

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

GWENNETTA L. TATUM
DIRECTOR



Post Office Box 1018
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1018
Telephone: (601) 359-3310
Fax: (601) 359-2928

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES LEGISLATIVE SERVICES OFFICE

TO: Members of the Mississippi House of Representatives
FROM: Gwennetta Tatum, Director *GT*
Legislative Services Office
DATE: May 5, 2025
RE: 2025 Summary of Major Legislation

At the request of Speaker White, please find attached an electronic copy of the 2025 Summary of Major Legislation.

If you have any difficulty in accessing the attached information, please contact the Legislative Services Office at 601-359-3310. Thank you.

GT/jab

Attachment



JASON WHITE

SPEAKER

Mississippi House of Representatives

POST OFFICE BOX 1018
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39215-1018

TO: Members of the Mississippi House of Representatives
FROM: Jason White *JW*
Speaker of the House
DATE: May 5, 2025
RE: 2025 Summary of Major Legislation

The enclosed information is for your use in answering the many questions which will be posed to you by your constituents regarding 2025 legislation.

As always, if I can be of service to you or your constituents, do not hesitate to call upon this office.

JW/jab

Enclosures

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

<u>Regular Session (Year)</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
HOUSE BILLS				
Introduced	2012	2131	1820	1769
Passed by House	343	424	354	381
Passed by Senate	186	255	214	250
Approved	125	209	207	157
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS				
Introduced	70	66	64	90
Adopted by House	41	31	35	59
Adopted by Senate	38	30	34	58
Adopted by Both Houses	38	30	34	58
SENATE BILLS				
Introduced	1290	1235	1159	1212
Passed by Senate	316	305	276	295
Passed by House	191	179	239	282
Approved	129	176	216	96
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS				
Introduced	44	49	74	105
Adopted by Senate	30	32	60	92
Adopted by House	26	31	58	91
Adopted by Both Houses	26	31	58	92
BILLS THAT PASSED BOTH HOUSES	414	492	453	532
BILLS THAT BECAME LAW	259	225	424	258
VETOED BILLS				
House Bills	4	8	0	1
Senate Bills	4	5	8	4

PARTIAL VETOES

House Bills	0	3	3	1
Senate Bills	0	0	1	1

VETOES OVERRIDDEN

House Bills	0	0	0	0
Senate Bills	0	0	0	0

BILLS THAT BECAME LAW W/OUT SIGNATURE

House Bills	5	16	0	6
Senate Bills	0	5	1	1

*As of April 29, 2025

SUMMARY OF MAJOR LEGISLATION

2025 Regular Session

Prepared by
Mississippi House of Representatives
Legislative Services Office
May 2025

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ACCOUNTABILITY, EFFICIENCY, TRANSPARENCY

HB 13. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill amends Section 31-11-3 to require the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) to establish criteria for projects up to \$10,000,000 to make a determination to whether a community college may self-manage capital projects funded, in whole or in part, by general obligation bonds or other state resources. The criteria that the board must use shall include, but not be limited to, whether the community college employs applicable full-time personnel, including licensed architects, qualified construction engineers, and other experienced employees designated for the management of the construction of capital projects. The MCCB shall consider all of the criteria and make a determination. If the MCCB makes a favorable determination, the established Board of Trustees of each college shall make a second determination as to whether it is in the best interest of the college to procure and self-manage all such contracts. If both the MCCB and the Board of Trustees of each college make a favorable determination, a memorandum of understanding shall be executed by the MCCB and the college.

HB 186. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 31-7-14 to clarify that an entity may use any sources of funds available to the entity to enter into certain energy services contracts. The bill also extends the date of the repealer on energy efficiency services public contracts to July 1, 2028.

HB 598. Effective 7/1/25. Law without Governor's
Signature 4/1/25.

This bill amends Section 25-7-65 to revise fee schedules charged for publishing documents in a newspaper on behalf of a

public body. The fees for publishing in a newspaper any summons, order, citation, advertisement or notice for any other party shall be 25¢ for each word it contains for the first insertion, and 23¢ for each of the words for each subsequent insertion required by law, and shall increase each year starting July 1, 2026, at a rate comparable to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Additionally, the fee for making proof of publication, making a copy thereof, and for depositing to the same, increased from \$3 to \$5.

HB 767. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 55-15-21 to revise the composition of the Grand Gulf Military Monument Commission to increase the number of commission members from five members to seven members. Of the two additional members, one shall be appointed by the Governor from the state-at-large after consideration of recommendations for the appointment made by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one member shall be appointed from the state-at-large by the Lieutenant Governor.

HB 917. Effective on passage. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 57-1-14 to revise the exemption for records that contain client information concerning development projects from the Mississippi Public Records Act. The exemption, which applied to just those records of the Mississippi Development Authority, will now apply to the records of any public body that contain client information concerning development projects, and the period of the exemption will be for four years instead of two years.

HB 924. Effective 7/1/25. Vetoed 4/24/25.

This bill creates the Creating Logic for Efficiency and Accountability Reform (CLEAR) Act.

The bill creates new Section 5-3-77 to authorize the PEER Committee to establish a program of reviewing selected newly adopted state agency administrative rules. Such reviews shall produce a report to the Legislature on newly adopted state agency administrative rules and their conformity to the intent of the law authorizing them, as well as any other matter the committee considers appropriate.

The bill also amends Section 47-5-579 to clarify that all program withholdings from participants of the prison industries corporation's work initiative program shall be calculated based upon participant wages after mandatory deductions. It also requires that accounting of any dependent support payments, fines, restitutions, fees or costs, as ordered by the court, be reported for each work initiative participant. The bill requires that the remaining sentence length of such participant be collected, maintained and reported, and that a financial account creation date be collected, maintained and reported for each participant.

Section 1, Chapter 431, Laws of 2024, is amended in the bill to extend the operation of the Mississippi K-12 and Postsecondary Mental Health Task Force for one additional year. The task force shall develop and report its findings and recommendations to the Mississippi Legislature on or before October 1, 2025, and the task force shall dissolve upon presentation of the report.

The bill also creates the "Mississippi K-12 and Postsecondary Mental Health Act of 2025". The bill establishes an executive committee of the Interagency Coordinating Council for Children and Youth (ICCCY) and provides for the composition of the executive committee. The executive committee's coordinating responsibilities related to the general mental health and well-being of children and adolescents are specified,

and the bill provides for the dissemination of recommendations and information compiled by the executive committee. Section 43-13-1 is amended to conform.

Section 5-3-70 is created in the bill to provide for civil enforcement of PEER committee subpoenas. As an alternative to a criminal proceeding as provided in Section 5-3-59, in any instance wherein a witness fails to respond to the lawful subpoena of the PEER Committee at any time or, having responded, fails to answer all lawful inquiries or to turn over evidence that has been subpoenaed, the committee may seek judicial enforcement of the process. The process for seeking judicial enforcement is provided.

The bill also amends Section 5-3-59 to provide criminal penalties for persons who fail to comply with subpoenas from the PEER Committee. Such penalties shall be a fine of not more than \$1,000, by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six months, or both.

Section 5-1-23, which provides for contempt proceedings for the House of Representatives or Senate, and Section 5-1-25, which provides for immunity in certain situations, are amended to provide that these provisions are not applicable to subpoenas issued by the PEER Committee.

The bill amends Section 5-1-35 to provide that the sergeant-at-arms of the Mississippi State Senate shall deliver to the Department of Public Safety the request to serve subpoenas issued by the PEER Committee.

The bill amends Section 29-13-1 to allow for the Department of Finance and Administration to establish a self-insurance fund or self-insurance reserves, or any combination thereof, to insure state-owned buildings and contents. The Mississippi Self-Insurance Task Force is created to study, report and make recommendations regarding a self-insurance plan for the state.

The membership and meeting procedure is provided for, and the task force is required to study, report and make recommendations on certain items. The task force shall make a report of its findings and recommendations, including any recommended legislation, to the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Chairs of the Insurance Committees of the House Of Representatives and Senate on or before November 1, 2025, at which time the task force will be dissolved. The Mississippi Self-Insurance Task Force shall report on the cost benefits of self-insuring before funds are expended to self-insure. Section 31-11-3 is amended to conform.

HB 1293. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 51-15-105 to revise the eligibility criteria for persons appointed to the board of directors of the Pat Harrison Waterway District. No appointed person may be a current member of a board of supervisors, a full-time elected official or a county employee.

HB 1505. Effective on passage. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 31-7-13.2 to revise the construction manager at risk method of project delivery to provide that the construction manager for projects for Institutions of Higher Learning shall not be required to solicit bids for construction on the project using the public purchasing law. The construction manager shall be permitted to obtain proposals from contractors or vendors, with such proposals being based on certain qualifications and criteria for contracts for the various scopes of work for the project. The construction manager, in consultation with the agency or governing authority, shall publish the above defined qualifications and criteria that shall be considered in the process for selecting contractors and

vendors that will contract with the construction manager to construct the project at least four weeks in advance of any award of contract to such contractors or vendors. Confidential and proprietary information furnished by a construction manager or a contractor or vendor pursuant to this section shall not be disclosed outside of the agency, governing authority or construction manager without the prior written consent of all parties. The construction manager shall not be required to submit a proposed guaranteed maximum price for the construction of a project, or for a phase or component of the project, until after the construction manager obtains certain information. A construction manager or its affiliates may self-perform construction work on a project so long as certain conditions are met; however, a construction manager or its affiliates shall only be allowed to self-perform construction work on not more than 15% of the project.

HB 1530. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 41-19-35 to authorize Mental Health Regional Commissions to be established with a set composition of members if each board of supervisors of the counties participating in a particular regional commission agree to such composition as evidenced by resolutions adopted by each board.

SB 2087. Effective on passage. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill repeals Section 1-1-58, which requires the Joint Committee on Compilation, Revision and Publication of Legislation to contract with a publishing company for the publication of the advance sheets of the General Laws of Mississippi enacted at each session of the Legislature, and to

distribute or provide for the distribution of the advance sheets to certain parties.

SB 2143. See summary under State Affairs.

SB 2177. See summary under Education.

SB 2267. See summary under State Affairs.

SB 2298. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill amends Section 31-7-13 to change language concerning decision procedures for "Mississippi Landmarks" to include "prequalified construction." Prequalified construction is considered construction procurement with a minimum construction cost of \$10,000,000 where the agency or governing authority has determined that prequalification of bidders is in the best interest of the state. Further amendments require prequalification criteria to be limited to bidder's and proposed sub-contractor's knowledge and experience on projects of similar size and scope, past performance, project management team and financial stability.

SB 2517. See summary under Universities and Colleges.

SB 2526. See summary under Universities and Colleges.

SB 2573. See summary under Tourism.

SB 2748. See summary under Public Health and Human Services.

SB 2835. See summary under Technology.

SB 2840. See summary under Appropriations A.

SB 2851. See summary under State Affairs.

SB 2854. See summary under Ways and Means.

SB 2857. See summary under Ways and Means.

AGRICULTURE

HB 913. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill provides a comprehensive framework for labeling and regulating meat and meat substitute products in Mississippi. Its primary aim is to prevent consumer confusion regarding the authenticity of food products marketed as "meat." The bill introduces definitions, inspection protocols, labeling standards, and enforcement mechanisms targeting cultivatedprotein, insectprotein and plantprotein food products that could be mistaken for traditional meat derived from animal slaughter.

Section 1 of the bill defines key terms such as:

- "Meat product" means food derived from animal slaughter and meat processing.
- "Manufacturedprotein food product" means a cultivatedprotein, insectprotein or plantprotein product.
- "Identifying meat term" means any word or phrase that states, indicates, suggests or describes a meat product, regardless of whether the word or phrase is used individually or as a compound word.
- "Qualifying term" means a word, compound word or phrase that would clearly disclose to a reasonable purchaser of meat products from a food processing plant that a food product is not a real meat product, such as: "cellcultivated," "cellcultured," "plantbased," "labgrown," "vegan" or a comparable word or phrase as approved by the department.
- "Misbranded": A food product using a meatidentifying term without a qualifying term to clarify it's not actual meat.

Section 2 empowers the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) to conduct routine premise and inventory inspections of food processing plants licensed by the department in accordance with the "Meat, MeatFood and Poultry Regulation Inspection Law of 1960."

Section 3 of the bill prescribes the elements that must be met in order to determine if a food product is misbranded as meat. Misbranding is established if all of the following are satisfied: (i) the product is or contains a manufacturedprotein food product; (ii) contains more than trace amounts of one or more plantprotein food products; (iii) the food product is offered for sale or sold by a food processing plant; and (iv) any labeling placed directly on the product packaging or storage container includes an identifying meat term.

Section 4 of the bill empowers the Department of Agriculture to issue stop for potential violations if it has reasonable cause to believe that a food processing plant, retail or food establishment is offering for sale or selling a food product that is misbranded as a meat product, preventing the further offering for sale or selling of the food product until a determination is made that the product is not misbranded as a meat product.

Upon a determination that a food product being offered for sale or sold is misbranded as a meat product, the appropriate regulatory authority may issue an embargo requiring the disposal of the misbranded meat product by any means other than by sale to purchasers. The department or the Attorney General shall enforce the stop or embargo orders in the chancery court of the county where the violation occurs.

Section 5 prohibits food processing plants, retail or food establishments from misbranding a food product as a meat product imposes civil penalties for established violations of \$500 for each violation, not to exceed \$10,000 in total for violation arising from the same occurrence, with each day of an established violation going uncorrected constituting a separate offense. Monies collected for violations are deposited in the State General Fund. Additionally, this section provides alleged violators with a process of contesting imposition of the civil penalties to the department, and further providing an appeals process through the circuit and Supreme Courts.

Section 6 authorizes the department to suspend or revoke the license of a food processing plant, retail or food establishment that offers for sale or sells a food product that is misbranded as a meat product.

Section 7 requires schools, colleges and universities to adopt policies preventing the purchase of misbranded or cultivatedprotein food products.

Section 8 mandates final pointofsale disclosures in retail and food service settings of the products' authenticity as a meat or nonmeat product with appropriate labeling. The methods of notification required under this section are specific to retail establishments (by means of a label, stamp, mark, placard or other clear and visible sign on the meat or nonmeat product or on the package, display, holding unit or bin containing the product) and food service establishments (by indications on the menu). The Commissioner of Agriculture may require preparers, storers, handlers or distributors of food products, meats, meatfood products, cultivatedprotein food products, manufacturedprotein food products, insectprotein food products and plantprotein food products to maintain verifiable recordkeeping audit trails the purpose of verifying compliance. Additionally, wholesalers and distributors are required to certify product authenticity origin through a state or federal agency that regulates the processing of meat or through a federal agency that verifies that meat and/or other products produced in other countries.

Section 9 amends Section 75353 to include the formal definitions of terms "cultivatedprotein," "insectprotein," "plantprotein" and "manufacturedprotein food products" in the definitions section of the "Mississippi Meat Inspection Law of 1968."

Section 10 amends Section 753515 to prohibit the manufacture or sale of cultivatedprotein food products, and further conforms the labeling requirements specific to nonmeat food products by including plantprotein and insectprotein food

products, as well as requiring final pointofsale consumer disclosure.

Section 11 amends Section 75333 by adding "food establishment" definition to conform to the definitions section of the "Meat, MeatFood and Poultry Regulation Inspection Law of 1960."

Section 12 amends Section 75337 to require all food establishments, unless exempted by the USDA inspection system, to be licensed by the Commissioner of Agriculture in order to operate such establishment.

Updates the list of included species in "meat" definitions to be consistent with modern terminology and coverage.

HB 1006. Effective 7/1/25. Law without Governor's signature 3/21/25.

This bill prohibits the manufacture, sale, offer for sale, distribution or possession for sale of any "cultivated food product," defined as food produced from cultured animal cells—within the State of Mississippi, significantly reinforces the state's regulatory stance against labgrown or cellcultivated meat alternatives in all forms of commerce.

The bill imposes misdemeanor criminal penalties up to \$500 or three months of incarceration for individuals convicted of violations, and licensing sanctions resulting in suspension or revocation if the Commissioner of Agriculture determines a violation has occurred. The bill further vests regulatory enforcement mechanisms within the State Department of Health.

Additionally, the bill amends existing labeling provisions in Section 753515 to expressly prohibit the manufacture or sell of food product that contains cultured animal tissue produced from animal cell cultures outside of the organism from which it is derived within the State of Mississippi.

HB 1295. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill revises and clarifies Mississippi's agritourism liability protection laws by amending:

- Section 69531 to update the definition of "agritourism activity" to specify that these activities occur on the premises of a location registered by an agritourism professional.
- Section 69535 to require agritourism professionals to post signage with the statutory warning at the entrance to the agritourism location, in a clearly visible location.

SB 2025. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 69245 by adding definitions for "beneficial substance" and "plant biostimulant" to the Fertilizing Materials and Additives chapter of the Agriculture, Horticulture and Animals title of the Mississippi Code. Additionally, the bill amends Section 69247 to provide that the commissioner and State Chemist may adopt a rule codifying the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials' recommended beneficial substances label, which pertains to plant and soil amendments and plant biostimulant products. Lastly, the bill requires that bulk shipment containers of soil and plant amendments must be labeled and include information that states the brand, net weight or net volume, the name and address of the guarantor, a purpose statement, directions for use and a statement of composition showing the amount of each ingredient.

SB 2264. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 69531 by modifying the definition of agrotourism activity to mean any activity conducted on a location registered by an agrotourism professional, which allows members of the general public to view and enjoy rural activities. The bill also amends Section 69535 to address the

warning notice signage requirements at an agrotourism location. Now, a warning notice must be placed in a clearly visible location at the entrance of an agrotourism location, rather than signs at each agrotourism activity site.

SB 2266. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill requires the Mississippi Department of Revenue to publish a list of items eligible for sales tax exemptions or reduced sales tax rates for holders of a commercial farmer permit. The department shall publish the list by August 1, 2025.

APPORTIONMENT AND ELECTIONS

HB 289. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 23-15-213 to revise the staggered terms of election commissioners in Districts Two and Four. Those election commissioners from Districts Two and Four and elected in the 2027 election shall be elected for a three-year term, and those election commissioners from Districts Two and Four shall be elected in the 2030 election shall serve for a four-year term and have a new election every four years thereafter.

HB 291. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/24/25.

This bill amends Section 23-15-193 to require all candidates running in the state general election to secure the majority vote to be elected. Sections 23-15-601 and 23-15-951 are amended to conform.

HB 293. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 23-15-1031 to revise the time for holding primary elections for representatives in the Congress of the United States in years without a presidential election from the first Tuesday in June to the second Tuesday in March. Section 23-15-299 is amended to conform by changing the qualification deadline from 60 days before the presidential preference primary to 75 days before the congressional preference primary, and to provide that no assessments may be paid before December 1 of the year before the primary election for the office is held. The bill also amends Section 23-15-359 to conform.

Additionally, the bill creates a new section of law that provides the times for nominating and qualifying for the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Districts, which shall match the times

of the congressional preference primaries. Lastly, the bill repeals Section 8, Chapter 12, Laws of 1928, which provides for the dates of nominations for Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Commissioners.

HB 724. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill amends Section 97-13-13 to provide that if any person assisting an elector with voting in accordance with Section 23-15-907 willfully fails to transmit the ballot that was mailed to the elector with the intent of the ballot not being cast and counted in the election, the person shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be imprisoned in the county jail for not more than one year, and subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000.

HB 811. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

- This bill amends Section 23-15-299 to provide that in order to qualify to run for office, a candidate must submit, along with the qualification fees, an affidavit under penalty of perjury, and such affidavit shall require the candidate to certify that he or she meets all qualifications for the office for which he or she is a candidate.

The bill also requires the Secretary of State to assess a \$500 fine to any state executive committee that fails to transmit any written statements and other required documents and accompanying fees to the Secretary of State by 6:00 p.m. on the date of the qualifying deadline; however, such fines assessed to a state executive committee shall not exceed \$2,500 for a particular qualifying deadline.

Changes to this section also provide that if a candidate has voted in any election outside of the jurisdiction in which he or she seeks to represent during the period in which

the candidate is required to have resided within the jurisdiction, the name of such candidate shall not appear on the ballot unless redistricting has changed a candidate's jurisdiction and would otherwise make him or her ineligible to run as a candidate in the jurisdiction where he or she currently resides.

A timeline is also included in this section that provides when the proper executive committee, or the Secretary of State, whichever is applicable, must make the determination regarding whether a candidate is qualified for the office he or she seeks.

- Section 23-15-961 is amended to conform to the preceding section, and to provide that a candidate who has been disqualified under Section 23-15-299 may file a petition for judicial review.

- The bill amends Section 23-15-359 to provide that a petition required under the section or any other petition for a special election, shall be accompanied by a statement, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, containing the name and physical address of the candidate, the email address of the candidate, if any, and the office he or she seeks. Each statement shall also require the candidate to certify that he or she meets all the qualifications to hold the office he or she seeks.

Changes to this section also provide that if a candidate has voted in any election outside of the jurisdiction in which he or she seeks to represent during the period in which the candidate is required to have resided within the jurisdiction, the name of such candidate shall not appear on the ballot unless redistricting has changed a candidate's jurisdiction and would otherwise make him or her ineligible to

run as a candidate in the jurisdiction where he or she currently resides.

This section also provides that a candidate aggrieved by the decision of the appropriate election commission, which must make its decision within five days of the hearing, may file a petition for judicial review to the circuit court of the county in which the election commission whose decision is being reviewed sits. The process for that judicial review is provided.

- Lastly, the bill amends Section 23-15-1093 to change the deadline to qualify to run for president from January 1 through January 15 to November 15 through December 15.

HB 1419. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Sections 23-15-557, 23-15-281, 23-15-285, 23-15-35, 23-15-115, 19-3-1, 21-9-59 and 23-15-283 to provide that the location of a polling place shall not be altered within 60 days of any primary, general, runoff or special election unless exigent circumstances exist. If the board of supervisors or governing authorities find that exigent circumstances exist where a polling place needs to be altered within 60 days of an election, then their reasons for making that decision shall be spread upon the minutes at their next scheduled meeting. When the location of a polling place is altered within 60 days of an election, public notice of the change shall be posted at city hall, the courthouse, the registrar's office, the previous polling place location if it is a public building, and for three consecutive weeks, or each week before the election if the alteration happens within three weeks of the election in a newspaper that is circulated in the area.

SB 2657. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 23-15-153 to allow the board of supervisors, in their discretion, to pay election commissioners an additional \$35 for their work on election day.

SB 2659. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/13/25.

This bill amends Sections 37-7-211, 37-5-9, 37-7-225, 37-7-711, 23-15-785, 23-15-839, 23-15-851, 23-15-853 and 23-15-855 to amend the qualification deadlines for special elections and school board elections. The bill increases the time before a special or school board election that an individual must file his or her signed petition by 15 days. This means candidates running in a special or school board election must file their petition between 105 and 75 days before an election. If the 75th day before a special or school board election falls on a weekend or legal holiday, the petition and affidavit required shall be filed by 5:00 p.m. on the business day immediately following the weekend or legal holiday.

APPROPRIATIONS

HB 918. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/13/25.

This bill transfers administration of the Mississippi Community Heritage Preservation Grant Fund from the Department of Finance and Administration to the Department of Archives and History.

HB 1074. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill adds two members to the Electronic Government Oversight Committee that oversees the implementation of EGovernment and related technology initiatives: the Executive Director of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and the Executive Director of the Department of Archives and History, or their designees. The addition of these new members expands the committee from seven members to nine members.

HB 1126. Effective on passage. Vetoed 4/24/25.

This bill provides that the maximum match requirement for assistance provided to municipalities and counties from the Gulf Coast Restoration Fund is the lesser of 20% of the amount of the assistance or the value of one mill on all taxable properties in the county or municipality assessed after exemptions or fee in lieu agreements.

HB 1127. Effective on passage. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill requires the agencies that administer grant funds under programs that were funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to report to the Department of Finance and Administration by October 1, 2025, the amount of funds that have been expended, the amounts remaining to be expended and/or remaining to be requested for reimbursement by each subgrantee.

- Each of those agencies is required to notify all subgrantees of this reporting requirement within 30 days of the effective date of this act and to provide a second notice on September 1, 2025.

- The Department of Finance and Administration is directed to submit the combined reporting of all funds to the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, House and Senate Appropriations Chairmen, and Legislative Budget Office on November 3, 2025.

In addition, the bill requires each agency to which funds were appropriated or reappropriated by the Legislature from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund or the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Lost Revenue Fund in any fiscal year to report the amount and source of those funds that have not been expended by November 1, 2025.

- This report is required to be filed by December 1, 2025, with the Department of Finance and Administration, the Secretary of the Senate, and the Clerk of the House, who will distribute the report to the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate and House Appropriations Chairs.

The bill also revises a chapter law from the 2024 session to require the State Treasurer to transfer any Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds determined to be available after October 5, 2024, to the ARPAMDOT Maintenance Project Fund.

Finally, the bill provides that if the programs that were funded with ARPA funds have a reporting requirement under this act and a subgrantee has not provided two consecutive reports to the appropriate agency, the Department of Finance and Administration is authorized to transfer available funds to the ARPAMDOT Maintenance Project Fund.

HB 1129. Effective on passage. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill authorizes the Department of Finance and Administration to receive repayments on approved loans from the Educational Facilities Revolving Loan Fund Program that was repealed on July 1, 2024.

- The State Department of Education is required to provide the Department of Finance and Administration with all Educational Facilities Revolving Loan Fund program terms of repayment and balances owed from school districts.

- The Department of Finance and Administration will deposit those repayments into the Education Enhancement Fund.

- If a school district is in arrears on loan repayments, the Department of Education is required to remit the amount owed to the Department of Finance and Administration and to withhold that amount from future payments of total funding formula funds to the school district.

- The State Treasurer, in conjunction with the state Fiscal Officer, is directed to transfer to the Education Enhancement Fund all remaining funds in the Educational Facilities Revolving Loan Fund.

HB 1131. Effective on passage. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill revises the purposes of certain projects funded with monies disbursed from the 2022 IHL Capital Improvements Fund and the 2022 State Agencies Capital Improvements Fund, and clarifies and corrects names and purposes of certain projects funded with monies disbursed from the 2024 Local Improvements Projects Fund.

SB 2730. Effective on passage. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill directs the State Board of Health, in allocating funds appropriated from the Mississippi Burn Care Fund to hospitals that provide services to Mississippi burn victims, to

equitably divide the appropriated funds among all certified health centers.

SB 2840. Effective on passage, except that Sections 19 and 20 are effective 7/1/25. Vetoed 4/24/25.

This bill amends several provisions of law to provide technical fixes to provisions related to the budget, create a number of new funds in the State Treasury, and direct the transfer of certain funds.

- Section 1 of the bill provides that the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning will disburse the monies from the Mississippi State University Veterinary School Fund instead of the Department of Finance and Administration.

- Section 2 revises the purpose of certain funds within the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriation to the State Department of Education so that certain funds may be used to continue the current school safety platforms.

- Section 3 corrects the fund number for the 2022 Emergency Road and Bridge Fund.

- Section 4 amends Section 2999 to provide that purchases of certain obsolete personal property from the Legislature will not be a violation of certain ethics laws.

- Sections 5 through 7 direct the State Treasurer to make the following transfers:

- \$13,000,000 from the Capital Expense Fund to the Secretary of State Land Improvement Fund;

- \$4,030,416 for the Office of Mississippi Physician Workforce to the State Department of Health; and

- \$2,250,000 from the Capital Expense Fund to the Mississippi Semiquincentennial Celebration Fund.

- Section 8 creates the Mississippi Veteran's Home Improvement Fund within the State Treasury to defray costs associated with the design, construction, and equipping of a new veteran's home located in Rankin County, and Section 9 transfers \$2,500,000 from the MSVA Board CEF to the newly created fund.

- Section 10 creates the United States Fire Insurance Company Settlement Fund within the State Treasury to defray costs in compliance with a settlement that the Department of Finance and Administration received, and Section 11 transfers \$310,362 from the Attorney General Contingent Fund to the newly created fund.

- Section 12 transfers \$2,047,425.77 from the Capital Expense Funds DFA to the 2022 IHL Capital Improvements Fund to be disbursed by the Department of Finance and Administration to the University of Southern Mississippi to pay the costs for the repair or renovation of systems or buildings on the Hattiesburg campus.

- Sections 13 through 15 direct the State Treasurer to make the following transfers:

\$2,500,000 from the March 2023 Storm Housing Mission Fund to the Hazard Mitigation Administration and Management Fund;

The remaining balance of the March 2023 Storm Housing Mission Fund, after completion of the transfer above, to the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund; and

\$5,500,000 from the Capital Expense Fund to the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund.

- With the remaining balance transferred from the March 2023 Storm Housing Mission Fund, Section 16 repeals the March 2023 Storm Housing Mission Fund.

- Section 17 creates the DBCF Civil Money Penalty Fund within the State Treasury, and Section 18 transfers \$1,760,285.83 from the Consumer Finance Fund to the newly created fund.

- Sections 19 and 20 direct the State Treasurer to transfer certain sums of the monies of the former Commercial Mobile Radio Service Board from the appropriate financial institutions to the NG911 CMRS Grant Fund and the State NG911 Fund established in Senate Bill No. 2835, which is the Mississippi Emergency Communications Authority Act.

BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

HB 1325. Effective on passage. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 27-105-305 to revise the interval of time for counties to publish notice of the acceptance of bids from financial institutions to serve as the county depository whenever the board of supervisors designates a depository during the board members' last year of their four-year term of office. In such cases, the interval of time for giving notice may be no longer than 24 months. The bill also deletes the prohibition against a board of supervisors designating a county depository during the last year of a four-year term.

HB 1330. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill expands the borrowing authority of state banks and trust companies by deleting the limitation that investments may be made only in small business investment companies incorporated in Mississippi. Section 81-5-25 is amended to authorize any investments, not just shares of stock, in both instate and out-of-state small business investment companies which are recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The bill also amends Section 81-5-45 to require the board of directors of a bank to meet at least quarterly, unless otherwise directed by the Department of Banking and Consumer Finance based on an examination finding or applicable regulatory finding. The requirement for periodic meetings by executive and auditing committees selected by a majority of the board of directors to meet in months when the board does not meet is deleted; however, the audit committee is required to meet at least quarterly, notwithstanding the board also meeting at least quarterly.

HB 1428. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill is the Money Transmission Modernization Act, an act developed by the Conference of State Banking Supervisors to establish a single set of nationwide standards in order to: coordinate licensing and regulation; protect the public from financial crime; standardize activities subject to licensing; and modernize requirements to ensure customer funds are protected. The bill replaces the current law governing the business of money transmissions, the Mississippi Money Transmitters Act (Sections 75-15-1 through 75-15-35).

The bill defines numerous terms used throughout the act, including "money transmission," which is: selling or issuing payment instruments to an instate person; selling or issuing stored value to an instate person; and receiving money or monetary value for transmission from an instate person. Section 4 of the bill specifically exempts certain persons from the requirements of the act; persons claiming an exemption may be required by the Commissioner of Banking and Consumer Finance to provide information documenting the person's qualifications for the claimed exemption.

The bill grants broad authority to the commissioner in the administration and enforcement of the act. The commissioner may promulgate rules and regulations for the act's implementation and may impose and collect fees associated with applications, examinations, investigations and other actions.

The bill requires all information received by the commissioner relating to applicants and investigations to be kept confidential; however, certain information described in Section 7 may be made available to the public and on the banking department's website.

