

By: Senator(s) DeBar, Simmons (12th), Tate

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2695
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-25-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ANY SCHOOL DISTRICT MAINTAINING A
3 SECONDARY SCHOOL SHALL ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN DRIVER EDUCATION AND
4 TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PUPILS ENROLLED IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
5 THAT DISTRICT; TO AMEND SECTION 37-25-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
6 TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION AND THE
7 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SAFETY SHALL JOINTLY PREPARE AND RECOMMEND
8 TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THE SCOPE OF DRIVER EDUCATION AND
9 TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE THAT ON OR
10 BEFORE JULY 1, 2025, THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION AND THE
11 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SAFETY SHALL JOINTLY PREPARE AN ESTIMATED
12 BUDGET AND FISCAL REPORT OF THE ADDITIONAL EXPENSES AND COSTS
13 RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MANDATORY DRIVER EDUCATION
14 PROGRAMS AND PRESENT THE SAME TO THE LEGISLATURE; TO AMEND SECTION
15 37-25-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT A DRIVER'S
16 EDUCATION STUDENT SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO POSSESS A LEARNER'S
17 PERMIT OR DRIVER'S LICENSE WHILE THE STUDENT IS UNDER THE DIRECT
18 SUPERVISION OR AN INSTRUCTOR; TO DELETE CERTAIN FEES THAT THE
19 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY COULD CHARGE FOR A LEARNER'S PERMIT;
20 TO CREATE NEW SECTION 37-25-8, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
21 PROVIDE THAT UPON SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF A DRIVER EDUCATION
22 AND TRAINING PROGRAM, A DRIVER'S EDUCATION STUDENT SHALL BE ISSUED
23 A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION AND COPY OF SAID CERTIFICATE SHALL BE
24 DELIVERED TO THE DRIVER SERVICE BUREAU OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
25 SAFETY; TO CREATE NEW SECTION 37-25-14, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
26 TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY SHALL REPORT TO
27 THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ANNUAL STATISTICS REGARDING CRASH AND
28 FATALITY DATA FOR THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI AND NATIONALLY,
29 INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, STATISTICS INVOLVING TEENAGE
30 DRIVERS; TO AMEND SECTION 63-1-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
31 PROVIDE CERTAIN PROVISIONS RELATED TO DRIVER'S LICENSE TRAINING
32 PROGRAMS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE COMMISSIONER MAY ESTABLISH RULES,
33 REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE
34 DURING THE FIRST 12 MONTHS THAT AN INDIVIDUAL UNDER THE AGE OF 18



35 POSSESSES A LICENSE; TO PROVIDE THAT BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026, THE
36 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY SHALL ESTABLISH A DRIVER EDUCATION
37 PROGRAM TO BE TAUGHT THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND MADE AVAILABLE FOR
38 HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ADULTS WHO HAVE NOT OTHERWISE TAKEN A
39 DRIVER'S EDUCATION COURSE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

40 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

41 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-25-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
42 amended as follows:

43 37-25-3. * * * Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the
44 school board of any school district maintaining a secondary school
45 which includes any of the grades nine (9) through twelve (12)
46 inclusive, * * * shall establish and maintain driver education and
47 training programs for pupils enrolled in the day secondary schools
48 in that district.

49 * * *

50 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-25-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
51 amended as follows:

52 37-25-5. On or before July 1, 2025, the State Superintendent
53 of Public Education and the Commissioner of Public Safety shall
54 jointly prepare and recommend to the State Board of Education, and
55 the board shall adopt rules and regulations governing the
56 establishment, conduct and scope of driver education and training
57 programs in secondary schools of this state, subject to the
58 requirements and exceptions set forth in this chapter. Said
59 program shall be established and maintained only in accordance
60 with such rules and regulations. Said program shall include both
61 classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel instruction. The State
62 Driver Education and Training Program in secondary schools of this



63 state shall include a program of study for distracted driving,
64 alcohol, drug and safety education as it pertains to driver and
65 highway safety and shall also include instruction relating to
66 organ and tissue donation and organ and tissue donation
67 procedures, and shall include instruction on the litter laws of
68 the state and the responsibilities of the driver and all
69 passengers to dispose of litter in the proper container. The
70 state driver education and training program in secondary schools
71 of this state shall also include a program of study, developed by
72 the Department of Public Safety under Section 37-25-29, on how
73 persons should properly respond when stopped by law enforcement
74 officers.

75 The State Superintendent of Public Education shall prepare an
76 administrative budget from funds made available under this chapter
77 which budget shall be approved by the State Board of Education.
78 It shall be the responsibility of the State Superintendent of
79 Public Education to administer this program in accordance with
80 rules and regulations established by the State Board of Education
81 and to appoint the necessary supervisors of safety education and
82 the necessary clerical personnel.

83 On or before July 1, 2025, the State Superintendent of
84 Education and the Commissioner of Public Safety shall jointly
85 prepare an estimated budget and fiscal report of the additional
86 expenses and costs related to the implementation of mandatory



87 drivers education programs and present the same to the
88 Legislature.

89 **SECTION 3.** Section 37-25-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
90 amended as follows:

91 37-25-7. * * * Any student receiving instruction under this
92 chapter shall be:

93 (a) Fourteen (14) years of age or above;

94 (b) A regularly enrolled student in the ninth, tenth,
95 eleventh or twelfth grade; and

96 (c) A full-time student in the respective secondary
97 school.

