

REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MR. SPEAKER AND MR. PRESIDENT:

We, the undersigned conferees, have had under consideration the amendments to the following entitled BILL:

H. B. No. 1777: Appropriation; Engineers and Land Surveyors, Board of Registration for Professional.

We, therefore, respectfully submit the following report and recommendation:

1. That the Senate recede from its Amendment No. 1.
2. That the House and Senate adopt the following amendment:

Amend by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

6 **SECTION 1.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
7 necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State
8 Treasury to the credit of the State Board of Registration for
9 Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, for the purpose of
10 defraying the expenses of the board for the fiscal year beginning
11 July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....\$ 1,077,245.00.

12 **SECTION 2.** Of the funds approved for expenditure under the
13 provisions of Section 1, the following positions are authorized:

14 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

15 Permanent: 5

16 Time-Limited: 0

17 With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's
18 responsibility to make certain that funds required for Personal
19 Services for Fiscal Year 2026 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2025 funds

20 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
21 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 budget by the Mississippi
22 Legislature. The Legislature shall determine the agency's
23 personal services appropriation, which the State Personnel Board
24 shall publish. The agency's personal services appropriation may
25 consist of restricted funds for approved vacancies for Fiscal Year
26 2025 that may be utilized to fill vacant Fiscal Year 2024
27 headcount. It shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that
28 the funds provided for vacancies are used to increase headcount
29 and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments
30 or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current
31 employees. It is the Legislature's intention that no employee
32 salary falls below the minimum salary established by the
33 Mississippi State Personnel Board.

34 Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and
35 publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current
36 employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to
37 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025 do
38 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
39 the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 projected cost exceeds the
40 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the
41 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be
42 essential for the agency.

43 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
44 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or

45 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State
46 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written
47 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The
48 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written
49 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or positions
50 without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the
51 appropriated level.

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

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

60 **SECTION 3.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
61 State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land
62 Surveyors shall maintain complete accounting and personnel records
63 related to the expenditure of all funds appropriated under this
64 act and that such records shall be in the same format and level of
65 detail as maintained for Fiscal Year 2024. It is further the
66 intention of the Legislature that the agency's budget request for
67 Fiscal Year 2026 shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative
68 Budget Committee in a format and level of detail comparable to the

69 format and level of detail provided during the Fiscal Year 2025
70 budget request process.

71 **SECTION 4.** It is the intention of the Legislature that
72 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
73 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things
74 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
75 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
76 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
77 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
78 made without competitive bids.

79 **SECTION 5.** Of the funds provided herein, Four Hundred
80 Thousand Dollars (\$400,000.00) shall be provided in grants for
81 ABET-accredited engineering programs and Board-approved surveying
82 programs of any college or university in the State of Mississippi,
83 after application to and subject to approval by the Board. The
84 Board will develop guidelines for application, award, and
85 disbursement of these grants. The Board will issue a written
86 report to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the chairs of the
87 House and Senate Appropriations Committees as to how the grants
88 were awarded not later than August 1, 2025.

89 **SECTION 6.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
90 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with
91 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency
92 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their
93 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally

94 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
95 actions contrary to this provision.

96 **SECTION 7.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
97 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
98 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
99 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal
100 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
101 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

102 **SECTION 8.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
103 and after July 1, 2024.

**Further, amend by striking the title in its entirety and
inserting in lieu thereof the following:**

1 AN ACT APPROVING THE EXPENDITURE OF SPECIAL FUNDS FOR THE
2 PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING THE EXPENSES OF THE STATE BOARD OF
3 REGISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS FOR
4 FISCAL YEAR 2025.

CONFEREES FOR THE HOUSE

CONFEREES FOR THE SENATE

X (SIGNED)
Bounds

X (SIGNED)
Hopson

X (SIGNED)
Read

X (SIGNED)
Turner-Ford

X (SIGNED)
Boyd (19th)

(NOT SIGNED)
Seymour