The commissioner is authorized to conduct an annual examination or investigation of licensees and is encouraged to

participate in multistate supervisory processes established between states and coordinated through national organizations.

Section 11 of the bill requires persons engaged in the business of money transmission to procure a license. The commissioner is encouraged to take certain actions to promote consistent licensing with other states. Detailed application requirements are prescribed for corporations and individuals seeking a license. A license must be renewed annually, accompanied by a renewal fee equal to \$800 plus an additional \$100 for each additional location in Mississippi through which the licensee plans to conduct money transmission. The commissioner may suspend or revoke a license due to a licensee's failure to continue to meet the qualifications applicable to applicants seeking a new license.

The bill creates certain requirements for persons seeking to acquire control of a licensee, including obtaining written approval from the commissioner before acquiring control. The commissioner must determine whether an application to acquire control of a licensee will be approved or denied.

Licensees adding or replacing key individuals must report such changes to the commissioner, who may issue a notice of disapproval.

Each licensee must submit a report of condition within 45 days after the end of a quarter. Required components of the report are prescribed. Within 90 days after the end of each fiscal year, a licensee must file an audited financial statement. If certain events prescribed in the bill occur, a licensee must file a report of such with the commissioner within one business day after the licensee knows of the occurrence. Licensees also must comply with the reporting requirements set forth in the Bank Secrecy Act.

The bill requires a licensee to maintain certain records for a specified period. Persons may not engage in the business of money transmission on behalf of a person not licensed under the act. Licensees must forward money received for transmission in a timely manner in accordance with the agreement between the licensee and sender, and a licensee must refund a sender money received for transmission unless certain specified conditions exist. Senders must be provided a receipt for money received for transmission, which can be a paper receipt or electronic record. The bill prescribes net worth requirements that vary according to a licensee's total assets, and licensees must maintain a surety bond and permissible investments, as described in the bill.

A license may be suspended or revoked by the commissioner if certain specified actions occur. Except in those instances when a license may be revoked automatically, a licensee must be provided ten days' notice of the revocation and may demand a hearing. The commissioner may issue an order to cease and desist whenever it is believed that a violation of the act is likely to cause immediate and irreparable harm. In addition, the commissioner may sue a licensee in the Chancery Court of the First Judicial District of Hinds County to enjoin a person from engaging in a violation. The commissioner also may enter into a consent order to resolve a matter. The bill creates a felony for intentionally making false statements in required records and for engaging in activities without a license and establishes criminal penalties for such violations. In addition, the commissioner may assess a civil penalty for violations of the act. Persons performing acts without a required license may be served with an order to cease and desist. The commissioner is authorized to examine persons and all relevant books and records to determine if a violation has occurred.

Lastly, the bill provides for a transition period for persons currently licensed to engage in the business of money transmission. To the extent HB 1428 conflicts with current law or establishes new requirements, a current licensee will not be subject to the new provisions until the later of the date on which the licensee renews its current license or July 1, 2026.

SB 2495. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 75-67-639 to extend the repealer on the Mississippi Credit Availability Act until July 1, 2030. The bill also amends Section 75-67-619 to increase the maximum outstanding principal balance for a credit availability account from \$2,500 to \$3,250; however, before July 1, 2026, and each year thereafter, the Department of Banking and Consumer Finance shall issue a memo authorizing a new maximum outstanding principal balance calculated by applying any increase or decrease in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the previous calendar year to the previous maximum outstanding principal balance, rounded up to the nearest \$10 increment.

SB 2508. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill revises the Mississippi S.A.F.E. Mortgage Act to authorize mortgage loan originators to perform origination activities at a remote location under the supervision of, and in compliance with, the licensed mortgage broker or mortgage lender's policies and procedures. The licensee must take appropriate safeguards specified in the bill to ensure the security and confidentiality of customer information. If a licensee determines that an unauthorized access to or disruption or misuse of consumer information has occurred, the licensee must notify the Commissioner of Banking and Consumer Finance as

promptly as possible and in no event, later than three business days. The licensee must regularly audit or otherwise monitor the effectiveness of its information security requirements. The bill also updates the name of the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry to the Nationwide Multistate Licensing System and Registry.

The bill amends Section 81-18-3 to define the terms "employee," "exclusive agent," "independent contractor" and "remote location" as used in the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Act. Section 81-18-9 is amended to provide that in order to be eligible for a license, as an alternative to the requirement that an individual work for a Mississippi company, the commissioner may find that the individual is exclusively engaged to perform mortgage loan origination activities from the location licensed with the company or a remote location. Section 81-18-25 is amended to provide that the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Act may not be interpreted to prohibit a mortgage loan originator from performing origination activities at a remote location, the person's residence, or another remote location if the licensee complies with the requirements prescribed in the bill for loan origination activities to be performed remotely.

The bill increases various fees and bond amounts, with those increases being as follows:

- Mortgage loan originator license - \$200 to \$300 (Section 81-18-9).
- Mortgage brokers surety bond - \$25,000 to \$50,000 (Section 81-18-11).
- Mortgage lenders surety bond - \$150,000 to \$250,000 (Section 81-18-11).
- Mortgage broker or lender initial license application fee - \$1,500 to \$2,000 (Section 81-18-15).

- Mortgage broker or lender annual renewal license application fee - \$1,000 to \$1,500 (Section 81-18-15).
- Application fee for a licensee's branch office - \$300 to \$500 (Section 81-18-17).
- Annual renewal fee for a licensee's branch office - \$100 to \$350 (Section 81-18-17).
- Range of examination of book fees for licensees in the state - \$300-600 to \$400-800, subject to a new maximum of \$3,200 (Section 81-18-21).
- Maximum daily fee for examination of book fees for out-of-state licensees - \$800 to \$1,000 (Section 81-18-21).

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

HB 999. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 75493 to revise the definition of the term "modular home" for purposes of The Uniform Standards Code for FactoryBuilt Homes Law.

HB 1077. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill prohibits retailers, manufacturers, and wholesalers from selling or distributing a kratom product to an individual under 21 years of age. It also provides that kratom products offered for sale must be placed behind a retailer's counter and that every person engaged in the business of selling kratom products at retail must notify each individual employed by that person as a retail sales clerk that state law:

- Prohibits the sale or distribution of kratom products, including samples, to any person under 21 years of age and the purchase or receipt of kratom products by any person under 21 years of age; and
- Requires that proof of age be demanded from a prospective purchaser or recipient if the individual is not known to the seller, barterer, deliverer or giver of the kratom product to be the age of 21 years or older.

The bill prohibits retailers, wholesalers, jobbers, distributors and manufacturers from preparing, distributing, or selling any of the following:

- A product represented as being a kratom product that does not meet the definition for a kratom product under the bill;
- A kratom product containing a level of 7hydroxymitragynine in the alkaloid fraction that is greater than 1% of the alkaloid composition and not to exceed onehalf milligram per container of the product;

- A kratom product containing any controlled substance listed in the Uniform Controlled Substances Act, unless the product is compounded by a licensed pharmacist with the controlled substance dispensed in accordance with a valid prescription; or

- Any kratom product that does not have a label that clearly sets forth the identity, address and telephone number of the manufacturer, and a full list of the ingredients in the kratom product.

Retailers, wholesalers, jobbers, distributors and manufacturers must register with the Department of Revenue prior to selling, distributing or exposing for sale a kratom product.

The bill provides that any person under 21 years of age who falsely states he or she is 21 years of age or older, or presents any document that indicates he or she is 21 years of age or older, for the purpose of purchasing or otherwise obtaining kratom products will be guilty of a misdemeanor, and punished by a fine of not less than \$100, nor more than \$200, and a sentence to not more than 30 days community service. It also provides that any person under the age of 21 who purchases, receives, or has in his or her possession any kratom product in any public place will be guilty of a misdemeanor and punished by a fine of not less than \$200 nor more than \$500.

A retailer or agent of a retailer, wholesaler, jobber, distributor and manufacturer that sells, stores, or maintains kratom products, who violates or permits the violation of the provisions of the bill will be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000 per violation.

Any municipality or county that enacted a ban and/or restriction on kratom products before July 1, 2025, will retain the authority to continue enforcing any such ban and/or

restriction. The bill does not preempt, override, or prohibit any future enactment of any ban and/or restriction by municipalities and counties seeking to regulate, restrict, or ban kratom products within their jurisdictions.

The bill defines "kratom product" to mean a food or dietary supplement that consists of or contains kratom leaf or kratom leaf extract that does not contain any synthesized kratom alkaloids, other kratom constituents, or synthesized metabolites of any kratom constituent in which the level of 7hydroxymitragynine, on a percent weight basis, is not greater than 1% of the amount of total kratom alkaloids, as confirmed with a highperformance liquid chromatography testing method and not to exceed onehalf milligram per container. For the purposes of this definition, "synthesized" refers to substances produced using directed synthetic or biosynthetic chemistry, as opposed to traditional food preparation techniques such as heating or extracting.

HB 1316. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill reenacts Sections 731141 through 731173, which create the State Board of Funeral Service and prescribe its powers and duties. It also amends Section 731133 to extend the repeal date on those sections until July 1, 2028.

SB 2078. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill brings forward Sections 731141 through 731173, which create the State Board of Funeral Service and prescribe its powers and duties. It also amends Section 731133 to extend the repeal date on those sections until July 1, 2029.

SB 2086. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 73-35-17 to delete the repealer on certain application and licensure fees for real estate brokers.

SB 2423. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 73-35-10 to require the Mississippi Real Estate Commission to provide prior written notification to any licensee whose license, once issued, is subject to be amended, suspended, revoked or not renewed.

The bill also amends Section 73-35-23 to change the standard of proof required at commission administrative hearings from a preponderance of evidence to clear and convincing. It also requires any complaint initiated by or filed with the commission to be resolved by dismissal or issuance of a formal complaint within 120 days of the date written notice is provided to licensee(s) and their responsible broker(s) of commencement of an investigation pertaining to any complaint. Finally, it requires any complaint initiated by or filed with the commission to be resolved by final dismissal, final ruling on any formal complaint or by entry of agreed dispositional order within one year of the date written notice is provided to licensee(s) and their responsible broker(s) of commencement of an investigation pertaining to any complaint. The requirement for final disposition within one year will not operate to deprive a licensee of the right to use the administrative hearing option provided for by law and any administrative hearing may be scheduled to occur not more than 60 days outside the one-year period in cases where administrative hearing officers are not reasonably available to conduct hearings within the one-year period.

SB 2451. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 91-17-401 of the Mississippi Principal and Income Act of 2013. Section 91-17-401 is the provision of law that provides for the character of receipts from entities during the administration of trusts. The bill amends the provision of Section 91-17-401 that governs money received in partial liquidation.

Under the bill one method that money is received in partial liquidation is if the total amount of money and property received in a distribution or series of related distributions by all of the owners, collectively, is greater than 20% of the entity's total assets, as shown by the entity's year-end financial statements immediately preceding the initial receipt. For purposes of this method, "total assets" means the amount of cash and the aggregate adjusted bases of other property held by the entity. The bill further provides that if money is received in partial liquidation in the method described above, a portion of the receipt allocated to principal will be reallocated to income by the trustee to reimburse the trustee or beneficiary for the federal and state income taxes attributable to the receipt.

WARNING: Summary document not found for Committee of the Whole

CONSERVATION AND WATER RESOURCES

SB 2250. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends various code sections in the Asbestos Abatement Accreditation and Certification Act to remove conflicts between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state regulatory definitions, licensure requirements and acceptable training for certification. Sections 37-138-5 is amended to delete the definitions of numerous terms. Sections 37-138-11 and 37-138-13 are amended to increase the pool of qualified contractors eligible for an asbestos management planner certificate or project designer certificate by deleting the requirement that registered professional engineers and architects applying for either certificate be licensed by the State of Mississippi and by adding a new category of professionals, certified industrial hygienists, who are eligible to apply for a certificate.

In addition, the bill authorizes asbestos programs authorized by the EPA to satisfy the training requirements for applicants for an asbestos abatement management planner certificate (Section 37-138-11), project designers certificate (Section 37-138-13), air monitor certificate (Section 37-138-14), contractor certificate (Section 37-138-15), supervisor certificate (Section 37-138-17), inspector certificate (Section 37-138-19), and worker certificate (Section 37-138-21).

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CORRECTIONS

HB 188. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill creates the "Dignity and Safety for Incarcerated Women Act" to provide for the safety and privacy needs of incarcerated individuals in correctional facilities that are operated, regulated or authorized by the Mississippi Department of Corrections to house state inmates. The act provides the following for such correctional facilities:

- Every multioccupancy restroom, which is a space that is designated for use by multiple persons simultaneously that includes one or more toilets or urinals, as well as every changing room within a correctional facility, which is a room or area where a person may be in a state of undress in the presence of others, including a locker room or shower room, shall be designated for exclusive use of:

Males; or

Females.

- A restroom or changing room within a correctional facility that is designated for one sex shall be used only by members of that sex, and no incarcerated individual shall enter a restroom or changing room that is designated for one sex unless he or she is a member of that sex.

- Each multioccupancy sleeping quarter within a correctional facility shall be designated for exclusive use of:

Males; or

Females.

- A sleeping quarter within a correctional facility that is designated for one sex shall be used only by members of that sex, and no incarcerated individual shall be housed in a sleeping quarter that is designated for one sex unless he or she is a member of that sex.

Further, the bill provides that this act shall not apply to an incarcerated individual who enters a restroom, changing room, or sleeping quarter designated for the opposite sex when entering for the following purposes:

- For custodial or maintenance purposes;
- To render medical assistance;
- During a natural disaster, emergency, or when necessary to prevent a serious threat to good order or safety; or
- On a temporary basis (which shall not include overnight housing) at the direction of the correctional facility.

Finally, the bill provides that civil actions may be brought against the correctional facility for violations of the act. Specifically, an individual has a private cause of action for declaratory and injunctive relief against the correctional facility when the following occurs:

- When an incarcerated individual who is required by the correctional facility to share sleeping quarters with a person of the opposite sex in violation of this act; or
- When an individual who, while accessing a restroom or changing room designated for use by their sex, encounters a person of the opposite sex in that restroom or changing room in violation of this act and the following occurs:

The correctional facility gave that person permission to use a restroom or changing room of the opposite sex; or

The correctional facility failed to take reasonable steps to prohibit that person from using the restroom or changing room of the opposite sex.

SB 2049. Effective 6/30/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill extends the automatic repealer on the Prison Overcrowding Emergency Powers Act from July 1, 2025, to July 1,

2029. This act authorizes the Commissioner of Corrections to notify the Governor and the State Parole Board whenever the prison system population is in excess of 95% of operating capacity in order to take appropriate action to either reduce prison system population or expand operating capacity.

SB 2050. Effective 6/30/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill extends the repealer on the Intensive Supervision Program under the Department of Corrections (DOC) from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2029. This program may be used by DOC as an alternative to incarceration for offenders who are not convicted of a crime of violence with the exception of a sex crime. Participants in the intensive supervision program shall participate with the approved electronic monitoring device designated by the department.

SB 2051. Effective 6/30/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill extends the date of the repealer from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2029, on the authority of the Department of Corrections to contract with the Bolivar County Regional Facility for a drug and alcohol treatment program.

SB 2239. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill authorizes the Department of Corrections to contract with Forrest County and Wayne County to provide for the housing, care and control of offenders who are in the custody of the state.

SB 2242. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill authorizes the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) to establish an inmate work program under which eligible inmates perform services for the Mississippi

Department of Transportation (MDOT). Additionally, the bill provides the following concerning the inmate work program:

- MDOT shall adopt rules necessary to implement the inmate work program, including those necessary to define eligibility for participation in the program.
- Inmate compensation for the program shall be no less than the prevailing wage for the position and shall under no circumstances pay less than the federal minimum wage.
- Any inmate who participates in the program shall maintain an account through a local financial institution and shall provide a copy of a check stub to the commissioner or his designee.
- Any inmate who is a work participant for the program shall be required to pay his or her wages for the following purposes:

To pay 25% toward any support of dependents or to the Mississippi Department of Human Services on behalf of dependents as may be ordered by a judge of competent jurisdiction as well as fines, restitution, or costs as ordered by the court to include any fines and fees associated with obtaining a valid driver's license upon release. Once all the aforementioned balances have been cleared, or if no liability exists, these funds shall be added to the participant's savings diversion program.

To save 50% of the inmate's wages in the account that is required to be maintained through a local financial institution and any such monies shall be made available to the inmate upon parole or release.

To pay up to 15% of the inmate's wages to the facility for administrative expenses to include transportation costs.

The inmate shall have access to the remaining 10% of the monies in his or her account to purchase incidental expenses.

Any monies remaining after all mandatory deductions are paid, shall be deposited in the inmate's account and any such monies remaining, upon the release of the inmate, shall be released to the inmate upon his or her release.

- The work program, in the discretion of MDOC, may be established in each Mississippi Department of Transportation District.

- MDOC may assign the management and oversight of the work release program, established by this act, to the prison industries corporation (MAGCOR) if it determines that this will be conducive to providing effective job training for state inmates.

SB 2243. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill provides that the negotiated private prison contract rate for correctional services shall be based upon inmate classification of the inmate and not a flat rate.

SB 2357. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill establishes a workrelease program at Delta Correctional Facility. The Prison Industries Corporation (MAGCOR) shall serve as the program administrator and shall focus on meaningful, skilloriented, privatesector work opportunities in the surrounding communities. There shall be a limit of 100 people in the program at a time.

Additionally, the bill provides the following concerning the work-release program:

- Any person who has been sentenced to confinement in jail or who has been sentenced for a felony conviction but is

confined in a jail may request assignment to the work-release program.

- Admission to the program shall be in the discretion of the sheriff and the sheriff may further authorize the offender to participate in educational or other rehabilitative programs designed to supplement his work-release employment or to prepare the person for successful reentry.

- No offender shall be eligible for the work-release program if he or she has more than one year remaining on his or her sentence.

- No person sentenced for any sex crime or multiple violent felonies in the past 10 years shall be eligible for the work-release program.

- The Commissioner of the Department of Corrections shall direct the facility's superintendent to identify eligible participants within 30 days of the effective date of this act.

- The corporation shall collect and maintain data which shall be shared annually with the Legislature in sortable electronic format regarding the number of participants and their classification.

- Any person who has been sentenced to confinement in jail or who has been sentenced for a felony conviction but is confined in a jail may request assignment to the work-release program but admission to the program shall be in the discretion of the superintendent of the facility. The superintendent may further authorize the offender to participate in educational or other rehabilitative programs designed to supplement his workrelease employment or to prepare the person for successful reentry.

- The superintendent shall adopt and publish rules and regulations prior to accepting inmates and these rules and

regulations shall, at a minimum, include all requirements for workrelease programs established pursuant to Sections 475451 through 475471.

- Participating employers shall pay no less than the prevailing wage for the position and shall under no circumstance pay less than the federal minimum wage.

- Any inmate assigned to such a program by the superintendent who, without proper authority or just cause, leaves the area to which he or she has been assigned to work or attend educational or other rehabilitative programs, or leaves the vehicle or route of travel involved in his or her going to or returning from such place, will be guilty of escape, and shall be ineligible for further participation in a workrelease program during his or her current term of confinement.

- The inmate shall maintain an account through a local financial institution and shall provide a copy of a check stub to the sheriff.

- The inmate shall be required to pay his or her wages earned as a participant under the programs for the following purposes:

To pay 25% toward any support of dependents or to the Mississippi Department of Human Services on behalf of dependents as may be ordered by a judge of competent jurisdiction as well as fines, restitution, or costs as ordered by the court to include any fines and fees associated with obtaining a valid driver's license upon release. Once all the aforementioned balances have been cleared, or if no liability exists, these funds shall be added to the participant's savings diversion program.

To save 50% of the offender's wages in the account required and monies shall be made available to the inmate upon parole or release.

To pay up to 15% of the inmate's wages to the facility for administrative expenses to include transportation costs.

The inmate shall have access to the remaining 10% of the monies in his or her account to purchase incidental expenses.

Any monies remaining after all mandatory deductions are paid, shall be deposited in the inmate's required account and any monies remaining, upon the release of the inmate, shall be released to the inmate upon his or her release.

SB 2359. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill provides that the term "technical violation" related to parole supervision shall not include a plea or sentence in an intervention court.

SB 2360. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill provides that when an inmate or detainee escapes, then immediate notification shall be given to the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation and local law enforcement as soon as the escape is known. If the escape occurs at a local jail or regional prison, then the sheriff shall make the required immediate notification. If the escape occurs at a state prison facility, then the Mississippi Department of Corrections shall make the required immediate notification.

SB 2704. See summary under Public Health and Human Services.

COUNTY AFFAIRS

HB 1325. See summary under Banking and Financial Services.

SB 2002. Effective on passage. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill amends Section 19-5-22, which pertains to delinquent tax hearings held by the county board of supervisors. The bill removes a board of supervisors' authority to designate a disinterested person to serve as a hearing officer and instead allows the board to designate a hearing officer either from among its own membership, from the staff of the county, or some other qualified and impartial person. However, the bill prohibits the board from appointing the attorney for the board of supervisors or a member of the tax collector's office as the hearing officer. Additionally, the bill stipulates that no hearing officer may have an interest in the outcome of a hearing or be related to a board member or the person who owes delinquent fees.

SB 2562. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill amends Section 25-7-13 by increasing the circuit clerks fee from \$75 to \$85 for each of the days a circuit clerk and any necessary deputies attend the circuit court term.

DRUG POLICY

HB 17. Effective on passage. Law without Governor's signature 3/21/25.

This bill, known as the "Protecting Patient Access to Physician-Administered Drugs Act," is a bill to ensure patient access to physician-administered drugs and related services under a health insurance contract by prohibiting health insurance issuers from: refusing to authorize or pay a participating provider for physician-administered drugs and related services to covered persons; or requiring a covered person to pay a penalty or additional fee to obtain the physician-administered drug provided by a participating provider. Provider agreements must be construed as including a provision requiring that, when all criteria for medical necessity are met, the drug and its administration will be payable regardless of whether the provider obtains the drugs from a pharmacy that is not in the health insurance issuer's network. Provisions in a contract which are contrary to HB 17 must be considered null and void and unenforceable, and Section 75-24-5 is amended to include violations of the act in the list of unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive trade practices which are prohibited under the state consumer protection laws.

HB 1463. Effective on passage. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 73-21-124 to require a manufacturer of pseudoephedrine or ephedrine that is lawfully sold in the state to pay to the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators a monthly fee, in an amount set by the association, to support the administration of the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx). (The NPLEx is a near real-time

logging and compliance system that tracks sales of over-the-counter cold and allergy medications containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine). Upon request of the State Board of Pharmacy, a manufacturer required to pay the fee must provide written documentation demonstrating that it has done so.

SB 2356. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 41-29-113 by adding the following 16 substances to Schedule I of controlled substances because they have no legitimate medical use and have a high potency with great potential to cause harm:

Opiates:

- Alpha'-methyl butyryl fentanyl (2-methyl-N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)-N-phenylbutanamide).
- 2',5'-dimethoxyfentanyl (N-1-2,5-dimethoxyphenethyl)piperidin-4-yl)-N-phenylpropionamide).
- Etodesnitazene (2-2-4-ethoxybenzyl)-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl)-N,N-diethylethan-1-amine, also known as etazene.
- 3-furanyl fentanyl (N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)-N-phenylfuran-3-carboxamide).
- Isovaleryl fentanyl (3-methyl-N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)-N-phenylbutanamide).
- Meta-fluorofentanyl (N-3-fluorophenyl)-N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)propionamide).
- Meta-fluoroisobutyryl fentanyl (N-(3-fluorophenyl)-N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)isobutyramide).
- 2-methyl AP-237 (1-2-methyl-4-3-phenylprop-2-en-1-yl)piperazin-1-yl)butan-1-one.
- Para-methoxyfuranyl fentanyl (N-(4-methoxyphenyl)-N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)furan-2-carboxamide).

- N-pyrrolidino etonitazene 2-4-ethoxybenzyl)-5-nitro-1-2-pyrrolidin-1-yl)ethyl)-1H-benzimidazole, also known as etonitazepyne.

- Ortho-fluorofuranyl fentanyl (N-2-fluorophenyl)-N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)furan-2-carboxamide).

- Para-methylcyclopropyl fentanyl (N-4-methylphenyl)-N-1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)cyclopropanecarboxamide).

- Protonitazene N,N-diethyl-2-5-nitro-2-4-propoxybenzyl)-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl)ethan-1-amine.

Hallucinogenic substances:

- ADB-BUTINACA N-1-amino-3,3-dimethyl-1-oxobutan-2-yl)-1-butyl-1H-indazole-3-carboxamide.

Stimulants:

- α -PiHP 4-methyl-1-phenyl-2-pyrrolidin-1-yl)pentan-1-one, also known as alpha-PiHP.

- 3-MMC 2-methylamino)-1-3-methylphenyl)propan-1-one, also known as 3-methylmethcathinone.

EDUCATION

HB 246. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill amends Sections 29-3-29 and 57-75-37 as it relates to the management of mineral rights on sixteenth section lands that have been developed for industrial purposes.

Section 29-3-29 is amended to provide an exception to the standard reservation of mineral rights in sixteenth section lands sold for industrial purposes. Specifically, it allows that, except as permitted by Section 57-75-37(4)(f) and (7)(f), all minerals in, on, and under any lands conveyed under these subsections.

Section 57-75-37 is amended to authorize the board of education controlling applicable sixteenth section lands, the local superintendent of education and the Mississippi Development Authority, acting in concert, to sell certain sixteenth section mineral interests to enterprises owning or operating specific projects on lands developed for industrial purposes. Alternatively, it permits the perpetual waiver of the school district's right to use the surface of such lands for mineral exploration or production.

HB 809. Effective on passage. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 37-15-29 to expand and clarify school enrollment options for children of certain military and civilian personnel. The amendments aim to provide greater flexibility in school choice for these families, addressing eligibility by allowing children of parents or legal guardians on active duty or Active Guard and Reserve duty (excluding inactive duty training) with the U.S. Armed Forces to enroll in any school district and campus of their choosing, irrespective of residence. The bill further clarifies the definition of the

term "active duty" and "Active Guard and Reserve duty" refer to full-time duty under specified U.S. Code provisions, excluding inactive duty training and specifies the required documentation, including a Department of Defense photo ID and a "Statement of Service" from a ranking official, which must be presented to the appropriate school district official before enrolling the child in the selected school of choice.

HB 962. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill reenacts Sections 37-69-1 through 37-69-7, which are provisions of the "Energy Academy Act" that authorizes the Vicksburg-Warren and Claiborne County School Districts to partner with a nuclear facility, Warren County and the State of Mississippi for the establishment of an Energy High School Academy. The bill creates new Section 37-69-9 to extend the date of the repealer on the "Energy Academy Act," while also amending Section 5, Chapter 482, Laws of 2019, as amended by Section 5, Chapter 382, Laws of 2022, to remove the repealer language on the "Energy Academy Act" from the effective date section of the enabling legislation.

HB 1066. Effective on passage. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 37-135-31, known as the "Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children," to correct references to specific chapters in the United States Code that pertain to active duty orders for National Guard and Reserve members. The original text referenced "10 USC, Sections 1209 and 1211". The amendment changes this to "10 USC, Chapters 1209 and 1211," accurately pointing to the relevant chapters in the United States Code.

SB 2177. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 37-31-13 to expand the availability of payments from state appropriations to school districts for extended contracts for vocational agriculture education services and other related vocational education services contributing to economic development. Under current law, such payments are available only to high schools whose teachers of vocational programs are responsible for certain designated programs of instruction during the months between the academic years. The amendment makes the payments available when the designated programs of instruction take place during the days or weeks between academic years or, for school districts having adopted the extended school year calendar, between academic quarters.

SB 2181. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill amends Section 37-11-51 to exempt school district test security plans for the administration of the Statewide Student Assessment Program from the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983.

SB 2247. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/7/25.

This bill amends Section 29-3-63 to authorize the school board of the Hattiesburg Public School District to grant the holder of a valid 99-year lease, which is free of any outstanding financial obligation and has less than 30 years remaining on the original term, an extension for no more than 25 years, on terms acceptable to the school board.

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FORESTRY

SB 2019. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/13/25.

This bill amends Section 57-1-783 to revise criteria for projects that may be considered for grants under the Forestry Facility Grant Program. The new criteria will include project sites that use at least 25 acres of land under public control (50 acres under the prior law) or existing wood-use facilities. It also revises the grant funding to amounts based on funds provided by the Legislature.

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INSURANCE

HB 959. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 83-1-191 to extend the date of the repealer on the Comprehensive Hurricane Damage Mitigation Program within the Department of Insurance to July 1, 2028.

HB 1174. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 83-17-501 to define certain terms related to public adjusters, including "person" and "home state".

- Section 2 of this bill amends Section 83-17-511 to provide for additional requirements for the licensure for public adjusters by the Department of Insurance, including having not committed any act that is grounds for probation, suspension, revocation or refusal of a license, passed the examination for the adjuster license and the applicable line of authority, paid certain fees, and is financially responsible to exercise the license.

- To demonstrate financial responsibility, an applicant for an adjuster's license shall obtain a bond or irrevocable letter of credit.

The surety bond must be a minimum of \$50,000, in favor of the State of Mississippi, specifically authorizes recovery of any person in Mississippi who sustained damages as a result of the public adjuster's actions, and not be terminated unless certain notice is given.

The irrevocable letter of credit must be a minimum of \$50,000, be subject to lawful levy of execution on behalf of any person to whom the public adjuster has been found legally liable, and not be terminated unless certain notice is given.

- The section also provides for the licensing of business entities as public adjusters and nonresident public adjusters.

Before approving an application of a business entity as a public adjuster, the Commissioner of Insurance shall find that the business entity is eligible to designate Mississippi as its home state, has designated a licensed adjuster or public adjuster responsible for the business entity's compliance with the insurance laws and regulations of Mississippi, has not committed an act that is a ground for probation, suspension, revocation, or refusal of a public adjuster's license, and has paid the privilege tax pursuant to Section 27-15-97.

A nonresident person applying for a nonresident public adjuster license must show that the person is currently licensed in good standing as a public adjuster in their home state, the person has submitted the proper request for licensure and has paid the fees required by Section 25-17-97, the person has submitted the uniform individual application, and the person's designated home state issues nonresident public adjuster licenses to persons of Mississippi on the same basis.

- The bill amends Section 83-17-523 to require additional contract terms in contracts between a public adjuster and an insured.

The revocation or cancellation of a public adjuster contract must be in writing, mailed or delivered to the public adjuster at the address in the contract, and postmarked or received within the five-business-day period. Additionally, if an insured exercises the right to revoke or cancel a contract, anything of value given by the insured under the contract to the public adjuster shall be returned to the insured within 15

business days following receipt by the public adjuster of the contract revocation or cancellation.

All contracts between the public adjuster and the insured for services must be in writing and contain certain terms, including: the legible full name of the adjuster signing the contract, as specified in the department's licensing records, the adjuster's permanent home state business address and phone number, the license number issued to the adjuster by the department, a title of "Public Adjuster Contract", the insured's full name, street address, insurer name, and policy number, if known or upon notification; a description of the loss or damage and its location, a description of services to be provided to the insured, the signatures of the adjuster and the insured, the date the contract was signed, and attestation language stating that the adjuster has a letter of credit or a surety bond as required by Section 83-17-511.

