1	State of Arkansas
2	80th General Assembly A Bill ACT 1256 OF 1995
3	Regular Session, 1995SENATE BILL609
4	By: Senator Dowd
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6	
7	For An Act To Be Entitled
8	"AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR UNIFORM FILING FEES AND COURT
9	COSTS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."
10	
11	Subtitle
12	"TO PROVIDE FOR UNIFORM FILING FEES AND
13	COURT COSTS"
14	
15	BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
16	
17	SECTION 1. (a) It is hereby found by the General Assembly that the
18	current system of funding the state judicial system has created inequity in
19	the level of judicial services available to the citizens of the state. It is
20	further determined that the current method of financing the state judicial
21	system has become so complex as to make the administration of the system
22	impossible. Finally, it is determined that the lack of any reliable data on
23	the current cost of the state judicial system prohibits any comprehensive
24	change in the funding of the system at this time.
25	(b) It is, therefore, the intent of this act to eliminate the current
26	system of collecting and assessing a large number of individual court costs
27	and filing fees, to replace it with a uniform cost and fee to be applied
28	statewide, and to prohibit the implementation of new costs and fees for
29	specific programs in the future. It is, further, the intent of this act to
30	put in place a reporting system which will allow the General Assembly to
31	obtain accurate data to determine the cost to the state for the funding of the
32	judicial system, so as to allow the state, in the 1997-1999 biennium, to fund
33	the cost of the judicial system from the costs, fees, fines, and such other
34	sources as the General Assembly shall determine.
2 5	(a) The Concercal Aggembly hereby advised all individuals programs and

35 (c) The General Assembly hereby advises all individuals, programs, and 36 agencies which are affected by this act and which receive or expend funds as a

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1 part of the state judicial system to be prepared to provide information on the 2 level of expenditures, number of staff, and related information which were in 3 place and existing during the period January 1, 1994 - December 31, 1994 to 4 the 1997 session of the General Assembly.

6 SECTION 2. (a) Except as otherwise provided by this Act, all filing 7 fees and all court costs shall be uniform for each type of case in all general 8 and limited jurisdiction courts of this state.

9 (b) In all cases filed in such courts on or after July 1, 1995, the 10 court costs and filing fees shall be assessed and distributed according to 11 this act.

12 (c) In all cases filed in such courts prior to July 1, 1995, all court 13 costs and filing fees shall be assessed and distributed according to law in 14 existence on the date of the filing, including monies collected on and after 15 July 1, 1995.

(d) Prosecuting Attorneys filing actions on behalf of the State, with
 17 the exception of child support cases, shall be exempt from paying filing fees.
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19 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Annotated 21-6-403 is amended to read as 20 follows:

21 "21-6-403. Circuit and chancery court clerks - Uniform filing fees. The uniform filing fees to be charged by the clerks of the circuit 2.2 (a) 23 and chancery courts for initiating or reopening a cause of action in the 24 circuit and chancery courts in the state shall be as prescribed in this 25 section. No portion of the filing fees shall be refunded: 26 (1) For initiating a cause of action in the circuit court (including 27 appeals) \$110.00 28 (2) For initiating a cause of action in the chancery court\$110.00 29 (3) For reopening a cause of action in the chancery court\$30.00 (b) No fee shall be charged or collected by the clerks of the circuit 30 31 and chancery courts for reopening a cause of action in the chancery court 32 under the following circumstances:

(1) (A) An agreed order is presented to be filed; or
(B) An order of income withholding is to be filed; and
(2) No service of process is required.

