MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2026

By: Representatives Mims, Read, Barton, Cockerham, Faulkner, Hood, McKnight, Rushing, Watson

To: Appropriations D; Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1931

AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING THE EXPENSES OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE SUPREME COURT WHICH IS COMPRISED OF THE SUPREME COURT, THE OFFICE OF THE SUPREME COURT CLERK AND THE STATE LAW LIBRARY AND TO PAY EXPENSES OF SPECIAL JUDGES, CHANCELLORS AND CIRCUIT JUDGES, AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING THE EXPENSES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS AND CERTIFIED COURT REPORTERS, CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION, COURT OF APPEALS AND THE BOARD OF BAR ADMISSIONS, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2027; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General Fund not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Mississippi State Supreme Court for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....
.....$ 6,771,318.00.

SECTION 2. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in any special fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the Mississippi State Supreme Court which is comprised of special source funds collected by or otherwise available to the Mississippi State Supreme Court, for

the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Mississippi State Supreme Court for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027 .....$ 1,427,641.00.

SECTION 3. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Mississippi State Supreme Court, the following positions are authorized:

AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

Permanent: 60

Time-Limited: 0

SECTION 4. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General Fund not otherwise appropriated to the Mississippi State Supreme Court for the purpose of defraying the expenses of special judges, chancellors and circuit judges for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....$ 39,881,344.00.

SECTION 5. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in any special fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the trial judges, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of special judges, chancellors and circuit judges for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....$ 24,495,094.00.

SECTION 6. Of the funds appropriated under Sections 4 and 5 of this act for the purpose of defraying the expenses of special

judges, chancellors and circuit judges, the following positions are authorized:

AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

Permanent: 122

Time-Limited: 0

SECTION 7. Of the funds appropriated under Sections 4 and 5 of this act, Fifteen Million Four Hundred Seventy Thousand Dollars ($15,470,000.00) is provided for the purpose of employing support staff in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thirty Thousand Dollars ($130,000.00) per fiscal year per judge.

SECTION 8. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General Fund, not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of funding the Administrative Office of Courts for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....$ 17,595,344.00.

SECTION 9. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in any special fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the Administrative Office of Courts for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Administrative Office of Courts and the Board of Certified Court Reporters for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....$ 21,993,245.00.

SECTION 10. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act for the purpose of funding the Administrative Office of Courts, not more than the following amount of funds, with the

exception of the provisions in this section, shall be expended only for "Personal Services," which includes "Vacancy Funding," for the following authorized number of employment headcount:

FUNDING:	
General Funds:	$ 4,573,560.00
Special Funds:	$ 2,284,610.00
Total Funds:	$ 6,858,170.00
PERSONAL SERVICES:	
Employee Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits:	$ 6,464,862.00
Progressions:	$ 0.00
Vacancy Funding:	$ 393,308.00
Total Personal Services:	$ 6,858,170.00
AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:	
Permanent:	91
Time-Limited:	0

As used in this section, the term "Personal Services" shall mean funds provided under the major object of expenditure category Personal Services for Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits. Funds in this category shall not be transferred to any other category.

It is the intention of the Legislature to ensure compliance with the Variable Compensation Plan, as outlined in Section 25-9-147, Mississippi Code of 1972. Payment from these funds shall be in accordance with the Variable Compensation Plan promulgated by the Mississippi State Personnel Board. It is the Legislature's

intention that no employee's salary falls below the minimum salary established by the Mississippi State Personnel Board.

The State Personnel Board shall determine and publish the projected annual cost of "Personal Services" based on monthly and year-to-date payroll expenditures in compliance with the provisions of this act.

With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that no single personnel action or combination of personnel actions, when annualized, exceeds the Fiscal Year 2027 appropriation for "Personal Services" with the exception of escalated funds. Further, it shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that funds required to be appropriated for "Personal Services" for Fiscal Year 2028 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2027 funds appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2027 budget by the Mississippi Legislature.

If, at the time the agency takes any action to change "Personal Services," the State Personnel Board determines that the agency has taken or will take an action that would cause the agency to exceed the funds appropriated in this act when annualized for Fiscal Year 2027 or increase the need for "Personal Services" for Fiscal Year 2028, when annualized, the State Personnel Board shall process no salary actions until such time as the requirements of the provisions of this section are met with

the exception of new hires determined to be essential for the agency.