- Lastly, the bill creates a new section of law that provides that all funds received or held by a public adjuster on behalf of an insured toward the settlement of a claim shall be handled in a fiduciary capacity and deposited into certain fiduciary trust accounts.

HB 1611. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill amends Section 83-5-28 to require insurance companies to issue notices for renewal, cancellation, reduction of coverage or nonrenewal of **property and casualty insurance** not less than 45 days before the effective date of the renewal, cancellation, reduction of coverage or nonrenewal. The bill also provides that if the insurer fails to meet the 45-day notice requirement, the named insured has the option of continuing the policy or contract for the remainder of the notice period plus an additional 45 days at the premium rate of

the existing policy or contract. Such option shall continue in forty-five-day increments until the insurer provides the notice required in this section. Such requirement begins on July 1, 2026.

The bill amends Sections 83-11-5 and 83-11-7 to require insurance companies to issue notices for renewal, cancellation, reduction of coverage or nonrenewal of automobile insurance not less than 45 days before the effective date of the renewal, cancellation, reduction of coverage or nonrenewal. The bill also provides that if the insurer fails to meet the 45-day notice requirement, the named insured has the option of continuing the policy or contract for the remainder of the notice period plus an additional 45 days at the premium rate of the existing policy or contract. Such option shall continue in forty-five-day increments until the insurer provides the notice required in this section. Such requirement begins on July 1, 2026.

The bill amends Section 71-3-77 to require insurance companies to issue notices for renewal, cancellation, reduction of coverage or nonrenewal of workers' compensation insurance not less than 45 days before the effective date of the renewal, cancellation, reduction of coverage or nonrenewal. The bill also provides that if the insurer fails to meet the 45-day notice requirement, the named insured has the option of continuing the policy or contract for the remainder of the notice period plus an additional 45 days at the premium rate of the existing policy or contract. Such option shall continue in forty-five-day increments until the insurer provides the notice required in this section. Such requirement begins on July 1, 2026.

SB 2401. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill creates a study committee on the matter of certification of health benefit plans and health insurance issuers that provide for the financing and delivery of health care services to enrollees.

The study committee shall be composed of the following members:

- Three members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the Senate Insurance Committee, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the Senate Public Health and Human Services Committee, and one of whom shall be a medical doctor or other physician member of the Mississippi State Medical Association;

- Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the House Insurance Committee, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee, and one of whom shall be a medical doctor or other physician member of the Mississippi Independent Physician Practice Association;

- Three members appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Department of Finance and Administration or his or her designee, one of whom shall be a president or chief executive officer of a health benefit plan certified by the Department of Insurance or his or her designee, and one of whom shall be an administrator for a hospital or ambulatory surgery center located in Mississippi;

- The Commissioner of Insurance or his or her designee; and
- The Chairman of the Mississippi State Board of Health or his or her designee.

The study committee shall study and make recommendations regarding the matter of certification of health benefit plans and health insurance issuers, including, but not limited to,

health benefit plans that provide for the financing and delivery of health care services to persons enrolled in such plans and the providing of health care services by participating providers pursuant to the Patient Protection Act of 1995, Section 8341403 et seq., or other laws and related issues, including, but not limited to, measures to address conditions under which participating provider contracts may be amended; access to fee schedules by participating providers; physician advisory committees; billing dispute processes; any willing or authorized participating providers; assignment of plan benefits; regulation of excessive surpluses of plans or their operators; charitable foundations affiliated with health insurance issuers or health benefit plans; and accurate measurement and reporting of market share of health benefit plans, health insurance issuers, and licensed insurance companies that operate health benefit plans or networks.

The study committee shall make and file a report of its findings and recommendations, including any recommended legislation, with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate not later than December 1, 2025.

SB 2412. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill amends Sections 83-6-1, 83-6-3, 83-6-5, 83-6-7, 83-6-21 and 83-6-29 to include NAIC group capital calculation and "NAIC Liquidity Stress Test Framework" requirements in the Insurance Holding Company Act.

- "NAIC" means the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.
- "Group capital calculation instructions" means the group capital calculation instructions as adopted by the NAIC and as amended by the NAIC from time to time in accordance with the procedures adopted by the NAIC.

- "NAIC Liquidity Stress Test Framework" is a separate NAIC publication which includes a history of the NAIC's development of regulatory liquidity stress testing, the scope criteria applicable for a specific data year, and the Liquidity Stress Test Framework instructions and reporting templates for a specific data year, such scope criteria, instructions and reporting template being as adopted by the NAIC and as amended by the NAIC from time to time in accordance with the procedures adopted by the NAIC.

- "Scope criteria," as detailed in the "NAIC Liquidity Stress Test Framework," are the designated exposure bases, along with minimum magnitudes thereof for the specified data year, used to establish a preliminary list of insurers considered scoped into the NAIC Liquidity Stress Test Framework for that data year.

- The ultimate controlling person of every insurer subject to registration shall concurrently file with the registration an annual group capital calculation as directed by the Commissioner of Insurance. The report shall be completed in accordance with the NAIC group capital calculation instructions, which may permit the Commissioner of Insurance to allow a controlling person that is not the ultimate controlling person to file the group capital calculation. The report shall be filed with the insurance holding company system as determined by the commissioner in accordance with the procedures within the Financial Analysis Handbook adopted by the NAIC. Certain insurance holding company systems are exempt from filing the group capital calculation.

- The ultimate controlling person of every insurer subject to registration and also scoped into the "NAIC Liquidity Stress Test Framework" shall also file the results of a specific year's

liquidity stress test. The filing shall be made to the Commissioner of Insurance of the insurance holding company system as determined by the procedures within the Financial Analysis Handbook adopted by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

- The failure to file a registration statement or any summary of the registration state or enterprise risk filing required by this act within the time specified for filing shall be a violation of this section.

- If an insurer subject to this act is deemed by the commissioner to be in a hazardous financial condition as defined by 19 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 1, Chapter 39: Define Standards and Commissioner's Authority for Companies Deemed to be in Hazardous Financial Condition Regulation or a condition that would be grounds for supervision, conservation or delinquency proceeding, then the commissioner may require the insurer to secure and maintain either a deposit, held by the commissioner, or a bond, as determined by the insurer at the insurer's discretion, for the protection of the insurer for the duration of the contract(s) or agreement(s), or the existence of the condition for which the commissioner required the deposit or the bond. In determining whether a deposit or a bond is required, the commissioner should consider whether concerns exist with respect to the affiliated person's ability to fulfill the contract(s) or agreement(s) if the insurer were to be put into liquidation.

- All records and data of the insurer held by an affiliate are and remain the property of the insurer, are subject to control of the insurer, are identifiable, and are segregated or readily capable of segregation, at no additional cost to the insurer, from all other persons' records and data.

- Premiums or other funds belonging to the insurer that are collected by or held by an affiliate are the exclusive property of the insurer and are subject to the control of the insurer. Any right of offset in the event an insurer is placed into receivership shall be subject to the Insurers Rehabilitation and Liquidation Act, Sections 83241 through 8324119.

- Any affiliate that is a party to an agreement or contract with a domestic insurer that is subject to this act shall be subject to the jurisdiction of any supervision, seizure, conservatorship or receivership proceedings against the insurer and to the authority of any supervisor, conservator, rehabilitator or liquidator for the insurer appointed pursuant to supervision and receivership acts for the purpose of interpreting, enforcing and overseeing the affiliate's obligations under the agreement or contract to perform services for the insurer.

- For purposes of the information reported and provided to the Department of Insurance pursuant to this act, the commissioner shall maintain the confidentiality of the group capital calculation and group capital ratio produced within the calculation and any group capital information received from an insurance holding company supervised by the Federal Reserve Board or any non-U.S. group-wide supervisor.

- For purposes of the information reported and provided to the Department of Insurance pursuant to this act, the commissioner shall maintain the confidentiality of the Liquidity Stress Test results and supporting disclosures and any liquidity stress test information received from an insurance holding company supervised by the Federal Reserve Board and nonU.S. group-wide supervisors.

- The group capital calculations and resulting group capital ratio required under this act and the liquidity stress test along with its results and supporting disclosures required under this act are regulatory tools for assessing group risks and capital adequacy and group liquidity risks, respectively, and are not intended as a means to rank insurers or insurance holding company systems generally. Therefore, except as otherwise may be required under the provisions of this act, the making, publishing, disseminating, circulating or placing before the public, or causing directly or indirectly to be made, published, disseminating, circulating or placing before the public, or causing directly or indirectly to be made, published, disseminated, circulated or placed before the public in a newspaper, magazine or other publication, or in the form of a notice, circular, pamphlet, letter or poster, or over any radio or television station or any electronic means of communication available to the public, or in any other way as an advertisement, announcement, or statement containing a representation or statement with regard to the group capital calculation, group capital ratio, the Liquidity Stress Test results, or supporting disclosures for the Liquidity Stress Test of any insurer or any insurer group, or of any component derived in the calculation by any insurer, broker, or other person engaged in any manner in the insurance business would be misleading and is therefore prohibited.

SB 2415. Effective 6/30/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 83-9-351 to extend the repealer to July 1, 2028, on the provision of law requiring health insurance and employee benefit plans to provide coverage for telemedicine services to the same extent that the services would be covered if provided through inperson consultation.

SB 2894. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Sections 83-23-109 and 83-23-115 to include "cybersecurity insurance" for purposes of the Mississippi Insurance Guaranty Association statutes.

"Cybersecurity insurance," for purposes of this act, includes first and thirdparty coverage, in a policy or endorsement, written on a direct, admitted basis for losses and loss mitigation arising out of or relating to data privacy breaches, unauthorized information network security intrusions, computer viruses, ransomware, cyber extortion, indemnity theft, and similar exposures.

An insurance policy issued by a member insurer and later allocated, transferred, or assumed by, or otherwise made the sole responsibility of another insurer, pursuant to any provision of law of this state providing for the division of an insurance company or the statutory assumption or transfer of designated policies and under which there is no remaining obligation to the transferring entity, shall be considered to have been issued by a member insurer which is an insolvent insurer for the purposes of this act in the event that the insurer to which the policy has been allocated, transferred, assumed by, or otherwise made the sole responsibility of is placed in liquidation. An insurance policy that was issued by a nonmember insurer and later allocated, transferred, assumed by, or otherwise made the sole responsibility of a member insurer under any provision of law of this state not be considered to have been issued by a member insurer for the purposes of this act.

Such obligation shall be satisfied by paying the claimant an amount as follows:

- An amount in excess of \$50 but not exceeding \$400,000 per claimant for property damage covered claims;

- In no event shall the association be obligated to pay an amount in excess of \$300,000 for all first and thirdparty claims under a policy or endorsement providing or that is found to provide cybersecurity insurance coverages and arising out of a single insured event, regardless of the number of claims made or the number of claimants.

WARNING: Summary document not found for Interstate Cooperation

JUDICIARY A

HB 599. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill authorizes liability for a commercial entity that knowingly and intentionally publishes or distributes obscene matter or matter that depicts, describes or promotes child pornography or child sexual exploitation on the Internet. The entity may be held liable to an individual for nominal damages, actual damages, court costs and reasonable attorney's fees as ordered by the court.

The entity may also be held liable to an individual for punitive damages. The bill also allows individual claims that satisfy the generally applicable legal standards for joinder or class action to be combined into a single action.

HB 724. See summary under Apportionment and Elections.

HB 1193. Effective on Passage. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill prohibits public schools and public postsecondary educational institutions from engaging in discriminatory practices. It requires the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning, the Mississippi Community College Board, the Mississippi State Board of Education and the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board to make certain that each institution, college and public school, as applicable, refrain from divisive teaching and training based on an individual's race, sex, color, or national origin.

HB 1197. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill prohibits any person from soliciting in any municipality, county or political subdivision of this state without a solicitation permit issued by the municipality, county or political subdivision in which the solicitation will occur.

The municipality, county or political subdivision is authorized to charge a fee for the solicitation permit in an amount which shall not exceed \$25.

The bill also creates the crime of "forgery of a solicitation permit" for making and using solicitation permits without the authority or permission of a municipality, county or political subdivision in which the solicitation occurs. The fine is limited to not more than \$300, imprisonment of not more than six months in the county jail, or both.

HB 1200. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill creates the "Real Property Owners Protection Act" to regulate the crime of squatting. It defines the term "squatter" and outlines the process to legally remove a squatter from property. It also states that the right to manage, control or receive payments for any use of real property shall only belong to the owner of the property or an agent designated by the owner for such purposes.

A person commits the crime of squatting when he or she trespasses onto property or is invited onto property and remains on the property without the consent or authority of the owner or an agent of the owner after written notification to leave the premises by the owner or an agent of the owner or the law enforcement agency of the municipality, county or political subdivision in which the property is located.

The process for expelling a squatter requires the owner of the property or his or her agent to file a sworn affidavit with the law enforcement agency of the municipality. If the person is determined to be a squatter, criminal and civil penalties may be assessed and the person shall move out by the courtordered moveout date.

The bill creates felony crimes for:

- Any person who unlawfully detains, occupies or trespasses upon a residential dwelling and intentionally damages the dwelling in excess of \$1,000;

- Any person, except an heir to the property, who lists or otherwise advertises real property for sale knowing that the purported seller has no legal title or authority to sell the property, or rents or leases the property to another person knowing that he or she has no lawful ownership in the property or leasehold interest in the property.

HB 1203. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill prohibits camping on any sidewalks, streets, sports fields, sports complexes, highways, alleys, roads, passageways or any other public property, except a public property that is otherwise designated for camping by a municipality, county, political subdivision or state, or by state law.

The bill also:

- Authorizes immediate removal of any person found in violation of the act.

- Authorizes any municipality, county, political subdivision or state agency, as applicable, to remove individuals, personal property, camping materials, and campsites from public property consistent with the process outlined in the bill.

- Provides that whenever possible, any individual removed from a campsite be provided with available information concerning health, mental health, substance abuse treatment, or housing resources.

- Requires the court, upon conviction of a person, to mitigate whether or not the person immediately removed all personal property and litter, including, but not limited to,

bottles, cans, and garbage from the campsite after being informed they were in violation of the law.

- Requires a violator to demonstrate that after receiving the citation and before the hearing, they meaningfully engaged with private resources and/or service providers to address the reason(s) that led them to be in violation, and requires the court to consider that information when determining the appropriate penalty.

HB 1442. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill requires certain medical professionals from the Mississippi State Hospital, the North Mississippi State Hospital, East Mississippi State Hospital or any other state hospital to sign the certificates for mental health examination for a pending conservatorship if the respondent who is housed in a state hospital at the time a Conservatorship petition is pending. It also grants access to the respondent's medical records from a Mississippi State Hospital if the respondent is housed in a state hospital at the time of the petition.

HB 1451. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill removes the prohibition against circuit and chancery court clerks from receiving compensation for attending youth court.

SB 2328. Effective on passage. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill clarifies several provisions of the Residential Landlord Tenant Act.

First, it amends Section 89-8-35, which is the summons procedure for an eviction proceeding, to provide that a tenant will have no right to reside in the premises once the tenant has been removed. It clarifies that the landlord must grant the tenant reasonable access to the premises during the 72 hours

following the tenant's removal to retrieve the tenant's personal property.

Second, the bill amends Section 89-8-39 to provide that unless the tenant pays all unpaid rent in full and other sums awarded to the landlord, the tenant will have no right to reside in or on the premises after the court-ordered move out date. It also provides that the warrant of removal shall not be considered executed by law enforcement posting the warrant of removal on the door of the premises and that law enforcement must remove all occupants from the premises and place the landlord into physical possession of the premises.

Third, it amends Sections 89-8-3 and 89-8-31 to clarify that the Residential Landlord Tenant Act also applies to the parties' rights to possession following the termination or expiration of such an agreement.

Last, the bill provides that the owner or operating agent of a recreational vehicle park may have a person removed from the park for certain reasons, such as intoxication, profanity, lewdness, or brawling, failure to pay rent or disturbance of the peace. The bill provides the process for removal when a person refuses to leave and authorizes a law enforcement officer to arrest such person. The bill also provides that a refusal of accommodations, service or access to the premises under this section may not be based upon race, color, national origin, sex, physical disability or creed.

SB 2469. Effective on passage. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill creates a study committee (1) to study the problem of unmerchantable and uninsurable titles resulting from sales of land for nonpayment of taxes, blight created as a result of the current tax sale process, and other inconsistencies within the current sale process and (2) to

recommend solutions for such problems and inconsistencies. The committee is composed of the following 7 members:

- Two members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;
- Two members of the House, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One chancery clerk, to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;
- One tax assessor, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
- The Secretary of State, or a designee, as an ex officio, nonvoting member.

The bill sets up the procedure for the study committee to conduct itself and provides that any political subdivision of the state shall, at the request of the chairman of the study committee, provide the facilities, assistance, information and data needed to enable the study committee to carry out its duties. Last, the bill provides that the study committee shall be dissolved on or before January 1, 2026.

SB 2482. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill amends Section 9-1-59 to provide that public defenders and county prosecutors in cases related to the Mississippi Electronic Court system shall have free access to the system for matters involving indigent defendants.

SB 2489. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill authorizes each Supreme Court Justice and each Judge of the Court of Appeals to receive an expense allowance while actually attending judicial duties in any area of the state for up to 12 days a month. It also provides that no

justice or judge shall receive an expense allowance for more than the 20 days previously authorized by law.

SB 2771. See summary under Youth and Family Affairs.

SB 2787. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/24/25.

This bill reenacts Sections 75-24-351 through 75-24-357 which are the provisions of law that prohibit bad faith assertions of patent infringement and establish remedies for prevailing plaintiffs in civil actions instituted under the provisions. It also repeals Section 75-24-359 which had provided for a repealer on Sections 75-24-351 through 75-24-357.

SB 2899. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 9-13-19 to require court reporters in circuit and chancery court to be paid a certain salary. It also increases the authorized annual salary for court reporters as follows:

- Not to exceed \$59,400 for reporters who have five or less years' experience;
- Not to exceed \$72,200 for reporters who have more than five years' experience but less than 10 years; and
- Not to exceed \$76,800 for reporters who have 10 years or more of experience.

The bill also authorizes court reporters to engage in freelance reporting activities as long as the matter at issue is not under the jurisdiction of the court in which the official court reporter is appointed. If an official court reporter does not have delinquent work from the court of appointment and his or her attendance is not required in the court of appointment, the court reporter shall not be prohibited from engaging in freelance reporting activities.

JUDICIARY B

HB 565. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill clarifies the process for law enforcement agencies to report disciplinary matters to the Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training. It requires the law enforcement agency of any full or parttime law enforcement officer who resigns from his or her law enforcement agency to notify the board in writing and by email within 72 hours of the officer's resignation. If any full- or parttime law enforcement officer is terminated or resigns due to disciplinary action, the law enforcement agency shall notify the board within 72 hours of the termination or resignation, as the case may be, and the agency shall provide in writing and by email to the board, the explanation for the termination or resignation of the officer. The required explanation of such termination or resignation shall be submitted, along with the required notification, within the same 72 hour time frame as required under this subsection. If a law enforcement agency fails to adhere to the reporting requirements, then the agency shall not be eligible for state grants or other subsidiary funding provided by the state; and shall not receive reimbursement for continuing education requirements as provided under Section 45619.

The bill also authorizes the board to provide a hearing to any law enforcement agency that fails to adhere to the reporting requirements; and promulgate all rules necessary for implementing the requirements of the bill.

HB 623. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill increases compensation for attorneys who represent indigent clients. The bill increases the amount to \$3,000.

HB 624. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill increases the salaries of full-time criminal investigators for district attorneys to \$75,000.

HB 861. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends the Mississippi Medical Emergency Good Samaritan Act by creating and adding the "Aid to Sexual Offense Victim Reporting Act". It provides criminal immunity for a person who, in good faith, seeks medical assistance for or reports a sexual offense. Such person shall not be arrested, charged, or prosecuted for a drug violation if there is evidence that the person is or was under the influence of a controlled substance or in possession of a controlled substance at the time of the sexual offense or the request of assistance for or report of the sexual offense.

HB 1189. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill increases the deposits made into the Victims Of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Fund by adding fines or other penalties for misdemeanor violations of Section 9737, of not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,000.

HB 1308. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill creates the felony crime of "Grooming of a Child". Any person over the age of 21 commits the offense of grooming of a child when such person knowingly engages in a pattern of conduct or communication in person; through a third party; through the use of an electronic device, computer, social media, or text messages; or by any other means to gain access to, to gain the compliance of, to prepare, to persuade, to induce, or to coerce a child to engage in sexually explicit conduct or human trafficking or to procure the sexual servitude of a child.

The bill doubles the incarceration time and penalty for any person who is 18 years of age or older and violates this section while that person was in a position of trust or authority over the child at the time of the offense. A person in a position of trust or authority over a child includes, without limitation, a child's teacher, counselor, physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, minister, priest, physical therapist, chiropractor, legal guardian, parent, stepparent, aunt, uncle, scout leader, or coach.

HB 1338. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill gives governing authorities of any board or political subdivision of the State of Mississippi the authority to use specified, unmarked vehicles when identifying marks would hinder official investigations by a sworn law enforcement officer. The governing authority of any airport or school may authorize the use of unmarked vehicles when the identifying mark will compromise security at such airport or school. The order or resolution authorizing such unmarked vehicles shall contain the manufacturer's serial number, the inventory number, and shall set forth why the vehicle should be exempt from the provisions of this paragraph. The governing authority shall enter its order or resolution on the minutes and shall furnish the State Department of Audit with a certified copy of its order or resolution for the use of the unmarked police vehicle.

The bill also adds felony penalties for impersonating a law enforcement officer.

HB 1509. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill sets the salary for district attorneys to 95% of the salary authorized by law for circuit and chancery court judges of this state.

HB 1544. Effective on Passage. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill requires any person who qualifies as a candidate for judicial office to be a resident of the district that he or she seeks by the date of qualification. It also provides that a circuit judge elected from a subdistrict shall not be required to be a resident of that subdistrict but shall be a resident of the circuit court district in which he or she seeks to serve by the date on which the person qualifies as a candidate for the judicial office. It requires no less than four weeks between terms of court in any one county.

The bill also repeals the code sections for the Twenty-third circuit court district on and after January 1, 2027, and the Twenty-second circuit court district on and after January 1, 2031. The number of judges, precincts and some residency requirements for the First, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Seventh, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Twentyfirst, Twentysecond, and Twenty-third circuit court districts as follows:

First: From and after January 1, 2027, the residency requirements are revised.

Third: From and after January 1, 2031, the number of judges increases from three to four, and residency requirements are added.

Fourth: From and after 2031, Holmes and Humphreys Counties are added to the district, the subdistricts are revised and two judges are elected from each subdistrict.

Sixth: From and after January 1, 2027, Pike County is added, and comprises Subdistrict 6-3. The number of judges increases from two to three.

Seventh: From and after January 1, 2027, until 2031, Claiborne and Jefferson Counties are added to this district, along with a CCID subdistrict. From and after January 1, 2031,

Claiborne and Jefferson Counties remain, but the CCID is removed.

Until January 1, 2027, the number of judges is increased from four to five (immediately); and from and after January 1, 2027, until 2035, the number of judges is increased from five to six.

From and after 2035, the CCID is removed and the number of judges is reduced to five.

Ninth: From and after January 1, 2035, Yazoo County is added to this district.

Tenth: From and after January 1, 2027, Wayne County is removed from this district.

Eleventh: From and after January 1, 2031, the number of subdistricts is reduced from three to two.

Fourteenth: From and after January 1, 2027, Pike and Walthall Counties are removed from this district, and Copiah, Jefferson Davis and Lawrence Counties are added.

Fifteenth: From and after January 1, 2027, Jefferson Davis and Lawrence Counties are removed, and Walthall County is added. Residency requirements are also added.

Eighteenth: From and after January 1, 2027, George, Greene, Jones and Wayne Counties are added; one judge is also added.

Nineteenth: From and after January 1, 2027, George and Greene Counties are removed. This district will only be composed of Jackson County. The number of judges is increased from three to four, with the fourth judge dedicated to intervention court.

Twenty-first: This district number is changed to "the Twenty-second District" upon the effective date of the bill. The section repeals from and after January 1, 2031.

Twenty-second: This district number is changed to "the Twenty-third District" upon the effective date of the bill. It repeals from and after January 1, 2027.

Twenty-third: This district number is changed to the "Twenty-first District" upon the effective date of the bill. From and after January 1, 2027, the number of judges increases from three to four.

The bill also revises the number of assistant district attorneys and criminal investigators assigned to certain circuit court districts. It also provides procedural instructions for the time and manner of candidate qualifications and elections for judicial offices in the Seventh and Twenty-first Circuit Court Districts, as well as instructions for district attorneys in the Twenty-second and Twenty-third circuit court districts.

HB 1637. See summary under Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

SB 2200. Effective 6/30/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill deletes the repealer on Section 41-29-139.1, which provides for the crime of fentanyl delivery resulting in death. The bill also removes some legislative intent statements from the section and deletes the requirement of the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review to annually report on the number of persons convicted under the section.

SB 2204. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill requires law enforcement in Mississippi to report the theft of agriculture-related items, including vehicles, livestock, timber, grain or certain chemicals, to the Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau. It also requires any commercial dealer of agriculture-related vehicles to report the thefts of such vehicles to the bureau. Last, the

bill amends Section 69-29-1 to direct the bureau to maintain a registry of reports of stolen agriculture-related vehicles.

SB 2208. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill provides an enhanced sentence of imprisonment for a person who makes a terroristic threat against an airport. A person convicted of the crime shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of not less than five years in the custody of the Mississippi Department of Corrections in addition to the term of imprisonment already authorized by law.

SB 2211. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill provides that a victim of sexual assault shall have the right to be informed in writing of policies governing the collection and preservation of a sexual assault evidence collection kit. It also extends the notice period from 20 days to 60 days that law enforcement must provide to victims when the law enforcement agency intends to destroy or dispose of an evidence collection kit.

Another component places certain requirements on hospitals. Each hospital in the state that operates an emergency department shall be required to have at least one staff member available at all times who is able to conduct forensic examinations of victims of sexual assault and prepare sexual assault evidence collection kits. Further, all licensed hospitals in the state shall screen, treat or examine victims of sexual assault who present to a hospital and shall maintain a sufficient supply of sexual assault evidence collection kits. Last, hospitals are authorized to contract with forensic nurses to conduct forensic examinations of victims of sexual assault.

SB 2311. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill creates the crimes of mail theft, theft or unauthorized reproduction of a mail receptacle key or lock, the theft or receipt of a stolen check or sight order, and traffic in or possession of counterfeit credit cards. The penalties for first-time convictions of these crimes are mirrored off of existing penalties for credit card fraud.

The bill also imposes enhanced penalties for a second or subsequent violation of these new crimes as well as convictions under Sections 97-19-32 and 97-45-31.

Last, the bill amends Section 97-21-23 to include within the crime of forgery using or having check-printing software or hardware with the intent to produce, make, design, or otherwise utter a counterfeit promissory note, bill of exchange, draft, check, bank check, certificate of deposit, or other evidence of debt, treasury note or monetary instrument.

SB 2315. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends several provisions related to bail procedure and provides when a bond shall be considered discharged. First, the bill amends Sections 21-23-8 and 99-5-25 to provide that if a clerk fails to provide a surety with notice of the forfeiture of the bond, the order shall be set aside, and the clerk shall accept a set-aside order on behalf of the surety for submission to the court. Also, all felony warrants issued for nonappearance shall be entered into the National Crime Information Center index until the defendant is returned to custody. Second, it amends Sections 21-23-8, 83-39-7 and 99-5-25 to give an opportunity--before the surety's license is revoked--for a surety to submit proof to the Department of Insurance that a defendant has been surrendered to the appropriate authorities or that the bond has been paid directly to the court or other proper authorities.

Last, it also provides a list of circumstances when a bail bond is discharged. These circumstances include when:

- The defendant is found guilty and sentence is pronounced;
- The charge is dismissed or nolle prosequi;
- The charge is retired or remanded to the files;
- The defendant is surrendered by a bail agent in open court or to the sheriff or chief of police or respective jailer of the proper jurisdiction, or a verbal or written, including electronic detention, notice of surrender is delivered thereto as required in Section 99-5-27; or

- The defendant is sentenced to nonadjudication, an alternative sentence, or an intervention court program.

SB 2768. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill is one of two bills passed by the Legislature to fulfill its constitutional obligation to redistrict the circuit and chancery court districts of the state. The bill redistricts the chancery court districts and HB 1544 redistricts the circuit court districts. It also includes procedural language for both bills that govern the geographic boundaries of the district, the severability of the acts, and the purpose of the acts. It adds language that provides the redistricting of each circuit and chancery court district shall be deemed to be separate and distinct from one another. Thus, the invalidity of any individual district of either the circuit or chancery courts shall not affect or require the redistricting of any other district.

Except as noted for the Fifth, Sixteenth, and Nineteenth Chancery Districts, the amendments to the chancery court districts take effect in January 2027 and are as follows:

Second. Under the bill, Covington, Jefferson Davis, Simpson, and Smith counties are added to the district. An

additional chancellorship is added to the district for a total of three chancellors.

Third. Desoto County is removed from the district, and Carroll and Tallahatchie counties are added. A chancellorship is removed from the district for a total of two chancellors, and the subdistricts are deleted.

Fourth. Adams, Jefferson, and Wilkinson counties are added to the district. An additional chancellorship is also added to the district for a total of three chancellors.

Fifth. From and after January 1, 2031, the subdistricts are deleted from the district.

Sixth. Carroll County is removed from the district, and Webster County is added.

Seventh. Tallahatchie County is removed from the district, and Sunflower County is added.

Eighth. Stone County is removed from the district.

Ninth. Sunflower County is removed from the district, and a chancellorship is also removed for a total of three chancellors.

Tenth. Forrest and Perry counties are removed from the district, and Walthall County is added. Further, the senior chancellor in the district is authorized to divide the court into separate divisions for the efficient handling of cases based on subject matter, judicial economy, or other factors.

Eleventh. Precinct geography is updated in the subdistricts of the district.

Thirteenth. All of the counties in the district are removed, and Forrest, Perry, and Stone counties are added to the district.

Fourteenth. Webster County is removed from the district, and the subdistricts are amended to reflect that removal and

geographically connect Chickasaw and Oktibbeha counties in Subdistrict 14-1.

Fifteenth. Claiborne and Lawrence counties are added to the district, and an additional chancellorship is added to the district for a total of two chancellors.

Sixteenth. From July 1, 2025, until January 1, 2031, the local contributions required for the maintenance of the district shall be paid on a pro rata basis by each county in the district based on the proportion of that county's population to the district as a whole according to the most recent federal decennial census. The amount of these local contributions shall be determined by the Jackson County Board of Supervisors to be ordered by the senior chancellor of the district.

From and after January 1, 2027, an additional chancellorship is added to the district for a total of four chancellors.

From January 1, 2027, and until January 1, 2031, Greene County is removed from the district.

From and after January 1, 2031, George County is removed from the district.

Seventeenth. All of the counties in the district are removed, and Desoto County is added to the district. An additional chancellorship is also added to the district for a total of three chancellors.

Nineteenth. From and after January 1, 2027, an additional chancellorship is added to the district for a total of two chancellors.

From January 1, 2027, and until January 1, 2031, Greene County is added to the district.

From and after January 1, 2031, George County is added to the district.