98 Any driver education student * * * shall not be required to
99 possess a learner's permit or driver's license while the student
100 is under the direct supervision of a driver education instructor
101 and is actually enrolled in an approved course of driver
102 education * * *.

103 **SECTION 4.** The following shall be codified as Section
104 37-25-8, Mississippi Code of 1972:

105 37-25-8. Upon satisfactory completion of the State Driver
106 Education and Training Program, a driver's education student shall
107 be issued a Certificate of Completion. A copy of said certificate
108 shall be delivered by the school to the Driver Service Bureau of
109 the Department of Public Safety.

110 **SECTION 5.** The following shall be codified as Section
111 37-25-14, Mississippi Code of 1972:



112 37-25-14. The Department of Public Safety shall report to
113 the Department of Education annual statistics regarding crash and
114 fatality data for the State of Mississippi and nationally,
115 including, but not limited to, statistics involving teenage
116 drivers.

117 **SECTION 6.** Section 63-1-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
118 amended as follows:

119 63-1-9. (1) No driver's license or learner's permit shall
120 be issued pursuant to this article:

121 (a) To any person under the age of eighteen (18) years
122 except as provided in this article.

123 (b) To any person whose license to operate a motor
124 vehicle on the highways of Mississippi has been previously revoked
125 or suspended by this state or any other state or territory of the
126 United States or the District of Columbia, if the revocation or
127 suspension period has not expired.

128 (c) To any person who is an habitual drunkard or who is
129 addicted to the use of other narcotic drugs.

130 (d) To any person who would not be able by reason of
131 physical or mental disability to operate a motor vehicle on the
132 highways with safety. However, persons who have one (1) arm or
133 leg, or have arms or legs deformed, and are driving a car provided
134 with mechanical devices whereby the person is able to drive in a
135 safe manner over the highways, if otherwise qualified, shall



136 receive an operator's license the same as other persons.

137 Moreover, deafness shall not be a bar to obtaining a license.

138 (e) To any person as an operator who has previously
139 been adjudged to be afflicted with and suffering from any mental
140 disability and who has not at time of application been restored to
141 mental competency.

142 (f) To any * * * person under the age of eighteen (18)
143 years who does not at the time of application present a diploma or
144 other certificate of high school graduation or a general
145 educational development certificate issued to the person in this
146 state or any other state; or on whose behalf documentation has not
147 been received by the Department of Public Safety from that person
148 or a school official verifying that the person:

149 (i) Is enrolled and making satisfactory progress
150 in a course leading to a general educational development
151 certificate;

152 (ii) Is enrolled in school in this state or any
153 other state;

154 (iii) Is enrolled in a "nonpublic school," as such
155 term is defined in Section 37-13-91(2)(i); or

156 (iv) Is unable to attend any school program due to
157 circumstances deemed acceptable as set out in Section 63-1-10.

158 (g) To any person under the age of eighteen (18) years
159 who has been convicted under Section 63-11-30.



160 (h) Beginning on July 1, 2027, to any person who has
161 not previously obtained a driver's license unless that person has
162 successfully completed a Driver Education and Training Program
163 certified by the State Board of Education or the Department of
164 Public Safety; provided, however, a person under the age of
165 eighteen (18) shall be able to receive a learner's permit as
166 otherwise provided in this article.

167 (2) All permits and licenses issued * * * to an individual
168 under the age of eighteen (18) shall be issued as follows:

169 (a) A learner's permit may be issued to any person who
170 is at least fifteen (15) years of age who otherwise meets the
171 requirements of this article.

172 (b) A driver's license may be issued to any person who
173 is at least sixteen (16) years of age who otherwise meets the
174 requirements of this article and who has held a learner's permit
175 for at least one (1) year without any conviction under Section
176 63-11-30 or of a moving violation. Any conviction under Section
177 63-11-30 or of a moving violation shall restart the one-year
178 requirement for the holding of a learner's permit before an
179 applicant can qualify for a driver's license.

180 (c) An applicant for a driver's license who was unable
181 to make timely application * * * for a learner's permit * * * may
182 have the period in which he or she was eligible but unable to
183 apply due to a hardship credited toward the one-year requirement
184 for the holding of a learner's permit. The Department of Public



185 Safety shall set forth the criteria for which a hardship exception
186 may be granted, at the discretion of the department, to any
187 individual who has completed a Driver Education and Training
188 Program certified by the Board of Education or the Department of
189 Public Safety.

190 (* * *d) An applicant for a Mississippi driver's
191 license who, at the time of application, is at least sixteen (16)
192 years of age and who has held a valid motor vehicle driver's
193 license issued by another state for at least six (6) months shall
194 not be required to hold a learner's permit before being issued a
195 driver's license.

196 (e) In addition to the restrictions set forth in
197 Section 63-1-21(3), the commissioner may establish rules,
198 regulations and restrictions for the operation of a motor vehicle
199 during the first twelve (12) months that an individual under the
200 age of eighteen (18) possesses a license.

201 (f) Beginning July 1, 2026, the Department of Public
202 Safety shall establish a Driver Education and Training Program to
203 be taught throughout the state and made available for home school
204 students and adults who have not otherwise taken a driver's
205 education course. Upon completion of the course, each participant
206 shall be issued a Certificate of Completion, and a record of the
207 certificate shall be delivered to the Mississippi Driver Service
208 Bureau.



209 (3) The commissioner shall ensure that the learner's permit
210 and driver's license issued under this article are clear, distinct
211 and easily distinguishable from one another.

212 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
213 and after July 1, 2024.

