

Legislative Update

July 21, 2025

Summer MMA | Gulfport, MS

Senator Derrick Simmons, District 12
Chairman County Affairs

Committee Membership:

- County Affairs
- Constitution (Vice-Chair)
- Finance
- Gaming
- Judiciary, Division A
- Judiciary, Division B
- Municipalities
- Ports and Marine Resources

Simmons & Simmons, PLLC
Greenville, MS

Update Contents:

County Affairs		2
Municipalities		2
Local Government Bills		5
Judiciary, Division A		15
Judiciary, Division B		33

County Affairs

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

SB 2002 amends Section 19-5-22, concerning delinquent tax hearings held by the board of supervisors. It 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, it 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.

Municipalities

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

HB 733 establishes, in the State Treasury, the "Property Cleanup Revolving Fund," which is a grant fund that shall be administered by the Mississippi Home Corporation (here after referred to as the 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.

This 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.

HB 733 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 that 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) is 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, HB 733 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 the 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. HB 733 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, HB 733 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. Effective on passage. Signed 3/6/25.

HB 1211 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.

Local Government Bills

SB 2143. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

SB 2143 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 2846. Effective on passage. Signed 3/13/25.

SB 2846 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 shall be binding on future county boards or municipal 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.

All such agreements must be submitted to the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) as a condition for its

effectiveness. The MDA shall 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). If the MDA does not disapprove an agreement within 60 days of its submission, the agreement shall be approved by default.

Agreements authorized by this act may not exceed 20 years and shall bind future county boards of supervisors and municipal governing authorities.

SB 2857. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

SB 2857 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 (MDA) to a small municipality or limited population county from the Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Fund during any grant period established by the MDA.

SB 3165. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

SB 3165 authorizes the issuance of bonds as follows:

Section 1 authorizes the issuance of \$20 million in state general obligation bonds for the Mississippi Site Development Grant Fund.

Section 2 makes a conforming amendment to Section 51-1-701 to acknowledge the monies from those new bonds going into the Site Development Grant Fund.

Section 3 authorizes the issuance of \$10 million in state general obligation bonds for the ACE Fund.

Section 4 amends Section 57-61-25 to increase by \$25 million the general obligation bonds that may be issued under the Mississippi Business Investment Act. (The purposes of this additional \$25 million are set out in Sections 5 and 6.)

Section 5 amends Section 57-61-36 to increase by \$5 million the bond proceeds that MDA may use under the Mississippi Business Investment Act to make grants or loans to municipalities 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 6 amends Section 57-61-41 to increase by \$20 million the bond proceeds that MDA may use under the Mississippi Business Investment Act to make loans to counties, municipalities, or state, county or municipal port and airport authorities through a port, airport and rail revitalization revolving loan fund for the improvement of port and airport facilities, or for publicly owned freight rail service projects, to promote commerce and economic growth.

Section 7 amends Section 57-75-15 to increase by \$5 million the general obligation bonds that may be issued under the Mississippi Major Economic Impact Act (MMEIA) for projects designed to enhance facilities that are at risk for closure under federal law (especially the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990). It also removes the reverter on the authority of the State Bond Commission to determine the appropriate method for the sale of certain bonds and to negotiate their sale.

Section 8 amends chapter laws to increase by \$20 million the general obligation bonds that may be issued for the Mississippi Industry Incentive Financing Revolving Fund. It also extends to July 1, 2029, the period of time in which bonds may be issued for that fund.

Section 9 amends Section 65-4-25 to increase by \$1 million the bonds authorized to 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) ("Any project which would benefit from the construction of any highway bypass which would aid in economic development and would provide an alternate route to avoid an existing route which underpasses a railroad and which would aid in existing or proposed industry").

HB 1201. Section 1 effective 1/1/25, remaining sections effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/17/25.

HB 1201 provides for tax incentives and incentive payments for developing eligible and blighted property, such as buildings and other facilities, and to place the developed property into use. The following terms are defined for purposes of both the tax incentive program and the incentive payment 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 blighted, and will be offered or used for residential or business purposes.

- "Developer" means a person, firm, corporation, authority, partnership, or other entity that constructs, repairs, renovates, and/or procures the construction, repair, or renovation of property such as buildings and other facilities,

but was not the owner of the property when it was sold for taxes.