SB 2803. Sections 1 through 8 of this act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2025, and Section 9 of this act shall take effect and be in force from and after January 1, 2026.
Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 63-21-9 to require an owner of an all-terrain vehicle, manufactured or first sold for use after July 1, 2025, to apply to the Department of Revenue for a certificate of title. It also amends Section 63-21-5 to amend the definition of "motor vehicle" to include all-terrain vehicles, and to amend the definition of "all-terrain vehicle" to include utility task vehicles, also known as side-by-sides, for purposes of the Mississippi Motor Vehicle and Manufactured Housing Title Law.

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MARINE RESOURCES

HB 602. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 69155 to expand the country of origin labeling law for crawfish and shrimp to make it applicable to crawfish and seafood, which means saltwater finfish, crustaceans, molluscan shellfish and other forms of saltwater aquatic animal life where such aquatic animal life is intended for human consumption.

The bill provides that any crawfish or seafood label, menu, sales display or other advertisement must be designated as either domestic or imported. Any seafood or crawfish that originated in a foreign country outside of the territorial waters of the United States shall be identified as imported. If a wholesaler, processor, retailer or food service establishment offers for sale only domestic seafood, then that may be disclosed in a prominent place on the premises.

The bill requires suppliers of crawfish and seafood to maintain a verifiable recordkeeping audit trail that permits the collective agencies to verify compliance with this law and any regulations promulgated. The Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the Department of Marine Resources shall have collective regulatory authority over the crawfish and seafood labels.

Additionally, the bill provides penalties for violating the crawfish and seafood country of origin labeling requirements, which may include civil penalties as well as the revocation of a license. Any wholesaler, processor, retailer or food service establishment that unknowingly violates the section due to a good faith reliance upon the supplier's documentation of the seafood or crawfish's country of origin shall be held harmless against penalties. Fines and other monies collected for

violations related to seafood shall be distributed to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and deposited into the Seafood Fund for promotion of the domestic seafood market and implementation, enforcement and administration of this section. Fines and monies collected for violations related to crawfish shall be distributed to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce for implementation, enforcement and administration of this section.

The bill also establishes the Mississippi Seafood Marketing Task Force to study and make recommendations regarding seafood marketing and seafood production in the waters of Mississippi. The task force is comprised of the following people or their designees: the Governor, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Gaming Commission, a representative of the Mississippi Restaurant Association, the Director of the Division of Tourism, a person with a valid commercial fisherman's license appointed by the Governor, and a person who is an active shrimp or seafood processor appointed by the Governor. The bill provides the duties of the task force, and requires the task force to submit a report with recommendations for necessary legislation to the Governor, Legislature and affected state agencies on or before January 1, 2027, after which the task force shall dissolve.

HB 1095. Effective on passage. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill amends Section 291511 to provide that any leases and/or subleases granted by or through the Department of Marine Resources under the provisions of Sections 491527, 491537 or 491546 shall be exempt from any county or municipal tax levy upon the leasehold interests.

SB 2003. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Sections 59-21-9, 59-21-11, 59-21-17 and 59-21-19 to update the requirements for the numbering of certain boats and vessels for the purpose of compliance with federal regulations.

- In addition to the requirements for the display of the awarded number for the vessel, the validation decal certifying the awarded number shall be displayed on each side of the vessel within six inches of the awarded number.

- Temporary certificates shall be carried on board when the vessel is being operated and shall have the following information:

- Name and full address of owner, including zip code;
- State in which vessel is principally operated;
- Type of propulsion;
- Length of vessel;
- Make of vessel;
- Signature of owner; and
- Date of issuance.

SB 2263. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill amends Section 49-15-27 to clarify the authority of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources relating to the approval of oyster leases and also amends Section 49-15-36 to clarify that permitted oyster lease areas not subject to a lease shall remain open to the public.

The Department of Marine Resources may, in its discretion, lease an area to an applicant who has no experience in oyster cultivation as long as the applicant can demonstrate their financial stability and the area applied for has not been requested by another applicant with demonstrated experience.

The Department of Marine Resources shall have full jurisdiction and control of all designated stateowned reefs and oyster bottoms of the State of Mississippi. The department may lease up to 80% of the permitted areas available. Permitted areas not subject to a lease under this chapter shall remain open to the public.

MEDICAID

HB 662. Effective on passage. Law without Governor's signature 3/25/25.

This bill revises the criteria for presumptive eligibility for Medicaid for pregnant women to conform to federal law and regulations. Specifically, it removes two provisions of the bill that passed during the 2024 session: the requirement that the pregnant woman provide proof of her pregnancy and documentation of her monthly family income, and the 60day limit on the period of presumptive eligibility after a health care provider makes a determination that the woman is eligible for Medicaid.

HB 1401. Effective 7/1/25. Law without Governor's signature 3/11/25.

This bill establishes a community health worker certification program in the State Department of Health with the following provisions:

- Requires the Division of Medicaid to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for a state plan amendment, waiver, or alternative payment model to provide reimbursement for the following services when provided by a certified community health worker who is employed and supervised by a Medicaid participating provider:

Direct preventive services or services designed to slow the progression of chronic diseases, including screenings for basic human needs and referrals to appropriate services and agencies to meet those needs;

Health promotion education to prevent illness or diseases, including the promotion of health behaviors to

increase awareness and prevent the development of illness or disease;

Facilitate communications between a consumer and provider when cultural factors, such as language, socioeconomic status or health literacy, become a barrier to properly understanding treatment options or treatment plans;

Educate patients regarding diagnosis-related information and selfmanagement of physical, dental or mental health; and

Conduct any other service approved by the department.

- Provides that the State Department of Health will be the sole certifying body for the community health worker profession and practice in Mississippi.

- Provides that from and after January 1, 2026, persons may not represent themselves as a community health worker unless the person is certified as such in accordance with the requirements of the department.

- Directs the department to promulgate rules necessary to carry out the provisions of the act, including establishing the core competencies of community health workers, the community health worker certification application and renewal process, certification application and renewal fees, procedures for certification denial, suspension and revocation, and the scope of practice for certified community health workers.

- Requires the department to approve competency-based training programs and training providers, and approve organizations to provide continuing education for certified community health workers.

SB 2386. Effective 7/2/25. Vetoed 4/24/25.

This bill makes various amendments to the Mississippi Medicaid Law regarding Medicaid eligibility, Medicaid services, administrative provisions, assignment of rights against third parties, gender transition procedures, assessments on health care facilities, and the Medicaid Advisory Committee, and creates new sections for maternal mental health. Unless otherwise noted, the provisions in the bill are the same as the provisions in Senate Bill No. 2867, which was vetoed by the Governor on 3/27/25.

Amendments to Section 4313115 Medicaid eligibility

- Updates the age and income criteria for Medicaid eligibility throughout the section to reflect the current criteria.
- Requires the Division of Medicaid to submit a waiver by July 1, 2025, to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to authorize the division to conduct less frequent medical redeterminations for eligible children who have certain longterm or chronic conditions that do not need to be reidentified every year.
- Provides that men of reproductive age are eligible under the family planning program; women have already been eligible for years.
- Authorizes the division to apply for a federal family planning waiver to implement the previous provision instead of requiring the division to apply for the waiver.
- Provides that children in foster care are eligible for Medicaid until their 26th birthday; eligibility under current law ends on their 21st birthday.
- Eliminates the requirement for the division to apply to CMS for waivers to provide services for certain individuals who are end stage renal disease patients on dialysis, cancer

patients on chemotherapy or organ transplant recipients on antirejection drugs.

Amendments to Section 4313117 Medicaid services

- Requires the division to update the casemix payment system and fair rental reimbursement system for nursing facilities as necessary to maintain compliance with federal law.
- Authorizes the division to implement a quality or valuebased component to the nursing facility payment system.
- Requires the division to reimburse pediatricians for certain primary care services as defined by the division at 100% of the rate established under Medicare.
- Requires the division to reimburse for one pair of eyeglasses every two years instead of every five years for certain beneficiaries.
- Authorizes oral contraceptives to be prescribed and dispensed in twelvemonth supply increments under family planning services.
- Authorizes the division to reimburse ambulatory surgical care (ASC) facilities based on 90% of the Medicare ASC payment system rate in effect July 1 of each year as set by CMS.
- Authorizes the division to provide reimbursement for devices used for the reduction of snoring and obstructive sleep apnea.
- Directs the division, in consultation with the Mississippi Hospital Association, the Mississippi Healthcare Collaborative, the University Of Mississippi Medical Center and any other hospitals in the state, to provide recommendations no later than December 1, 2025, to the Chairmen of the Senate and House Medicaid Committees on methods for allowing physicians or other eligible providers employed or contracted at any hospital in the state to participate in any Medicare Upper Payment Limits

(UPL) Program, allowable delivery system or provider payment initiative established by the division, subject to federal limitations on collection of provider taxes.

(This replaces the provision in Senate Bill No. 2867 that directed the division to allow physicians at any hospital to participate in any Medicare Upper Payment Limits (UPL) Program, allowable delivery system or provider payment initiative established by the division.)

- Directs the division, in consultation with the Mississippi Hospital Association, the Mississippi Healthcare Collaborative, the University Of Mississippi Medical Center and any other hospitals in the state, to study (1) the feasibility of offering alternative models for distribution of medical claims and supplemental payments for inpatient and outpatient hospital services, and (2) the feasibility of the division establishing a Medicare Upper Payment Limits (UPL) Program to physicians employed or contracted by hospitals who are able to participate in the program through an intergovernmental transfer.

(This replaces the provision in Senate Bill No. 2867 that authorized the division, in consultation with the Mississippi Hospital Association, to develop alternative models for distribution of medical claims and supplemental payments for inpatient and outpatient hospital services.)

- Updates and clarifies language about the division's transition from the Medicare Upper Payment Limits (UPL) Program to the Mississippi Hospital Access Program (MHAP).

- Directs the division, in order to stabilize access to hospital care, to maximize total federal funding for MHAP, UPL and other supplemental payment programs in effect for state fiscal year 2025 and prohibits the division from changing the

methodologies, formulas, models or preprints used to calculate the distribution of supplemental payments to hospitals from those methodologies, formulas, models or preprints in effect and as approved by CMS for state fiscal year 2025.

- Authorizes the division, instead of requiring the division, to contract with the State Department of Health to provide for a perinatal high risk management/infant services system for any eligible beneficiary that cannot receive such services under a different program.

- Requires Medicaid managed care organizations to develop a perinatal riskmanagement services program in consultation with the division and the State Department of Health or to contract with the department for these services, and to begin providing these services no later than January 1, 2026.

- Authorizes the division to reimburse for services at Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHCs), which are authorized under Senate Bill No. 2392.

- Extends to July 1, 2027, the date of the repealer on the provision of law that requires the division to reimburse for outpatient hospital services provided to eligible Medicaid beneficiaries under 21 years old by border city universityaffiliated pediatric teaching hospitals, which was repealed by operation of law in 2024.

- Limits the payment for providing services to Mississippi Medicaid beneficiaries under 21 years old who are treated by a border city universityaffiliated pediatric teaching hospital to 200% of its cost of providing services to those beneficiaries.

- Requires the division to develop and implement a method for reimbursement of autism spectrum disorder services based on a continuum of care for best practices in medically necessary early intervention treatment.

- Requires the division to reimburse for preparticipation physical evaluations.
- Requires the division to reimburse for United States Food and Drug Administration approved medications for chronic weight management or for additional conditions in the discretion of the medical provider.
- Requires the division to provide coverage and reimbursement for any nonstatin medication approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration that has a unique indication to reduce the risk of a major cardiovascular event in primary prevention and secondary prevention patients.
- Requires the division to provide coverage and reimbursement for any nonopioid medication approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for the treatment or management of pain.
- Reduces the length of notice that the division must provide to the Medicaid Committee chairmen from 30 days to 15 days for proposed rate changes and provides that such legislative notice may be expedited.
- Requires the division to reimburse ambulance transportation service providers that provide an assessment, triage or treatment for eligible Medicaid beneficiaries, and provides that such providers will be reimbursed at a rate or methodology as determined by the division.
- Extends the date of the repealer on Section 4313117 by one year to July 1, 2029.

Amendments to Section 4313121 administrative provisions

- Authorizes the division to extend its Medicaid Enterprise System and fiscal agent services, including all related components and services, contracts in effect on June 30, 2025, for an additional twoyear period.

(This replaces the provision in Senate Bill No. 2867 that authorized the division to extend its Medicaid Enterprise System and fiscal agent services, including all related components and services, contracts in effect on June 30, 2025, for additional fiveyear periods if the system continues to meet the needs of the state, the annual cost continues to be a fair market value, and the rate of increase is no more than 5% or the current Consumer Price Index, whichever is less.)

- Authorizes the division to enter into a twoyear contract with a vendor to provide support of the division's eligibility system.

- Reduces the length of notice that the division must provide to the Medicaid Committee chairmen from 30 days to 15 days for proposed State Plan Amendment and provides that such legislative notice may be expedited.

Amendments to Section 4313305 - assignment of rights against
third parties

- Provides that when a third party payor requires prior authorization for an item or service furnished to a Medicaid recipient, the payor must accept authorization provided by the division that the item or service is covered under the State Plan as if such authorization were the prior authorization made by the third party payor for such item or service.

Amendments to Section 4313117.7 gender transition procedures

- Prohibits the division from reimbursing or providing coverage for gender transition procedures for any person, not just those under 18 years old.

Amendments to Section 4313145 assessments on health care
facilities

- Provides that a quarterly hospital assessment may exceed the assessment in the prior quarter by more than \$3,750,000 if

such increase is to maximize federal funds that are available to reimburse hospitals for services provided under new programs for hospitals, for increased supplemental payment programs for hospitals or to assist with state matching funds as authorized by the Legislature.

- Authorizes the division to reduce or eliminate the portion of the hospital assessment applicable to longterm acute care hospitals and rehabilitation hospitals if CMS waives the uniform and broadbased requirements in federal regulation.

Amendments to Section 4313107 Medicaid Advisory Committee

- Establishes a Medicaid Advisory Committee and Beneficiary Advisory Committee as required pursuant to federal regulations, effective July 9, 2025.

- Provides that all members of the Medical Care Advisory Committee serving on January 1, 2025, shall be selected to serve on the Medicaid Advisory Committee and such members shall serve until July 1, 2028.

New sections created for maternal mental health

- Creates a new Section 411401 to define certain terms.
- Creates a new Section 411403 to (1) require the State Department of Health to develop and promulgate written educational materials and information for health care professionals and patients about maternal mental health conditions; (2) require hospitals providing birth services to provide such educational materials to new parents and, as appropriate, other family members; and (3) require that such materials be provided to any woman who presents with signs of a maternal mental health disorder.
- Creates a new Section 411405 to require any health care provider or nurse midwife who renders postnatal care or pediatric infant care to ensure that the postnatal care patient

or birthing mother of the pediatric infant care patient, as applicable, is offered screening for postpartum depression; and to provide appropriate referrals if such patient or mother is deemed likely to be suffering from postpartum depression.

SB 2392. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill authorizes regional mental health commissions (which are the governing boards for community mental health centers) to provide services through enhanced certification as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), as follows:

- Provides a description of the purposes of CCBHCs, which are to provide comprehensive, holistic services, respond to local needs, incorporate evidencebased practices and establish care coordination as a center for service delivery, including effective community partnerships with law enforcement, schools, hospitals, primary care providers, veterans' groups and other organizations to improve care, reduce recidivism and address health disparities.

- Directs the State Department of Mental Health and the Division of Medicaid to submit an application to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to join the CCBHC Demonstration Grant at the next available application period.

- Provides that the CCBHC system will be consistent with the demonstration program established by Section 223 of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA) of 2014 and other applicable federal laws governing the CCBHC model.

- Charges the State Department of Mental Health with certifying and monitoring compliance of CCBHC clinics, and charges the Division of Medicaid with the responsibility of

establishing a prospective payment system (PPS) to fund the CCBHC program.

SB 2396. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill provides that the State of Mississippi or any agency or instrumentality of the state will not be considered a creditor of, and may not seek repayment for, any Medicaid benefits provided to a designated beneficiary from an account established under the Mississippi ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Program. The bill further provides that a Mississippi ABLE account or funds distributed from such an account upon the death of a qualified beneficiary will not be considered part of the "estate" of the beneficiary as that term is used in Section 4313317, which is the Medicaid estate recovery statute.

SB 2867. Effective on passage. Vetoed 3/28/25.

This bill makes various amendments to the Mississippi Medicaid Law regarding Medicaid eligibility, Medicaid services, administrative provisions, assignment of rights against third parties, gender transition procedures, assessments on health care facilities, presumptive eligibility for pregnant women, and the Medicaid Advisory Committee, and creates new sections for maternal mental health. (Most of the provisions of this bill are included in Senate Bill No. 2386, with a few exceptions that are noted in the summary of Senate Bill No. 2386.)

Amendments to Section 4313115 Medicaid eligibility

- Updates the age and income criteria for Medicaid eligibility throughout the section to reflect the current criteria.
- Requires the Division of Medicaid to submit a waiver by July 1, 2025, to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

(CMS) to authorize the division to conduct less frequent medical redeterminations for eligible children who have certain longterm or chronic conditions that do not need to be reidentified every year.

- Provides that men of reproductive age are eligible under the family planning program; women have already been eligible for years.

- Authorizes the division to apply for a federal family planning waiver to implement the previous provision instead of requiring the division to apply for the waiver.

- Provides that children in foster care are eligible for Medicaid until their 26th birthday; eligibility under current law ends on their 21st birthday.

- Eliminates the requirement for the division to apply to CMS for waivers to provide services for certain individuals who are end stage renal disease patients on dialysis, cancer patients on chemotherapy or organ transplant recipients on antirejection drugs.

Amendments to Section 4313117 Medicaid services

- Eliminates the option for certain rural hospitals to elect against reimbursement for outpatient hospital services using the Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) methodology.

- Requires the division to update the casemix payment system and fair rental reimbursement system for nursing facilities as necessary to maintain compliance with federal law.

- Authorizes the division to implement a quality or valuebased component to the nursing facility payment system.

- Requires the division to reimburse pediatricians for certain primary care services as defined by the division at 100% of the rate established under Medicare.

- Requires the division to reimburse for one pair of eyeglasses every two years instead of every five years for certain beneficiaries.
- Authorizes oral contraceptives to be prescribed and dispensed in twelvemonth supply increments under family planning services.
- Authorizes the division to reimburse ambulatory surgical care (ASC) facilities based on 90% of the Medicare ASC payment system rate in effect July 1 of each year as set by CMS.
- Authorizes the division to provide reimbursement for devices used for the reduction of snoring and obstructive sleep apnea.
- Directs the division to allow physicians at any hospital to participate in any Medicare Upper Payment Limits (UPL) Program, allowable delivery system or provider payment initiative established by the division.
- Authorizes the division, in consultation with the Mississippi Hospital Association, to develop alternative models for distribution of medical claims and supplemental payments for inpatient and outpatient hospital services.
- Updates and clarifies language about the division's transition from the Medicare Upper Payment Limits (UPL) Program to the Mississippi Hospital Access Program (MHAP).
- Directs the division to maximize total federal funding for MHAP, UPL and other supplemental payment programs in effect for state fiscal year 2025 and prohibits the division from changing the methodologies, formulas, models or preprints used to calculate the distribution of supplemental payments to hospitals from those methodologies, formulas, models or preprints in effect and as approved by CMS for state fiscal year 2025.

- Authorizes the division, instead of requiring the division, to contract with the State Department of Health to provide for a perinatal high risk management/infant services system for any eligible beneficiary that cannot receive such services under a different program.

- Requires Medicaid managed care organizations to develop a perinatal riskmanagement services program in consultation with the division and the State Department of Health or to contract with the department for these services, and to begin providing these services no later than January 1, 2026.

- Authorizes the division to reimburse for services at Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHCs), which are authorized under Senate Bill No. 2392.

- Extends to July 1, 2027, the date of the repealer on the provision of law that requires the division to reimburse for outpatient hospital services provided to eligible Medicaid beneficiaries under 21 years old by border city universityaffiliated pediatric teaching hospitals, which was repealed by operation of law in 2024.

- Limits the payment for providing services to Mississippi Medicaid beneficiaries under 21 years old who are treated by a border city universityaffiliated pediatric teaching hospital to 200% of its cost of providing services to those beneficiaries.

- Requires the division to develop and implement a method for reimbursement of autism spectrum disorder services based on a continuum of care for best practices in medically necessary early intervention treatment.

- Requires the division to reimburse for preparticipation physical evaluations.

- Requires the division to reimburse for United States Food and Drug Administrationapproved medications for chronic weight

management or for additional conditions in the discretion of the medical provider.

- Requires the division to provide coverage and reimbursement for any nonstatin medication approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration that has a unique indication to reduce the risk of a major cardiovascular event in primary prevention and secondary prevention patients.

- Requires the division to provide coverage and reimbursement for any nonopioid medication approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for the treatment or management of pain.

- Reduces the length of notice that the division must provide to the Medicaid Committee chairmen from 30 days to 15 days for proposed rate changes and provides that such legislative notice may be expedited.

- Requires the division to reimburse ambulance transportation service providers that provide an assessment, triage or treatment for eligible Medicaid beneficiaries, and provides that the such providers will be reimbursed at a rate or methodology as determined by the division.

- Extends the date of the repealer on Section 4313117 by one year to July 1, 2029.

Amendments to Section 4313121 administrative provisions

- Authorizes the division to extend its Medicaid Enterprise System and fiscal agent services, including all related components and services, contracts in effect on June 30, 2025, for additional fiveyear periods if the system continues to meet the needs of the state, the annual cost continues to be a fair market value, and the rate of increase is no more than 5% or the current Consumer Price Index, whichever is less.

- Authorizes the division to enter into a twoyear contract with a vendor to provide support of the division's eligibility system.

- Reduces the length of notice that the division must provide to the Medicaid Committee chairmen from 30 days to 15 days for proposed State Plan Amendment and provides that such legislative notice may be expedited.

Amendments to Section 4313305 assignment of rights against third parties

- Provides that when a third party payor requires prior authorization for an item or service furnished to a Medicaid recipient, the payor must accept authorization provided by the division that the item or service is covered under the State Plan as if such authorization were the prior authorization made by the third party payor for such item or service.

Amendments to Section 4313117.7 gender transition procedures

- Prohibits the division from reimbursing or providing coverage for gender transition procedures for any person, not just those under 18 years old.

Amendments to Section 4313145 assessments on health care facilities

- Provides that a quarterly hospital assessment may exceed the assessment in the prior quarter by more than \$3,750,000 if such increase is to maximize federal funds that are available to reimburse hospitals for services provided under new programs for hospitals, for increased supplemental payment programs for hospitals or to assist with state matching funds as authorized by the Legislature.

- Authorizes the division to reduce or eliminate the portion of the hospital assessment applicable to longterm acute

care hospitals and rehabilitation hospitals if CMS waives the uniform and broadbased requirements in federal regulation.

Amendments to Section 4313115.1 presumptive eligibility for pregnant women

- Removes the requirement that a pregnant woman must provide proof of her pregnancy and documentation of her monthly family income when seeking a determination of presumptive eligibility. (This provision was also in House Bill No. 662, which became law without the Governor's signature on 3/25/25, so it was not included in Senate Bill No. 2386.)

Amendments to Section 4313107 Medicaid Advisory Committee

- Establishes a Medicaid Advisory Committee and Beneficiary Advisory Committee as required pursuant to federal regulations, effective July 9, 2025.

- Provides that all members of the Medical Care Advisory Committee serving on January 1, 2025, shall be selected to serve on the Medicaid Advisory Committee and such members shall serve until July 1, 2028.

New sections created for maternal mental health

- Creates a new Section 411401 to define certain terms.
- Creates a new Section 411403 to (1) require the State Department of Health to develop and promulgate written educational materials and information for health care professionals and patients about maternal mental health conditions; (2) require hospitals providing birth services to provide such educational materials to new parents and, as appropriate, other family members; and (3) require that such materials be provided to any woman who presents with signs of a maternal mental health disorder.

- Creates a new Section 411405 to require any health care provider or nurse midwife who renders postnatal care or

pediatric infant care to ensure that the postnatal care patient or birthing mother of the pediatric infant care patient, as applicable, is offered screening for postpartum depression; and to provide appropriate referrals if such patient or mother is deemed likely to be suffering from postpartum depression.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

HB 1268. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill creates the Mississippi Save Our Service Member Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to unite key stakeholders in order to assess the mental health needs of military veterans and current members of the Mississippi National Guard and to develop a strategic plan and proposed legislation addressing mental health issues and the prevention of suicide.

The task force will be composed of the following members:

- The Chairs of the House Military Affairs Committee and the Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, or their designees from their respective committee membership;
- The Chairs of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee and the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, or their designees from their respective committee membership;
- The Executive Director the State Department of Health, or the director's designee;
- Two psychiatrists experienced in treating service members confronting mental health issues or suicidal ideation, or both, with one member being appointed by the Governor and one member being appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;
- Two chaplains in the Mississippi National Guard, appointed by the Adjutant General;
- One company grade military officer with command experience, appointed by the Adjutant General;
- One noncommissioned officer with first sergeant experience, appointed by the senior enlisted advisor for the Mississippi National Guard;

- One field grade officer with battalion commander experience, appointed by the Adjutant General;
- One noncommissioned officer with commander sergeant major experience, appointed by the senior enlisted advisor for the Mississippi National Guard;
- One employee of a university counseling center, or a person otherwise responsible for coordinating or providing student mental health services on campus, appointed by the Governor; and
- One employee of a community mental health provider that provides services to veterans and service members, appointed by the Governor.

The task force will perform the following duties:

- Assess the needs of Mississippi's military force by gathering input from veterans and current National Guard members about mental health challenges and reviewing existing resources and identifying gaps in mental health support services and suicide prevention efforts;
- Consult with faculty and researchers at universities and colleges who are studying and researching the psychology of PTSD and traumatic brain injury, particularly in relation to service members' mental health and to suicide prevention efforts;
- Review and make recommendations on how to identify PTSD and suicidal ideation in veterans and current National Guard members and on methods to prevent suicide;
- Identify partnering opportunities that will lead to improved mental health services and suicide prevention efforts accessible to veterans and National Guard members;
- Identify ways to reduce mental health stigma by promoting education and awareness to veterans, National Guard members and their families, and the general public;

- Develop programs and policies to mitigate mental health issues at the various military leadership levels;
- Formulate recommendations on changes to laws and policy in the State of Mississippi which will create opportunities for better identification of indicators signaling possible mental health concerns and suicidal ideation among veterans and current National Guard members; and
- Research and develop recommendations pertaining to any other issues that, in the determination of the task force, are relevant to improving mental health and suicide prevention services available to veterans and current National Guard members.

The task force will make a final report of its findings and recommendations, including any recommended legislation and funding needs, to the Legislature before January 1, 2026, at which time the task force will be dissolved.

The bill creates the Mississippi First Responder PTSD and Suicide Prevention Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to unite key stakeholders in order to assess the mental health needs of first responders and develop a strategic plan and proposed legislation. The task force will review and make recommendations on how to identify PTSD and those contemplating suicide and on methods to prevent suicide for Mississippi's first responders. The task force also will identify methods to effectively provide treatment for first responders. For purposes of the bill, "first responders" includes law enforcement officers, firefighters, 911 dispatchers, members of the Mississippi National Guard and emergency medical services.

The task force will be composed of the following members:

- Three members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee appointed by the chair of the committee;

- Three members of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee appointed by the chair of the committee;
- One employee of the State Department of Health appointed by the executive director;
- One employee of the State Department of Mental Health appointed by the executive director;
- One employee of the Mississippi Department of Human Services appointed by the executive director;
- The Medical Director and the Director of the Office of Standards and Training of the Department of Public Safety, or their respective designees;
- One employee of the Office of the Attorney General appointed by the Attorney General;
- Two members, who must be therapists, appointed by the First Responders of Mississippi organization;
- One member of the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police appointed by the president;
- One member of the Mississippi Sheriffs' Association appointed by the president;
- One member of the Mississippi Fire Chiefs Association appointed by the president;
- One member of the Professional Firefighters Association of Mississippi appointed by the president;
- One member of the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Association appointed by the president;
- One member of the Mississippi National Guard appointed by the Adjutant General of Mississippi; and
- One employee of a member of the Mississippi Ambulance Alliance appointed by the president.

The task force will perform the following duties:

- Assess the needs of first responders by gathering input from first responders about mental health challenges and reviewing existing resources, and identify gaps in mental health support services;

- Develop a plan to address identified needs by creating a detailed plan for programs and services that will support first responders' mental health, and identify strategies to make mental health services accessible, affordable and effective;

- Foster collaboration among stakeholders by bringing together first responders, mental health professionals and policymakers to identify solutions and propose legislation;

- Identify ways to reduce mental health stigma by promoting education and awareness;

- Ensure oversight and sustainability of programs by establishing a system and recommending an agency or entity to monitor program effectiveness and make needed improvements, and to secure funding and resources in order to ensure programs can continue longterm; and

- Recommend relevant changes to Mississippi law and other state and local policies which can be implemented by state and local governmental entities.

The task force will make a final report of its findings and recommendations, including any recommended legislation and any funding needs, to the Legislature before December 1, 2025, at which time the task force will be dissolved.

SB 2052. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 27-19-53 to authorize motor vehicle and motorcycle license tags for disabled veterans to be labeled as "100% Disabled Veteran" or "Disabled Veteran". A legal resident of the State of Mississippi who is rated as having 100% permanent serviceconnected disability by the

Veteran's Administration or United States Department of Veterans Affairs is privileged for the tag to have the label "100% Disabled Veteran" or "Disabled Veteran" listed on the tag.

SB 2434. Effective on passage. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill authorizes local government units, including municipalities and counties to enter into intergovernmental support agreements with a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States under the National Defense Authorization Act, 10 USC Section 2679, to provide installation support services to a military installation located in this state.

MUNICIPALITIES

HB 733. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill establishes, in the State Treasury, the "Property Cleanup Revolving Fund," which is a grant fund that shall be administered by the Mississippi Home Corporation (corporation). The grant fund shall be funded from any funds appropriated or otherwise made available by the Legislature in any manner and funds from any other source whether or not designated for deposit into such fund.

The bill also provides that the corporation must establish a grant program utilizing the funds in the grant fund to assist municipalities with projects. Projects are defined as property cleanup conducted by a municipality or its contractors on property sold for taxes that has been certified to the state that may include the following:

- Cutting grass and weeds;
- Filling cisterns;
- Securing abandoned or dilapidated buildings;
- Removing rubbish, abandoned or dilapidated fences, outside toilets, abandoned or dilapidated buildings, slabs, certain personal property, and other debris and draining cesspools and standing water from the property.

The bill also provides that grants from the grant fund may be made to municipalities as set forth in an agreement in amounts not exceeding 100% of estimated costs of a project. The corporation shall establish a maximum amount for any grant to provide for broad and equitable participation in the program.

Grants made from the fund may be used solely for the following purposes:

- To make grants upon receipt of an application from a municipality provided that a municipality may not receive more

than 15 grants in any calendar year, but a grant may be used for more than one project in a municipality;

- To earn interest on fund accounts; and
- For the reasonable costs of administering the grant fund, which shall not exceed 3% of the grant.