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(c) No county shall authorize and no circuit or chancery court clerk 1 2 shall assess or collect any other filing fees than those authorized by this 3 act, unless specifically provided by state law." 4 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code Annotated 16-14-105(a) is amended to read as 5 6 follows: "16-14-105. Uniform advance fees and court costs. 7 (a) The uniform advance fees to be charged by the clerks of the probate 8 9 court for initiating a cause of action in probate court in this state shall be 10 one hundred twenty dollars (\$120), and no portion of the advance fees shall be 11 refunded. No county shall authorize and no chancery or probate court clerk 12 shall assess or collect any other filing fees than those authorized, unless 13 specifically provided by state law." 14 15 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code Annotated 16-17-705 is amended to read as 16 follows: 17 "16-17-705. Filing fees and costs. The uniform filing fee to be charged by the clerks of the municipal 18 (a) 19 courts for initiating a cause of action in municipal court in this state shall 20 be as prescribed in this section. No portion of the filing fee shall be 21 refunded. 22 (1) For initiating a cause of action in the civil division of municipal court 23\$35.00 (2) For initiating a cause of action in the small claims division of 24 25 municipal court\$25.00 26 (b) No municipality shall authorize, and no municipal court clerk shall 27 assess or collect, any other filing fees than those authorized by this act, 28 unless specifically provided by state law." 29 SECTION 6. (a) The uniform filing fee to be charged by clerks for 30 31 initiating a cause of action in city or police courts, courts of common pleas, 32 or any other court of limited jurisdiction in this state shall be twenty-five 33 dollars (\$25.00). No portion of the filing fee shall be refunded. (b) No city shall authorize, and no city court clerk shall assess or 34 35 collect, any other filing fees than those authorized by this act, unless

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1 specifically provided by state law.

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3 SECTION 7. (a) There shall be levied and collected from each defendant 4 upon each conviction, each plea of guilty or nolo contendere, or forfeiture of 5 bond the following court costs: 6 (1) For misdemeanor or felony violation of state law, excluding violation of 7 the Omnibus DWI Act, in circuit court\$100.00 8 (2) For offenses which are misdemeanors or violations under state law or 9 local ordinance, excluding violation of the Omnibus DWI Act, in municipal, 10 city, or police court\$50.00 11 (3) For traffic offenses which are misdemeanors or violations under state law 12 or local ordinance, excluding violation of the Omnibus DWI Act, in municipal, 14 (4) For violation of the Omnibus DWI Act in circuit, municipal, and city 16 (b) The costs set forth in this act shall be imposed at the conclusion 17 of any criminal case that does not end in an acquittal, dismissal, or, with 18 the consent of the prosecution, a nolle prosequi. They shall be imposed at 19 the conclusion of cases involving a suspended or probated sentence even though 20 that sentence may be expunged or otherwise removed from the defendant's 21 record.

(c) No county, municipality, or town shall be liable for the payment of the costs taxed under this section in any instance where they are not collected, or in any case in which the defendant pays the costs by serving time in a jail, on a county farm, or at any other official place of detention or work.

(d) No municipality or county shall authorize and no police, city, municipal, or circuit court shall assess or collect any other court costs other than those authorized by this act, unless specifically provided by state authorized by this act, unless specifically provided by state

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32 SECTION 8. (a) The following court costs shall not be immediately 33 affected by this act and shall continue to be assessed and collected until 34 such time as the Arkansas Division of Legislative Audit shall certify in 35 writing that the debt service for the original construction for which the

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revenues generated by the court costs have been applied shall have been paid
 in full:

3 (1) The costs assessed by the city, municipal, and circuit courts 4 in Garland County pursuant to § 12-41-617 for the purpose of building a new 5 jail;

6 (2) The costs assessed by the city, municipal, and circuit courts 7 in Lawrence County pursuant to § 12-41-617 for the purpose of building a new 8 jail;

9 (3) The costs assessed by the city and municipal courts of 10 Pulaski County pursuant to §§ 16-17-111 and 16-17-113 for the purpose of 11 completing the municipal court renovation.

12 (4) The costs assessed pursuant to Act 685 of 1971, as amended,
13 by the city and county courts of Pulaski County for the purpose of retiring
14 the indebtedness on the Pulaski County Law Center.