Section 1 requires the Secretary of State (SOS), in conjunction with the Department of Revenue (DOR), to establish a program to provide income tax incentives for the development of blighted property either as an owner-occupied dwelling or a commercial building. A developer desiring to participate in the incentive program must submit an application to the SOS. The application must contain a development plan providing 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(s) 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 owner-occupied 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 owner-occupant who is not the developer, in the case of a single-family 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 excess amount may be carried forward for the 10 succeeding tax years. In lieu of claiming a credit, the taxpayer may elect to claim a rebate in the amount of 75% of the amount the taxpayer 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 who is not the developer, in the case of a single-family 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.

Section 2 of the bill requires the SOS, in conjunction with the DOR, to establish a program to provide incentive payments for the development of blighted property which will increase the value of the property and promote economic development and the public interest. A developer desiring to participate in the incentive program must submit an application to the SOS. The application must contain a development plan providing:

- A description of:
 - ▶ The property to be developed;
 - ▶ The purpose(s) 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(s) 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, the SOS will issue a certificate of participation to the developer for the development plan and provide a copy of the certificate and development plan to the municipal clerk or county chancery clerk, as applicable.

After receipt of a certificate of participation and development plan, the tax assessor of the county in which the eligible property is located 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 four years. For each 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 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 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 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 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 purchased by an owner/occupier that is not the developer, in the case of a single-family 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.

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

SB 2434 authorizes counties and municipalities to enter into intergovernmental support agreements with military branches. A local government unit, including municipalities and county boards of supervisors, may enter into intergovernmental support agreements with a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States under the National Defense Authorization Act, 10 USC § 2679, to provide installation support services to a military installation located in this state.

Judiciary, Division A

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

SB 2328 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, SB 2328 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 2451. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

SB 2451 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 shall be reallocated to income by the trustee to reimburse the trustee or beneficiary for the federal and state income taxes attributable to the receipt.

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

SB 2469 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.

SB 2482 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.

SB 2489 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 2766. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

SB 2766 amends Section 93-17-3 to provide that a certificate of a child's physical and mental condition attached to an adoption petition may be executed by a physician licensed under Chapter 25 of Title 73 of the Mississippi Code of 1972.

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

Section 1 of SB 2767 creates the Mississippi Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Council to ensure that monies received and deposited into the Opioid Settlement Fund are allocated and spent in accordance with the terms of the opioid settlements, except as otherwise authorized in Section 27-103-305(4), and to ensure public involvement, accountability and transparency in allocating and accounting for the monies in the fund. 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 shall not otherwise amend or modify the recommended list of grant recipients or the amounts recommended for the recipients. The council, though, shall not exclude any qualified applicant from the list provided to the Legislature.

Section 1 of the bill provides for the membership of the council, sets out its procedure, states its duties and responsibilities, and houses the council within the Office of the Attorney General. The council is required to make an annual report by December 1 to the Legislature and the Governor. The report shall summarize the distribution of funds, outcomes of funded programs, and any recommendations for improving the process of appropriation and administration of settlement funds.

SB 2767 also amends Section 27-103-305 to provide that abatement settlement funds shall be disbursed upon appropriation by the Legislature in accordance with the requirements of Section 1 of this act. Nonabatement settlement funds shall be disbursed upon appropriation by the Legislature without any recommendations by the council regarding the use of those monies. For abatement settlement funds, the Attorney General

shall oversee the expenditure of such monies to ensure compliance with the opioid settlements. For nonabatement settlement funds, the Attorney General shall have ultimate oversight authority to ensure that no more than 30% of the settlement monies are expended for nonabatement.

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

SB 2768 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. SB 2768 redistricts the chancery court districts and HB 1544 redistricts the circuit court districts. SB 2768 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. Importantly, SB 2768 provides that 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 in SB 2768 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 2771. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/24/25.

SB 2771 revises the timeline for permanency hearings and amends sections related to the State Defenders representation of certain youth. It amends Section 43-21-613 to revise the timeline for certain permanency hearings from within 120 days to within 3 months. The bill also authorizes the State Defender to provide representation to youth-in-delinquency and child-in-

need-of-supervision proceedings. Last, it amends Section 43-21-201 to clarify the requirement that certain appointed counsel receive child protection and juvenile justice training and revise the number of cases that attorneys appointed by a youth court must have in order to be exempt from annual training.