The bill also provides for any municipality with a population in excess of 145,000, according to the 2020 United States Census, the Urban Renewal Authority and the Parking Authority with oversight of the Jackson Redevelopment Authority (JRA) are authorized to apply for grants under the program and to enter into agreements and take actions necessary to carry out site demolition and site preparation for the purposes of urban renewal. More specifically, grant funds must be used exclusively for site preparation and property cleanup with oversight of the funds from the Jackson Redevelopment Authority.

Any grant made to a municipality, which must be overseen by the Jackson Redevelopment Authority, shall not exceed \$2,000 per project, and no more than 15 grants may be awarded per calendar year to any such municipality or authority.

Next, the bill amends Section 29-1-145 by authorizing the Secretary of State to reimburse maintenance costs to counties or municipalities that exceed the market value of the lands or the purchase money received from the sale of those lands. Previously, counties and municipalities were only allowed to receive maintenance costs that did not exceed the market value of the lands or the purchase money received from the sale of those lands.

Section 29-1-145 is also amended by authorizing the Secretary of State to use, upon appropriation by the Legislature, any monies deposited into the Land Records Maintenance Fund to contract with a vendor in accordance with

state competitive bidding process to maintain unredeemed lands sold for taxes while those lands remain unsold and lands sold for taxes that have been certified to the state. The bill defines the term "maintain" under this section as follows:

- Cutting grass, trees and/or limbs, or
- Repairing, clearing or demolishing structures and/or cleaning rubbish and debris.

Finally, the bill amends Sections 29-1-95 and 27-104-205 by restricting monies in the Land Records Maintenance Fund from lapsing into the State General Fund at the end of the fiscal year.

HB 1211. See summary under Public Utilities.

*WARNING: Summary document not found for Performance Based
Budgeting*

*WARNING: Summary document not found for Ports, Harbors and
Airports*

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

HB 569. Effective on passage. Vetoed 4/24/25.

This bill revises several provisions of the health care certificate of need (CON) laws as follows:

- Deletes the prohibition on participating in Medicaid for all of the 40 beds in a psychiatric residential treatment facility in DeSoto County that was established by a hospital in the county under the authority of a CON.

- Directs the State Department of Health to issue a CON to a nonprofit corporation located in Madison County for the construction, expansion or conversion of 20 additional beds in a community living program for developmentally disabled adults in an ICFIID facility.

- Revises the conditions for a CON issued for a longterm care hospital in Harrison County to allow the hospital to participate in the Medicaid program as a crossover provider. A crossover provider is a provider enrolled in Medicare who is not enrolled in Medicaid, but provides services to individuals who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid (dualeligible beneficiaries).

- Provides that the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) is not required to obtain a CON for any hospital beds, services, health care facilities, or medical equipment that have been approved and continuously operated under a CON exemption for a teaching hospital, or that are approved before July 1, 2025, so long as they do not undergo a physical relocation.

Provides that after July 1, 2025, UMMC has an academic exemption from the CON requirements only within a certain area of the City of Jackson. In order for UMMC to qualify for such an academic exemption, the State Health Officer

must determine that the proposed equipment or facility fulfills a substantial and meaningful academic function.

- Directs the State Department of Health to issue a CON to a psychiatric hospital located in the City of Jackson that was providing adult psychiatric services as of January 1, 2025, under CON authority that was transferred to it within the past five years under a change of ownership; and provides that the new CON will authorize the continuation of such adult psychiatric services, provided that the hospital relinquishes its existing authority to operate under the CON authority transferred to the hospital as of the effective date of the new CON.

- Directs the State Department of Health to conduct a study and report to the Legislature by December 1, 2025, on the feasibility of exempting small hospitals from the requirement for a CON for the placement of dialysis units to reduce the number of transfers for patients requiring dialysis, the feasibility of exempting small hospitals from the requirement for a CON to operate geriatric psychiatric units, and the feasibility of a new requirement that acute adult psychiatric units treat a certain percentage of uninsured patients or pay a periodic fee in lieu thereof.

- Increases the minimum dollar amounts of capital expenditures and major medical equipment that require the issuance of a CON.

HB 610. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill revises certain provisions of the law that requires vehicle permits and establishes standards for nonemergency medical transportation services as follows:

- Defines the term "nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT)" to mean transportation services provided to an

individual who is not experiencing an emergency or in need of an ambulance for transportation or transfer but does have a transportation need related to a covered health benefit.

- Revises the definition of "NEMT transportation service" to say that the service is provided to individuals who are physically or mentally unable to use regular means of transportation, instead of to individuals who are elderly or disabled and unable to use regular means of transportation.

- Provides that regular transportation, which means nonemergency transportation provided to individuals who qualify for NEMT transportation services under a plan but who are ambulatory and need minimal assistance, is exempt from the requirements of the law if the transportation is provided by a Transportation Network Company licensed by the Department of Insurance or a contract carrier by motor vehicle permitted by the Public Service Commission and operating under a contract with a public or private entity, including Medicaid, for purposes of providing nonemergency transportation to ambulatory individuals.

- Provides that this law does not preclude an NEMT provider from using a permitted vehicle to provide services to ambulatory individuals.

HB 807. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill establishes the Division of Autism Services within the Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the State Department of Mental Health to develop and coordinate autism services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families.

The bill specifies the powers and duties of the division as follows:

- To develop a longterm plan, reviewed annually, for a comprehensive statewide coordinated system of care for individuals with ASD that is derived from scientificbased research and nationally recognized best practices; and
- To ensure interagency collaboration, public participation, and mutual sharing of information to facilitate policy decisions and the implementation of a plan for a comprehensive statewide system of care to individuals with ASD.

HB 856. Effective on passage. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill extends to July 1, 2029, the date of the repealer on the Mississippi Pharmacy Practice Act and revises various provisions of the Pharmacy Practice Act as follows:

- Revises the definitions of the terms "device," "dispense" and "manufacturing" and adds a new definition for the term "pharmacy services administrative organization," which is defined as any entity that contracts with a pharmacy or pharmacist to assist with thirdparty interactions and that may provide a variety of other administrative services.

- Authorizes the State Board of Pharmacy to delegate to the executive director of the board such powers and duties as it deems appropriate, and authorizes the executive director, with the approval of the board, to delegate to any officer or employee of the board such of his or her powers and duties as he or she finds necessary to carry out the purposes of the Pharmacy Practice Act.

- Clarifies the board's authority to regulate manufacturing of drugs, and provides that the board will regulate pharmacy services administrative organizations.

- Increases the amount of the surcharge that the board may add on a license renewal fee to fund an impaired pharmacists or pharmacy students program.

- Includes pharmacy services administrative organizations in the renewal license fee provisions.
- Clarifies that the board does not give the licensure exam but approves it.
- Clarifies that the board may impose a monetary penalty against a licensee, and includes interns/externs, pharmacy technicians, registrants and permit holders in the disciplinary provisions of the board.
- Exempts meetings of the Investigations Review Committee from the Open Meetings Act and exempts minutes of the meetings of the committee from the Public Records Act.
- Authorizes the board to issue subpoenas for the purpose of conducting investigations to obtain papers, documents, prescriptions or any other records deemed relevant to an investigation, and provides that all records of investigation must be kept confidential and are not subject to discovery or subpoena.
- Authorizes the board to order summary suspension of an individual's license or registration or a permit of a facility without a hearing if the board determines that there is an immediate danger to the public, and requires a hearing to be held within 20 days of such action.
- Provides that if a board order is appealed, the appeal will act as a supersedeas as to any monetary penalty, but such person will not be allowed to practice pharmacy in violation of any disciplinary order while the appeal is pending.
- Removes the minimum amount of monetary penalties authorized by the board.
- Provides that penalties imposed by the board upon a person or business that practices or does business without the required license, registration or permit may be assessed

beginning with the date that the offender first conducted business in the state.

- Clarifies that all entities involved in the supply chain of prescription drugs and/or devices that are sold or shipped into or out of this state, including manufacturers, manufacturer affiliates, packagers, repackagers, thirdparty logistic providers, wholesale distributors and reverse distributors, must be registered with the board.

- Provides that permits for those entities involved in the supply chain may be issued for up to a triennial period and increases the maximum fee for such permits.

- Provides that any pharmacy located outside this state that performs any services included in the definition of the practice of pharmacy for residents of this state will be considered a nonresident pharmacy and must be permitted by the board.

- Authorizes the board to enter and inspect any facility identified in the supply chain that ships, or causes to be shipped, or receives any controlled substances or prescription or legend drugs or devices.

- Clarify that entities located in this state or outside of this state that provide any home medical equipment to patients in this state must be permitted by the board.

- Deletes the provisions specifying the format and content of prescription forms.

- Deletes requirements for pharmacists to keep certain records about dispensing biological products and communicating that information to the prescriber.

- Provides that references to community pharmacies will instead be to charity pharmacies.

- Clarifies that the board will issue and renew licenses and permits for both in and outofstate persons, businesses and entities owning or shipping into, within or out of the state.

- Authorizes the board to use an outside agency to accredit all persons, businesses and facilities licensed or permitted with the board.

- Clarifies certain provisions relating to the Prescription Monitoring Program.

- Provides that the Prescription Monitoring Program will provide a report to the Legislature upon request that indicates the number of opioid prescriptions that were provided to patients during that year, instead of providing an annual report.

- Requires any entity assisting with the return of outdated drugs to a manufacturer on behalf of a pharmacy to register with the board and have a permit.

HB 1062. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill authorizes licensed dental hygienists to provide dental hygiene services to patients for up to 10 consecutive business days under the general supervision of licensed dentists if all of the following conditions are met:

- The dental hygienist must have practiced dental hygiene in Mississippi for a minimum of five years, with a minimum of 6,000 hours of dental hygiene practice;

- The supervising dentist must have examined the patient of record not more than seven months before the date that the dental hygienist provides the dental hygiene services;

- The dental hygienist must provide dental hygiene services to the patient of record in accordance with a written treatment protocol prescribed by the supervising dentist for the patient;

- The patient of record must be notified in advance of the appointment that the supervising dentist will be absent from the location;

- A dental hygienist under general supervision may not delegate or supervise any dental hygiene duties for a dental assistant; and

- The supervising dentist is responsible for all actions of the dental hygienist during treatment of patients under general supervision.

The following limitations also apply to the practice of dental hygiene under general supervision:

- No entity may employ dental hygienists to provide treatment for patients of record under general supervision other than:

A nonprofit entity that meets the statutory, regulatory and program requirements for grantees supported by the Public Health Service and that has supervision by a Mississippi licensed dentist; or

An office owned by a dentist or group of dentists licensed in Mississippi.

- Dental hygienists are prohibited from practicing in a manner that is separate or independent from a supervising dentist, and from establishing or maintaining an office or a practice that is primarily devoted to the provision of dental hygiene services.

- A dentist may not supervise more than three dental hygienists under general supervision at any one time.

- A dentist may not supervise a dental hygienist for more than 10 consecutive business days or for more than 24 total days in any calendar year.

- A patient may not be seen twice consecutively under general supervision.
- An examination fee may not be charged if a patient is seen under general supervision.
- The patient undergoing dental hygiene services under general supervision must be a minimum of 18 years of age.

In addition, the State Board of Dental Examiners is authorized to assess the need for dental hygiene services in nursing facilities and correctional facilities and authorize the general supervision of dental hygienists in those facilities, provided that such dental hygiene services are provided in accordance with all of the conditions of this act.

HB 1063. Effective 1/1/26. Signed 3/25/25.

This act creates the Mississippi State Employees Paid Parental Leave Act, which provides for six weeks of paid parental leave for eligible state employees who are the primary caregivers of a child.

- "Eligible employee" is defined as a person who has been employed by the State of Mississippi or any agency, department or institution of the state for a minimum of 12 consecutive months in a position for which he or she is compensated on a fulltime permanent basis and who is the primary caregiver of a child.

- "Paid parental leave" is defined as the compensated absence from work provided to an eligible employee for the birth of the employee's biological child, or legal adoption of a child under 18 years of age.

- "Primary caregiver" is defined as the parent who has the primary responsibility for the care of a child following the birth or adoption of a child.

- An eligible employee who is the primary caregiver of a child is entitled to receive six weeks (240 hours) of paid parental leave compensated at 100% of the employee's regular salary, to be used to care for the child after the birth or adoption of the child.

- The paid parental leave must be taken within 12 weeks of the birth or adoption of the child, and it may be taken only once in a period of 12 months.

- The paid parental leave is in addition to other leave benefits available to state employees by state or federal law and is not counted against accrued personal leave or major medical leave provided to state employees by statute.

- The paid parental leave will run concurrently with any leave provided to an eligible employee under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) where applicable.

- The paid parental leave will not be accrued or carried over or used for retirement purposes and is not payable upon separation from state service.

- An eligible employee requesting the paid parental leave under this section is required to give notice at least 30 calendar days before the anticipated leave start date, where foreseeable, to the employee's supervisor and human resources manager. If advance notice of 30 days is not possible due to exigent circumstances, the employee must notify the employee's supervisor and human resources manager at the earliest available opportunity.

- State employees are authorized to use up to six weeks of earned major medical leave for the birth of the employee's biological child, after using the paid parental leave authorized under this act for the birth or adoption of the child.

- The board of trustees of any public school district and the board of trustees of any community or junior college district is authorized to adopt a policy, in addition to any other leave policies of the district, to provide for paid parental leave for employees of the district that includes the same or substantially the same provisions as those of the Mississippi State Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

HB 1094. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill exempts from Public Procurement Review Board approval contracts entered into by the State Department of Health for service on specialized equipment and/or software required for the operation of such specialized equipment for the use by the Public Health Laboratory.

HB 1262. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill authorizes persons who have completed the training required for a United States Army Combat Medic Specialist, a United States Navy Hospital Corpsman, or a United States Air Force Aerospace Medical Service Specialist and then completed two years of clinical experience that involves providing direct patient care, to take the examination to be licensed as a licensed practical nurse.

HB 1401. See summary under Medicaid.

HB 1404. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill provides an exemption from the requirement to have a preaffidavit screening before a relative or interested person may file an affidavit for civil mental health commitment if the individual to be committed is being treated in a licensed hospital with licensed acute psychiatric beds and has already had two qualified professional evaluations, provided that the

licensed hospital notifies the community mental health center that the individual is in the hospital at least 24 hours before filing the affidavit.

The bill also requires a preaffidavit screening to be conducted before an affidavit for emergency involuntary commitment of a person for alcohol or drug use may be filed, except that a preaffidavit screening is not required if the individual to be committed is being treated in a licensed hospital with licensed acute psychiatric beds and has already had two qualified professional evaluations, provided that the licensed hospital notifies the community mental health center that the individual is in the hospital at least 24 hours before filing the affidavit.

Finally, the bill requires community mental health centers to submit certain written quarterly reports to the boards of supervisors of each county in their region on a standard form developed and provided to the community mental health centers by the State Department of Mental Health.

HB 1447. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill authorizes the State Department of Health to increase the amount of fees for water quality analysis and related activities as required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act to \$3.75 per connection or \$50,000 per system, whichever is less. The bill further authorizes the fee to be increased no more than one time during the next fiscal year, and requires that any such increase be based on the most recent increase in the Producer Price Index.

SB 2392. See summary under Medicaid.

SB 2664. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill enacts into law the Dietitian Licensure Compact and provides that the State of Mississippi enters into the compact with other states that join in the compact. The purpose of the compact is to facilitate interstate practice of dietetics with the goal of improving public access to dietetics services.

The bill provides various provisions related to the compact, including definitions, state participation in the compact, compact privilege, active military members or their spouses, adverse actions, establishment of a Dietitian Licensure Compact Commission and additional provisions, and amends several code sections to conform to the compact.

SB 2690. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill deletes the repealer on certain provisions relating to the Health Care Expendable Fund, which is the fund where the annual payment to the state from the tobacco settlement is deposited and appropriated for health care purposes.

SB 2691. Effective on passage. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends provisions of the Mississippi Juvenile Tobacco Access Prevention Act to increase from 18 years of age to 21 years of age the age under which the sale of tobacco or tobacco products is prohibited.

SB 2695. Effective 6/30/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill extends to July 1, 2029, the date of the repealer on the Mississippi Professional Massage Therapy Act.

SB 2697. Effective on passage. Signed 3/13/25.

This bill extends to December 31, 2024, the end of the period during which expenses incurred by hospitals for creation

of ICU beds and negative pressure beds may be reimbursed under the COVID19 Hospital Expanded Capacity Program.

SB 2698. Effective 6/30/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill extends to July 1, 2029, the end of the operating period of the Mississippi Dementia Care Program.

SB 2699. Effective on passage. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill repeals the repealer on the Patient's Right to Informed Health Care Choices Act and amends several code sections to delete the repealers on the provisions that make violations of the Patient's Right to Informed Health Care Choices Act by health care practitioners specific grounds for disciplinary action against licensees.

In addition, the bill creates the Mississippi Genetic Counselor Practice Act, which:

- Provides for the licensure and regulation of genetic counselors by the State Board of Health.
- Defines certain terms and the scope of practice of genetic counseling.
- Provides that from and after January 1, 2026, a license issued under the act is required to engage in the practice of genetic counseling.
- Provides that genetic counselors who are practicing in Mississippi on July 1, 2025, are allowed to continue their current practice until the licensure process is established by the board, at such time they are required to seek licensure.
- Prohibits persons from holding themselves out as genetic counselors unless they are licensed in accordance with the act.
- Prescribes the minimum qualifications for genetic counseling licensure.

- Provides for reciprocal licensure for persons who are licensed or registered as a genetic counselor under the laws of another state.

- Authorizes the board to grant provisional genetic counselor licenses for persons who have been granted active candidate status.

- Prescribes continuing education requirements for licensees.

- Provides exemptions from licensure for certain persons.

- Creates the Mississippi Council of Advisors in Genetic Counseling to advise the board and department on matters relating to the administration and interpretation of the provisions of the act.

- Prescribes the powers and duties of the board in administering the provisions of the act.

- Authorizes the board to deny, suspend or revoke licenses for certain conduct.

- Authorizes the board to receive and process complaints and investigate allegations or practices violating the provisions of the act.

- Authorizes the board to seek injunctive relief to prohibit persons from providing services as a genetic counselor without being licensed under this act.

- Provides criminal penalties for violations of the act.

Finally, the bill establishes a task force to conduct a study of alternative funding programs and their effect on patient access to affordable prescription drugs in Mississippi and the impact of those programs on patient assistance programs for prescription medications and insurance coverage. The task force will consist of the members of the Mississippi Rare Disease Advisory Council or their designees.

SB 2704. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill requires the State Department of Health, beginning July 1, 2025, to conduct an annual structural and environmental inspection of the infirmary at the State Penitentiary at Parchman and to make a report on its inspection.

SB 2727. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill enacts the Social Work Licensure Compact. The purpose of the compact is to facilitate interstate practice of regulated social workers by improving public access to competent social work services.

The bill provides various provisions related to the compact, including definitions, state participation in the compact, social worker participation in the compact, issuance of a multistate license, authority of the interstate compact commission and member state licensing authorities, reissuance of a multistate license by a new home state, military families, adverse actions, establishment of a Social Work Licensure Compact Commission and additional provisions, and amends several code sections to conform to the compact.

SB 2729. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill establishes in the State Treasury a special fund to be known as the "Mississippi Public Health Trust Fund," to provide financial support for public health programs and services defined in the public health statutes.

The bill provides that the fund will consist of any monies appropriated to the fund by the Legislature, any donations, gifts and grants from any source, and other monies received from any other source or which may be later provided by law.

SB 2731. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/2/25.

This bill extends to July 1, 2029, the date of the repealer on the sections of law that provide for the licensure of psychologists. In addition, the bill adds two members to the Mississippi Board of Psychology, increasing the number of members of the board from seven to nine.

SB 2741. Effective 7/1/25, except for Section 12, which is effective on passage. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill provides for the licensure of professional music therapists by the State Department of Health as follows:

- Defines "music therapy" as the clinical and evidencebased use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals for people of all ages and ability levels within a therapeutic relationship by a boardcertified music therapist.

- Creates within the department the Music Therapy Advisory Committee and provides for the appointment and membership of the committee, directs the department to seek advice of the advisory committee for issues related to music therapy, and sets out the powers and duties of the committee.

- Provides that beginning on January 1, 2026, persons who do not have a license as a professional music therapist are prohibited from using the title "licensed professional music therapist," "LPMT" or a similar title that implies that the person is a professional music therapist.

- Sets forth certain requirements for professional music therapists in the provision of music therapy services; provides for licensure application, qualifications for licensure and license renewal; lists acts for which the board may sanction a licensee and potential sanctions; and directs the board to set certain fees and for fees collected to be deposited in a special fund created in the State Treasury.

In addition, Section 12 of the bill creates the Mississippi Comprehensive Cancer Care Coalition (MCCCC) Task Force to develop and propose a plan for addressing cancerrelated issues in the state. The bill provides for the membership of the task force and directs the task force to complete its plan for addressing cancerrelated issues in the state and to present the plan, together with any recommended legislation, to the Legislature not later than December 1, 2025.

SB 2743. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill allows funds collected for certified copies of birth, death and marriage records to be used for public health programs pertaining to maternal, infant and child health and/or for the completion of all other vital records and statistics.

SB 2748. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill revises several provisions of the Mississippi Medical Cannabis Act as follows:

- Revises the definition of Mississippi Medical Cannabis Equivalency Unit (MMCEU) to provide that one unit of MMCEU is considered equal to one gram of total THC in a medical cannabis concentrate or one gram of total THC in an infused product.
- Authorizes a health care practitioner to issue a written certification of a patient's debilitating medical condition after a telemedicine evaluation for patients who are homebound or bedbound as certified by a practitioner with whom the patient has a bona fide practitionerpatient relationship within his or her scope of practice other than the practitioner making the written certification.
- Prohibits an applicant for a medical cannabis establishment license from applying to a county or municipality for any action regarding zoning or permitting of a medical

cannabis establishment until after the applicant has received a medical cannabis establishment license from the State Department of Health or the Department of Revenue as applicable.

SB 2767. Effective on passage. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill creates the Mississippi Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Council to ensure that monies received by the State of Mississippi from settlements of opioid litigation with distributors, manufacturers, pharmacy chains and other defendants of opioid litigation that are deposited into the Opioid Settlement Fund are allocated and spent in accordance with the terms of the opioid settlements, except as otherwise authorized for nonabatement settlement funds, to ensure public involvement, accountability and transparency in allocating and accounting for the monies in the fund.

- The term "abatement settlement funds" is defined to mean those monies from the opioid settlements that are required to be spent on opioid abatement programs, goods and services; and the term "nonabatement settlement funds" is defined to mean those monies from the opioid settlements that are not required to be spent on opioid abatement programs, goods and services.

- The council is to review applications for grants funded by the proceeds of opioid settlements and to make recommendations to the Legislature for the appropriation of such proceeds to fund the grants.

The Legislature may then accept or reject each of the council's grant recipient recommendations, but may not otherwise amend or modify the recommended list of grant recipients or the amounts recommended for the recipients.

The council may not exclude any qualified applicant from the list provided to the Legislature.

- The membership of the council is provided and the duties of the council are prescribed, and the council is housed within the Office of the Attorney General, which will provide the staff and facilities necessary to assist the council in the performance of its duties.

- The council is required to make an annual report by December 1 to the Legislature and the Governor that summarizes the distribution of funds, outcomes of funded programs, and any recommendations for improving the process of appropriation and administration of settlement funds.

- Section 27103305, which created the Opioid Settlement Fund, is amended to provide that abatement settlement funds will be disbursed upon appropriation by the Legislature in accordance with the requirements of this act.

The Attorney General will oversee the expenditure of abatement settlement funds to ensure compliance with the opioid settlements.

Nonabatement settlement funds may be disbursed upon appropriation by the Legislature without any recommendations by the council regarding the use of those monies.

The Attorney General will have ultimate oversight authority regarding nonabatement settlement funds to ensure that no more than 30% of the settlement monies are expended for nonabatement.

SB 2886. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill creates the Mississippi Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Law, which provides the following:

- Establishes a statewide domestic violence team of no less than five members within the Department of Public Safety, and authorizes the establishment of circuit teams within a circuit court district or districts by judicial order.

- Provides that for the statewide team, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety will designate four other initial members and chair the initial meeting, where the initial members will appoint any additional members to the statewide team and elect a chair of the team.

- Provides that circuit teams will function in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, any local or statewide domestic violence center, and local judicial officers including the court, prosecutor, and public defender.

- Provides that the purpose of a team is to learn how to prevent domestic violence through early intervention and improving the quality of the response by individuals and institutions to domestic violence.

- Requires teams to review fatal and nearfatal incidents of domestic violence, related domestic violence matters, and suicides within their jurisdiction.

Provides that the review may include an examination of events leading up to the domestic violence incident, available community resources, current laws and policies, and actions taken by organizations, agencies, and individuals incident to the events and the parties.

- Provides that the team will determine the specific structure and operating procedures that it employs, and the team may determine the number and type of incidents it wishes to review.

- Requires the team to make policy and other recommendations on how the community and state may more effectively respond to the needs of domestic violence victims.

- Provides limited immunity for members of a team and persons acting as a witness to or investigator for a team for actions taken within the scope of the functions of that team.

- Provides that information, records and other evidence obtained, generated or transmitted by a team is not subject to discovery, subpoena or introduction into evidence in any civil action, or in any administrative or disciplinary proceeding by any department or employing agency, if the information or records arose out of matters that are the subject of evaluation and review by the team.

- Authorizes teams to consider including in their membership or consulting with certain persons or entities in effectuating the purposes of this act.

PUBLIC PROPERTY

HB 556. Effective on passage. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill authorizes the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) to acquire specific real properties, known as the "East Hamilton Street Properties," located within the Capitol Complex in Jackson, Mississippi. DFA must obtain an independent appraisal to ascertain the fair market value of the properties, the purchase price of which cannot exceed the average fair market value as determined by the appraisal. DFA is authorized to negotiate any and all closing costs related to the acquisition of these properties as well as correct any discrepancies in the legal descriptions of the property to be purchased, which shall be used exclusively for state office space and parking purposes.

HB 1167. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill renames several state facilities to honor numerous individuals for their service to the state, including:

- **Facilities located at the State Fire Academy:**

Education Building and Auditorium: renamed as the "Honorable Mary Ann Stevens Education Building and Auditorium" to honor for Representative Mary Ann Stevens for her contributions.

Administration Building: renamed as the "Commissioner George Dale Administration Building" in recognition of former Mississippi Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal, George Dale.

Fire Station: renamed as the "Reggie Bell Fire Station" to honor former State Fire Academy Executive Director, Reggie Bell.

Apparatus Building: renamed as the "Bill Warren Apparatus Building" in tribute to former State Fire Academy Executive Director, Bill Warren.

- **Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission Building:** renamed as the "Liles Williams Workers' Compensation Building" to honor Liles Williams for his service as former Chairman of the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission.

HB 1436. Effective on passage. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill authorizes the Mississippi State Highway Commission, acting on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), to transfer specific parcels of land to the City of Gulfport, by means of donation. Existing utilities on, under, or above the described properties shall remain at the discretion of the utility owners. The City of Gulfport and its successors cannot require relocation of these utilities without agreement from the utility owners. The State of Mississippi retains all mineral rights to the transferred properties and authorizes MDOT to correct any discrepancies in the legal descriptions of the properties. If the City of Gulfport decides to sell either parcel, MDOT holds the right of first refusal.

Additionally, the bill amends prior legislation to correct the method of conveyance for a parcel to the Mississippi Transportation Commission, on behalf of MDOT, to reflect the transfer by means of donation of a specified parcel of land in Greene County to the Board of Supervisors of Greene County. The amendment to this section also allows the board to transfer the donated land to a private property owner in exchange for a similarly situated property of equal or greater value.

SB 2297. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/7/25.

This bill amends Sections 3-5-5 and 3-5-9 to provide for concurrent jurisdiction between federal and state governments over lands ceded to the United States.

Section 3-5-5 is also amended to require that notice in writing shall be given by the United States to the Governor stating the intent to relinquish jurisdiction. Such written notice shall include a clear statement of the subject matter for the concurrent jurisdiction request, specifically whether it includes juvenile delinquency and status offenses; a metes and bounds description of the boundary of the concurrent jurisdiction request; and an indication whether the request includes future contiguous expansions of land acquired for military purposes. Section 3-5-5 is further amended to require that the Governor's written acceptance shall confirm each of the elements of the request that are accepted. Finally, Section 3-5-5 is amended to stipulate that upon the establishment of concurrent jurisdiction, any state or local agency may enter into an agreement with any agency of the United States for coordination and designation of responsibilities related to the concurrency.

Section 3-5-9 is amended to include all laws applicable to juveniles.

SB 2303. Effective on passage. Signed 3/7/25.

This bill authorizes the Department of Public Safety to purchase for fair market value real property located at 152 Watford Parkway in Canton, Mississippi, from the Madison County Economic Development Authority. DPS is authorized to negotiate any and all closing costs and may correct any discrepancies in the legal descriptions of the property provided in the bill. Finally, the real property and improvements acquired in this

bill must be used exclusively for state office space and parking purposes.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

HB 1186. Section 8 effective 7/1/25; remaining sections effective 7/1/26. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill requires all K-12 schools, public and private, to annually perform a pressure test on the natural gas piping system in school facilities, beginning in 2026. The results of the test must be reported to the school's natural gas supplier before the beginning of each school year unless a school operates on a year-round calendar, in which case the test must be performed and results reported before July 1. The bill prescribes certain requirements for the test, including that it be performed by a qualified plumber to determine whether the natural gas piping downstream of the school's meter holds at least normal operating pressure over a period, as specified by the Public Service Commission. The school must notify the supplier of the date and results of the test, and the supplier must maintain a copy of those results for at least one year after receiving them. If the supplier receives official notification of a hazardous natural gas leakage or that a required test at a school facility has not been performed, the supplier must discontinue service to that school facility. The results of the annual test in public schools and other schools accredited by the State Board of Education also must be reported to the State Department of Education. If a leakage in a school facility is identified, the testing firm or individual must report the leakage to the local school board, as well as the department, or to the person responsible for a nonpublic school.

Section 8 of the bill provides that before January 1, 2026, the Public Service Commission shall promulgate rules necessary to implement the school natural gas pressure testing

requirements, which will be applicable beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

HB 1191. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill revises certain requirements applicable to excavators and utility operators in regard to underground and submerged utility lines and facilities. The bill amends Section 77-13-3 to revise various definitions and define additional terms, particularly in regard to submerged facilities, which are underground facilities or utility lines that normally are submerged under a body of water.

The bill also amends Section 77-13-5 to revise the notice requirements for excavators before beginning an excavation and to establish specific notice requirements for submerged excavations. The maximum proposed time within which an excavator reasonably believes a project may be completed is increased from 14 to 20 calendar days. Pre-marking of a proposed excavation may be done by electronic pre-marking and may not exceed the actual area of excavation; pre-marking is not required for excavations on property owned by the excavator where the proposed excavation area can be defined clearly in the locate request ticket. Markings provided by operators are valid for 20 days, increased from 14, from the date of the locate request ticket, and an excavator must notify Mississippi 811, Inc., if remarks are necessary when markings are no longer visible. Notice requirements are waived for excavations occurring as the result of electric power generation activities that are confined to the immediate secured property of the facility and not on an operator's marked right-of-way or easement. This section also prescribes certain requirements for excavations within the tolerance zone, which is defined as a strip of land 18 inches, plus 1/2 of the diameter of the

underground facility, if the diameter is marked, from the outside edge of both sides of the marks on the horizontal plane.