15 (5) The costs assessed by the circuit and chancery courts in 16 Saline County pursuant to § 21-6-403 in effect on January 1, 1995, and used 17 for the purpose of renovation, refurbishing, and equipping of the Saline 18 County Courthouse.

19 (6) Any other costs assessed by the city, municipal, circuit,
20 chancery, or probate courts which are dedicated on the effective date of this
21 act for the purpose of retiring any debt service for construction, when
22 certified by the Arkansas Division of Legislative Audit.

(b) For each court in which a court cost included in paragraph (a) of this section shall be continued, that cost shall be in addition to the uniform court costs and filing fees provided in Section 3 through Section 7 of this act.

(c) The additional costs specified in paragraph (a) shall not be remitted to the Department of Finance and Administration with the uniform court costs and filing fees provided for in Section 3 through Section 7 of this act, but shall be remitted to the city or county treasurer and credited to the fund and for the limited purpose as provided for in Arkansas Code Annotated §§ 12-41-617, 16-17-111 and 16-17-113 and Act 685 of 1971 as amended.

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SECTION 9. (a) There is hereby created in the Department of Finance

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1 and Administration an Administration of Justice Funds Section, to which shall 2 be remitted court costs and filing fees enumerated in Section 3 through 3 Section 7 as provided in this act which are assessed and collected in the 4 police, city, municipal, chancery, probate, and circuit courts in this state. 5 There is hereby created on the books of the State Treasurer, the State 6 Auditor, and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a trust fund account to be 7 known as the "State Administration of Justice Fund." Said funds shall be 8 deposited by the Section in the State Administration of Justice Fund. The 9 Section shall keep an accurate account of all receipts by type of case and 10 type and location of court from which such fees and costs are submitted.

(b) The Section shall also prescribe, in cooperation with the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Association of Arkansas Counties, appropriate forms for the reporting and allocation of all funds and such other information relevant to the income derived by and the costs associated with the operation of the justice system by cities and counties, and shall require, beginning July 1, 1995, the use thereof by all parties remitting funds.

18 SECTION 10. (a) There is hereby created in each county a fund in the 19 Office of the County Treasurer to be known as the County Administration of 20 Justice Fund.

(b) The County Administration of Justice Fund shall be used to defray a part of the expenses of the administration of justice in the county. From the Fund, the county shall continue to finance the following county agencies and programs which are currently funded, in whole or in part, by filing fees and/or court costs, at a funding level equal to not less than the greater of the amount which was disbursed by the county from filing fees and/or court costs to the agency or program in the calendar year ending December 31, 1994, or the amount appropriated by ordinance enacted prior to December 31, 1994, or on February 14, 1995, or by Resolution dated February 9, 1995, to the agency or program for the calendar year ending December 31, 1995:

(1) the prosecuting attorney fund including all grant funds
 awarded and appropriated for calendar year ending December 31, 1995;

33 (2) the prosecuting attorney_s victim-witness program fund;
34 (3) the public defender/indigent defense fund and public defender
35 investigator fund including all grant funds awarded and appropriated for

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1 calendar year ending December 31, 1995;

(4) the county law library fund;

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(5) the county jail fund; and(6) the intoxication detection equipment fund.

The County Administration of Justice Fund of each county may retain 5 (C)6 an amount equal to the amount which was disbursed by the county from court 7 costs and filing fees for county administration of justice expense in the 8 calendar year ending December 31, 1994, or the amount appropriated from court 9 costs and filing fees by ordinance enacted prior to December 31, 1994, or on 10 February 14, 1995, or by Resolution dated February 9, 1995, for county 11 administration of justice expense from court costs and filing fees for the 12 calendar year ending December 31, 1995, plus for each year after calendar year 13 1995 an additional amount based upon the increase in the Consumer Price Index 14 as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor 15 using the greater of the amount disbursed in calendar year 1994 or the amount 16 appropriated for calendar year 1995 as the base, which base shall be increased 17 by the percentage that the Consumer Price Index for December of the succeeding 18 year bears to the base.

