

By: Senator(s) Blackwell

To: Accountability,
Efficiency, Transparency

SENATE BILL NO. 2140

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 25-5-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE FOR THE REMOVAL OF APPOINTED STATE OFFICERS FOR CERTAIN
3 FORMS OF WILLFUL NEGLECT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 25-5-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
6 amended as follows:

7 25-5-1. (1) If any public officer, state, district, county
8 or municipal, shall be convicted or enter a plea of guilty or nolo
9 contendere in any court of this state or any other state or in any
10 federal court of any felony other than manslaughter or any
11 violation of the United States Internal Revenue Code, or
12 corruption in office or peculation therein, or of gambling or
13 dealing in futures with money coming to his or her hands by virtue
14 of his or her office, any court of this state, in addition to such
15 other punishment as may be prescribed, shall adjudge the defendant
16 removed from office; and the office of the defendant shall thereby
17 become vacant. If any such officer be found by inquest to be of
18 unsound mind during the term for which he or she was elected or



19 appointed, or shall be removed from office by the judgment of a
20 court of competent jurisdiction or otherwise lawfully, his or her
21 office shall thereby be vacated; and in any such case the vacancy
22 shall be filled as provided by law.

23 (2) When any such officer is found guilty of a crime which
24 is a felony under the laws of this state or which is punishable by
25 imprisonment for one (1) year or more, other than manslaughter or
26 any violation of the United States Internal Revenue Code, in a
27 federal court or a court of competent jurisdiction of any other
28 state, the Attorney General of the State of Mississippi shall
29 promptly enter a motion for removal from office in the Circuit
30 Court of Hinds County in the case of a state officer, and in the
31 circuit court of the county of residence in the case of a
32 district, county or municipal officer. The court, or the judge in
33 vacation, shall, upon notice and a proper hearing, issue an order
34 removing such person from office, and the vacancy shall be filled
35 as provided by law.

36 (3) In addition to removal as the result of a criminal
37 conviction, an appointed state officer may be removed, and the
38 officer's position vacated, consistent with Article 6, Section
39 175, Mississippi Constitution of 1890, in the following manner:

40 (a) The Governor, the State Auditor, the Senate or the
41 House of Representatives, by resolution, may direct a complaint
42 under this section to the Attorney General setting out willful
43 neglect as grounds for removal.



(b) In addition to any common law definitions of willful neglect that may be recognized by the courts of this state, willful neglect shall also consist of:

- (i) Failure by the officer to respond to a subpoena issued by a court, executive agency or legislative body,
- (ii) Failure to comply with a court-ordered repayment of any funds which have been misspent, or failure to comply with an agreement with the State Auditor or the Attorney General to repay such funds, or
- (iii) Failure to attend more than three (3) consecutive meetings of any board, commission or authority to which the officer has been appointed unless circumstances exist

(4) Upon receipt of the complaint or resolution, the Attorney General shall investigate the allegations against any appointed state officer, and if determined to be well-founded, shall petition the Hinds County Circuit Court, First Judicial District, for the removal of the officer. The court, or the judge in vacation, shall, upon notice and a proper hearing, issue an order removing such person from office, and the vacancy shall be filled as provided by law.

(5) Any officer removed by authority of this section shall be barred from future service in any position that requires appointment by the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor or any other officer in the executive branch of government.



69 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
70 and after July 1, 2025.

