

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.