19 (d) Nothing in this act shall prevent the county from funding any 20 additional costs for the administration of justice from other county funds or 21 as disbursed by the county as required and authorized by the 80th General 22 Assembly meeting in regular session.

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SECTION 11. (a) There is hereby created in each municipality which operates a police, city, or municipal court a fund in the Office of the City Treasurer to be known as the City Administration of Justice Fund.

(b) The City Administration of Justice Fund shall be used to defray a part of the expense of the administration of justice in the city. From the Fund, the city shall continue to finance the following city agencies and programs which are currently funded, in whole or in part, by filing fees and/or court costs, at a funding level equal to not less than the greater of the amount which was disbursed by the city from court costs and/or filing fees to the agency or program in the calendar year ending December 31, 1994, or the amount appropriated by ordinance enacted prior to December 31, 1994, to the segncy or program for the calendar year ending December 31, 1995:

(2)

1 2 (1) the municipal court judge and clerk retirement fund;

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(3) the intoxication detection equipment fund;

the police and fire pension fund;

4 (4) all municipal-level programs and agencies funded in whole or 5 in part by court costs and filing fees assessed and collected by the 6 municipal, city, or police court, notwithstanding the repeal by this act, of 7 laws authorizing the collection of court costs and filing fees; and

8 (5) all county-level programs and agencies funded in whole or in 9 part by court costs and filing fees assessed and collected by the municipal, 10 city, or police court, notwithstanding the repeal, by this act, of laws 11 authorizing the collection of court costs and filing fees and the disbursement 12 of all or a part thereof to the county.

13 (c) The City Administration of Justice Fund of each city may retain an 14 amount equal to the amount which was disbursed by the city from court costs 15 and filing fees for city administration of justice expense in the calendar 16 year ending December 31, 1994, or the amount appropriated from court costs and 17 filing fees by ordinance enacted prior to December 31, 1994, for city or 18 county administration of justice expense from court costs and filing fees for 19 the calendar year ending December 31, 1995, plus for each year after calendar 20 year 1995 an additional amount based upon the increase in the Consumer Price 21 Index as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of 22 Labor using the greater of the amount disbursed in calendar year 1994 or the 23 amount appropriated for calendar year 1995 as the base, which base shall be 24 increased by the percentage that the Consumer Price Index for December of the 25 succeeding year bears to the base.

(d) Nothing in this act shall prevent the city from funding any
additional costs for the administration of justice from other city funds.

29 SECTION 12. The county shall, on or before the tenth (10th) day of 30 November, 1995, and on or before the tenth (10th) day of each month 31 thereafter, remit all sums received in excess of the amounts necessary to fund 32 the expenses enumerated in Section 10(b) and (c) of this act during the 33 previous month from the uniform filing fees provided for in Sections 3 and 4 34 herein and the uniform court costs provided for in Section 7 herein to the 35 Department of Finance and Administration, Administration of Justice Fund

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Section, for deposit in the State Administration of Justice Fund.
SECTION 13. The city shall, on or before the tenth (10th) day of
November, 1995, and on or before the tenth (10th) day of each month
thereafter, remit all sums received in excess of the amounts necessary to fund
the expenses enumerated in Section 11(b) and (c) of this act during the
previous month from the uniform filing fees provided for in Sections 5 and 6
herein and the uniform court costs provided for in Section 7 herein to the
Department of Finance and Administration, Administration of Justice Fund
Section, for deposit in the State Administration of Justice Fund.