New requirements addressing submerged excavations are added to Section 77-13-5. Excavators must give at least seven days notice to Mississippi 811, Inc., before beginning a submerged excavation; however, before giving such notice, an excavator must pre-mark the approximate boundary of the proposed excavation area. The markings and locate request ticket are valid for 30 days from the date the locate request ticket is processed in the Mississippi 811, Inc., system, which must be renewed at least seven working days before expiration. Renewal notices are also valid for 30 days. A renewal notice may not include areas in which the excavator has completed the excavation work. Excavation in a marine exclusion zone requires consent from the operators with submerged facilities, and the operators may not unreasonably hold the consent.

The bill also amends Section 77-13-9 to establish different timeframes, which vary according to the type of excavation, for utility operators to locate and mark underground lines and facilities and submerged facilities after receiving notice of an excavation. Unless otherwise agreed to by an excavator and underground or submerged facility operator, the timeframes, from the time the locate request ticket is processed, are as follows:

- For standard excavations, three working days.
- For submerged excavations, seven working days.
- For emergency excavations, two hours.
- For impending emergency excavations, before the start time of excavation provided in the locate request ticket.

Excavators must inspect the site for the presence of marks and evidence of unmarked underground utility lines before and during an excavation.

Section 77-13-11 is amended to require an excavator making an emergency excavation to provide the contact information of the person at the site who is available to discuss the excavation with operators.

The bill creates new Section 77-13-12 to authorize an excavator that is planning a large project excavation (defined as a project that, due to the large area or complexity of the project, cannot be completed in 20 calendar days or for submerged excavations, 30 calendar days) to request a preconstruction meeting with operators and other interested parties. Notice of such a meeting must include certain specified information. The parties participating in the meeting may execute an agreement establishing terms and timeframes for the project, which the excavator must adhere to in performing the excavation work. If an agreement is not reached, the large project designation is considered null and void, and the excavator must comply with the applicable ordinary excavation requirements.

Lastly, Section 77-13-17 is amended to require operators of submerged facilities to be a member of Mississippi 811, Inc., and to comply with the requirements applicable to underground utility lines and facilities.

HB 1194. See summary under State Affairs.

HB 1211. Effective on passage. Signed 3/6/25.

This bill amends Section 21-13-3 to remove the requirement that a municipal ordinance granting a utility a franchise or right to use certain streets must be approved by a majority of the qualified electors in the municipality. The bill also removes the requirement that an ordinance must be read by the municipal clerk, upon request of two or more members of the

governing authorities, before a vote is taken on that ordinance by the governing authorities.

SB 2368. Effective on passage. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 77-11-3 to prohibit the assessment of a civil penalty that exceeds the maximum penalty allowed under federal law for violations by a public utility of the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Standard adopted by both the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Public Service Commission.

*WARNING: Summary document not found for Revenue and Expenditure
General Bills*

WARNING: Summary document not found for Rules

STATE AFFAIRS

HB 958. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill removes outdated exemptions to the requirements for the Mississippi Department Of Information Technology Services (MDITS). It revises certain definitions used in those statutes prescribing the powers and duties of MDITS and other state agencies regarding information technology. It also deletes the requirement that the executive director of its agency involve the public procurement review board in decisions regarding information technology, provides that acquisitions of information technology made by state agencies while exempt from public purchasing requirements remain exempt until it determines a new acquisition is required. It also deletes provisions:

- Requiring the state personnel board to be involved in ITS staffing;
- Relating to certain equipment support contracts entered into by ITS;
- Deleting specific procurement requirements for the acquisition of nonregulated telecommunications systems.

HB 1094. See summary under Public Health and Human Services.

HB 1194. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/20/25.

This bill authorizes a forprofit entity involved in the sale, transmission and distribution of potable water, which entity was formed solely for the purpose of complying with a federal or state order, to convert to a body politic as a water authority.

HB 1284. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/2/25.

This bill renames the "Mississippi Native Spirit Law" as the "Mississippi Native And Craft Spirits Law".

The bill also:

- Defines the terms "craft distillery" and "craft spirit";
- Revises the definition of the term "produce";
- Legalizes the manufacture and sale of craft spirits, to be regulated in the same manner as native wine and native spirits;
- Revises and provides certain provisions regarding sales made by native distilleries and craft distilleries;
- Authorizes native distilleries and craft distilleries to have one permanent satellite tasting room sales location in any other location in the state that otherwise allows the sale of alcoholic beverages; and
- Revises certain provisions regarding certain permits and distance restrictions and to revise certain provisions regarding holders of certain permits within leisure and recreation districts under the local option alcoholic beverage control law.

HB 1459. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/2/25.

This bill authorizes the Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court to appoint two fulltime CCID judges. In addition, the Chief Justice may appoint one parttime judge for the CCID court, who shall serve for such time specified by the Chief Justice. Each judge is required to possess all qualifications required by law for municipal court judges. The Administrative Office of Courts shall provide compensation for all CCID inferior court judges and the support staff for the judges. The compensation of each fulltime judge shall be in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 less than the compensation paid to county court judges. The compensation of the parttime judge shall be paid at

an hourly rate and for such times as deemed necessary by the fulltime CCID judges.

HB 1491. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill establishes a Cloud Center of Excellence Act.

Section 2 defines terminology used within the act.

Section 3 establishes the Cloud Center of Excellence (CCOE) which will serve as a centralized body within ITS, providing strategic guidance, best practices, governance frameworks and technical support for cloud adoption and management across state entities. The CCOE is designed to facilitate the adoption and management of cloud computing across state agencies and governing authorities, aiming to enhance security, scalability and cost efficiency in statewide cloud operations.

Section 4 provides that the CCOE is tasked with establishing a two-year phased implementation plan to be completed by July 1, 2027, which includes:

- Conducting statewide readiness assessments and developing detailed cloud migration plans for pilot agencies.
- Initiating pilot migrations for selected state agencies, establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and refining processes based on feedback.
- Expanding cloud adoption to additional state agencies, focusing on optimizing resource utilization and ensuring adherence to best practices.
- Integrating governing authorities into the cloud ecosystem and providing support for local governments, postsecondary educational institutions and school districts.
- Achieving full statewide adoption of cloud services, with ongoing monitoring, training and optimization provided by the CCOE.

During the implementation period, each state agency and governing authority is required to consider cloud computing service options with security benefits and cost savings associated with purchasing those options from a cloud computing service provider and from a statewide technology center established by ITS, and cloud computing service options and compatibility with cloud computing in the development of new information technology software.

The bill requires state agencies and governing authorities, when making purchase of an automated information system, to ensure that the system is capable of deployment and operation on cloud computing services. Requires agencies and governing authorities to submit a report that describes the purchase and the agency's reasoning for making the purchase of an automated information system to the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) at least 14 days before the date a state agency or governing authority solicits bids, proposals, offers or expresses an interest for a purchase.

ITS is required to provide administrative support and oversight to the CCOE to ensure compliance. Additionally, ITS is authorized to enter into agreements with cloud service providers to facilitate cost-effective procurement of cloud solutions; develop and enforce statewide cloud security and compliance standards; establish funding mechanisms to support operations of the CCOE; and promulgate rules and regulations necessary to administer this act.

Section 5 requires ITS to submit biennial reports to the Governor and the Legislature by November 15 of each even-numbered year, detailing the progress of the CCOE, including metrics on cloud adoption, cost savings, security enhancements and recommendations for further improvements. State agencies and governing authorities are mandated to cooperate with ITS by

providing timely and accurate information to assist in the creation of these reports.

Section 6 requires the Legislature to appropriate funds to the Department of Information Technology Services to implement and operate the Cloud Center of Excellence (CCOE), and further authorizes the CCOE to seek additional funding through federal grants, partnerships and other available resources.

Section 7 amends Section 25-53-3 to conform definitions related to information technology services in alignment with the establishment of the CCOE.

Section 8 establishes the Technology Innovation Fund to be administered by ITS in order to support the development and deployment of innovative technological solutions that enhance the efficiency, transparency and responsiveness of government services. The fund is intended to support collaborative efforts between government agencies, educational institutions, private sector partners and nonprofit organizations in implementing digital solutions that drive public sector modernization. The CIO of ITS is charged with establishing criteria for the evaluation of proposals and the allocation of funds, with priority given to projects that: improve government operations, demonstrate scalability and sustainability potential, foster partnerships across government, private and nonprofit sectors, and address urgent service delivery, efficiency and cybersecurity challenges. Additionally, the CIO is required to submit an annual report to the Governor and Legislature detailing the use of the Technology Innovation Fund, including descriptions of funded projects, their outcomes and recommendations for future innovations.

SB 2143. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill revises the definition of "qualified resort area" in the Local Option Alcoholic Beverage Control Law to modify the boundaries of a couple of existing resort areas and to add several others.

Item 15 is amended to expand an area near Mississippi State University, but outside Starkville.

Item 82 expands the resort area at the Philadelphia Country Club to include not only the clubhouse, but the entire country club property.

The following resort areas are added:

Pontotoc Country Club (item 93);

A plot of land in the southwest corner of Rankin County (item 94);

The City of Poplarville (item 95);

The Town of Mathison (item 96); and

The Tabb House, a historical landmark being restored as an event center in the City of Houston (item 97).

For all of the newly added resort areas, the governing municipality or, in the case of item 94, county may control the hours, percentage of revenue from food sales, and locations of establishments with on-premises retailer's permits.

The bill also amends Section 67-1-57 to provide that a felony conviction, other than a crime of violence or a violation of state or federal controlled substance laws, does not automatically disqualify a person from being approved for an alcoholic beverage permit. If at least 10 years have elapsed since conviction, the Department of Revenue may consider such felony convictions in determining whether all other qualifications are met.

SB 2145. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 2/26/25.

This bill authorizes in-state and out-of-state wine manufacturers to sell and ship wine directly to consumers and fulfillment providers in Mississippi, if the winery obtains a direct wine shipper's permit from the Department of Revenue. The bill provides for the issuance and annual renewal of direct wine shipper's permits.

The holder of a direct wine shipper's permit is required to keep certain records and report certain information to the department on a quarterly basis and is prohibited from selling or shipping light wine or beer, or any alcoholic beverage other than wine, and from selling and shipping wine contracted through Mississippi distributors, brokers, and solicitors, except highly allocated items. The amount of wine that a holder of a direct wine shipper's permit may sell or ship annually to any one address is limited to 12 nine-liter cases. Persons purchasing or receiving wine from a direct wine shipper must be at least 21 years of age and shall use the wine for personal consumption only and may not resell it.

The Commissioner of Revenue is authorized to adopt any rules or regulations as necessary to carry out this act. A sale or shipment in violation of this act is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six months, or both. In addition, a violation of this act may subject the holder of a direct wine shipper's permit to suspension or revocation of the permit by the Department of Revenue. If a consumer is otherwise compliant with this act and reasonably believes a shipment is in accordance with the permits and regulatory requirements established by the state, the consumer shall not be subject to penalties merely for receiving a shipment that is deemed to be in violation of the act.

Section 67-1-51 is amended to provide for the direct wine shipper's permit and the wine fulfillment provider's permit. Section 27715 is amended to provide a privilege tax of \$100 for the issuance of each of these permits.

Section 27717 is amended to add a new subsection (3) to levy on a direct wine shipper a tax of 15.5% of the sales price of each sale and shipment of wine made to a Mississippi resident. The direct wine shipper must file with the Department of Revenue a monthly report, along with a copy of the invoice for each sale and shipment of wine, and remit any taxes due. A late fee of \$50 is imposed for failure to timely file and pay taxes. Section 277129 is amended to require that the 15.5% tax levied under Section 27-71-7(3) be paid into the General Fund, except for an amount equivalent to the 3% markup levied on alcoholic beverages sold by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Division under Section 27-71-7(2), which shall be paid into the Mental Health Programs Fund.

Section 67-1-53 is amended to exempt applicants for direct wine shipper's permits from notice and publication requirements. Section 67-1-55 is amended to exempt applicants for direct wine shipper's permits from financial interest disclosure requirements. Section 67-1-57 is amended to exempt managers employed by the holder of a direct wine shipper's permit from the requirement that all managers be approved by the Department of Revenue prior to completing any managerial tasks on behalf of a permittee and must possess all of the qualifications required of a permittee, and to provide that the department may waive the fingerprint requirement for direct wine shipper's permit applicants. Section 67-1-73 is amended to authorize the Department of Revenue to prescribe the form and content of information regarding the sales, shipment, delivery, and transportation of wine by direct wine shippers.

Conforming amendments are made to Sections 27-71-15, 67141, 67145, 973147, and 973149.

SB 2210. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill amends Section 45-13-9 to enlarge the range of dates during which fireworks may be sold or offered for sale at retail within the state. Under state law, fireworks may now be sold between the 23rd of May to the 12th of July and between the 5th of December and the 9th of January. It also reduces the crime from a felony to a misdemeanor for violating the provisions of Article 1, Chapter 13, Title 45, which are the provisions of law regulating the sale of fireworks at retail.

SB 2267. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill creates the Mississippi Statewide Data Exchange Act, which requires the Department of Information Technology Services to conduct a comprehensive study on the implementation of a statewide data exchange initiative. The department will coordinate with state agencies to assess data-sharing needs, operational requirements and policy considerations. The department shall also develop the data exchange and then phase in implementation to ensure a secure, cloud-based statewide data exchange platform that allows for interagency data sharing, while also complying with privacy and security standards.

To oversee, coordinate and provide strategic guidance for the data exchange initiative, the bill requires MDITS to establish the Chief Information Officer Council that shall be composed of information and technology leaders from state agencies. The council will provide recommendations for interoperability frameworks and cybersecurity, facilitate interagency collaboration to improve data-sharing efficiencies and serve as an advisory board to MDITS in evaluating the

long-term sustainability and innovation potential of the platform.

SB 2383. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill designates the sweet potato as the official state vegetable of Mississippi.

SB 2555. Effective on passage. Signed 3/21/25.

This bill amends Section 67-5-11 to authorize any native winery to make sales to the Department of Revenue or to consumers at one satellite location in the county of the native winery's original location.

SB 2851. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill amends Section 67-1-51 to provide that, where an on-premises retailer's permit is issued to an establishment located in a qualified resort area created by Section 67-1-5(o)(iii)18, persons in the permitted premises are allowed to bring alcoholic beverages into the premises and to possess, store, and consume those beverages in the premises.

The section is also amended to provide that the distance restrictions prohibiting the sale or storage for sale of alcoholic beverages within 400 feet of any church, school (excluding colleges or universities), kindergarten or funeral home, or 100 feet for areas zoned commercial or business, shall not apply to the qualified resort areas defined in Section 67-1-5(o)(iii)83 and 84.

The last amendment to the section eliminates the wine fulfillment provider's permit provided for in Senate Bill No. 2145, 2025 Regular Session. Section 1 of Senate Bill No. 2145 is amended to remove references to the permit and to provide instead that fulfillment providers shall obtain the same direct

wine shipper's permit required for wine manufacturers wishing to ship wine to consumers in the state.

Finally, Section 9 of Senate Bill No. 2145 is amended to change the penalty for violation of the direct wine shipment law from a misdemeanor criminal penalty to a civil penalty.

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TECHNOLOGY

HB 1491. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

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service options with security benefits and cost savings associated with purchasing those options from a cloud computing service provider and from a statewide technology center established by ITS, and cloud computing service options and compatibility with cloud computing in the development of new information technology software.

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Section 6 requires the Legislature to appropriate funds to the Department of Information Technology Services to implement and operate the Cloud Center of Excellence (CCOE), and further authorizes the CCOE to seek additional funding through federal grants, partnerships and other available resources.

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SB 2426. Effective on passage. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill creates the "Artificial Intelligence Regulation (AIR) Task Force." It establishes the membership of the task force, including both voting and ex officio nonvoting members

and sets guidelines for meetings. The task force is responsible for balancing innovation and public interest while endeavoring to mitigate risks and unintended consequences of AI and its regulation. Members shall receive a per diem as provided in Section 25-3-69. PEER will provide necessary clerical support for the task force. The task force is authorized to apply for and accept gifts, grants, subsidies and other funds, and if funds are sufficient, may hire additional contract staff to support its work. Because the work of the task force is related to sensitive matters of security, the meetings, work and findings of the task force are not subject to the requirements of Chapters 41 or 61 of Title 25, Mississippi Code of 1972.

The bill also defines the term "artificial intelligence" for the purposes of the task force, giving it the meaning set forth in 15 USC Section 9401(3).

The responsibilities of the task force are to:

- Facilitate and evaluate through comprehensive review, develop tentative drafts of any necessary proposed revisions to the Mississippi Code involving the regulation of AI technologies, which may or may not include the following:

Fostering innovation by providing an environment for businesses and organizations to develop and test AI systems under relaxed regulatory constraints;

Regulatory oversight of the designing, testing and refinement of regulations to ensure responsible AI deployment;

Collaborating with stakeholders to bridge communication and idea exchanges between developers, policymakers and the public to align AI innovation with ethical and societal goals; and

Any other areas as deemed necessary by the task force.

- Review laws, policies and procedures concerning the use of AI technology established by the United States Congress and other state legislatures, if any, and compile a list of recommendations to include in the report required by this act. The review shall focus on, but not be limited to focusing on, privacy and data protection, development for a framework for AI testing, compliance with ethical standards which enforce adherence to fairness, accountability, transparency, disclosures and promoting equitable outcomes, assessment of risk and benefits which measure the societal and economic impact of AI innovations, liability, constituent and consumer impact, bias and social impact, and copyright and provenance.

- Consider implementation and use of artificial intelligence in state government agencies and compile a list of recommendations of best practices and potential uses for AI technologies in government to include in the report required by this act.

- Consider ways to allocate funding for development and use of artificial intelligence technologies in the state and draft proposals accordingly to include in the report required by this act.

- Consider any other issues related to artificial intelligence technologies that the task force finds appropriate to address.

SB 2835. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill, the "Mississippi Emergency Communications Authority Act," establishes the Mississippi Emergency Communications Authority (MECA) to work in cooperation with state and local governments to create a technical and operational framework for implementing and operating an interoperable and interconnected NG911 public safety network.

MEMA is the ultimate authority and administrative head of MECA. The bill vests management of the authority in an appointed director, with an advisory board to offer technical guidance and recommendations. It describes terms of the board members and prescribes qualifications for appointments to the board.

Section 5 requires the authority to administer, receive and audit emergency communications service charges, as well as develop, establish and publish a defined scope, technical standards and operation requirements for a State NG911 Plan on or before March 1, 2026. Furthermore, the authority must also publish minimum standards, specifications and requirements for each ECD NG911 Plan on or before September 30, 2026.

Section 6 outlines the duties and responsibilities of MECA, including the duty to:

- Develop and adopt an annual budget for implementation, management, upgrades, deployments and operations consistent with the State NG911 Plan. Such plan must be submitted to and approved by the Legislative Budget Office;
- Apply for, receive, and use federal grants, state grants or both;
- Study, evaluate and establish technology standards for regional and statewide provision of a public safety communications network and NG911 systems;
- Review and revise technology standards based on orders and rulings by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC);
- Identify and recommend changes to accomplish a more effective emergency communication service across the state;
- Identify and recommend any changes necessary in the assessment and collection of emergency communication service charges and provide a report to the Legislature;

- Develop, offer or make recommendations to the Mississippi Board of Emergency Telecommunications Standards and Training according to Section 19-5-351 and other state agencies about standardized training that should be provided to telecommunicators, trainers, supervisors and directors of Public Safety Answering Points;

- Recommend minimum standards for the operation of public safety answering points, develop and implement an internal quality assurance program and monitor local and regional PSAP compliance with technical and operational standards, requirements and practices;

- Collect data regarding the performance and operation of public safety answering points and coordinate with ECDs to provide technical assistance when requested;

- Identify any necessary changes or enhancements to the State NG911 Plan;

- Establish policies and procedures to develop and implement a plan to provide NG911 services statewide;

- Investigate Geographical Information Systems Standards and mapping and incorporate them, as well as other resources, into the State NG911 Plan;

- Address adverse findings in ECD financial and program reports and order such action as may be necessary to remedy the adverse findings; and

- Develop a CMRS Implementation Grant Program to provide the State NG911 Fund and ECDs competitive grants for NG911 implementation consistent with the State NG911 Plan and an approved ECD NG911 plan.

Section 7 of the bill establishes the "NG911 CMRS Grant Fund" for the purpose of defraying costs associated only with

capital improvements, equipment, software and other expenses directly related to implementation of approved ECD NG911 plans.

Section 8 stipulates that MECA shall:

- Require each ECD to submit a plan to implement a NG911 program consistent with this act. The ECD may obtain technical assistance from the authority in formulating its plan.

- Identify and define all ECDs created in Section 19-5-315 throughout the state by geospatial layer.

- Make and execute contracts necessary to exercise the powers of the authority or to further the public purpose for which the authority is created.

- Acquire by purchase, lease, or otherwise and hold, lease, and dispose of real or personal property of every kind and character, or any interest therein, in furtherance of the purpose of the authority.

- Apply for and accept any gifts or grants, loan guarantees, loans of funds, property, or financial or other aid in any form from the state or federal government.

- Deposit or otherwise invest funds held by the authority in any state depository or in any authorized investment of proceeds of state general obligation bonds and use such funds for its corporate purposes or redeposit or reinvest interest earned on such funds.

- Administer the NG911 CMRS Grant Fund and the State NG911 Fund.

- Retain a portion of the total service charges remitted to the department from the emergency communications service charge not to exceed 7% and deposit such funds into a special fund established in the State Treasury to be designated the "State NG911 Fund" to be used for the purpose of administration and

operations of the authority and costs directly associated with the implementation and/or maintenance of the State NG911 Plan.

- Receive, manage and control the fund established in the State Treasury designated as the "Emergency Communications Public Safety Trust Fund" pursuant to Section 13 of the bill.

- Establish and maintain a distribution formula for the department to make disbursements from the "Emergency Communications Public Safety Trust Fund" to the ECDs.

- Receive and maintain from the department a registration database of all service providers and notify the department as necessary of any provider that fails to comply with the requirements of the bill.

- Promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to effect the provisions of the bill.

Furthermore, the bill stipulates that all monies received by the authority shall be deemed to be trust funds, and that the bill shall be liberally construed to effect its purposes. The bill stipulates that all information submitted to MECA is subject to review only by the authority and the department. Additionally, the Attorney General will provide legal services for MECA.

Section 13 outlines the \$2 emergency communications service charge levied by the state on residential telephone subscriber lines, commercial telephone subscriber lines, Voice over Internet Protocol subscriber accounts, CMRS connections and prepaid wireless telecommunications service purchased in a retail transaction. It also provides for audit and appeal procedures applicable to the service charges, as well as for disbursement of funds collected via the charge to individual ECDs. Finally, Section 13 also provides for liability concerning collection of the service charge.

The bill also provides that anyone who knowingly uses or attempts to use wireless emergency telephone service for an invalid purpose is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Sections 16 through 18 create requirements for individual ECDs, including use of funds, development and submission of annual financial and program reports, and adoption of a district NG911 plan.

Sections 19-5-305, 19-5-307, 19-5-315, 19-5-317 and 331514 are amended to conform.

Sections 19-5-303, 19-5-311, 19-5-313, 19-5-331, 19-5-333, 19-5-335, 19-5-337, 19-5-339, 19-5-341 and 19-5-343 are repealed at varying times to allow for seamless rollover to the new system.

SB 2894. See summary under Insurance.

TOURISM

SB 2424. Effective on passage. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill establishes the Entertainment Industry and Workforce Development Task Force for the purpose of examining methods to grow the state's creative economy and increase revenue for and from the entertainment industry. The task force will develop recommendations for the Legislature on changes to policy and appropriations that will help develop and grow the entertainment industry and workforce within the state.

The task force will be composed of the following members:

- The Director of Visit Mississippi, or his or her designee;
- A representative from the Mississippi Tourism Association;
- The chairmen of both the Senate and House Tourism Committees;
- Two senators appointed by the Lieutenant Governor; and
- Two representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The task force will develop and report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2025.

SB 2573. Section 9 effective on passage,
remaining sections effective 7/1/25.
Vetoed 4/24/25.

This bill creates the Mississippi Department of Tourism (department). The department will be responsible for the promotion, development and support services for the tourism industry within the state. All of the powers, duties, property, contractual rights, staff and obligations of the Tourism Division of the Mississippi Development Authority will be

transferred to the department on July 1, 2025. The Governor will appoint an executive director of the department. The department may establish a program of grants to be matched by tourism entities in the state to finance, promote and advertise local tourism attractions.

The bill creates the Department of Tourism Advertising Fund as a special fund in the State Treasury and monies in the fund may be used by the department for the purpose of paying costs incurred in connection with the purchase of advertising, marketing, promotional information and materials, and other services related to Mississippi tourism resources and activities. In addition, any unexpended amounts remaining on June 30, 2025, in the Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Advertising Fund established in Section 57164 will be transferred and deposited into the Department of Tourism Advertising Fund. The bill also amends Section 27-65-75 to provide that the portion of sales tax revenue previously deposited into the Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Advertising Fund will be deposited into the Department of Tourism Advertising Fund.

The bill creates the Mississippi Tourism Association Marketing Advisory Board to assist the department in planning initiatives for advertising and promoting tourism in Mississippi. The board will be composed of the following members:

- The Executive Director of the Mississippi Tourism Association;
- The members of the Mississippi Tourism Association Board of Directors, composed through the bylaws of the association as being geographically and ethnically diverse members from the five tourism regions designated as the Hills, the Delta, the

Capital/River, the Pines and the Coastal regions of Mississippi, and three atlarge members;

- Three atlarge members appointed by the Governor;
 - One atlarge member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;
- and
- One atlarge member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The board will give input and advice to the department on marketing and advertising planning, but will have no executive powers at the department.

TRANSPORTATION

HB 150. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends section 93-5-27 to adjust weight limits for vehicles transporting concrete and solid waste. The bill increases the maximum allowable gross vehicle weight to 64,000 pounds for three-axle configurations and establishes a limit of 72,000 pounds for four-axle configurations. It also specifies maximum weight limits for axle distributions:

- **22,000 pounds for single axles**
- **48,000 pounds for two-axle tandems**
- **57,000 pounds for three-axle tandems**

These vehicles are restricted to operating within a 50-mile radius of their home base and must not exceed their rated capacity. Additionally, all such vehicles must have at least three axles, with three-axle vehicles required to have all wheels equipped with brakes. The bill prohibits these vehicles from traveling on federal interstate highways or on roads and bridges designated as incapable of carrying such loads by relevant authorities.

HB 638. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 65-1-8 authorize the Mississippi Transportation Commission to delegate its authority to enter into supplemental agreements for certain contracts previously approved by the commission, provided that such expenditures do not exceed \$250,000, increasing the spending authority on the previously capped \$100,000 limit.

HB 953. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 63-5-33 to extend the repealer of the provisions concerning the maximum allowable weight for vehicles operating under harvest permits and the requirement for

certain harvest permit holders to obtain prior approval for their designated routes for three years, to now stand repealed on July 1, 2028.

HB 1245. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill designates various segments of highways and bridges across the state as memorials to honor distinguished individuals and groups. The designations are as follows:

- **"Medal of Honor Trail":** Designates the entire segment of Interstate 22 traversing through DeSoto, Marshall, Benton, Union, Pontotoc, Lee and Itawamba Counties, Mississippi, along with a portion of U.S. Highway 78 in Byhalia, DeSoto County, extending to the Mississippi-Tennessee state line, as the "Medal of Honor Trail."

- **"MSgt. Bridgette R. Horn Memorial Highway":** Names a segment of Mississippi Highway 19 South in Neshoba County as the "MSgt. Bridgette R. Horn Memorial Highway," honoring her service and marking her "End of Watch" on November 19, 2020.

- **"Meaghan Bedford Reed Memorial Highway":** Designates a portion of Mississippi Highway 9 South in Pontotoc County in memory of Meaghan Bedford Reed.

- **"Badger-Malone-Igleharte Memorial Bridge":** Names the Strong River Bridge on Mississippi Highway 149 in Simpson County to honor the contributions of individuals with the surnames Badger, Malone, and Igleharte.

- **"Houston 'Dale' Kennedy Memorial Highway":** Designates a segment of Mississippi Highway 366 in Prentiss County in memory of Houston 'Dale' Kennedy.

- **"Jerry Wilburn Memorial Bridge":** Names the bridge on Regional Center Drive in Oxford, Lafayette County, in honor of Jerry Wilburn.

- **"Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge"**: Designates the bridge on U.S. Route 72 spanning Turner Creek in Corinth, Alcorn County, as a tribute to Vietnam veterans.

- **"Timothy Jones-Willie Jones-George Hilton Stephenson-Adam J. Sims-Johnny Lee Jones Memorial Road"**: Names a segment of County Road 14 in Jasper County in honor of these individuals.

- **Berean Children's Home Signage**: Mandates the erection of signage for the Berean Children's Home on U.S. Route 84 in Lincoln County, approaching the intersection with Mississippi Highway 583.

- **"Elizabeth 'Lake' Little Memorial Highway"**: Designates a segment of Mississippi Highway 82 East in Oktibbeha County in memory of Elizabeth "Lake" Little.

- **"Officer Liquori T. Tate Memorial Road"**: Names a segment of Blackjack Road in Oktibbeha County in honor of Officer Liquori T. Tate, honoring his service and marking his "End of Watch" on May 9, 2015.

- **"Winfred T. Aiken Memorial Highway"**: Designates a portion of Mississippi Highway 4 East in Tate County in memory of Winfred T. Aiken.

- **"Mary Kalene 'Katie' Pipkins Memorial Highway"**: Names a segment of Mississippi Highway 63 North in Leakesville, Greene County, in honor of Mary Kalene "Katie" Pipkins.

The bill also authorizes the State Highway Commission, acting on its own behalf, or on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Transportation, to donate a specific parcel of land, known as the "Marks Community Park," to the City of Marks, Mississippi. The conveyance is conditioned that no junkyards, shall be established or maintained on the described lands, and no signs, billboards, outdoor advertising structures or advertisement of any kind shall be hereafter erected, displayed,

placed or maintained upon or within the land. There is an exception allowed for signage that may be erected and maintained to advertise the sale, hire or lease of the property, or principal activities conducted on the land. The State of Mississippi retains all mineral rights to the property and MDOT is authorized to correct any discrepancies in the legal description of the property. Finally, any expenses incurred in conducting a survey of the property shall be paid for by the City of Marks, Mississippi.

SB 2260. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill establishes the Blue Envelope Program to enhance effective communication between law enforcement and drivers with autism, and directs the Department of Public Safety to administer the program and to provide for, assist in, and authorize the printing and assembling of a program package. In addition, the bill identifies who may request a program package and instructs the Department of Public Safety to provide information on its website regarding how to obtain a program package. The bill also provides how a driver may participate in the program.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

HB 3. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 37-101-241 to revise the composition of the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation (MCCA), in order to ensure representation from all postsecondary educational sectors registered with the commission. The commission will now include four additional members selected by the Executive Director of the Mississippi Community College Board, the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Executive Director of the Mississippi Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities, in their official capacities as permanent commission members, to represent: public community and junior colleges, universities, private colleges and proprietary schools. The four additional members will each serve a term of three years.

