STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1462

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Mississippi and Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-11(b)(17), I issued a Proclamation declaring that a State of Emergency exists in the State of Mississippi as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency for COVID-19 beginning on January 27, 2020; on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic; and on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a nationwide state of emergency due to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 and the effects of its extreme risk of person-to-person transmission throughout the United States and Mississippi significantly impact the life and health of our people, as well as the economy of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the risk of spread of COVID-19 within Mississippi constitutes a public emergency that may result in substantial injury or harm to life, health, and property within Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the Mississippi State Department of Health confirmed the first presumptive case of COVID-19 in Mississippi and as of March 20, 2020, there are 80 presumptive and confirmed cases in Mississippi that have tested positive for COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for responding to COVID-19 recommends avoiding crowds as much as possible, especially for older adults and individuals with serious chronic medical conditions, and the Mississippi State Department of Health has recommended avoiding social gatherings where 10 people or more may come into close contact; and

WHEREAS, due to health and safety concerns related to the risk of possible transmission of COVID-19, many businesses within the State of Mississippi have either significantly downsized their staffs in order to adhere to CDC guidelines or have temporarily closed business operations until further notice, leaving many employers and employees without regular work and/or income; and

WHEREAS, this public emergency has taken a significant financial toll on countless employers and employees in the state of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi is committed to helping the plight of the employers and employees adversely impacted by this emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (hereinafter "MDES") is committed to the timely processing of all Unemployment Insurance claims in this time of emergency.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tate Reeves, Governor of the State of Mississippi, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, do hereby order and direct as follows:

1. That due to essential efforts in response to the COVID-19 emergency, the one week waiting period established in Mississippi Code Annotated 71-5-511(d) would prevent and hinder the expeditious disbursement of vital Unemployment Insurance benefits necessary to cope with the COVID-19 emergency. Accordingly, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-11(c)(1), the one-week waiting period requirement for receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits shall be waived for all claims filed from March 8, 2020, until June 27, 2020. Prior to

its expiration on June 27, 2020, MDES has the discretion to reassess this measure and will modify, continue or cancel this measure as needed in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

2. That due to essential efforts in response to the COVID-19 emergency, the work search requirements established in Miss. Code Ann. § 71-5-511(a)(i) and MDES Regulation 305.02 would prevent and hinder the expeditious disbursement of vital Unemployment Insurance benefits necessary to cope with the COVID-19 emergency. Accordingly, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-11(c)(1), all work search requirements that normally must be met to be considered eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits shall be suspended beginning the date this Executive Order is signed until June 27, 2020. Prior to its expiration on June 27, 2020, MDES has the discretion to reassess this measure and will modify, continue or cancel this measure as needed in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

3. That due to essential efforts in response to the COVID-19 emergency, the collection activity measures established in MDES Regulation 403 and Miss. Code Ann. §§ 71-5-19(4), 71-5-367, 71-5-369, and 71-5-375, would create an undue burden on the public during the COVID-19 emergency. Accordingly, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-11(c)(1), all collection activities including, but not limited to, interception of state tax refunds, payment agreements, enrollment of liens, tax garnishments, and claimant overpayment garnishments shall be suspended until June 27, 2020. This will only apply to delinquencies and will not affect the timely filing of employer contributions or wage reports. Prior to its expiration on June 27, 2020, MDES has the discretion to reassess this measure and will modify, continue or cancel this measure as needed in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

4. That any waivers granted by the United States Congress related to the COVID-19 emergency may be adopted and implemented by the State of Mississippi. Moreover, MDES has the express authority to actively seek any waivers that it deems necessary to serve the people of Mississippi in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

5. That the Mississippi Department of Employment Security shall be empowered with the administrative flexibility to carry out this Executive Order pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §§ 33-15-31 and 71-5-115.

6. That all departments, commissions, agencies, institutions, and boards of the State of Mississippi, political subdivisions thereof, counties, municipalities and school districts are authorized and directed to cooperate in actions and measures taken in response to COVID-19 during the State of Emergency.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, on the 21st day of March, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-fourth.

Tate Reeves

TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR

BY THE GOVERNOR

Michael Watson

MICHAEL WATSON
SECRETARY OF STATE