

By: Senator(s) Williamson

To: Judiciary;  
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2543

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A SPECIAL FUND TO BE KNOWN AS THE  
2 MISSISSIPPI CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE FUND AND TO DESIGNATE  
3 ORGANIZATIONS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDS THEREFROM; AND FOR RELATED  
4 PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is hereby created in the State  
7 Treasury a special fund designated as the Civil Legal Assistance  
8 Fund. The funds shall be administered by the Supreme Court  
9 through the Administrative Office of Courts. The Administrative  
10 Office of Courts may also accept monies from any public or private  
11 source for deposit into the fund. Money remaining in the fund at  
12 the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General  
13 Fund, and any interest earned from the investment of monies in the  
14 fund shall be deposited to the credit of the funds. Money in the  
15 fund shall be utilized by the Administrative Office of Courts to  
16 provide legal representation for poor persons in civil matters as  
17 determined by the Supreme Court.

18 (2) All monies shall be allocated to only those  
19 organizations providing legal services to low income  
20 Mississippians, specifically those eligible to receive funds from  
21 the Legal Services Corporation, Washington, D.C.

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

26 (4) Monies appropriated to the fund may be used to promote  
27 increased participation by the private bar in the delivery of



28 legal services to the indigent through the Mississippi Volunteer  
29 Lawyers Project.

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

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

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

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

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