12 SECTION 14. (a) In the event a city or county fails to timely or 13 adequately submit funds and reports required by Sections 9, 12, or 13 of this 14 act,

15 (1) the Attorney General may file a civil suit in circuit court 16 against the city or county alleged to have failed to submit the funds required 17 by this act. If the county or city is found by the court to have failed to 18 submit the funds and reports required by this act, the court shall impose a 19 civil penalty on such county or city of ten percent (10%) of the amount 20 required to be remitted for the period of time the county or city has failed 21 to be in compliance with this act. Such actions may be brought in the circuit 22 court of the subject county or the circuit court of Pulaski County. The 23 Attorney General shall be allowed to recover costs and attorney_s fees 24 associated with the civil suit from the county or city found to have violated 25 the provisions of this act; or

26 (2) the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State may, upon a finding 27 that the city or county has failed to submit the funds and reports required by 28 this act, withhold from month to month an equal amount from the city's or 29 county's share of the state turnback funds owed to such city or county, until 30 the funds required to be paid by this act have been submitted; and

(3) provided the failure to act continues for a period of sixty
(60) days, the State may, upon a finding by the Chief Fiscal Officer, require
such county or city to remit all costs and fees generated by this act. Such
county or city will thereafter receive its share of these funds at a time and
in the manner prescribed by regulations of the Chief Fiscal Officer.

1 (b) All funds received pursuant to Section 14(a) shall be transferred 2 to the Administration of Justice Fund to be held and distributed pursuant to 3 this act.

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5 SECTION 15. At the close of books on the twentieth (20th) working day 6 of November, 1995, and on or before the twentieth (20th) working day of each 7 month thereafter, the Department of Finance and Administration shall make the 8 following distribution of revenue received for the previous month and credited 9 to the State Administration of Justice Fund:

10 The following State programs and agencies which are currently funded by 11 court costs and filing fees shall be paid at an annual rate, at not less than 12 the amounts certified by the Department of Finance and Administration which 13 were received by the program or agency in the fiscal year ending June 30, 14 1995, in a monthly installment of at least one-twelfth (1/12) of the annual 15 appropriation provided for each agency for this purpose from the State 16 Administration of Justice Fund:

17 (1) the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas for the purpose
18 and as regulated by Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-64-604 - 606;

(2) the Public Health Fund for use in the Drug Abuse Prevention and
 20 Treatment program of the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention;

(3) the Highway Safety Special Fund for programs of the Arkansas
Highway Safety Program;

(4) the Department of Arkansas State Police for the State PoliceRetirement Fund;

(5) the Crime Victims Reparations Revolving Fund for the purpose and as
regulated by Arkansas Code Annotated § 16-90-701 et seq.;

(6) the Prosecutor Coordinator's office for deposit in the Law28 Enforcement and Prosecutor Drug Enforcement Training Fund;

(7) the Code Revision Fund for the purpose and as regulated by Arkansas
Code Annotated § 1-2-305;

31 (8) the Crime Information System Fund;

32 (9) the Municipal Court Judge and the Municipal Court Clerk Education33 Fund;

34 (10) the Arkansas Judicial Retirement System Fund;

35 (11) the state Central Services Fund for the benefit of the Public

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1 Defender Commission;

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(12) the Court Reporter Fund;

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(13) the Justice Building Fund;

4 (14) until June 30, 1996, the Arkansas Counties Alcohol and Drug Abuse 5 and Crime Prevention Fund; and

6 (15) effective July 1, 1996, the Administration of Justice Fund to fund 7 the trial court staff persons authorized by Section 16 of this act.

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9 SECTION 16. (a) Beginning July 1, 1996, positions shall be authorized 10 and funds appropriated to the Auditor of State from the State Administration 11 of Justice Fund to provide one (1) staff person for each of the judges of the 12 circuit, chancery, and probate courts. The staff person may be employed to 13 perform secretarial, docketing, and management services. Each judge of the 14 circuit, chancery, or probate court shall report to the Administrative Office 15 of the Courts his intention to employ such a staff person. Two (2) or more 16 judges within a judicial district may employ jointly, in their discretion, one 17 (1) staff person when coordinated with the Administrative Office of the 18 Courts.

(b) The circuit, chancery, or probate judges authorized by subparagraph (a) of this section to employ a staff person shall have the authority to select and hire the person who will serve, and any person so employed shall serve at the will and pleasure of the judge.