When used in this section, "Vacancy Funding" shall mean funds included in the Total Personal Services amount listed above and designated for approved vacancies in Fiscal Year 2027. These funds are to be utilized to increase the number of filled headcounts that were authorized but unfilled as of the last day of Fiscal Year 2026. If the agency fills additional headcounts after February 1, 2026, until the end of Fiscal Year 2026, the amount of available Vacancy Funding may be proportionally adjusted to reflect the updated number of filled headcounts. The agency shall be responsible for ensuring that "Vacancy Funding" is used to increase headcounts and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments, or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current employees.

Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State Personnel Board shall not escalate positions or increase the Personal Services total without written approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or headcounts without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the appropriated level. Unless specifically noted, all Fiscal Year 2026 escalated

headcounts have been accounted for and shall be converted to authorized time-limited headcounts.

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.

If the agency's total authorized headcount decreases from Fiscal Year 2026 to Fiscal Year 2027, it will be the agency's discretion as to what headcounts are removed.

SECTION 11. Funding and headcount provided for Information Technology and Finance positions in Sections 1, 3, 20, and 22 of this act are now authorized in Sections 8 and 10 of this act. Funding and headcount provided for CCID judges and their staff positions in Sections 8 and 10 of this act are now authorized in Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this act.

SECTION 12. Of the funds appropriated in Section 8, Six Million Dollars ($6,000,000.00) is provided to defray the costs of the adult felony Drug Court Program operated by the 23 Circuit Courts as certified in Section 9-23-11(2c) (i-iii), Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 13. Of the funds provided in Section 8, Two Million Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($2,250,000.00) is provided to defray the costs of Youth Drug Courts and Family Courts as certified in Section 9-23-11(2c) (iv), Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 14. Of the funds provided in Section 8, Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($750,000.00) is provided to defray the costs of pilot Mental Health Treatment Courts in accordance with Sections 9-27-1 through 9-27-21, Mississippi Code of 1972:

(a) 4th Circuit District Mental Health Treatment..... Court Pilot.....$ 250,000.00

(b) 6th Circuit District Mental Health Treatment..... Court Pilot.....$ 250,000.00

(c) 7th Circuit District Mental Health Treatment..... Court Pilot.....$ 250,000.00

SECTION 15. Of the funds provided in Section 8, Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000.00) is provided for the purpose of defraying the secretarial and support services expenditures for the Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program pursuant to Section 43-21-855, Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 16. Of the funds provided in Section 9, Two Hundred Thousand Dollars ($200,000.00) is provided to defray the costs of the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission.

SECTION 17. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the Continuing Legal Education Fund, a special fund hereby created in the State

Treasury, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of providing continuing legal education programs to lawyers in Mississippi, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.. .....$ 242,418.00.

SECTION 18. It is the intention of the Legislature that interest earned from any investment or deposit to the Continuing Legal Education Fund made pursuant to Section 27-105-33, Mississippi Code of 1972, shall be credited by the State Treasurer to the Continuing Legal Education Fund and shall not be paid into the General Fund of Mississippi.

SECTION 19. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act for the purpose of providing continuing legal education programs, the following positions are authorized:

AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

Permanent: 3

Time-Limited: 0

SECTION 20. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General Fund not otherwise appropriated to the Mississippi State Supreme Court for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Court of Appeals for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....$ 7,423,528.00.

SECTION 21. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the special fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the Mississippi State Supreme

Court, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Court of Appeals for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....$ 274,274.00.

SECTION 22. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Court of Appeals, the following positions are authorized:

AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

Permanent: 54

Time-Limited: 0

SECTION 23. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the special fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the Board of Bar Admissions, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the board for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.....$ 393,426.00.

SECTION 24. It is the intention of the Legislature that interest earned from any investment or deposit to the Board of Bar Admissions Fund made pursuant to Section 27-105-33, Mississippi Code of 1972, shall be credited by the State Treasurer to the Board of Bar Admissions Fund and shall not be paid into the General Fund of Mississippi.

SECTION 25. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act for the purpose of funding the Board of Bar Admissions, the following positions are authorized:

AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

Permanent: 3

Time-Limited: 0

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

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

SECTION 26. No part of the funds herein appropriated shall be used in the payment of attorney's fees, nor shall any of such funds be used, either directly or indirectly, for the purpose of paying any clerk, stenographer, assistant, deputy or other person who may be related by blood or marriage within the third degree, computed by the rules of civil law, to the official employing or having the right of employment or selection thereof; and in the event of any such payment, then the official or person approving and making or receiving such payment shall be jointly and severally liable to return to the State of Mississippi and to pay into the State Treasury three (3) times any such amount so paid or received, to be recovered at suit of the Attorney General; however, when the relationship is by affinity and the person through whom the relationship was established is dead, this provision shall not apply.

