

1 State of Arkansas  
2 88th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2011  
4

*As Engrossed: S3/15/11*  
**A Bill**

SENATE BILL 941

5 By: Senator M. Lamoureux  
6 By: Representative Wright  
7

**For An Act To Be Entitled**

8  
9 AN ACT REGARDING THE ARKANSAS PUBLIC DEFENDER  
10 COMMISSION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
11

12  
13 **Subtitle**

14 REGARDING THE ARKANSAS PUBLIC DEFENDER  
15 COMMISSION.  
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17  
18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
19

20 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 16-87-211 is amended to read as follows:  
21 16-87-211. Compensation.

22 (a) On an interim basis in complex cases or at the conclusion of each  
23 case, the appointed attorney shall submit his or her bill to the appointing  
24 court, which shall issue an order authorizing compensation.

25 (b)(1)(A) An application for compensation shall be submitted to the  
26 Arkansas Public Defender Commission, accompanied by ~~the affidavit of the~~  
27 ~~appointed attorney detailing the hours spent on the case and the services~~  
28 ~~rendered and~~ an itemized bill with a detailed explanation of services  
29 rendered, time spent, and expenses incurred.

30 (B) The application for compensation should also indicate  
31 whether compensation was received or has been applied for from any other  
32 source.

33 (2) The commission shall determine and set the compensation  
34 award based upon guidelines established by the commission.

35 (c) There shall not be ~~no~~ a maximum amount of compensation in capital  
36 cases.



1  
2 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 16-87-212(a), regarding court fees and  
3 expenses that the Arkansas Public Defender Commission is authorized to pay,  
4 is amended to read as follows:

5 (a)(1) The Arkansas Public Defender Commission is authorized to pay  
6 for certain expenses regarding the defense of indigents.

7 (2) The expenses shall include, but shall not necessarily be  
8 limited to, fees for:

9 ~~(A) appointed~~ Appointed counsel;

10 ~~(B) expert~~ Expert witnesses;

11 ~~(C) temporary investigators~~ Investigators;

12 ~~(D) Mitigation specialists;~~

13 ~~(E) testing,~~ Testing; and

14 ~~(F) travel~~ Travel of the:

15 (i) Appointed counsel;

16 (ii) Expert witness;

17 (iii) Investigator; or

18 (iv) Mitigation specialist.

19 ~~(3)(A) Whenever a judge orders an authorized payment in a case~~  
20 ~~involving an indigent person, a copy of the order accompanied by a detailed~~  
21 ~~explanation of services rendered, time spent, and expenses incurred shall be~~  
22 ~~transmitted to the commission, and the commission shall set the amount of~~  
23 ~~compensation.~~

24 ~~(B)(3) Orders as authorized throughout this chapter shall be~~  
25 ~~paid by the commission provided~~ If sufficient funds are available, the  
26 commission shall pay all orders as authorized throughout this chapter.

27  
28 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 16-87-213 is amended to read as follows:  
29 16-87-213. Certificate of indigency.

30 (a)(1)(A) Any person charged with an offense punishable by  
31 imprisonment who desires to be represented by an appointed attorney shall  
32 file with the court in which the person is charged a written certificate of  
33 indigency.

34 (B) The certificate of indigency shall be in a form  
35 approved by the Arkansas Public Defender Commission and shall be provided by  
36 the court in which the person is charged.

1                   (C) The certificate of indigency shall be executed under  
2 oath by the person and shall state in bold print that a false statement is  
3 punishable as a Class D felony.

4                   (D) Upon execution, the certificate of indigency shall be  
5 made a permanent part of the indigent person's records.

6                   (2)(A)(i) If the court in which the person is charged determines  
7 that the person qualifies for the appointment of an attorney under standards  
8 set by the commission, the court, except as otherwise provided ~~by~~ in this  
9 subchapter, shall appoint the trial public defender to represent the person  
10 before the court.

11                   (ii) The court shall not appoint counsel ~~prior to~~ before  
12 review of the submitted affidavit.

13                   (iii) The commission shall develop and provide affidavit  
14 of indigency forms.

15                   (iv) All completed affidavits of indigency shall be  
16 entered into the record at the time of appointment.

17                   (v)(a) The court may make a finding of partial indigency  
18 and at the time of appointment set an attorney's fee based upon the  
19 defendant's ability to pay.

20                   (b) This fee is to be paid by the defendant before  
21 the resolution of the case.

22                   (vi) A finding of indigency may be challenged by the  
23 commission or its attorneys at the time of the appointment.

24                   (B)(i)(a)(1) At the time of appointment of counsel, the  
25 court shall assess a user fee of not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more  
26 than ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) to be paid  
27 to the commission in order to defray the costs of the public defender system.

28                   (2) Payment of the user fee is to be  
29 made before a resolution in the case.

30                   (b) The fee may be waived if the court finds  
31 such an assessment to be too burdensome.

32                   (ii)(a) All the user fees shall be collected by the  
33 county or city official, agency, or department designated under § 16-13-709  
34 as primarily responsible for the collection of fines assessed in the circuit  
35 courts and district courts of this state who shall remit to the commission by

1 the tenth day of each month all of the fees collected on forms provided by  
2 the commission.

3 (b) The commission shall deposit the money  
4 collected into a separate account within the State Central Services Fund  
5 entitled "Public Defender User Fees", where it is to be used for all cases  
6 involving a risk of loss of liberty.

7 (3) The appointing court may at any time review and redetermine  
8 whether a person is an indigent person who qualifies for the appointment of  
9 an attorney ~~pursuant to~~ under this subchapter.

10 (b)(1) The State of Arkansas or a county, or both, may file a civil  
11 action for recovery of money expended in the representation of a person who  
12 is determined by a court not to have been indigent at the time expenditures  
13 were made.

14 (2) Suit shall be brought within three (3) years after the date  
15 a certificate of indigency is filed.

16 (c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to bar a prosecution  
17 for perjury or other offenses based on misrepresentation of financial status.

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19 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 16-87-303 is amended to read as follows:  
20 16-87-303. Selection and qualifications of public defenders.

21 (a) Each person selected as a public defender shall be:

22 (1) Licensed to practice law in the State of Arkansas; and

23 (2) Experienced in the defense of criminal cases.

24 (b)(1) ~~Any~~ A person interested in being considered for appointment as  
25 a public defender in a judicial district shall submit his or her name to the  
26 Arkansas Public Defender Commission.

27 ~~(2)(A) The commission shall evaluate and submit up to three (3)~~  
28 ~~names to the judges within the judicial district.~~

29 ~~(B) By majority vote, the judges will select one (1) of~~  
30 ~~the candidates whose name was submitted by the commission as the public~~  
31 ~~defender.~~

32 ~~(C) If one (1) of the candidates submitted does not~~  
33 ~~receive a majority vote from the judges, then the commission shall select the~~  
34 ~~public defender.~~