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

SB 2787 reenacts Section 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 2886. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/10/25.

SB 2886 enacts the Mississippi Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Law. The bill establishes a statewide domestic violence team within the Department of Public Safety and authorizes the establishment of circuit level teams established by judicial order within a circuit court district or districts.

The purpose of a team under this section shall be to learn how to prevent domestic violence through early intervention and improving the quality of the response by individuals and institutions to domestic violence. To do so, the team may determine its specific structure and operating procedures and is responsible for reviewing fatal and near-fatal incidents of domestic violence, related domestic violence matters, and suicides within its jurisdiction. 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.

For the statewide team, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety shall designate four other initial members and chair the initial meeting. At its first meeting, the initial members shall appoint additional members to the statewide team and elect a chair of the team.

SB 2886 also provides limited civil immunity for team members and addresses the civil and criminal testimony of certain other persons who attend and participate in meetings. It also provides procedures for information, testimony, records, reports, recommendations, or other evidence obtained, generated, or transmitted by a team and suggests a number of persons that a team may consider consulting with or including within its membership.

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

SB 2899 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.

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

HB 599 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, noneconomic 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 624. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

HB 624 amends Section 25-31-10 to increase the salaries of full-time criminal investigators for district attorneys from \$63,000 to \$75,000.

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

HB 1063 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 full-time 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 1197. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

HB 1197 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 sets forth the procedure for solicitation and authorizes local governments to opt out of the act.

Further, the bill 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.

HB 1200 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 being presented with 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 court-ordered move-out date.

The bill creates crimes for:

- Any person who makes false statements when filing a complaint under this act;
- Any person who unlawfully detains, occupies or trespasses upon a residential dwelling and intentionally damages the dwelling in excess of \$1,000; and
- 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 1387. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/12/25.

HB 1387 amends Sections 43-15-17 and 43-21-105 to expand 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 revises the term of "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.

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

HB 1442 amends Sections 93-20-407 and 93-20-408 to require 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 amends Section 93-20-409 to grant access to the respondent's medical records from certain hospitals.

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

HB 1451 amends Section 43-21-205 to remove the prohibition against circuit and chancery court clerks from receiving compensation for attending youth court.

HB 1459. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/2/25.

HB 1459 amends Section 9-12-1 to authorize the Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court to appoint two full-time CCID judges. In addition, the Chief Justice may appoint one part-time 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 full-time judge shall be in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 less than the compensation paid to county court judges. The compensation of the part-time judge shall be paid at an hourly rate and for such times as deemed necessary by the full-time CCID judges.

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

HB 1509 amends Section 25-3-35 to set 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.

HB 1544 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. HB 1544 redistricts the circuit court districts, and SB 2768 redistricts the chancery court districts. HB 1544 also revises the number of assistant district attorneys (ADAs) and criminal investigators assigned to certain circuit court districts.

The primary amendments to the circuit court districts are as follows:

First. The bill amends the residency requirements of the judges in the district.

Third. From and after January 1, 2031, an additional judgeship is added to the district for a total of four judges.

Fourth. From and after January 1, 2031, Holmes and Humphreys counties are added to the district.

Sixth. From and after January 1, 2027, Pike County is added to the district. An additional judgeship is also added for a total of three judges in the district.

Seventh. Until January 1, 2027, a judgeship is added for a total of five judges in the district. From and after January 1, 2027, Claiborne and Jefferson counties are added to the district. From January 1, 2027, until January 1, 2035, an additional judgeship is added to the district for a total of six judges. From and after January 1, 2035, a judgeship is removed from the district for a total of five judges. During this time, several revisions are made to the subdistricts in the district. Also, the authority of the senior circuit court judge to divide the district into civil and criminal divisions is deleted. Last, two state-funded ADAs that were previously authorized only until July 1, 2025 in the district are made permanent in the bill.

Ninth. From and after January 1, 2031, Yazoo County is added to the district. Effective January 1, 2027, an additional, state-funded ADA is added to the district for a total of four state-funded ADAs.

