



**ATTORNEY GENERAL STEVEN T. MARSHALL APPLAUDS ALABAMA SENATE
APPROVAL OF “FAIR JUSTICE ACT” ADVOCATED BY THE ATTORNEY
GENERAL’S OFFICE**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steven T. Marshall praised the Alabama Senate for passing the Fair Justice Act (SB 187) which helps streamline the appeals process for death sentences. The legislation was introduced at the request of the Attorney General’s Office.

“I would like to thank Senator Cam Ward for sponsoring and shepherding this important legislation through the Alabama Senate,” said Attorney General Marshall. “I also want to thank Madison County District Attorney Rob Broussard for championing this much-needed reform of Alabama death sentence appeals which consolidates the time consideration of certain appeals.”

The Fair Justice Act streamlines the appeals process for those death row inmates seeking appeals based on claims of ineffective counsel or juror misconduct, known as Rule 32 post-conviction relief. The legislation would require defendants sentenced to death in Alabama to seek Rule 32 post-conviction relief at the same time the defendant’s direct appeal is pending rather than waiting until the direct appeal has ended.

“The appellate process for capital cases is extremely lengthy,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Under the current system, a capital defendant may wait up to one year after his direct appeal to file his Rule 32 petition and begin this lengthy appeal process. The implementation of the Fair Justice Act could result in shortening the average time a death sentence is carried out by five to six years, saving the taxpayers well over \$100,000 in total housing costs per inmate. It also reduces the time victims must wait to see justice carried out in these capital murder cases.”

The Fair Justice Act would make the appeals process more efficient, while both maintaining the same opportunities for appellate review and enhancing representation that are provided to death-row inmates by requiring the appointment of counsel for purposes of seeking Rule 32 post-conviction relief within 30 days of the date the defendant is sentenced.

The Fair Justice Act passed the Alabama Senate Tuesday night.

--30--