SB 2216. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 37-101-15 to remove the date of repeal on the provision of law authorizing the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning to administer and approve contracts for the construction and maintenance of buildings and facilities owned by the institutions which are funded, in whole or in part, by general obligation bonds of the State of Mississippi at institutions designated annually by the board as being capable to procure and administer all such contracts.

SB 2517. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill amends the Mississippi Intercollegiate Athletics Compensation Rights Act.

Section 37-97-103 is amended to define "athletics financial aid agreement," "athletics-related revenue," and "revenue sharing agreement."

Additionally, the bill amends Section 37-97-105 to allow an institution to share a portion of the institution's athletics-related revenue with a student-athlete or compensate a student-athlete for publicity rights. Further, amendments require that a student-athlete have signed an athletics financial aid agreement with the institution prior to making any agreement with a third-party for compensation for the use of a student-athlete's publicity rights. The bill also amends provisions of Section 37-97-107 to include student-athletes who have given notice to their institutions of an intent to transfer. Additionally, the amendment to this section prohibits postsecondary institutions from using funds appropriated from the State General Fund to share revenue or compensate student-athletes for their publicity rights.

Finally, the bill amends Section 37-97-109 to prohibit individuals, entities and postsecondary institutions from offering money or sharing revenue with a student-athlete currently enrolled or committed to a postsecondary institution in an effort to recruit or persuade them to transfer to a different school, unless that athlete has officially declared their intent to transfer under recognized rules. Additionally the amendments to this section stipulate that a person or entity who violates the bill is liable to the postsecondary educational institution where the student-athlete is enrolled or has signed an athletics financial aid agreement. Lawsuits may be initiated in a state court where the initiating institution is located. By giving or offering to share revenue or compensate a student-athlete enrolled at the university, the parties also consent to the personal jurisdiction of the state court.

SB 2518. Effective on passage. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill requires the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning to develop and report to the Legislature policies, procedures and a list of recommended legislative changes for the purpose of promoting and completing public-private partnerships between institutions of higher learning and private entities for long-term leases. These leases shall include projects for developing buildings, housing, parking garage facilities, dining halls, and/or other retail spaces. Such report shall be made to the Legislature on or before October 1, 2025.

Additionally, the bill amends Section 31-11-3 to increase the amount of available bond funds that DFA is authorized to transfer to each community college requesting to be exempt from DFA control and supervision for repair, renovation, and improvement of existing facilities owned by the community colleges up to \$3,000,000. This increase in amount shall stand repealed on July 1, 2028.

SB 2519. Effective on passage. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill authorizes the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, acting on behalf of the University of Mississippi, to enter into a long-term lease of five parcels of real property. Such lease shall be for a period not to exceed 45 years with two additional options for renewal periods not to exceed ten years and one additional option for a renewal period not to exceed five years. Such lease may be entered into for the purposes of developing buildings, housing, parking garage facilities, dining halls and/or other retail developments, and/or other spaces for the benefit of the university. The university is authorized to negotiate all aspects of the lease or sublease with the approval of the IHL

Board. Furthermore, all proceeds derived from agreements shall be deposited into a special fund and expended only for the use and benefit of the university. At the end of the lease, the property shall be reverted to the university. The State of Mississippi shall retain all mineral rights, and DFA is authorized to correct any discrepancies in the property descriptions included in this act.

SB 2525. Effective on passage. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 75-60-5 to include the accurate nomenclature of the new joint Board of Cosmetology and Barbering in a list of exceptions to Chapter 60 of Title 75. Furthermore, Section 75-60-5 is also amended to clarify that nonvocational schools are exempt from registering with the Commission on Proprietary School and College Registration.

SB 2526. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 37-103-25 to allow nonresident students who are under Section 702 of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 to fully participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program and receive funds. It stipulates that nonresident veterans who qualify for Yellow Ribbon Program funds shall be charged nonresident tuition provided by the institution or community and junior college.

WAYS AND MEANS

HB 1. Sections 1 through 13 and Sections 25 through 29 effective 7/1/25, Sections 15 through 24 effective 3/1/26. Signed 3/27/25.

This bill revises various sections of law relating to income tax, sales tax, use tax, fuel excise taxes, and the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi.

Income tax

The bill amends Section 27-7-5 to reduce the state income tax on individuals for income in excess of \$10,000 as follows:

- For calendar year 2027, a rate of 3.75%;
- For calendar year 2028, a rate of 3.5%;
- For calendar year 2029, a rate of 3.25%; and
- For calendar year 2030 and all calendar years thereafter, except as otherwise provided below, a rate of 3%.

The bill provides a method for determining whether the state income tax on individuals for income in excess of \$10,000 will be reduced below 3%. For calendar year 2031 and any calendar year thereafter, if the Working CashStabilization Reserve Fund is fully funded, the income tax imposed on all taxable income of individuals in excess of \$10,000 will be reduced by a percentage as indicated below, depending on the percentage by which the Adjusted General Fund Revenue Collections for a fiscal year (beginning with fiscal year 2029) exceed the Appropriations for the following fiscal year (beginning with fiscal year 2030):

- If the excess is at least 0.85%, but less than 1%, of the cost of a 1% cut, the tax will be reduced by 0.2%;
- If the excess is at least 1%, but less than 1.15%, of the cost of a 1% cut, the tax will be reduced by 0.25%; and

- If the excess is at least 1.15% of the cost of a 1% cut, the tax will be reduced by 0.3%.

The bill provides the following definitions for purposes of determining future income tax rate reductions:

- "Adjusted General Fund Revenue Collections" means State General Fund revenue collections adjusted by removing any nonrecurring State General Fund revenue collections, which figure shall be provided annually to the Commissioner of Revenue by the Legislative Budget Office on or before October 1 for the prior fiscal year (beginning October 1, 2029, for fiscal year 2029 revenue collections) and presented at the next meeting of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

- "Appropriations" means the total amount contained in all deficit appropriations bills that are recurring expenses in State Support Funds and all General Fund appropriation bills passed into law, but not including any additional appropriations in excess of statutory required employer rate for the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi, which figure shall be provided annually to the Commissioner of Revenue by the Legislative Budget Office on or before October 1 for the current fiscal year (beginning October 1, 2029, for fiscal year 2030 appropriations) and presented at the next meeting of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

- "Cost of a 1% cut" means the reduction in individual income tax collections that would result from a 1% reduction in the tax on all taxable income of individuals in excess of \$10,000, which figure shall be provided annually by the Commissioner of Revenue to the Legislative Budget Office on or before December 15, based on data from the prior calendar year (beginning December 15, 2029, for calendar year 2028); however, if any filing extensions were granted by the commissioner under

Section 27750, the commissioner shall provide the Legislative Budget Office with an updated cost of a 1% cut before the end of the next regular legislative session.

Sales tax and use tax

The bill amends Section 27-65-17 to reduce the tax rate on retail sales of groceries to 5% from and after July 1, 2025. It also amends Section 27-65-75 to revise various diversion percentages for sales tax revenue collected from sales of groceries after the reduction of the tax rate on these sales.

The bill amends Section 27-67-31 to revise the distribution of use tax revenue after the reduction of the sales tax on groceries. The distribution rate of 15% to municipalities and 15% to counties for infrastructure is maintained, except that revenue collected from the use tax corresponding to the 5% grocery sales tax is distributed at the rate of 21% to municipalities and 21% to counties.

The bill amends Section 27-67-35 to provide that monies in a special fund consisting of use tax revenue distributions to be expended by municipalities for infrastructure also may be expended for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of buildings.

Fuel taxes

The bill amends Section 27-55-11 to increase the excise tax on gasoline (18¢ per gallon under the prior law) as follows:

- 21¢ per gallon from 7/1/25, through 6/30/26;
- 24¢ per gallon from 7/1/26, through 6/30/27; and
- 27¢ per gallon from 7/1/27, until the first day of the month immediately following the date upon which the Mississippi Transportation Commission and the State Treasurer make certain certifications under Section 65-39-35.

The bill also amends Sections 27-55-519 and 27-55-521 to make the same excise tax rate revisions for special fuels such as diesel fuel and kerosine.

Beginning July 1, 2029, and on July 1 of every other year thereafter, the excise tax rates will be adjusted by the percentage change in the yearly average of the National Highway Construction Cost Index issued by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration for the most recent twelvemonth published period ending December 31, compared to the base year average, which is the average for the twelvemonth period ending December 31, 2025, and rounded to the nearest whole cent. The maximum amount of increase in the excise tax rates will not exceed 1¢ per net gallon of gasoline or special fuel and will take effect every other year.

The bill amends Section 27-5-101 to provide for the apportionment of the revenue from the portion of the excise tax on gasoline and special fuels that exceeds 18¢ per gallon as follows:

- 23.25% will go to the Office of State Aid Road Construction;
- 2.75% will go to the Strategic Multi-Modal Investments Fund created in Section 65-1-901; and
- 74% will go to the Mississippi Department of Transportation for constructing, maintaining or improving segments of highways and bridges under its jurisdiction, and for operational improvements on such segments, in accordance with a project schedule as reported in the Three-Year Plan as adopted, amended by or reissued by the Mississippi Transportation Commission under Section 65-1-141.

The bill amends Section 27-65-75 to revise the distribution of revenue from the excise tax on gasoline and special fuels

that is apportioned under Section 27-5-101(ii)(a)1 and (iii) and deposited to the credit of the State Aid Road Fund as follows:

On or before 9/15/25, and monthly thereafter through 8/15/26, \$5,000,000 or an amount equal to 23.25% of those funds, whichever is greater;

On or before 9/15/26, and monthly thereafter through 8/15/27, \$6,500,000 or an amount equal to 23.25% of those funds, whichever is greater; and

On or before 9/15/27, and monthly thereafter, \$8,000,000 or an amount equal to 23.25% of those funds, whichever is greater.

The \$4,000,000 of revenue from the excise tax on gasoline and special fuels allocated and deposited monthly to the credit of the State Aid Road Fund under the prior law will continue through August 15, 2026.

Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi

The bill creates a new tier in the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi (system) for employees becoming members of the system on or after March 1, 2026, which will have a defined benefit plan component and a defined contribution plan component meeting the requirements of Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code. A portion of the employee's contributions will be deposited into the employee's defined contribution plan account, and in addition, the employer may elect to contribute an amount up to the maximum pretax amount allowable under federal law for plans under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code. Members will be vested immediately in the defined contribution plan. The Board of Trustees of the system (board) may establish a defined contribution, qualified plan under which a portion of the employee's mandatory contributions will be deposited and which meets all requirements

under federal and state law. The administration of the defined contribution plan will be under the direction of the system.

Each participating member will direct the investment of the individual's accumulated employer and employee contributions and earnings to one or more investment choices within available categories of investment provided by the board. The board will provide an investment menu of investment options. In establishing the investment options, the board will include predetermined investment portfolio options constructed to reflect different risk profiles that automatically reallocate and rebalance contributions as a participating member ages, and allow a participating member to construct an investment portfolio using some or all of the investment options.

The bill amends Section 25-11-103 to revise the definition of "average compensation" to mean, for persons who became members of the system on or after March 1, 2026, the average of the eight highest consecutive years of earned compensation reported for an employee in a fiscal or calendar year period, or of the last 96 consecutive months of earned compensation reported for an employee, whichever is greater. It also revises the definition of "member" to provide that if a member of the system withdrew from state service and received a refund of the amount of the accumulated contributions to the credit of the member in the annuity savings account before March 1, 2026, and the person reenters state service and becomes a member of the system again on or after March 1, 2026, the member will be considered to have become a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, and may not receive creditable service for service rendered before March 1, 2026.

The bill amends Section 25-11-109 to limit the circumstances for which creditable service may be awarded for

employees becoming members of system on or after March 1, 2026, as follows:

- For anyone who becomes a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, no service credit will be awarded for unused leave;

- For any elected official who becomes a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, no service credit will be awarded for leave;

- Anyone who becomes a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, is not eligible to receive creditable service for service rendered in another state as a public employee of such other state, or a political subdivision, public education system or other governmental instrumentality thereof, or service rendered as a teacher in American overseas dependent schools conducted by the Armed Forces of the United States for children of citizens of the United States residing in areas outside the continental United States; and

- Anyone who becomes a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, and who receives, or has received, professional leave without compensation for professional purposes directly related to the employment in state service is not eligible to receive creditable service for the period of professional leave without compensation.

The bill amends Section 25-11-111 to provide that:

- Any member who became a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, upon withdrawal from service upon or after attaining the age of 62 who has completed at least eight years of membership service, or upon withdrawal from service regardless of age who has completed at least 35 years of creditable service, will be entitled to receive a retirement allowance;

- Any member who became a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, whose withdrawal from service occurs before attaining the age of 62 who has completed eight or more years of membership service and has not received a refund of his accumulated contributions, will be entitled to receive a retirement allowance, beginning upon attaining the age of 62, of the amount earned and accrued at the date of withdrawal from service; and

- Any member who became a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, upon withdrawal from service upon or after attaining the age of 65 who has completed at least eight years of membership service, or upon withdrawal from service at the age of 62 who has completed at least 30 years of creditable service, or upon withdrawal from service regardless of age who has completed at least 35 years of creditable service, will be entitled to an annual retirement allowance which will consist of a member's annuity, which will be equal to 1% of the average compensation for each year of creditable service. In the case of the retirement of any member who has attained the age of 62 but has not completed at least 30 years of creditable service, the total annual retirement allowance will be reduced by an actuarial equivalent factor for each year of creditable service below 30 years or the number of years in age that the member is below age 65, whichever is less.

The bill amends Section 25-11-112 to provide that a member who became a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, is not entitled to an annual cost-of-living adjustment for a retirement allowance. However, the Legislature may provide such a benefit for a specific year. It also amends Section 25-11-115 to provide that any member who became a member of the system on

or after March 1, 2026, will not be eligible for a partial lumpsum distribution.

The bill amends Section 25-11-123 to provide that for any employee who became a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, the employee's contribution will be 9% of earned compensation, with 4% of such earned compensation to be deposited into the annuity savings account, and the remaining 5% of earned compensation to be deposited into the employee's defined contribution account. In addition, for each member who became a member of the system on or after March 1, 2026, except for any payment made into the member's defined contribution account, the employer's monthly payment will be applied to the system's accrued liability contribution fund.

The bill amends Section 25-11-305 to provide that membership in the Supplemental Legislative Retirement Plan will apply only to those state legislators and Presidents of the Senate who are elected before March 1, 2026. It also provides that if a member of the Supplemental Legislative Retirement Plan withdrew from state service and received a refund of the amount of the accumulated contributions to the credit of the member before March 1, 2026, and the person reenters state service on or after March 1, 2026, the member will be considered to have become a member of the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi on or after March 1, 2026, and may not receive creditable service for service rendered before March 1, 2026.

HB 733. See summary under Municipalities.

HB 812. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill amends Section 27-33-75 to extend the homestead exemption from all ad valorem taxes for homeowners who are honorably discharged American veterans and 90 years of age to

the unremarried surviving spouses of such homeowners. It also extends the homestead exemption for qualified homeowners classified as totally disabled under the federal Social Security Act, Railroad Retirement Act, or any other federal act approved by the Department of Revenue to the unremarried surviving spouses of such homeowners.

HB 916. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/20/25.

This bill requires the Commissioner of Revenue to establish directories for purposes related to regulating the sale of cigarettes and ENDS products. For purposes of the portions of the bill relating to ENDS products, "ENDS product":

- Means any noncombustible product that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit, or other electronic, chemical, or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, to produce vapor from nicotine in a solution;
- Includes a consumable nicotine liquid solution suitable for use in an ENDS product, whether sold with the product or separately; and
- Does not include any product regulated as a drug or device under Chapter V of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 USC Section 351 et seq.).

Cigarettes

The bill provides that before September 1 of each year, beginning in 2025, each cigarette manufacturer whose cigarettes are sold in this state, whether directly or through an importer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer or similar intermediary, must execute and deliver a certification to the Commissioner of Revenue (commissioner), on a form and in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, certifying that the manufacturer is in compliance with the provisions of the bill. Each certification must include the following information:

- A list of the manufacturer's brand families that are sold in Mississippi, which must be updated by executing and delivering to the commissioner a supplemental certification no later than 30 days before any addition to or modification of the list is to take effect;

- Verification that the manufacturer possesses all orders required by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which must be current, for the manufacture and sale of the cigarettes included in the manufacturer's brand families;

- Verification that the manufacturer is registered to do business in this state or has a resident agent for service of process, as required under the bill; and

- All other information and materials specifically requested by the commissioner in the course of enforcing the certification requirements of the bill.

Each annual certification form must be accompanied by a fee in an amount as may be prescribed by the commissioner.

A manufacturer required to submit a certification form must notify the commissioner of any material change to the certification form within 30 days of the change. A material change includes, but is not limited to, any order or action by the FDA or any court which affects the ability of the manufacturer's cigarettes to be distributed for commercial distribution or sale in the United States.

A manufacturer that falsely represents any information required by a certification form is guilty of a misdemeanor for each false representation.

Beginning on October 1, 2025, the commissioner will maintain and make publicly available on the Department of Revenue (department) website a state cigarette directory listing all cigarette manufacturers that have provided current and

accurate certification forms and all brand families that are listed in each manufacturer's certification. The commissioner will update the directory at least monthly to ensure accuracy and will establish a process to provide retailers, distributors, wholesalers and importers notice of the initial publication of the directory and subsequently, of changes made to the directory in the prior month.

Neither a manufacturer nor its brand family may be included or retained in the directory if the commissioner determines that:

- The manufacturer failed to provide a complete and accurate certification;
 - The manufacturer submitted a certification that does not comply with the requirements of the bill;
 - The manufacturer failed to include with its certification the payment of the required fee;
 - The manufacturer sold cigarettes in Mississippi required to be certified during a period when either the manufacturer or the cigarettes were not certified and listed on the directory;
- or
- The information provided by the manufacturer in its certification is determined by the commissioner to contain false information or material misrepresentations or omissions.

The commissioner may not remove a manufacturer or its brand family from the directory before the manufacturer has received notice of the intended removal from the commissioner setting forth the reasons for the action. Upon receipt of the required notice, the manufacturer, no later than 15 business days from the date of service of the notice, must cure the deficiencies or otherwise establish that the manufacturer or its brand family should be included in the directory.

Beginning October 1, 2025, or on the date that the commissioner first makes the directory available for public inspection on the department's website, whichever is later, cigarettes not included in the directory may not be sold for retail sale in Mississippi, either directly or through an importer, distributor, wholesaler, retailer or similar intermediary.

A retailer has 60 days from the date that the commissioner first makes the directory available for inspection on the department's website to either sell cigarettes in the retailer's inventory which are not included in the directory or remove those cigarettes from inventory. Upon the expiration of the initial 60 days after the first date the directory is available on the department's website, a retailer has 30 days following the date of removal of a manufacturer or its brand family from the directory to either sell the cigarettes in the retailer's inventory on the date of removal from the directory or remove those cigarettes from inventory.

An importer, distributor or wholesaler has 60 days from the date that the commissioner first makes the directory available for inspection on the department's website to remove those cigarettes intended for sale in the state from its inventory. Upon the expiration of the initial 60 days after the first date the directory is available on the department's website, an importer, distributor or wholesaler has 30 days following the date of removal of a manufacturer or its brand family from the directory to remove those cigarettes intended for sale in the state from its inventory.

Cigarettes that must be sold or removed from inventory because the cigarettes are not included in, or are removed from, the directory may not be purchased or sold for retail sale in Mississippi, either directly or through an importer,

distributor, wholesaler, retailer or similar intermediary, and are subject to seizure, forfeiture and destruction.

In addition to the seizure and destruction of cigarettes being made available for sale in violation of the provisions of the bill, the following penalties apply:

- A retailer, distributor, wholesaler or importer who sells or offers for sale cigarettes in Mississippi which are not included in the directory is subject to a civil penalty in an amount not more than \$500 per day for each style of cigarette in a brand family which is offered for sale in violation of the provisions of the bill until the offending product is removed from the market or properly listed on the directory.

- For a second violation, whether involving the same or a different style of cigarettes in a brand family, by the same retailer, distributor, wholesaler or importer occurring within a period of 12 months, the civil penalty will be an amount not less than \$750 nor more than \$1,000 per day for each style of cigarette in a brand family which is offered for sale in violation of the provisions of the bill until the offending product is removed from the market or properly listed on the directory.

- For a third violation, whether involving the same or a different style of cigarettes in a brand family, by the same retailer, distributor, wholesaler or importer occurring within a period of 12 months after the initial violation, the civil penalty will be an amount not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$1,500 per day for each style of cigarette in a brand family which is offered for sale in violation of the provisions of the bill until the offending product is removed from the market or properly listed on the directory.

A manufacturer whose cigarettes are not listed in the directory and who causes the products that are not listed to be sold for retail sale in Mississippi, whether directly or through an importer, distributor, wholesaler, retailer or similar intermediary, is subject to a civil penalty of \$10,000 per day for each style of cigarette in a brand family which is offered for sale in violation of the provisions of the bill until the offending product is removed from the market or properly listed on the directory.

Before January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the commissioner will provide a report to the Legislature on the status of the directory, manufacturers and cigarettes included in the directory, revenue and expenditures related to administration of the provisions of the bill, and enforcement activities undertaken pursuant to the bill.

ENDS products

Before September 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, every manufacturer of an ENDS product that is sold for retail sale or for sale to a consumer in Mississippi, whether directly or through an importer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or similar intermediary or intermediaries, must execute and deliver to the commissioner a certification, under penalty of perjury on a form and in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, that the manufacturer is compliant with the provisions of the bill and that, for each ENDS product sold in Mississippi:

- The manufacturer has received a marketing granted order for the ENDS product from the FDA pursuant to 21 USC Section 387j;
- The manufacturer submitted a timely filed premarket tobacco product application for the ENDS product to the FDA pursuant to 21 USC Section 387j, and the application either

remains under review by the FDA or has received a denial order that has been and remains stayed by the FDA or court order, rescinded by the FDA, or vacated by a court; or

- The manufacturer is not required to submit an additional marketing granted order or premarket tobacco product application for the ENDS product, because the ENDS product merely reflects changes to the name, brand style, or packaging of an ENDS product that is covered under one of the above provisions.

The certification form must separately list each brand name, category (e.g., eliquid, power unit, device, eliquid cartridge, eliquid pod, disposable), product name, and flavor for each ENDS product that is sold in Mississippi, and must be accompanied by:

- A copy of:

The marketing granted order issued by the FDA pursuant to 21 USC Section 387j;

A copy of the acceptance letter issued by the FDA pursuant to 21 USC Section 387j for a timely filed premarket tobacco product application; or

A document issued by FDA or by a court confirming that the premarket tobacco product application has received a denial order that has been and remains stayed by FDA or court order, rescinded by FDA, or vacated by a court; and

- A payment of \$500 for each ENDS product each time a manufacturer submits an annual certification form for that ENDS product, but not to exceed \$15,000 annually per manufacturer.

A manufacturer required to submit a certification form must notify the commissioner within 30 calendar days of any material change to the certification form, including the issuance or denial of a marketing authorization or other order by the FDA pursuant to 21 USC Section 387j, or any other order or action by

the FDA or any court that affects the ability of the ENDS product to be introduced or delivered into interstate commerce for commercial distribution in the United States. To the extent that 21 USC Section 387j is amended, or subsequent regulations or other official federal guidance or formal policy statement is issued, changing compliance requirements or standards for an ENDS product to become federally compliant, a manufacturer of an ENDS product that is sold for retail sale in Mississippi must submit documentation to the commissioner substantiating compliance with the new federal requirements or standards within 30 days of the date compliance with such requirement or standard is mandated. Failure to substantiate compliance with new federal requirements or standards will be grounds for removal of the manufacturer and its ENDS products from the directory.

Beginning on October 1, 2025, the commissioner will maintain and make publicly available on the department's website a directory that lists all ENDS product manufacturers, brand names, categories (e.g., eliquid, eliquid cartridge, eliquid pod, disposable), product names, and flavors for which certification forms have been submitted and approved by the commissioner. The commissioner will update the directory at least monthly to ensure accuracy and will establish a process to provide manufacturers, licensed retailers, distributors, and wholesalers notice of the initial publication of the directory and changes made to the directory in the prior month.

Neither a manufacturer nor its ENDS products will be included or retained in the directory if the commissioner determines that any of the following apply:

- The manufacturer failed to provide a complete and accurate certification;

- The manufacturer submitted a certification that does not comply with the requirements of the bill;
- The manufacturer failed to include with its certification the payment of the required fee;
- The manufacturer sold ENDS products in Mississippi required to be certified during a period when either the manufacturer or the ENDS product had not been certified and listed on the directory; or
- The information provided by the manufacturer in its certification is determined by the commissioner to contain false information or contains material misrepresentations or omissions.

The commissioner may not remove a manufacturer or its ENDS products from the directory until at least 30 business days after the manufacturer has been given notice of an intended action setting forth the reasons therefor. The ENDS product manufacturer will have 15 business days from the date of service of the notice of the commissioner's intended action to cure the deficiencies or otherwise establish that the ENDS product manufacturer or its ENDS products should be included in the directory.

Retailers will have 30 days following the removal of a manufacturer or its ENDS products from the directory to sell ENDS products that were in the retailer's inventory as of the date of removal.

After 30 calendar days following removal from the directory, the ENDS product of a manufacturer identified in the notice of removal and intended for retail sale or for sale to a consumer in Mississippi is subject to seizure, forfeiture, and destruction by the department, the Mississippi Attorney General's office, or any law enforcement agency in the State of

Mississippi, and may not be purchased or sold for retail sale or for sale to a consumer in Mississippi.

Beginning on October 1, 2025, or on the date that the commissioner first makes the directory available for public inspection on the department's website, whichever is later, ENDS products not included in the directory, cannot be sold for retail sale in Mississippi, either directly or through an importer, distributor, wholesaler, retailer, or similar intermediary or intermediaries.

A retailer will have 60 days from the date that the commissioner first makes the directory available for inspection on the department's website to sell ENDS products that were in its inventory and not included in the directory or remove those ENDS products from inventory. A distributor or wholesaler will have 60 days from the date that the commissioner first makes the directory available for inspection on the department's website to remove those ENDS products intended for sale in the state from its inventory.

After 60 calendar days following publication of the directory, ENDS products not listed in the directory and intended for retail sale or for sale to a consumer in Mississippi are subject to seizure, forfeiture, and destruction by the department, the Mississippi Attorney General's office, or any law enforcement agency in the State of Mississippi, and may not be purchased or sold for retail sale or for sale to a consumer in Mississippi.

A manufacturer, retailer, distributor, wholesaler, or importer who sells or offers for sale an ENDS product for retail sale or for sale to a consumer in Mississippi that is not included in the directory will be subject to a criminal penalty imposed by the Mississippi Attorney General's office or a

district attorney. Each violation will be treated as a separate offense. A violation will be punishable as follows:

- For each individual ENDS product offered for sale in violation of the provisions of the bill until the offending ENDS product is removed from the market or until the offending ENDS product is properly listed on the directory, the penalty will be not more than \$500 per ENDS product per day.

- For a second violation of this type within a twelvemonth period, the penalty will be at least \$750, but not more than \$1,000, per ENDS product per day.

- For a third violation of this type within a twelvemonth period after the initial violation, the penalty will be at least \$1,000, but not more than \$1,500, per ENDS product per day.

- For any subsequent violation, the Attorney General or district attorney may bring an action in the appropriate state court to prevent a manufacturer, retailer, distributor, wholesaler, or importer from selling or offering to sell an ENDS product that is not included in the directory.

- If the ENDS product contains any controlled substance, including, but not limited to, fentanyl, that causes the recipient of such to require emergency medical care as a result of using the ENDS product, then the applicable penalty described above will be trebled, and any other penalty provided by law for the sale, possession, or furnishing of a controlled substance will be added.

A manufacturer whose ENDS products are not listed in the directory and who causes the ENDS products that are not listed to be sold for retail sale in Mississippi, whether directly or through an importer, distributor, wholesaler, retailer, or similar intermediary or intermediaries, is subject to a civil penalty of \$2,500 per day for each individual ENDS product

offered for sale in violation of the provisions of the bill until the offending ENDS product is removed from the market or until the offending ENDS product is properly listed on the directory. In addition, any manufacturer that falsely represents any information required by a certification form will be guilty of a misdemeanor for each false representation. A repeated violation of the provisions of the bill will also constitute a deceptive trade practice under Section 75245.

Before January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the commissioner will provide a report to the Legislature regarding the status of the directory, manufacturers and ENDS products included in the directory, revenue and expenditures related to administration of the provisions of the bill, and enforcement activities undertaken pursuant to the bill.

HB 920. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill authorizes the issuance of distinctive motor vehicle license tags to supporters of:

- The Declaration of Independence Center for the Study of American Freedom at the University of Mississippi;
- Mississippi Land Bank;
- LouisianaMississippiWest Tennessee District of Kiwanis International;
- National Guard Association of Mississippi;
- Mississippi College School of Law;
- Magnolia Honeybee Education Exchange;
- Jackson State Tigers 2024 HBCU National Champions; and
- Promoting Peace, accomplished through the cooperation between Promote Peace Foundation and Mississippi Rotary clubs.

The bill authorizes the issuance of a distinctive motor vehicle license tag to persons who are retired members of the

Commercial Transportation Enforcement Division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

The bill also extends the time for the following previously authorized distinctive motor vehicle license tags to meet the 300-tag presale requirement:

- Tags displaying the emblem of a public junior college or community college;
- Pascagoula High School; and
- Mississippi Sickle Cell Foundation.

Distinctive motor vehicle license tags authorized for supporters of Mississippi Land Bank are placed in the pilot program, whereby such tags may be issued after meeting a 100-tag presale requirement. However, until 300 of the tags are sold, the additional fee will be deposited into the Department of Revenue License Tag Acquisition Fund. After 300 tags are sold, the fee will be distributed as provided in the law authorizing the tags.

HB 961. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill:

- Extends to July 1, 2028, the date of the repealer on the sections of law that provide an income tax credit for taxpayers that use the port facilities at state, county and municipal ports for the export of cargo and require the Mississippi Development Authority to report annually to the Legislature regarding the impact of the tax credit.

- Extends to July 1, 2028, the date of the repealer on the sections of law that provide an income tax credit for taxpayers that use the facilities at public airports for the export or import of cargo and require the Mississippi Development Authority to report annually to the Legislature regarding the impact of the tax credit.

HB 964. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill extends to October 1, 2028, the date of the repealer on the sections of law that:

- Provide for the issuance of bonds by the Mississippi Business Finance Corporation to finance economic development projects in order to induce the location or expansion of certain businesses in this state; and
- Provide for a credit against state income taxes for debt service paid by companies under financing agreements entered into with the Mississippi Business Finance Corporation under the above provision.

HB 970. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 27-65-111 to extend to July 1, 2028, the date of the repealer on the sales tax exemption for sales of tangible personal property and services to the Mississippi's Toughest Kids Foundation for use in the construction, furnishing and equipping of buildings and related facilities and infrastructure at Camp Kamassa in Copiah County.

HB 972. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/20/25.

This bill amends Section 27-7-22.40 to extend to January 1, 2029, the date of the repealer on the income tax job credit for enterprises primarily engaged in providing inland water transportation of cargo on lakes, rivers and intracoastal waterways for each full-time employee employed by the enterprise in a Mississippi full-time job.

HB 1095. See summary under Marine Resources.

HB 1196. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 41316 to authorize the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District to participate in the Local

Governments and Rural Water Systems Improvements Revolving Loan and Grant Program administered by the State Department of Health.

