

By: Senator(s) Williamson

To: Judiciary;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2543
(As Sent to Governor)

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.

15 (2) All monies shall be allocated to only those
16 organizations providing legal services to low income
17 Mississippians. Furthermore, no monies from this fund shall be
18 expended to provide legal services in matters currently prohibited
19 by the Legal Services Corporation, Washington, D.C., and no funds
20 shall be expended on persons who are not financially eligible to
21 receive legal services as directed by the Legal Services
22 Corporation, Washington, D.C.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

