

Pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated Section 25-61-19, the following legislation from the 2024 Regular Legislative Session affects the powers and duties of the Office of the Attorney General:

1. **H.B. 313: Board of Cosmetology and Barbering; create to regulate cosmetology and barber professions**

H.B. 313, which merges the State Board of Cosmetology and the State Board of Barbering, among other things, amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 73-7-37(2) regarding the chancery court where the “[B]oard, acting through the Attorney General” can file an application for a violation of the cosmetologists chapter. The “Chancery Court of the First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi” is amended to the “chancery court of the county in Mississippi in which the person or licensee resides or in the county which the person or licensee practices, or the county in which the salon, school, or other type of business entity is located.”

2. **H.B. 634: Sidearm of retired or deceased law enforcement officer; provide that the employing agency shall determine the amount**

H.B. 634 amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 45-9-131, the code section that allows law enforcement officers to retain their sidearm when they retire, to now require that the governing authority of the municipality or county or the state agency, board, or commission that employed the law enforcement officer “determine an agreed upon price to be paid for the sidearm.” The bill authorizes, in addition to a retiree, a law enforcement officer who has been employed for ten continuous years of service to purchase his or her firearm. The bill also requires that before the next of kin of a law enforcement officer who is killed in the line of duty may purchase that sidearm, there shall be satisfactory completion “of any required background checks.”

3. **H.B. 691: Mississippi Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training; revise composition of and provide with investigative authority**

H.B. 691, among other things, revises the composition of the Board on Law Enforcement Standards and Training established in Mississippi Code Annotated Section 45-6-5. Specifically, the bill revises the appointment related to the Attorney General from “the Attorney General, or his designee” to “the Attorney General, or a deputy Attorney General as a designee.”

4. **H.B. 728: Prescription drugs; prohibit discriminating actions against 340B drug discount program entities**

H.B. 728 creates the “Defending Affordable Prescription Drug Costs Act.” With respect to reimbursement to a 340B entity for 340B drugs, the bill prohibits a health insurance issuer,

pharmacy benefit manager, other third-party payor or its agent, manufacturer, or distributor from engaging in certain discriminatory actions relating to entities that are participating in or are authorized to participate in the federal 340B Drug Discount Program. The commission of any act prohibited by this bill is considered a violation of the Mississippi Consumer Protection Act.

5. **H.B. 844: State Parole Board; require to solicit recommendations from and provide notification to certain individuals before parole hearing**

H.B. 844 amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 47-7-17 to require the Parole Board, within 30 days prior to a scheduled parole hearing, to “solicit the written or oral recommendations of the Attorney General, the attorney who prosecuted the case, the judge who presided over the case, the chief of police of the municipality where the offender was convicted and the sheriff of the county where the offender was convicted.” The bill also requires that notification be given to certain individuals 30 days prior to a scheduled hearing.

6. **H.B. 1121: State officers; make minor, nonsubstantive changes regarding swearing in of**

H.B. 1121 amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 25-1-3 to provide, “[t]he term of office of all state officers elected at a general election for that purpose, except the Governor, shall commence on the Thursday next after the first day of the legislative session.”

7. **H.B. 1126: “Walker Montgomery Protecting Children Online Act”; establish to protect minors from harmful content**

H.B. 1126 implements several procedures to protect minors on digital services. Specifically, the bill prohibits a digital service provider from entering into an agreement with a person to create an account with a digital service “unless the person has registered the person’s age with the digital service provider.” The bill also prohibits a digital service provider from permitting a person who is a known minor to be an account holder on the digital service platform “unless the known minor has the express consent from a parent or guardian” through acceptable methods outlined in the legislation. The bill places certain requirements on digital service providers that enter into an agreement with a known minor to create an account related to their personal identifying information, their precise location, and their exposure to harmful material. The bill amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 97-5-31 regarding definitions of sexually explicit images of children to include “morphed images.” Lastly, the bill amends Section 75-24-5 to provide that a violation of the sections of the bill regarding protecting minors on digital service platforms is a violation of the Consumer Protection Act.

