

1 SB279
2 106230-3
3 By Senator Little (T)
4 RFD: Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability
5 First Read: 19-JAN-10

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8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would create the Crime Stopper
9 Commission that would award grants for crime
10 stopper programs throughout the state. This bill
11 would establish the Crime Stopper Grant Fund and
12 levy additional court costs on each conviction for
13 a violation, misdemeanor, or felony to be paid into
14 the fund.

15 This bill would also: Provide grants for
16 preexisting crime stopper programs; make available
17 grants for the establishment of new crime stopper
18 programs, rewards, and crime prevention educational
19 programs; and provide certain protections for
20 qualifying anonymous tip lines.

21 This bill would allow an agency to be
22 selected to manage, collect, and distribute the
23 funds.
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25 A BILL
26 TO BE ENTITLED
27 AN ACT

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Relating to crime stopper programs; to establish a crime stopper commission; to establish the Crime Stopper Grant Fund; to levy additional court costs on each conviction of a violation, misdemeanor, or felony; to provide grant money for crime stopper programs; and to allow an agency to manage, collect, and distribute the grants.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. As used in this act, the following words have the following meanings:

(1) COMMISSION. The Crime Stopper Commission.

(2) COURT FEE. The additional one dollar (\$1) added to each conviction for any violation, misdemeanor, or felony case in this state that will be used by the commission to make awards to crime stopper programs throughout the state.

(3) CRIME STOPPER GRANT FUND. The separate account in the State Treasury to which the proceeds from court fees are deposited by the facilitating office.

(4) CRIME STOPPER PROGRAM. A nonprofit program whose mission is to assist any local, state, or federal law enforcement agency or entity in the capture of wanted criminals.

(5) FACILITATING OFFICE. The Department of Economic and Community Affairs or a like agency selected to manage and facilitate the collection and distribution of the funds according to the laws of this state.

(6) FUND. The Crime Stopper Grant Fund.

1 (7) GRANT. The awarding of a grant made by the
2 commission of part of the fund to a qualifying crime stopper
3 organization for the purposes allowed in this act and
4 according to the laws of this state.

5 (8) REWARD. Any monetary payment or cash equivalent
6 that is made to a person who provides the initial pertinent
7 information to a crime stopper program that relates to
8 identifying a criminal offender or links a criminal offender
9 to a particular criminal act or both. The initial pertinent
10 information must directly lead to the arrest or indictment of
11 the criminal offender.

12 Section 2. There shall be assessed upon conviction
13 for a violation, misdemeanor, or felony, additional court
14 costs in the amount of one dollar (\$1), which shall be
15 distributed quarterly to a fund to be maintained in the State
16 Treasury. Monies collected in the fund are continuously
17 appropriated for the purposes of this act.

18 Section 3. (a) There is hereby created the Crime
19 Stopper Commission composed of the following:

20 (1) One member appointed by the Attorney General.

21 (2) One member appointed by the Governor.

22 (3) One member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

23 (b) Each member shall serve a four-year term or
24 until replaced by the appointing authority.

25 (c) The powers and duties of the commission shall be
26 as follows:

1 (1) Enter into a contract with the facilitating
2 office.

3 (2) Award grants to crime stopper organizations
4 within this state in accordance with the laws of this state.
5 The commission may not award a grant or grants in excess of
6 the balance of the fund or in anticipation of any moneys.

7 (3) Review applications for a grant to be awarded by
8 the commission.

9 Section 4. The powers and duties of the facilitating
10 office shall be as follows:

11 (1) Collect the court fee at least quarterly from
12 each municipal, district, and circuit court.

13 (2) Establish and maintain a separate account in
14 which to deposit the proceeds from the court fees that shall
15 become the fund.

16 (3) Within 30 days from written receipt of the date
17 of an award of a grant from the commission, distribute the
18 grant to the chosen crime stopper program and account for the
19 grant accordingly.

20 (4) Provide a written accounting to the commission
21 quarterly indicating the balance of the fund, the amount of
22 the fund distributed, the amount of the fund withheld for
23 fees, and the amount of the fund available for grants.

24 (5) Distribute to the facilitating office as
25 compensation, one percent of the collected moneys, and account
26 for the same.

1 (6) Distribute the remainder of the fund through
2 grants to approved crime stopper programs.

3 (7) Collect, copy, and distribute to members of the
4 commission the applications for grants as the commission
5 requires.

6 Section 5. (a) All monies received directly or
7 indirectly from a grant under this act shall be used solely
8 for the purpose of paying rewards to individuals who provide
9 information on criminal activity to the crime stopper
10 programs; covering administrative costs; starting new
11 programs; operating hot lines used for receiving anonymous
12 information; and paying for supplies, equipment, salaries,
13 crime prevention educational programs, advertising, training,
14 and statewide travel expenditures associated with crime
15 stopper programs.

16 (b) As set forth in this act, each crime stopper
17 program may receive grants as awarded by the commission in
18 accordance with the laws of this state.

19 Section 6. In order to be eligible to apply to the
20 commission for a grant, a crime stopper program shall do the
21 following:

22 (1) Be qualified under IRS regulations as a
23 501(c)(3) organization or under IRS regulations as an
24 incorporated nonprofit corporation.

25 (2) Offer an anonymous tip line and cash rewards to
26 the public for information about open cases and crimes.

1 (3) Every three years receive a written endorsement
2 of the participating crime stopper program's area district
3 attorney or at least one law enforcement agency within the
4 area.

5 (4) Be an active and current member of Crime Stopper
6 USA or Crime Stopper International.

7 (5) Be an active member of the Alabama Crime Stopper
8 Association.

9 (6) Educate the public on crime prevention.

10 (7) Have a board of directors composed of at least
11 five citizens from its geographic area.

12 Section 7. Each crime stopper program may apply for
13 one annual grant to be awarded by the commission, mailed to
14 the facilitating office, in accordance to the rules and
15 specifications set forth by the commission. The commission
16 shall award grants based upon rules, specifications, and other
17 established criteria in coordination with the Alabama Crime
18 Stopper Association. Grant funds for qualifying crime stopper
19 programs shall be apportioned among the 67 counties on the
20 basis of population according to the latest federal decennial
21 census. The commission shall make a written finding as to how
22 the grants awarded meet the established criteria.

23 Section 8. Each crime stopper program participating
24 pursuant to this act shall have sole legal responsibility for
25 the payment of any reward, for determining the formula to
26 calculate a reward, and for payment of any local
27 administrative expenditure. Each crime stopper program shall

1 agree in writing to indemnify and hold harmless the State of
2 Alabama, the facilitating office, the commission, and any of
3 its members for any payment to any individual for a reward.

4 Section 9. (a) A crime stopper program may not
5 reveal the identity or any information about an anonymous
6 caller or information that could lead to the identification of
7 the anonymous caller to any law enforcement personnel without
8 the express written consent of the anonymous caller.

9 (b) Each crime stopper program shall develop
10 policies and procedures, and educate all personnel on the
11 same, concerning the confidentiality of the information
12 collected.

13 (c) The disclosure of raw statistics is not
14 prohibited by this section.

15 Section 10. This act shall become effective on the
16 first day of the third month following its passage and
17 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.