorney
21 General's Office;

22 (g) A representative of the Mississippi Association of
23 Supervisors;

24 (h) The Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, or
25 his designee;

26 (i) The Chairman of the Senate Appropriations
27 Committee, or his designee;



28 (j) The Chairman of the House Judiciary En Banc
29 Committee, or his designee;

30 (k) The Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee,
31 or his designee.

32 (2) At its first meeting, the task force shall elect a
33 chairman and vice chairman from its membership and shall adopt
34 rules for transacting its business and keeping records. Members
35 of the task force shall receive a per diem in the amount provided
36 in Section 25-3-69 for each day engaged in the business of the
37 task force. Members of the task force other than the legislative
38 members shall receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred
39 while engaged in official business of the task force in accordance
40 with Section 25-3-41 and the legislative members of the task force
41 shall receive the expense allowance provided for in Section
42 5-1-47.

43 (3) The duties of the task force shall be to:

44 (a) Make a comprehensive study of the needs by circuit
45 court districts for state-supported indigent defense counsel,
46 examining existing public defender programs. Reports shall be
47 provided to the Legislature each year at least one (1) month
48 before the convening of the regular session.

49 (b) Examine and study approaches taken by other states
50 in the implementation and costs of state-supported indigent
51 criminal cases.

52 (c) To study the relationship between presiding circuit
53 court judges and the appointment of criminal indigent defense
54 counsel.

55 (4) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2004.

56 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
57 and after July 1, 2003.