8. **H.B. 1163: Community and junior colleges; authorize to contract or enter into interlocal agreements with local governing authorities for first responder services**

H.B. 1163, among other things, amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 37-29-231 to authorize the board of trustees of each community or junior college, “in its discretion and as deemed necessary,” to enter into a contract with a municipality, as authorized under Section 21-25-23, or into an interlocal agreement with the governing authority of the county wherein the community or junior college is located, if situated outside the incorporated limits of any city or municipality therein, “to provide fire protection and first responder services to the main campus of the community or junior college for which the contract or interlocal agreement was entered.” The first responder services include law enforcement services and emergency medical transportation services.

9. **H.B. 1350: Telephone solicitors; prohibit from making any solicitation regarding Medicare Advantage Plans and Medicare supplements**

H.B. 1350 prohibits a telephone solicitor from making or causing to be made “any telephone solicitation to any person in this state regarding any Medicare Advantage Plan.” There is an exemption for a person who has first initiated a call with a company or an entity regarding a Medicare Advantage Plan. The bill also prohibits issuers of Medicare supplement insurance policies or certificates from making or causing to be made telephone solicitations “for the purpose of advertising the sale or soliciting the purchase of a Medicare supplement policy or certificate.”

10. **H.B. 1567: Workforce development; revise various provisions related to**

H.B. 1567, among other things, authorizes the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services to have a paid internship program. The contract signed between the intern and the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services must be prepared and approved by the Attorney General, and in the event of an uncompleted contract, suit shall be filed and handled by the Attorney General.

11. **H.B. 1583: Consumer Freedom of Choice in Appliances Act; create**

H.B. 1583 provides, “[a] governmental entity shall not enact or enforce any resolution, ordinance, regulation, rule, code, or policy to take any action that restricts or prohibits, or has the effect of restricting or prohibiting, any person or entity from using any appliance based on the type of utility service required to operate the appliance.”

12. **H.B. 1697: Law enforcement and certain first responders killed in line of duty; authorize payment to family up to 30 days**

H.B. 1697 authorizes the governing authorities of any municipality, the board of supervisors of any county, any state agency, board or commission, and any public university or college to establish a policy “to pay to the covered individual’s beneficiary the full amount of the covered individual’s regular compensation for up to sixty (60) days when a covered individual, while engaged in the performance of the person’s official duties, dies or receives accidental or intentional bodily injury that results in the loss of the covered individual’s life and such death is the result of a covered cause of death, provided that the death is not the result of suicide and that the bodily injury is not intentionally self-inflicted.” A covered individual is defined as “any individual who receives monetary compensation for his or service as a law enforcement officer or firefighter, including a volunteer firefighter and any individual who receives monetary compensation for his or her service as an emergency medical technician.”

13. H.B. 1705: Budget; provide for various transfers of funds; and create various special funds in the treasury

Among other things, H.B. 1705 creates in the State Treasury a special fund to be known as the Opioid Settlement Fund. The bill provides that the “fund shall consist of monies received by the Attorney General on behalf of the State of Mississippi from settlements of opioid litigation with distributors Cardinal Health, McKesson and AmerisourceBergen, manufacturers Janssen Pharmaceuticals/Johnson & Johnson, Allergan and Teva, and pharmacy chains CVS, Walgreens and Walmart, which are deposited into the fund by the Attorney General.”

14. H.B. 1983: Bonds; authorize issuance for various purposes

By a deed executed on May 4, 1944, the State Mineral Lease Commission conveyed property to the City of Jackson which was made subject to, among other things, the condition that the property shall only be used by the City of Jackson for park purposes incident to the property and that if the property ceased to be used for such purposes then the same shall revert to and become the state’s property. The Legislature found that the property is not being used by the city in compliance with the agreement and must revert to and become the state’s property. Accordingly, in addition to authorizing the issuance of bonds for various purposes, H.B. 1983 requires the Attorney General to “take all actions necessary to enforce the terms of the instrument conveying the property and to have the subject property revert to and become the property of the State of Mississippi.”