(c) The entry level salary of a trial court staff person shall be equal to that established in the State pay plan at grade 16. No trial court staff person authorized by this act shall receive a salary from the state in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000). A county or counties shall be authorized to supplement the base salary of any trial court staff person, when approved by the quorum court.

(d) The staff persons shall be subject to the Uniform Attendance and
Leave Policy Act, as administered by the judge by whom they are employed.
(e) A trial judge who already has one (1) or more staff persons on the
effective date of this act shall designate one (1) such staff person to be
subject to and paid by the provisions of this act.

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35 SECTION 17. The uniform filing fees and court costs established by

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1 Sections 3 through 7 of this act shall become effective on July 1, 1995;
2 however, from the period beginning July 1, 1995, through September 30, 1995,
3 all courts shall deduct from the uniform fees and costs the individual fees
4 and costs owed to local, county, and state level agencies and disburse those
5 funds as required by law prior to the adoption of this act. Excess funds
6 shall be retained by the city or county and utilized as directed by the
7 governing body, but are, however, intended to provide a sufficient level of
8 funds as to allow for the change in the disbursement of funds as required by
9 Sections 12 and 13 of this act.

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11 SECTION 18. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent 12 nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas 13 Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code. 14

15 SECTION 19. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to 16 any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect 17 other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without 18 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this 19 act are declared to be severable.

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SECTION 20. Arkansas Code Annotated §§ 1-2-306, 5-64-416, 5-64-709, 5-65-113, 5-65-115(c), 5-65-307(c)(1) and (2), 6-64-603, 12-41-617, 14-20-102(b), 14-20-115, 14-42-112(e), 16-17-109, 16-17-110, 16-17-111, 16-17-112, 16-17-113, 16-17-123, 16-17-402(c) and (d), 16-17-614, 16-19-413, 16-20-107, 16-21-106(b)(2)(B) and (C), 16-21-113(f), 16-21-1103(b), 16-21-1503(a), 16-23-103, 16-87-111(b), 16-90-718, 16-92-110, 16-92-111, 16-92-116, 20-7-123(a)(1)(C) and (F), 20-18-405, 20-18-502(c), 21-6-404, 28 21-6-405, 21-6-410, 22-3-920, 24-8-303, 24-8-315(e), 24-8-402 and 27-50-401 29 are hereby repealed effective October 1, 1995.

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31 SECTION 21. Section 2 of Act 685 of 1971 as amended by Acts 995 and 32 1081 of 1975, Act 311 of 1981, Act 472 of 1981, Act 958 of 1981, Act 972 of 33 1981, Act 978 of 1981, Act 989 of 1981, Act 4 of 1983, Act 300 of 1983, 34 Section 3 of Act 335 of 1983, Section 7 of Act 485 of 1983, Act 576 of 1983, 35 Act 607 of 1983, Act 610 of 1983, Act 682 of 1983, Act 803 of 1983, Act 919 of

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1 1983, Act 322 of 1987, Act 543 of 1987, Act 782 of 1987, Act 851 of 1987, Act
 2 255 of 1989, Act 349 of 1989, Act 398 of 1989, Act 442 of 1989, Act 1149 of
 3 1991, Act 1150 of 1991, and Act 311 of 1993 are hereby repealed effective
 4 October 1, 1995.
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         SECTION 22. All other laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act
 7 are hereby repealed.
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         SECTION 23. EMERGENCY. It is hereby found and determined by the
10 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the current system of funding
11 the state judicial system has created inequity in the level of judicial
12 services available to the citizens of the state; and it is further determined
13 that the current method of financing the state judicial system has become so
14 complex as to make the administration of the system impossible, and the lack
15 of reliable data on the current costs of the state judicial system prohibits
16 any comprehensive change in the funding of the system at this time.
17 Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this act being
18 necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and
19 safety, shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and
20 approval."
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                                               /s/Dowd
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                                  APPROVED: 4-13-95
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