

By: Representatives Deweese, Read, Bennett,
Creekmore IV, Currie, McGee, Mickens, Scott,
Turner

To: Appropriations C;
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1754

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING
2 THE EXPENSES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR
3 FISCAL YEAR 2026.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
6 necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General
7 Fund not otherwise appropriated, for the purposes of defraying the
8 expenses of the Department of Rehabilitation Services for the
9 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....
10\$ 32,555,404.00.

11 **SECTION 2.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
12 necessary, is appropriated out of any money in any special fund in
13 the State Treasury to the credit of the Department of
14 Rehabilitation Services which is comprised of special source funds
15 collected by or otherwise available to the department for the
16 support of the various offices of the department, for the purpose
17 of defraying the expenses of the department for the fiscal year
18 beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....



19\$ 224,005,132.00.

20 **SECTION 3.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
21 Section 2, Three Million Six Hundred Eighty-one Thousand Eight
22 Hundred Two Dollars (\$3,681,802.00) shall be derived from the
23 Health Care Expendable Fund created in Section 43-13-407,
24 Mississippi Code of 1972. The above funds shall be allocated as
25 follows:

26 Fully match all available federal
27 funds.....\$ 2,826,899.00.

28 Independent Living Program which
29 includes the State Attendant
30 Care Program.....\$ 854,903.00.

31 **SECTION 4.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
32 this act, the following positions are authorized:

33 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

34 Permanent: 875

35 Time-Limited: 201

36 With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's
37 responsibility to make certain that funds required for Personal
38 Services for Fiscal Year 2027 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2026 funds
39 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
40 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 budget by the Mississippi
41 Legislature. The Legislature shall determine the agency's
42 personal services appropriation, which the State Personnel Board
43 shall publish. The agency's personal services appropriation may



44 consist of restricted funds for approved vacancies for Fiscal Year
45 2026 that may be utilized to fill vacant Fiscal Year 2025
46 headcount. It shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that
47 the funds provided for vacancies are used to increase headcount
48 and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments
49 or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current
50 employees. It is the Legislature's intention that no employee
51 salary falls below the minimum salary established by the
52 Mississippi State Personnel Board.

53 Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and
54 publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current
55 employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to
56 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2026 do
57 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
58 the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 projected cost exceeds the
59 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the
60 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be
61 essential for the agency.

62 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
63 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or
64 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State
65 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written
66 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The
67 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written
68 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or positions



without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the appropriated level.

No general funds authorized to be expended herein shall be used to replace federal funds and/or other special funds used for salaries authorized under the provisions of this act and which are withdrawn and no longer available.

None of the funds herein appropriated shall be used in violation of the Internal Revenue Service's Publication 15-A relating to the reporting of income paid to contract employees, as interpreted by the Office of the State Auditor.

SECTION 5. It is the intention of the Legislature that the Department of Rehabilitation Services shall maintain complete accounting and personnel records related to the expenditure of all funds appropriated under this act and that such records shall be in the same format and level of detail as maintained for Fiscal Year 2025. It is further the intention of the Legislature that the agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2027 shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format and level of detail comparable to the format and level of detail provided during the Fiscal Year 2026 budget request process.

SECTION 6. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind shall remain accredited by using not more than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) of the funds appropriated along with matching funds for payment of fees to an accreditation agency recommended by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.



94 **SECTION 7.** Of the funds appropriated herein, the Mississippi
95 Department of Rehabilitation Services through the Office of
96 Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind is authorized to expend an
97 amount not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00)
98 for the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) News line service
99 to allow blind and visually impaired persons to access newspapers
100 through toll-free telephone calls.

101 **SECTION 8.** It is the intention of the Legislature that
102 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
103 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things
104 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
105 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
106 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
107 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
108 made without competitive bids.

109 **SECTION 9.** In compliance with the "Mississippi Performance
110 Budget and Strategic Planning Act of 1994," it is the intent of
111 the Legislature that the funds provided herein shall be utilized
112 in the most efficient and effective manner possible to achieve the
113 intended mission of this agency. Based on the funding authorized,
114 this agency shall make every effort to attain the targeted
115 performance measures provided below:

116		FY2026
117	<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>Target</u>
118	Disability Determination Services	



119	Number of Dispositions	65,000
120	Processing Time (Days)	130
121	Voc Rehabilitation For The Blind	
122	Number of Blind & Visually Impaired	
123	Persons Served	2,075
124	Number of Persons Rehabilitated	305
125	Number of Independent Living Persons Served	630
126	Percent Change in Persons Employed	
127	Compared to Persons Served	13.00
128	Vocational Rehabilitation	
129	Number of Clients Served	15,075
130	Number of Clients Rehabilitated	2,555
131	Percent Change of Persons Employed	
132	Compared to Persons Served	16.00
133	Persons Employed with Pay Rate Greater	
134	than Federal or State Minimum Wage	2,555
135	Persons with Significant Disabilities	
136	Leaving VR With Competitive, Self, or	
137	BEP Employment, Wage = or > Than Minimum	1,594
138	Spinal Cord & Head Injury Program	
139	Number of Clients Served	1,050
140	Percent Change in Number of Spinal Cord	
141	& Brain injuries per Year	3.00
142	Special Disability Programs	
143	Number of Clients Served	3,100



144	Percent Change in Persons Receiving HCBW	
145	Services Compared to Waiting List	25.00
146	Ratio of Cost to HCBW Services per	
147	Person Compared to an Institutional	
148	Setting	38.00
149	Support Services	
150	Percent of Total Budget	2.00

151 A reporting of the degree to which the performance targets
152 set above have been or are being achieved shall be provided in the
153 agency's budget request submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget
154 Committee for Fiscal Year 2027.

155 **SECTION 10.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is
156 the intention of the Legislature that One Million Five Hundred
157 Sixty-three Thousand Thirty-nine Dollars (\$1,563,039.00) shall be
158 allocated to the Spinal Cord & Head Injury Trust supported from
159 General Fund court assessments.

160 **SECTION 11.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1 and
161 Section 2 of this act, it is the intention of the Legislature that
162 continued funding at or above the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriated
163 amount shall be provided for up to Forty-one Hundred (4,100) slots
164 in the Home and Community Based Waiver programs for Independent
165 Living and Spinal Cord/Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver programs.

166 **SECTION 12.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
167 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with
168 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency



shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for actions contrary to this provision.

SECTION 13. The money herein appropriated shall be paid by the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

SECTION 14. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2025.

