MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Ladner

To: Accountability, Efficiency, Transparency

HOUSE BILL NO. 1213

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 25-9-127, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE EACH STATE AGENCY THAT IS GRANTED AN EXEMPTION FROM THE STATE PERSONNEL BOARD RULES, REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES TO SUBMIT A COPY OF ITS ANNUAL REPORT TO THE STATE PERSONNEL BOARD, PEER COMMITTEE AND LEGISLATIVE BUDGET OFFICE; TO REQUIRE THE REPORT TO INCLUDE QUANTIFIABLE MEASURES SHOWING THAT THE EXEMPTION HAS HELPED THE AGENCY PERFORM MORE EFFICIENTLY OR EFFECTIVELY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 25-9-127, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-9-127. (1) No employee of any department, agency or institution who is included under this chapter or hereafter included under its authority, and who is subject to the rules and regulations prescribed by the state personnel system, may be dismissed or otherwise adversely affected as to compensation or employment status except for inefficiency or other good cause, and after written notice and hearing within the department, agency or institution as shall be specified in the rules and regulations of the State Personnel Board complying with due process of law; and any employee who has by written notice of dismissal or action

adversely affecting his compensation or employment status shall, on hearing and on any appeal of any decision made in such action, be required to furnish evidence that the reasons stated in the notice of dismissal or action adversely affecting his compensation or employment status are not true or are not sufficient grounds for the action taken; * * * however, * * * this provision shall not apply: (a) to persons separated from any department, agency or institution due to curtailment of funds or reduction in staff when such separation is in accordance with rules and regulations of the state personnel system; (b) during the probationary period of state service of twelve (12) months; and (c) to an executive officer of any state agency who serves at the will and pleasure of the Governor, board, commission or other appointing authority.

(2) The operation of a state-owned motor vehicle without a valid Mississippi driver's license by an employee of any department, agency or institution that is included under this chapter and that is subject to the rules and regulations of the state personnel system shall constitute good cause for dismissal of such person from employment.

(3) Beginning July 1, 1999, every male between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-six (26) who is required to register under the federal Military Selective Service Act, 50 USCS App. 453, and who is an employee of the state shall not be promoted to any higher position of employment with the state until he submits to the person, commission, board or agency by which he is employed

satisfactory documentation of his compliance with the draft registration requirements of the Military Selective Service Act. The documentation shall include a signed affirmation under penalty of perjury that the male employee has complied with the requirements of the Military Selective Service Act.

(4) For a period of two (2) years beginning July 1, 2014, the provisions of subsection (1) shall not apply to the personnel actions of the State Department of Education that are subject to the rules and regulations of the State Personnel Board, and all employees of the department shall be classified as nonstate service during that period. However, any employee hired after July 1, 2014, by the department shall meet the criteria of the State Personnel Board as it presently exists for employment. The State Superintendent of Public Education and the State Board of Education shall consult with the Office of the Attorney General before taking personnel actions authorized by this section to review those actions for compliance with applicable state and federal law.

It is not the intention or effect of this section to include any school attendance officer in any exemption from coverage under the State Personnel Board policy or regulations, including, but not limited to, termination and conditions of employment.

(5) (a) For a period of two (2) years beginning July 1, 2015, the provisions of subsection (1) shall not apply to the personnel actions of the Department of Corrections, and all

employees of the department shall be classified as nonstate service during that period. However, any employee hired after July 1, 2015, by the department shall meet the criteria of the State Personnel Board as it presently exists for employment.

(b) Additionally, for a period of one (1) year beginning July 1, 2016, the personnel actions of the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections shall be exempt from State Personnel Board rules, regulations and procedures in order to give the commissioner flexibility in making an orderly, effective and timely reorganization and realignment of the department.

(c) The Commissioner of Corrections shall consult with the Office of the Attorney General before personnel actions authorized by this section to review those actions for compliance with applicable state and federal law.

(6) Through July 1, 2020, the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to the personnel actions of the Department of Human Services that are subject to the rules and regulations of the State Personnel Board, and all employees of the department shall be classified as nonstate service during that period. Any employee hired on or after July 1, 2020, by the department shall meet the criteria of the State Personnel Board as it presently exists for employment. The Executive Director of Human Services shall consult with the Office of the Attorney General before taking personnel actions authorized by this section

to review those actions for compliance with applicable state and federal law.

(7) Through July 1, 2020, the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to the personnel actions of the Department of Child Protection Services that are subject to the rules and regulations of the State Personnel Board, and all employees of the department shall be classified as nonstate service during that period. Any employee hired on or after July 1, 2020, by the division shall meet the criteria of the State Personnel Board as it presently exists for employment. The Commissioner of Child Protection Services shall consult with the Office of the Attorney General before taking personnel actions authorized by this section to review those actions for compliance with applicable state and federal law.

(8) Any state agency whose personnel actions are exempted in this section from the rules, regulations and procedures of the State Personnel Board shall file with the State Personnel Board, Lieutenant Governor, * * * Speaker of the House of Representatives, Legislative Budget Office, Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER), and the members of the Senate and House Accountability, Efficiency and Transparency Committees an annual report no later than July 1 * * * of each year * * * while under the exemption. Such annual report shall contain the following information:

(a) The number of current employees who received an increase in salary during the past fiscal year and the amount of the increase;

(b) The number of employees who were dismissed from the agency or otherwise adversely affected as to compensation or employment status during the past fiscal year, including a description of such adverse effects; *** * ***

(c) The number of new employees hired during the past fiscal year and the starting salaries of each new employee *** * ***; and

(d) Quantifiable measures showing that the actions taken under authority of an exemption granted by this section have improved efficiency or effectiveness, or both, of the agency's operations.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.

~ OFFICIAL ~

ST: State Personnel Board; require exempted agencies' reports to include quantifiable data and to be sent to SPB, PEER and LBO.