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

Eleventh. From and after January 1, 2031, the subdistricts within the district are revised.

Fourteenth. From and after January 1, 2027, Lincoln, Pike, and Walthall counties are removed from the district, and Copiah, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence, and Lincoln counties are added to the

district. Upon passage, one state-funded ADA is removed from the district for a total of five ADAs.

Fifteenth. From and after January 1, 2027, Jefferson Davis and Lawrence counties are removed from the district, and Walthall County is added.

Eighteenth. From and after January 1, 2027, George, Greene, and Wayne counties are added to the district, and an additional judgeship is added for a total of two judges. Effective January 1, 2027, the district is authorized to employ two additional, state-funded ADAs for a total of four state-funded ADAs.

Nineteenth. From and after January 1, 2027, George and Greene counties are removed from the district, and an additional judgeship is added for a total of four judges. Further, one of the four judges, as designated by the senior judge of the circuit, shall be dedicated to intervention court with at least 75% of the cases on that judge's docket to be drug court eligible cases.

Twentieth. Upon passage, the district is authorized to employ three additional, local-funded ADAs for a total of five local-funded ADAs. From and after January 1, 2027, the district is authorized to employ three additional, state-funded ADAs for a total of ten state-funded ADAs.

Twenty-first. Until January 1, 2031, the district shall be designated as the Twenty-second Circuit Court District. Effective January 1, 2027, the district shall have four ADAs. From and after January 1, 2031, the district shall stand repealed.

Twenty-second. Until January 1, 2027, the district shall be designated as the Twenty-third Circuit Court District. From and after January 1, 2027, the district shall stand repealed.

Twenty-third. The district is redesignated as the Twenty-first Circuit Court District. Until January 1, 2027, an additional judgeship is added to the district for a total of three judges. From and after January 1, 2027, an additional judgeship is added to the district for a total of four judges. Effective January 1, 2027, the district shall have a total of seven state-funded ADAs.

Judiciary, Division B

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

SB 2200 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.

SB 2204 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.

SB 2208 amends Section 97-7-75 to provide 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 2210. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 3/21/25.

SB 2210 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 the 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 2211. Effective 7/1/25. Signed 4/23/25.

SB 2211 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 of SB 2211 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.

SB 2311 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, SB 2311 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.

SB 2315 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, SB 2315 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, SB 2315 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 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.

SB 2803 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.

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

HB 565 amends Section 45-6-11 to clarify 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 part-time 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 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, 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. 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 45-6-19.

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

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

HB 861 amends the Mississippi Medical Emergency Good Samaritan Act by creating and adding the "Aid to Sexual Offense Victim Reporting Act" in Section 41-29-149.1. It amends Sections 41-29-149.1 and 97-31-55 to provide 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.

HB 1189 amends Section 99-19-75 to revise the deposits made into the Victims Of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Fund by reducing the fines or other penalties for misdemeanor violations of Section 97-3-7 to a range of not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,000. Before the amendment, a misdemeanor violation of Section 97-3-7 was subject to a \$1000 fine. The bill also authorizes a court to allow a defendant to pay certain assessments in installments.

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

HB 1203 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; and

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

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

HB 1308 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. Any person who commits the crime shall be imprisoned in the Department of Corrections for not less than two years nor more than ten years, or fined not more than \$10,000, or both.

The bill also provides an enhanced 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. Under this enhancement, the person shall be imprisoned in the Department of Corrections for not less than five years nor more than ten years, or fined not more than \$20,000, or both.

Further, if a person who is a sex offender and required to register under Section 45-33-25 commits an offense under the act, the person shall be imprisoned in the Department of Corrections for not less than 10 years nor more than 20 years, or fined not more than \$30,000, or both.

Last, the bill amends the definition of "child" and "morphed images" in Section 97-5-31 to delete the reference to "an identifiable child." It also deletes the definition of "identifiable child."

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

HB 1338 amends Section 25-1-87 to authorize 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 amends Sections 45-3-29 and 97-7-44 to increase the criminal penalties for impersonating a law enforcement officer. Last, it repeals Section 97-7-43 which was a duplicative section of law related to the impersonation of law enforcement officers.