HB 1201. Section 1 effective 1/1/25, remaining sections effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill requires the Secretary of State (SOS), in conjunction with the Department of Revenue, to establish a program to provide income tax incentives for developers to develop eligible and blighted property such as buildings and other facilities and to place the developed property into use, either as an owneroccupied dwelling or a commercial building.

The following terms are defined for purposes of the program:

- "Blighted" means a property located in Mississippi that is declared by the governing authorities of the municipality or county in which the property is located to be unsafe, due to the physical condition of the property, to an extent that the property is an economic burden on the community that cannot be expected to be reversed absent redevelopment. Blighted property includes, but is not limited to: buildings in which it is unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work; conditions that prevent or substantially hinder the viable use or capacity of buildings or lots; and depreciated or stagnant property value.

- "Eligible property" means property located in Mississippi that is tax forfeited property certified to the state, has been declared as blighted, and will be offered or used for residential or business purposes.

A developer cannot have been the owner of the property when it was sold for taxes.

A developer desiring to participate in the incentive program must submit an application to the SOS. The application must contain a development plan that provides a description of:

- The property to be developed that meets the requirements of the program;
- Evidence that the property has been declared blighted;
- The type of work the developer will perform as part of development of the property and the purpose or purposes for which the property will be placed into use after development;
- The budget to perform the development; and
- Any other information requested by the SOS.

A taxpayer incurring costs and expenses for the rehabilitation of eligible property is entitled to a rebate or credit against income taxes in an amount equal to 25% of the total costs and expenses of rehabilitation incurred after January 1, 2026, subject to the following conditions being met:

- The costs and expenses associated with rehabilitation exceed \$50,000 for an owneroccupied dwelling or \$100,000 for a commercial structure;
- The actual expenses incurred in rehabilitating the building site are between 80% and 125% of the initial estimated expenses approved by the SOS;
- The project costs were certified by a licensed third party;
- The project was completed within 36 months of the application submission; and
- The property was purchased by an owneroccupant who is not the developer, in the case of a singlefamily dwelling, or sold or leased to a commercial tenant that is not the developer, in the case of a commercial building.

If the amount of the tax credit exceeds the total state income tax liability for the credit year, the amount that exceeds the total state income tax liability may be carried forward for the 10 succeeding tax years. In lieu of claiming a tax credit, the taxpayer may elect to claim a rebate in the amount of 75% of the amount that would be eligible to claim as a credit.

The maximum aggregate amount of rebates and credits awarded cannot exceed \$2,000,000 in any one calendar year, and the aggregate amount of rebates or credits that may be awarded under the program cannot exceed \$10,000,000.

The rebate or credit received by a taxpayer is subject to recapture if the property is not sold or otherwise put back into productive use with an owner/occupier that is not the developer in the case of a singlefamily dwelling or sold or leased to a commercial tenant that is not the developer in the case of a commercial building, or if the property is declared blighted by an appropriate governing authority within three years of certification of completion.

The bill also requires the SOS, in conjunction with the Department of Revenue, to establish a program to provide incentive payments for developers to develop eligible property such as buildings and other facilities and to place the developed property into use, which will increase the value of the property and promote economic development and the public interest.

The following terms are defined for purposes of the program:

- "Blighted" means a property located in Mississippi that is declared by the governing authorities of the municipality or county in which the property is located to be unsafe, due to the physical condition of the property, to an extent that the

property is an economic burden on the community that cannot be expected to be reversed absent redevelopment. Blighted property includes, but is not limited to: buildings in which it is unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work; conditions that prevent or substantially hinder the viable use or capacity of buildings or lots; and depreciated or stagnant property value.

- "Clerk" means the municipal clerk or county chancery clerk, as the case may be.

- "Eligible property" means tax forfeited property located in Mississippi that has been certified to the state, has been declared as blighted, and will be offered or used for residential or business purposes.

- "Tax assessor" means the tax assessor of the county in which the eligible property is located.

A developer cannot have been the owner of the property when it was sold for taxes.

A developer desiring to participate in the incentive program must submit an application to the SOS. The application must contain a development plan that provides:

- A description of:

- The property to be developed;

- The purpose or purposes for which the property is being used at the time the application is submitted;

- Evidence that the property has been declared blighted;

- The type of work the developer will perform as part of development of the property, the purpose or purposes for which the property will be placed into use after development, and whether the development of the property will be complete before being placed into use, or developed in phases and placed in use in phases before development is complete;

The budget to perform the development; and

- Any other information requested by the SOS.

The SOS will review an application and determine whether the developer is eligible to participate in the program. If the SOS approves the developer for participation in the program, the SOS will issue a certificate of participation to the developer for the development plan and also provide a copy of the certificate of participation and development plan to the clerk.

After receipt of a certificate of participation and development plan, the tax assessor will certify the assessed value of the property to be developed under the development plan according to its most recently determined assessed value. For purposes of the program, the assessed value is the original assessed value of the property. Each year thereafter, the tax assessor will certify the assessed value of the property described in the development plan and this assessed value will be known as the current assessed value of the property.

Beginning with the first year that property in a development plan is developed and placed into use for which it is developed, whether completely or in phases, and subject to ad valorem taxation based on such use, any amount by which the current assessed value of the property exceeds the original assessed value of the property will be known as the enhanced assessed value of the property.

For property in a development plan for which development is complete when the property is first placed into use after development, the tax assessor will certify annually the amount of the enhanced assessed value of the property to the municipality and county for the first year that the property is placed into use and subject to ad valorem tax based on that use and for each of the next succeeding four years. For each year of these years, the clerk will remit annually to the SOS an

amount equal to the revenue derived from the ad valorem tax levied for general fund purposes by the municipality or county on the enhanced assessed value of the property.

For property in a development plan that is developed in phases and placed into use in phases:

- The tax assessor will certify annually the amount of the enhanced assessed value of the property to the municipality and county for the first year of those years that the property is placed into use and subject to ad valorem tax based on that use and for each of the next succeeding years that the property is developed and placed into use in phases until the development is complete and the property is placed into use for which it was developed, and the clerk will:

For the first year of such years, remit to the SOS an amount equal to the revenue derived from the ad valorem tax levied for general fund purposes by the municipality or county on the enhanced assessed value of the property for such year; and

For each year of the succeeding years after the first year through the first year after the development of the property is complete and the property is subject to ad valorem tax based on the use for which it was developed, remit to the SOS an amount equal to the revenue derived from the ad valorem tax levied for general fund purposes by the municipality or county on the amount of any increase of the enhanced assessed value of the property for the applicable year from the enhanced assessed value of the property for the immediately preceding year.

- After the property has completed development according to a development plan and has been placed into use for which it was developed, the tax assessor will certify annually the amount of

the enhanced assessed value of the property to the municipality and county for the first year that the property is placed into use and subject to ad valorem tax based on that use and for each of the next succeeding four years. For each of those years, the clerk will remit annually to the SOS an amount equal to the revenue derived from the ad valorem tax levied by the municipality or county for general fund purposes on the enhanced assessed value of the property.

The SOS will deposit the funds received from the clerk into a special fund created in the bill and will allocate and use monies in the special fund for the purpose of making incentive payments as follows:

- For property that has completed development according to a plan and the property is purchased by an owner/occupier that is not the developer in the case of a singlefamily dwelling or is sold or leased to a commercial tenant that is not the developer in the case of a commercial building, the SOS will disburse to the developer an incentive payment for an amount equal to the amount remitted to the SOS by the clerk in each year that the remittances are made, not to exceed an aggregate of 25% of the approved budget for the project.

- For property that is developed according to a plan in phases and placed into use in phases:

The SOS will disburse to the developer for each applicable year an amount equal to the amount remitted to the SOS by the clerk; and

After the property has completed development according to the plan and has been placed into use, the SOS will disburse an amount equal to the amount remitted to the SOS by the clerk in each year that the remittances are made, not to

exceed an aggregate of 25% of the approved budget for the project.

HB 1341. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill extends to July 1, 2026, the date of the repealer on the Mississippi Health Care Industry Zone Act. It also:

- Extends the date of the reverter on the provisions of law that authorize county boards of supervisors and municipal governing authorities to grant an ad valorem tax exemption to health care industry facilities as defined in the Mississippi Health Care Industry Zone Act,

- Extends the date of the reverter on the provisions of law that authorize county boards of supervisors and municipal governing authorities to grant a feeinlieu of ad valorem taxes to qualified businesses as defined in the Mississippi Health Care Industry Zone Act which meet minimum criteria established by the Mississippi Development Authority, and

- Extends the date of the repealer on the provision of law that exempts from sales taxation sales of materials used in the construction of, or addition or improvements to, a health care industry facility as defined in the Mississippi Health Care Industry Zone Act and certain sales of machinery and equipment to be used in the facility.

HB 1461. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill amends Section 571301 to revise the definition of "capital improvements" for purposes of the Local Governments Capital Improvements Revolving Loan Program to include any project determined to be a capital improvement by the Mississippi Development Authority. It also amends Section 571303 to extend to July 1, 2029, the date of the repealer on the provision of law that authorizes the Mississippi Development

Authority to use certain monies in the Local Governments Capital Improvements Revolving Loan Fund for ordinary and necessary general support of the authority.

HB 1644. Section 3 of this act shall take effect and be in force from and after 7/1/25, and the remaining sections of this act shall take effect and be in force from and after 1/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill:

- Amends Section 57875 to revise the definition of "equipment used in the deployment of broadband technologies" for purposes of the income tax credit and corporation franchise tax credit available to telecommunications enterprises for investments made in such equipment before July 1, 2030 (July 1, 2025 under the prior law), and for purposes of the ad valorem tax exemption for such equipment placed in service.

The bill provides that for calendar year 2025, and for each calendar year thereafter, the aggregate amount of income tax and corporation franchise tax credits that may be claimed during a calendar year cannot exceed \$15,000,000, and for credits claimed during a calendar year, no more than \$1,500,000 of the credits may be claimed by a single telecommunications enterprise. For calendar year 2025, and for each calendar year thereafter, a telecommunications enterprise may file the cost of equipment used in the deployment of broadband technologies with the Department of Revenue between March 1 and March 20 for the expenditures incurred in the preceding calendar year. If the total credits requested exceed the annual aggregate cap of \$15,000,000, each telecommunications enterprise will be allocated credits on a prorated basis. No credit will be allowed if the equipment was paid for, or its cost was

reimbursed by, funds made available under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program.

Amends Section 57-87-7 to provide that:

- Equipment used in the deployment of fixed broadband technologies by a telecommunications enterprise that is placed in service after June 30, 2025, and before July 1, 2030, and capable of transmission at average speeds per customer at least equal to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) fixed broadband speed benchmarks in both directions, will be exempt from ad valorem taxation for a period of 10 years after the date the equipment is placed in service, or for such period the equipment remains capable of speeds at least equal to the FCC's thencurrent fixed broadband speed benchmarks in both directions, whichever period is less,

- Equipment used in the deployment of mobile broadband technologies by a telecommunications enterprise that is placed in service after June 30, 2025, and before July 1, 2030, and capable of transmission at average speeds not less than 35 megabits per second downlink and three megabits per second uplink, will be exempt from ad valorem taxation for a period of five years after the date the equipment is placed in service.

A taxpayer seeking an ad valorem tax exemption for equipment must submit a certified, sworn description of the equipment, including transmission speeds, to the tax assessor of the county in which the equipment is located, on or before April 1 of the first assessment year in which the exemption is being claimed.

- Amends Section 27-65-101 to revise the definition of "equipment used in the deployment of broadband technologies" for purposes of the industrial sales tax exemptions for sales of such equipment. Sales of the equipment must be made before July

1, 2030 (July 1, 2025 under the prior law) in order for the sales tax exemptions to apply.

HB 1878. Effective 1/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill amends Section 27-35-50 to provide for the manner of determining the true value of rural structures for ad valorem tax assessment purposes. The bill defines "rural structure" to mean any rural secondary building covered in Chapter V of the Department of Revenue appraisal manual, as revised December 2020. The term "rural structure" includes, but is not limited to, silos, grain storage bins, barns and poultry houses, but does not include rural dwellings.

The true value of any rural structure appraised before January 1, 2025, will be recalculated for 2025 and subsequent tax years as follows, beginning with a reappraisal of the true value as of the year of the initial appraisal:

- In arriving at the true value of a rural structure in operation on or before January 1, 2025, the assessor will follow the guidelines in the Department of Revenue appraisal manual in use immediately prior to the version revised December 2020. In arriving at the true value of a rural structure placed in operation after January 1, 2025, the assessor will follow the guidelines in the most current version of the Department of Revenue appraisal manual.

- After the initial appraisal, the true value of a rural structure will be based solely on depreciation on a straightline basis at a rate of 7% per year. For as long as the poultry house remains usable and in production, net depreciation will not fall below 20% of the original true value. Once the 20% threshold is reached, no further depreciation will be applied for the duration of the operational life of the poultry house.

- Starting with land roll 2009, an adjustment of 45% for economic obsolescence will be applied to all poultry houses used in commercial farming operations.

HB 1896. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill imposes an excise tax on each person or dealer in kratom product upon the sale, use, consumption, handling or distribution in the State of Mississippi, at the rate of 25% of the manufacturer's list price. The bill defines the following terms for purposes of the tax:

- "Kratom leaf" means the leaf of the kratom plant (*Mitragyna speciosa*) in fresh or dehydrated (dried) form and subjected to no postharvest processing other than:

Drying or size reduction (e.g., by cutting, milling, or similar procedure); and

Cleaning or sterilization through the application of heat, steam, pressurization, irradiation or other standard treatments applied to food ingredients.

- "Kratom leaf extract" means the material extracted from kratom leaves via application of a solvent consisting of water, ethanol or food grade carbon dioxide, or any other solvent allowed by federal or state regulation to be used in the manufacturing of a food ingredient.

- "Kratom product" means a food or dietary supplement that consists of or contains kratom leaf or kratom leaf extract.

The bill also amends Section 27-69-15 to revise provisions relating to the remittance of the tobacco excise tax on products purchased outside this state upon which the Mississippi tax has not been imposed as follows:

- Any person engaged in this state in the business of making wholesale or retail sales of other tobacco products including cigars, smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff or any

other tobacco products except cigarettes and heated tobacco products who purchases such products from a wholesaler or manufacturer outside this state upon which the Mississippi tobacco excise tax has not been imposed, will be responsible for remitting the Mississippi tobacco excise tax directly to the Department of Revenue by the twentieth of the month following the month the sale occurred of the other tobacco products by such person to a Mississippi customer.

- Any person making retail purchases of other tobacco products including cigars, smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff or any other tobacco products except cigarettes and heated tobacco products for personal use in this state who purchased such other tobacco products from outside this state upon which the Mississippi tobacco excise tax has not been imposed, will be responsible for remitting the Mississippi tobacco excise tax directly to the Department of Revenue within 48 hours after the purchase of the other tobacco products.

HB 1897. Effective on passage. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill authorizes the Boards of Supervisors of Tate, Panola, Lafayette and Yalobusha Counties to form the Northwest Regional Alliance (NWRA) for the purpose of engaging in economic development projects in those counties. The boards of supervisors of those counties each are authorized: to adopt any and all lawful resolutions, orders and/or ordinances; to execute such documents, contracts, leases, certificates and indentures; and to do and perform any and all acts and things not otherwise prohibited by law which are necessary, useful or convenient to aid and cooperate with the mission of the NWRA. The boards of supervisors of those counties also may appropriate funds to the NWRA from any available funds to assist the NWRA in carrying out the provisions of the bill.

The Boards of Supervisors of Tate, Panola, Lafayette and Yalobusha Counties may levy a special ad valorem tax annually in an amount not to exceed two mills on all taxable property within their county to carry out the provisions of the bill. A tax levied pursuant to the bill will be in addition to all other tax levies provided by law and may be levied only for specific purposes and must cease to be levied when the debt is eliminated for the specific purpose for which it was levied.

The bill also authorizes the Boards of Supervisors of Tate, Panola, Lafayette and Yalobusha Counties each to issue general obligation bonds of such counties for the purposes of the bill. Each county is authorized to issue its general obligation bonds in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$5,000,000 to finance a portion of the costs of a project. Any bonds issued under the bill will not constitute an indebtedness within the meaning of any constitutional or statutory limitation or restriction as to the amount of debt which may be incurred by the county.

HB 1901. Effective 1/1/25. Signed 3/28/25.

This bill amends Section 57-105-1 to increase the amount of tax credits that the Mississippi Development Authority may allocate during a state fiscal year under the program that authorizes it to allocate income tax credits and insurance premium tax credits for taxpayers holding certain qualified equity investments, and to extend the authority of the Mississippi Development Authority to allocate credits under the program to July 1, 2029.

SB 2052. See summary under Military Affairs.

SB 2266. See summary under Agriculture.

SB 2729. See summary under Public Health and Human Services.

SB 2802. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

This bill amends Section 83-34-4 to revise the distribution of monies derived from the nonadmitted policy fee remitted to the Mississippi Windstorm Underwriting Association. Of such monies:

- \$500,000 will be deposited annually into the Mississippi First Responders Health and Safety Trust Fund created in Section 25-15-41;

- \$12,000,000 will be remitted annually to the Mississippi Windstorm Underwriting Association; and

- The remainder will be deposited as follows:

- 40% into the Rural Fire Truck Fund created in Section 17-23-1,

- 30% into the Municipal Fire Protection Fund created in Section 83-1-37, and

- 30% into the County Volunteer Fire Department Fund created in Section 83-1-39.

SB 2803. See summary under Judiciary B.

SB 2805. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/24/25.

This bill amends Section 27-65-23.1 to provide that when a tax is levied and collected under the authority of a local and private law on the gross proceeds or gross income from room rentals of hotels or motels, the gross proceeds or gross income of persons facilitating the rental of rooms by hotels, as defined in Section 41493(b), by listing or advertising the availability of such rooms and, either directly or indirectly through agreements or arrangements with third parties, collecting payment from the customer and transferring that

payment to the hotel, will also be subject to tax under the local and private law.

The bill makes a conforming amendment to Section 41-49-3 to revise the definition of "hotel" for sales tax purposes only.

SB 2846. Effective on passage. Signed 3/13/25.

This bill amends Section 17-25-27 to revise the definition of "economic development project" to include a qualified project, as defined in Section 57-114-3 of the Mississippi Flexible Tax Incentive Act. This definition applies to the authority of county boards of supervisors or municipal governing authorities to enter agreements with economic development projects, which will be binding on future county boards of supervisors or municipal governing authorities, to provide water, sewer, or other services, or to agree in advance to approve any request for a 10-year ad valorem tax exemption in the manner provided by law.

The bill also authorizes counties and municipalities to enter into agreements with business entities to, either individually or cooperatively, fund or reimburse the businesses for costs incurred in connection with certain development or redevelopment projects solely using revenues derived from the projects. Under such an agreement, one or more local governments may use project revenues to pay any costs of a project, and/or the business may undertake or otherwise fund all or any part of a project or any facilities related to a project using private funds, with the local government(s) reimbursing the business for its costs incurred solely using project revenues. The local government(s) may place appropriate conditions on payments or reimbursements to protect the public interest, and such payments or reimbursements may not exceed \$5,000,000 cumulatively in costs of a project.

All such agreements must be submitted to the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) as a condition for being effective. The MDA will determine whether the agreement is in proper form and compatible with state law, and whether the agreement and project are appropriate for the issuance of an initial certificate of public convenience and necessity to the local government(s). Failure by the MDA to disapprove a submitted agreement within 60 days of its submission will constitute approval of the agreement.

The agreements authorized under the bill may be for a period not to exceed 20 years and will be binding on future boards of supervisors of a county and governing authorities of a municipality.

SB 2854. Effective on passage. Signed 4/10/25.

This bill amends Section 57-26-1 to revise the definitions of "tourism project" and "resort development" to increase the minimum private investment amounts required under the Tourism Project Incentive Program as follows:

- For a tourism project:

A hotel's minimum private investment is increased from \$40,000,000 to \$50,000,000, and, to be included within that threshold, the minimum private investment per guest room is increased from \$150,000 to \$200,000; and

A full-service hotel's minimum private investment is increased from \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000, and, to be included within that threshold, the minimum private investment per guest room is increased from \$200,000 to \$250,000, except for full-service hotels located in certain counties or municipalities, for which the minimum private investment per guest room is increased from \$150,000 to \$200,000. Added to

this exception is the county in which the Marty Stuart Congress of Country Music is located.

- For a resort development, the minimum private investment is increased from \$100,000,000 to \$200,000,000, and the percentage of the private investment amount that may be expended on facilities to house retail activity is decreased from 40% to 30%.

The bill amends Section 57-26-3 to increase, from 15 years to 20 years, the potential time in which the Mississippi Development Authority may make incentive payments from the Tourism Project Sales Tax Incentive Fund. It also amends Section 57-26-7 to reauthorize the Mississippi Development Authority to approve applications for projects that include resort developments, and to extend the application deadline to June 30, 2027.

SB 2857. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 57-1-18 to increase, from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000, the grant amount that may be awarded by the Mississippi Development Authority to a small municipality or limited population county from the Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Fund during any grant period established by the Mississippi Development Authority.

SB 3165. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

This bill authorizes the issuance of state general obligation bonds for various Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) programs as follows:

- \$20,000,000 for the Mississippi Site Development Grant Fund.
- \$10,000,000 for the ACE Fund.

- Amends Section 57-61-25 to increase by \$25,000,000 the amount bonds that may be issued under the Mississippi Business Investment Act to be used as follows:

Increase by \$5,000,000 the amount of bond proceeds that the MDA may use under the Mississippi Business Investment Act to make grants or loans to municipalities and counties through an equipment and public facilities grant and loan fund to aid in infrastructure-related improvements, the purchase of equipment, and the purchase, construction or repair and renovation of public facilities. (Section 57-61-36), and

Increase by \$20,000,000 the amount of bond proceeds that the MDA may use under the Mississippi Business Investment Act to make funds available to counties, municipalities, or state, county or municipal port and airport authorities through a port, airport and rail revitalization revolving loan fund for the purposes of making loans to port and airport authorities for the improvement of port and airport facilities, or making loans to counties or municipalities for publicly owned freight rail service projects, to promote commerce and economic growth. (Section 57-61-41)

- Amends Section 57-75-15 to increase by \$5,000,000 the amount of bonds that may be issued under the Mississippi Major Economic Impact Act for projects designed to enhance facilities that are at risk for closure or realignment pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 or other applicable federal law. It also removes the reverter on the authority of the State Bond Commission to determine the appropriate method for the sale of bonds and to negotiate the sale of bonds.

- Amends Section 25, Chapter 533, Laws of 2010, as last amended by Section 7, Chapter 507, Laws of 2024, to increase by

\$20,000,000 the amount of bonds that may be issued for the Mississippi Industry Incentive Financing Revolving Fund. It also extends to July 1, 2029, the period of time during which bonds may be issued for that fund.

- Amends Section 65-4-25 to increase by \$1,000,000 the amount of bonds that may be issued under the Economic Development Highway Act to provide funding for a high economic benefit project as defined in Section 65-4-5(1)(c)(v).

SB 3166. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/27/25.

This bill amends Section 27-35-50 to direct the Department of Revenue, when promulgating its annual table of inflation factors for industrial property, to include commercial solar and wind facilities as a separate category of industrial property. The bill requires the department to set the inflation factor at 1.000, if Marshall Valuation Service has not provided an inflation factor for commercial solar and wind facilities for a particular year.

WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS

HB 1637. Effective on passage. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Section 49-7-79 to revise provisions requiring the payment of restitution by persons convicted of unlawfully hunting or fishing on the lands of another. The bill requires a person convicted of unlawfully taking fish from a private body of water to make restitution to the landowner of the body of water in the amount of \$100 per fish, with no maximum total. A person convicted of unlawfully taking a wild animal or bird from the lands of another is required to pay an assessment of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 per animal or bird or parts of a wild animal or bird unlawfully taken, subject to an aggregate total of \$2,000. The clerk of court shall collect and deposit the assessments with the State Treasurer, and the assessments will be deposited in the Fisheries and Wildlife Fund for the purpose of wildlife and sport fish restoration. The Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks may expend the restitution monies upon appropriation by the Legislature.

The restitution required under HB 1637 is in addition to any fines or penalties assessed for the unlawful hunting or fishing on the lands of another.

SB 2276. Effective on passage. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill requires the open seasons which end on a Friday on deer (Section 49-7-31), bobwhite quail and wild turkey (Section 49-7-31.2), squirrel and rabbits (Section 49-7-31.3), and fur-bearing animals (Section 49-7-31.4) to be extended until 30 minutes after sunset on the following Sunday. Before passage of the bill, the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries

and Parks had discretionary authority to extend an open season ending on a Friday until the following Sunday.

SB 2280. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/20/25.

This bill requires hunters to procure a wild turkey stamp before hunting wild turkeys in Mississippi. The bill defines the state wild turkey stamp, in physical or electronic form, as a specialized permit required for hunting wild turkeys; the term "harvest tag" is defined as the electronic tool used to serve as the annual bag limit allotted to individual hunters. The fee for each stamp is \$10 for resident hunters and \$100 for nonresidents. Proceeds from stamps must be deposited into the Fisheries and Wildlife Fund to be used for: paying administrative costs associated with the harvest of wild turkeys; restoring wild turkey populations; funding scientific research; increasing access to publicly available turkey hunting opportunities; and securing grants or other financial awards when used as matching funds. The Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall determine the form of the stamp.

It is unlawful for a person to hunt or take wild turkeys during any open wild turkey season without first having procured a stamp; however, exempted from the stamp requirement are state residents who are: under the age of 16 years; 65 years or older; blind, paraplegic or a multiple amputee; adjudged as having a total service-connected disability by the Veterans Administration; adjudged to be totally disabled by the Social Security Administration; or the holder of an authorized lifetime sportsman license.

A person violating the wild turkey stamp requirement is guilty of a misdemeanor, subject to a fine of not less than \$25 nor more than \$100 upon conviction.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

HB 1414. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill amends Sections 71-5-353, 37-153-7 and 71-5-453, to provide that the Mississippi Office of Workforce Development (office) shall administer and oversee the Mississippi Workforce Enhancement Training Fund (WET Fund). This change removes the requirement that the office collaborate with the Mississippi Community College Board on the administration of the WET Fund. The bill also provides that the individual community and junior colleges shall be the primary entity to facilitate training. Additionally, the bill includes the Mississippi Department of Education in the requirement that certain agencies that are implementing or coordinating state-funded workforce development programs under state law cooperate with each other to promote effective workforce training in Mississippi, under the direction of the office.

SB 2177. See summary under Education.

SB 2285. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 71-5-146 to ensure that background check requirements for employees at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) who have access to, or will potentially have access to, Federal Tax Information (FTI) are consistent with and in compliance with Internal Revenue Service background investigation requirements.

New language stipulates that MDES has authority to fingerprint and conduct a background investigation on any MDES employee, contractor or subcontractor who is to be subjected to a national criminal history background check due to his or her access to FTI, and any individual who applies for a position

with MDES who will be subjected to a national criminal history background check due to required FTI access upon hire. Such fingerprints shall also be submitted to the state identification bureau for a check of state records.

SB 2286. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 71-5-353 to stipulate that certain contributions to the Workforce Enhancement Training Fund shall be suspended if the insured unemployment rate (IUR) exceeds an average of 5.5% for the three consecutive months ending on September 30 of the calendar year preceding the new rate year. This is changed from the three consecutive months immediately preceding the effective date of the new rate year following such occurrence. Additionally, it stipulates that such suspension shall continue until such time as the three consecutive months ending on September 30 have an IUR of less than an average of 4.5%, which is changed from three consecutive months immediately preceding the next rate year.

SB 2290. Effective on passage, or effective date of the reauthorized federal Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act, should that act create new opportunities for pilot comprehensive innovation demonstration programs under which Mississippi qualifies, whichever date is sooner. Signed 3/18/25.

This bill establishes the "Task Force to Study Work Force and Social Service Reform and Implementation of a One Door Policy." The goal of the task force is to develop a recommendation to the Legislature relative to increasing the labor force participation rate in Mississippi, as well as the earning capacity of working Mississippians through training and

education for high wage, high demand, priority sector jobs in the state. The bill sets the membership of the task force and stipulates that the task force shall meet within 45 days of the effective date. Upon finalization of findings, the task force must make a report to the Legislature on or before December 1, 2025, and the task force shall be dissolved upon presentation of its report.

The task force is charged with studying the following issues:

- Unfilled jobs in the State of Mississippi, record low unemployment rate and yet a lagging labor force participation rate under 58% as measured by the United States Bureau of Labor and Statistics;
- Modernization of Mississippi's economy with an increasing need to access high-quality education and training programs across avenues from K-12, community college, universities, private sector and adult education opportunities;
- Technology utilization for state government agencies to share information and have a unified vision between agencies for a one-door access for state resources and services to individuals of the state seeking employment, government assistance, or education to pursue higher per capita employment;
- Investigate a centralized location, including a clearing house of available public assistance programs, how to access it and eligibility requirements;
- How reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) by the United States Congress may create new opportunities to grant states to pilot comprehensive innovation demonstration programs; and
- An integrated system of workforce and social services may more effectively serve Mississippians in escaping poverty

through targeted supports and work to achieve dignity and self-sufficiency and strengthen Mississippi's economy.

SB 2300. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 31-7-13.1 to change provisions concerning construction contracts. It removes language allowing the design-build method of construction contracting to be used on residential buildings, residential mixed-use developments, parking garages and other prescriptive type facilities. Additionally, new language requires public agencies or governing authorities to solicit proposals from qualified design-builders for each design-build project. Final contracts between the public entity and the design-builder must be either a fixed firm price or guaranteed maximum price contract that includes payment for both the design and construction phases of the project. Further amendments remove the requirement that the evaluation committee must have at least one architect or engineer among its members, as well as the words "an independent," which ensures that the provision applies to all professionals licensed in Mississippi and not just independent professionals.

SB 2357. See summary under Corrections.

YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS

HB 1387. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 43-15-17 by expanding who may receive monthly relative care payments from the Department of Child Protection Services when a child is placed in the care of a relative. More specifically, such payments may be received by any adult who is related by blood, marriage, or adoption within the third degree or who makes up the family support system of the child, including adults related beyond the third degrees, godparents, friends of the family, or other adults who have a strong familial bond with the child. Previously, relative care payments could only be received by a child's relative within the third degree.

Additionally, the bill amends Section 43-21-105 by revising the term "fictive kin" to include adults related beyond the third degree, godparents, friends of the family, or other adults who have a strong familial bond with the child.

SB 2766. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

This bill amends Section 93-17-3 by clarifying that when a certificate of a child's physical and mental condition is attached to an adoption petition, then such certificate may be executed by a physician licensed under Chapter 25 of Title 73 of the Mississippi Code of 1972. Previously, the law used the term "doctor" rather than physician.

SB 2771. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/24/25.

This bill revises the timeline for permanency hearings and amends sections related to the state defenders representation of certain youth. The bill amends Section 43-21-613 by revising the timeline for certain permanency hearings from within 120 days to within three months. The bill also authorizes the state

defender to provide representation to youth-in-delinquency and child-in-need-of-supervision proceedings. Finally, the bill amends Section 43-21-201 by clarifying the requirement that certain appointed counsel receives child protection and juvenile justice training, and it revises the number of cases that attorneys appointed by a youth court must have in order to be exempt from annual training.