STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1539

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 impacts the life and health of our people, as well as the economy of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, with vigilance and common sense, and as a result of the continued sacrifices made by all Mississippians in the interest of public health over the past nine months, COVID-19 infections and resulting hospitalizations have been effectively managed; and

WHEREAS, the Safe Recovery Order instituted in Executive Order 1535 adopts reasonable public health measures under the current circumstances permitting all business and non-profits to continue operating within the State of Mississippi and permitting the continued resumption of all community activities subject to reasonable limitations to minimize person to person interactions and associated risk of transmission of COVID-19 remains in full force and effect until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 15, 2021, unless it is modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi must protect lives while restoring livelihoods, both of which can be achieved with the expert advice of medical professionals and business leaders; and

WHEREAS, as Mississippi continues to safely recover, the key to reducing spread of COVID-19 is the continued implementation of reasonable public health measures under the current circumstances including social distancing, limited capacity of gatherings where individuals are in prolonged close proximity, and use of face coverings for individuals engaged in close proximity activities and for prolonged gatherings where social distancing is not feasible; and

WHEREAS, while some jurisdictions throughout Mississippi have shown a relatively stabilized rate of diagnosis of new cases, the State Health Officer has reported that data from certain jurisdictions of the state (a) indicate periods of higher numbers of new cases over shorter periods of time accounting for a larger percentage of the State's overall case count, (b) have higher percent incidence of positive cases per number of tests performed, and (c) have other public health indicators reflecting ongoing community transmission; and

WHEREAS, testing and contact tracing throughout the state allows healthcare providers and the State Health Officer to monitor and gauge the rate and locations of new COVID-19 cases, enabling a prompt response to areas showing an increased rate of transmission; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2020, upon counsel and recommendation of the State Health Officer, I issued Executive Order 1536 establishing additional jurisdiction-specific measures in Adams, Alcorn, Amite, Attala, Bolivar, Calhoun, Carroll, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clarke, Clay, Coahoma, Copiah, Covington, De Soto, Forrest, Franklin, Grenada, Harrison, Hinds, Holmes, Itawamba, Jackson, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Kemper, Lafayette, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Lee, Leflore, Lincoln, Lowndes, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Neshoba, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Panola, Pearl River, Perry, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, Stone, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Washington, Webster, Winston, Yalobusha and Yazoo Counties to further disrupt the spread of the COVID-19 virus within those Counties; and

WHEREAS, upon counsel and recommendation of the State Health Officer, Benton, George, Greene, Hancock, Humphreys, Jasper, Leake, Newton, Pike, Quitman, Smith, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Walthall, Warren, Wayne and Wilkinson Counties have been identified as additional regions of the State that currently are at a higher risk for transmission of COVID-19; accordingly, additional jurisdiction-specific measures are necessary in these Counties to disrupt the spread of COVID-19 to address and further limit person to person contact and implement other health and safety measures.

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, and in consultation with the State Health Officer do hereby order and direct as follows:

I. Paragraph II of Executive Order 1536 is amended to add Benton, George, Greene, Hancock, Humphreys, Jasper, Leake, Newton, Pike, Quitman, Smith, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Walthall, Warren, Wayne and Wilkinson Counties.

II. This amendment to Paragraph II of Executive Order 1536 shall be effective at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 23, 2020, and shall remain in full force and effect until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 15, 2021, unless it is modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded.

IN WITNESS 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 22ND day of December, 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-fifth.

TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR

BY THE GOVERNOR

MICHAEL WATSON
SECRETARY OF STATE