

1 SB554  
2 120280-1  
3 By Senator Bedford  
4 RFD: Finance and Taxation General Fund  
5 First Read: 23-MAR-10

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8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would create the Crime Stoppers  
9 Advisory Board that would award grants for crime  
10 stoppers programs throughout the state.

11 This bill would establish the Crime Stoppers  
12 Grant Fund for depositing donations.

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

19 This bill would allow an agency to be  
20 selected to manage, collect, and distribute the  
21 funds.

22 This bill would establish a statewide  
23 toll-free telephone service for tips regarding  
24 criminal activity.

25  
26 A BILL  
27 TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2  
3 Relating to crime stoppers programs; to establish  
4 the Crime Stoppers Advisory Board; to establish the Crime  
5 Stoppers Grant Fund; to provide grant money for crime stoppers  
6 programs; to allow an agency to manage, collect, and  
7 distribute the grants; and to provide for a statewide  
8 toll-free telephone service for tips regarding criminal  
9 activity.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

13 (1) BOARD. The Crime Stoppers Advisory Board.

14 (2) CRIME STOPPERS GRANT FUND. The separate account  
15 in the State Treasury to which the proceeds from donations are  
16 deposited by the facilitating office.

17 (3) CRIME STOPPERS PROGRAM. A nonprofit program  
18 whose mission is to assist any local, state, or federal law  
19 enforcement agency or entity in the capture of wanted  
20 criminals.

21 (4) FACILITATING OFFICE. The Department of Economic  
22 and Community Affairs or a like agency selected by the board  
23 to manage and facilitate the collection and distribution of  
24 the funds according to the laws of this state.

25 (5) FUND. The Crime Stoppers Grant Fund.

26 (6) GRANT. The awarding of a grant made by the board  
27 of part of the fund to a qualifying crime stoppers program for

1 the purposes allowed in this act and according to the laws of  
2 this state.

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

10 Section 2. (a) The Crime Stoppers Advisory Board is  
11 created and composed of the following:

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

13 (2) One member appointed by the Governor.

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

15 (b) The membership of the board shall be inclusive  
16 and reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban/rural, and  
17 economic diversity of the state. The board shall annually  
18 report to the Legislature by the second legislative day of  
19 each regular session the extent to which the board has  
20 complied with the diversity provisions provided for in this  
21 act.

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

24 (d) The powers and duties of the board shall be as  
25 follows:

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

1           (2) Advise and assist in the creation of crime  
2 stoppers programs.

3           (3) Award grants to crime stoppers programs within  
4 this state in accordance with the laws of this state. The  
5 board may not award a grant or grants in excess of the balance  
6 of the fund or in anticipation of any moneys to be received  
7 into the fund.

8           (4) Review applications for grants to be awarded by  
9 the board.

10          (5) Solicit donations into the fund.

11          (e) The board may adopt rules to carry out its  
12 duties under this act.

13          Section 3. The powers and duties of the facilitating  
14 office shall be as follows:

15          (1) Solicit and accept donations for the payment of  
16 rewards to persons who provide information concerning criminal  
17 activity.

18          (2) Establish and operate a statewide toll-free  
19 telephone service to receive tips about criminal activity and  
20 forward information concerning criminal activity to the  
21 appropriate law enforcement agencies.

22          (3) Establish and maintain the fund to deposit  
23 donations.

24          (4) Distribute grants authorized by the board to the  
25 appropriate crime stoppers program within 30 days of the  
26 written receipt of notice of the award of the grant and  
27 account for the grant accordingly.

1           (5) Provide a written accounting to the board  
2 quarterly indicating the balance of the fund, the amount of  
3 the fund distributed, the amount of the fund withheld for  
4 fees, and the amount of the fund available for grants.

5           (6) Collect, copy, and distribute to members of the  
6 board the applications for grants as the board may require.

7           (7) Withhold as compensation, one percent of the  
8 collected moneys, and account for the same.

9           Section 4. (a) The facilitating office shall  
10 establish and operate a statewide toll-free telephone service  
11 and make the service accessible to persons residing in areas  
12 of the state not served by a crime stoppers program for  
13 reporting information about criminal activity.

14           (b) The statewide toll-free telephone service shall  
15 be made available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

16           (c) The facilitating office shall forward the  
17 information received to the appropriate law enforcement  
18 agencies or crime stoppers programs.

19           Section 5. (a) All monies received directly or  
20 indirectly from a grant under this act shall be used for all  
21 of the following:

22           (1) Paying rewards to individuals who provide  
23 information on criminal activity to a crime stoppers program,  
24 including information provided to the statewide toll-free  
25 telephone service.

26           (2) Establishing new crime stoppers programs.

27           (3) Covering administrative costs.

1           (4) Operating hot lines for receiving anonymous  
2 information.

3           (5) Paying for supplies, equipment, salaries, crime  
4 prevention education programs, advertising, training, and  
5 statewide travel expenditures associated with crime stoppers  
6 programs.

7           (b) Pursuant to this act, each crime stoppers  
8 program may receive grants as awarded by the board in  
9 accordance with the laws of this state.

10           Section 6. In order to be eligible to apply for a  
11 grant, a crime stoppers program shall do the following:

12           (1) Be qualified under Internal Revenue Service  
13 regulations as a 501(c)(3) organization or under Internal  
14 Revenue Service regulations as an incorporated nonprofit  
15 corporation.

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

18           (3) Every three years receive a written endorsement  
19 of the participating crime stoppers program's area district  
20 attorney or at least one law enforcement agency within the  
21 area.

22           (4) Be an active and current member of Crime  
23 Stoppers USA or Crime Stoppers International.

24           (5) Be an active member of the Alabama Crime  
25 Stoppers Association.

26           (6) Educate the public on crime prevention.

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

3                   Section 7. (a) Each crime stoppers program may apply  
4 for one annual grant to be awarded by the board, mailed to the  
5 facilitating office, in accordance to the rules and  
6 specifications set forth by the board.

7                   (b) The board shall award grants based upon rules,  
8 specifications, and other established criteria in coordination  
9 with the Alabama Crime Stoppers Association.

10                  (c) Grant funds for qualifying crime stopper  
11 programs shall be apportioned among the 67 counties on the  
12 basis of population according to the latest federal decennial  
13 census.

14                  (d) The board shall make a written finding as to how  
15 the grants awarded meet the established criteria.

16                  Section 8. (a) Each crime stoppers program  
17 participating pursuant to this act shall have sole legal  
18 responsibility for the payment of any reward, for determining  
19 the formula to calculate a reward, and for payment of any  
20 local administrative expenditure.

21                  (b) Each crime stoppers program shall agree in  
22 writing to indemnify and hold harmless the State of Alabama,  
23 the facilitating office, the board, and any of its members for  
24 any payment to any individual for a reward.

25                  Section 9. (a) A crime stoppers program may not  
26 reveal the identity or any information about an anonymous  
27 caller or information that could lead to the identification of

1 the anonymous caller to any law enforcement personnel without  
2 the express written consent of the anonymous caller.

3 (b) Each crime stoppers program shall develop  
4 policies and procedures, and educate all personnel on the  
5 same, concerning the confidentiality of the information  
6 collected.

7 (c) The disclosure of raw statistics is not  
8 prohibited by this section.

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