

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. 1809: Appropriation; Rehabilitation Services, Department of.

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:

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, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....
10\$ 32,796,819.00.

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, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....



19\$ 223,272,721.00.

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 2026 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2025 funds
39 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
40 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 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 2025 that may be utilized to fill vacant Fiscal Year 2024
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 2025 do
57 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
58 the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 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



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

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74 withdrawn and no longer available.

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

79 **SECTION 5.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
80 Department of Rehabilitation Services shall maintain complete
81 accounting and personnel records related to the expenditure of all
82 funds appropriated under this act and that such records shall be
83 in the same format and level of detail as maintained for Fiscal
84 Year 2024. It is further the intention of the Legislature that
85 the agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 shall be
86 submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format
87 and level of detail comparable to the format and level of detail
88 provided during the Fiscal Year 2025 budget request process.

89 **SECTION 6.** The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the
90 Blind shall remain accredited by using not more than Five Hundred
91 Dollars (\$500.00) of the funds appropriated along with matching
92 funds for payment of fees to an accreditation agency recommended
93 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		FY2025
117	<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>Target</u>
118	Disability Determination Services	



119	Number of Dispositions	60,000
120	Processing Time (Days)	150
121	Voc Rehabilitation For The Blind	
122	Blind & Visually Impaired Served (Persons)	2,050
123	Number of Persons Rehabilitated	295
124	Independent Living (Number Served)	720
125	Percent Change in Persons Employed	
126	Compared to Persons Served	14.00
127	Vocational Rehabilitation	
128	Number of Clients Served	15,050
129	Number of Clients Rehabilitated	2,545
130	Percent Change of Persons Employed	
131	Compared to Persons Served	16.00
132	Persons Employed with Pay Rate Greater	
133	than Federal or State Minimum Wage	2,545
134	Persons with Significant Disabilities	
135	Leaving VR With Competitive, Self, or	
136	BEP Employment, Wage = or > Than Minimum	1,588
137	Spinal Cord & Head Injury Program	
138	Number of Clients Served	1,050
139	Percent Change in Number of Spinal Cord	
140	& Brain injuries per Year	3.00
141	Special Disability Programs	
142	Number of Clients Served	3,100
143	Percent Change in Persons Receiving HCBW	



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

150 A reporting of the degree to which the performance targets
151 set above have been or are being achieved shall be provided in the
152 agency's budget request submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget
153 Committee for Fiscal Year 2026.

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

159 **SECTION 11.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1 and
160 Section 2 of this act, it is the intention of the Legislature that
161 continued funding at or above the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriated
162 amount shall be provided for up to Forty-one Hundred (4,100) slots
163 in the Home and Community Based Waiver programs for Independent
164 Living and Spinal Cord/Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver programs.

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



169 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally
170 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
171 actions contrary to this provision.

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

178 **SECTION 14.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
179 and after July 1, 2024.

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

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING
2 THE EXPENSES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR
3 FISCAL YEAR 2025.

CONFEREES FOR THE HOUSE

CONFEREES FOR THE SENATE

X (SIGNED)
Deweese

X (SIGNED)
Hopson

X (SIGNED)
Read

X (SIGNED)
Blackwell

X (SIGNED)
Creekmore IV

X (SIGNED)
Simmons (13th)