SECTION 27. It is the intent of the Legislature that the Mississippi State Supreme Court shall charge the maximum amount

allowable by law for services rendered where charges for such services are provided for by statute, and for any other services rendered, shall charge an amount consistent with the cost of providing such services. The funds derived from these charges shall be deposited into a special fund account in the State Treasury to the credit of the Office of the Mississippi State Supreme Court.

SECTION 28. It is the intent of the Legislature that no part of the funds herein appropriated shall be required to be used for the payment of rent for the public space in the Law Library.

SECTION 29. In accordance with Section 9-21-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, the Director of the Administrative Office of Courts is authorized to direct expenditures of state monies appropriated to the Administrative Office of Courts or any courts of the state for any and all functions or projects directly or indirectly affecting the operation of any court and may transfer monies appropriated for the office or any account to any one or more other accounts or office. The Director of the Administrative Office of Courts shall notify, in writing, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Chairman of the House Appropriations A Committee, and the Legislative Budget Office of any transfer. The written notification shall include the justification for the transfer of funds, an explanation of need, the amount, and where the funds will be used. This written

notification shall be sent on or before the fifteenth day of the month prior to the effective date of the transfer.

SECTION 30. Of the funds appropriated in this act, One Million Thirteen Thousand Two Hundred Thirty-nine Dollars ($1,013,239.00), or so much thereof as may be necessary, is provided for the operations of the CCID inferior court established in Section 9-12-1, Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 31. It is the intention of the Legislature that whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price, quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are made without competitive bids.

SECTION 32. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act, an amount not to exceed Two Million Four Hundred Sixty Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($2,460,500.00) may be provided for the Comprehensive Electronic Court Systems Fund administered by the Administrative Office of Courts.

SECTION 33. It is the intention of the Legislature that the Mississippi State Supreme Court 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

2026. It is further the intention of the Legislature that the agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2028 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 2027 budget request process.

SECTION 34. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act, Two Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($2,500,000.00) shall be provided for the Youth Court Support Fund as created in Section 43-21-801, Mississippi Code of 1972, and administered by the Administrative Office of Courts.

(a) As a condition of expending the funds provided in this section, the Administrative Office of Courts shall establish standardized intake procedures for Youth Courts and provide annual training to intake officers on these standardized procedures.

(b) As a condition of a court receiving the funds provided in this section, the intake officer of the receiving court shall attend the Administrative Office of Courts' annual training on standardized intake procedures and the court shall provide the information necessary to complete the annual report on Youth Courts provided in Section 35.

SECTION 35. It is the intention of the Legislature that the Administrative Office of Courts shall create an annual report on Youth Courts that includes but is not limited to the following for each Youth Court: (a) expenditures made by each Youth Court organized by major object; (b) the number of employees by job

classification; (c) the number of active cases assigned; (d) the number of cases pending for more than a year; (e) the number of cases disposed of; (f) the number of youth adjudicated delinquent; (g) the number of children adjudicated neglected or abused; and (h) the number of days court was held. This report shall be submitted no later than 90 days after the conclusion of the fiscal year to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairmen of the Senate and House Appropriations and Judiciary A Committees, and the Legislative Budget Office.

SECTION 36. It is the intention of the Legislature that in the event there are not sufficient funds in the Judicial System Operation Fund created under Section 9-21-45, Mississippi Code of 1972, in any given year with which to pay the annual salary supplements set forth in Section 25-3-35, Mississippi Code of 1972, then the county treasury shall not be obligated to fund such salary supplements and the salary of county court judges shall be that in place prior to the passage of Section 9-9-11, Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 37. Of the funds appropriated in Section 9, it is the intention of the Legislature that Two Hundred Thousand Dollars ($200,000.00) may be allocated for the Civil Legal Assistance Program.

SECTION 38. Of the funds appropriated in Section 8, Two Million Dollars ($2,000,000.00) or so much thereof as may be

necessary is provided for the employment of intake officers for Youth Courts pursuant to Section 43-21-351(2), Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 39. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of Section 9, Eight Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($8,750,000.00), or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be derived out of any money in the State Treasury to the credit of the Capital Expense Fund, as created in Section 27-103-303, Mississippi Code of 1972, and allocated in a manner as determined by the State Treasurer. These funds are provided to replace the Youth Courts system of record, including data cleanup.

SECTION 40. 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 41. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2026.