15. S.B. 2179: Department of Public Safety; revise certain provisions related to

Currently, Mississippi Code Annotated Section 41-61-55 provides for the State Medical Examiner Advisory Council of which the Attorney General, or his or her designee, is a member. Among other things, S.B. 2179 repeals this advisory council and establishes the “State Medical Examiner Task Force” as a successor entity to the State Medical Examiner

Advisory Council, and the bill places the Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee as a member of the task force.

16. S.B. 2298: State Bond Attorney; revise minimum and maximum fee paid to

Among other things, S.B. 2298 amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 31-13-1, the statute governing the appointment of the State Bond Attorney, to require that “[w]hen the State Bond Attorney has a conflict of interest under the Mississippi Rules of Professional Conduct that is not consentable due to his or her participation in a validation of a bond, the State Bond Attorney shall immediately notify the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and the Attorney General of the conflict of interest in writing.”

17. S.B. 2519: Mississippi Foreign Land Ownership Act; create

S.B. 2519 creates the “Mississippi Foreign Land Ownership Act.” Subject to certain exceptions, the bill prohibits a nonresident alien from owning a “majority part or majority interest in forest or agricultural land.” The bill gives oversight authority to the Secretary of State and requires the Secretary of State to formally notify the Attorney General with a specific request for enforcement action when there is a failure to comply with disposition of forest or agricultural land. The bill provides for fines to which the nonresident alien is subject and must pay within 30 days upon notification received by the Attorney General. Following the conclusion of the 30-day period, the Attorney General “shall begin the judicial taking of the property by filing a civil forfeiture action in the Chancery Court where the property is located or in the Hinds County Chancery Court, whichever is convenient to the State of Mississippi.” The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall promulgate rules and regulations as necessary to implement the provisions of this act.

18. S.B. 2698: Cyber Security Review Board; create

S.B. 2698 creates the “Cyber Security Review Board” which will be responsible “for ensuring a collaborative effort is made to address the cybersecurity threat posed to the State of Mississippi.” “Responsibilities of the Board include creating a system of reporting cybersecurity attacks within the state, researching and implementing best practices to mitigate cybersecurity risks, and connecting individuals and entities with federal and industry partners.” The Attorney General, or his or her designee, is a voting member of the Cyber Security Review Board. The Board is required to “produce a statewide cybersecurity report, which shall be presented to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and the Chairmen of the Technology Committees of the Mississippi Senate and Mississippi House of Representatives by December 15 each year.” The Board is also required to “develop a list of best practices in cybersecurity to disburse throughout the state to various parties as deemed necessary by the board.” The bill also creates a “Cyber Security Review Board Fund.”

19. S.B. 2753: SAFER Act; enact

S.B. 2753 creates the “Securing Areas for Females Effectively and Responsibly Act” or the “SAFER Act.” The bill protects restroom privacy by providing that, “Any public education building that maintains a restroom shall, at a minimum, have: (a) A restroom designated for exclusive use by females and a restroom designated for exclusive use by males; or (b) A single-sex or family-use restroom.” The bill also provides protections for changing room privacy, single-sex educational housing space privacy, and requires social fraternity and sorority single-sex housing facilities on public lands to comply with the definitions contained in this act. The bill requires the Attorney General to bring an action to enforce compliance with this act. The bill also provides definitions for “female,” “male,” and “sex.”

20. S.B. 2792: Foster care and adoption; revise provisions related to per recommendations of task force

S.B. 2792, which makes various changes to the foster care and adoption system in Mississippi, specifically amends Mississippi Code Annotated Section 43-21-201, regarding the right to counsel in youth court proceedings, to provide: “The Department of Child Protection Services shall have the right to hire agency counsel to represent the department and be represented by counsel from the Attorney General’s Office at all stages of the proceedings involving a child for whom the department has custody of or may be awarded custody of, including but not limited to, detention shelter, adjudicatory disposition, permanency, termination of parental rights and adoption hearings.”