

THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



Wicker leads effort to end child deaths in hot cars

Summer months pose unique risk to young children

Each summer, dozens of American families suffer the heartbreaking loss of a child from heatstroke in hot cars. Last year, more than 50 U.S. children died in hot cars, and unfortunately this year we have already had several hot car deaths. These avoidable tragedies leave permanent scars in the lives of families.

Children are at heightened risk of heatstroke. Their body temperatures can rise three to five times faster than an adult’s. A parked vehicle can heat up by 20 degrees within just 10 minutes, making it a dangerous place for a young child.

Face masks mandatory at driver services offices

Press Release

Due to the continuing rise in COVID-19 cases across the state, the Mississippi Department of Public Safety is urging customers to wear masks while visiting driver license offices. Masks are mandatory at all driver license offices as of Monday, July 13.

In order to help the offices run safely and more efficiently, customers are also being asked to follow proper social distancing protocols while waiting to be served. “We have to be diligent in our efforts to limit transmission of the virus,” said DPS Public Safety Commissioner Sean Tindell. “We also feel it is imperative to require a face mask be worn by all patrons and personnel inside driver license offices to accomplish that goal.”

Each station location will continue following the daily schedule according to the first letter of customers’ last names.

- Monday A-E
- Tuesday F-L
- Wednesday Firearm Permits, Security Guard Permits, Renewals, & Duplicates
- Thursday M-S
- Friday T-Z

In order to limit exposure, customers can take advantage of the online services by visiting www.dps.ms.gov and the Driver Service Bureau link.

As we enter the peak of summer, parents and caretakers should be aware of these risks and take appropriate precautions. I am working to advance a comprehensive approach that will help our nation reduce hot car deaths among our youngest citizens.

Installing New Safety Systems

Last year, I introduced the HOT CARS Act, which would mandate that all new vehicles be equipped with an alert system reminding drivers to check their backseats before leaving the vehicle. Such an alert would take only a second of the driver’s time and could save many lives.

This proposal got the attention of the auto industry. After consulting with industry leaders, we agreed that they would voluntarily implement the safety system

Auditor’s office returns \$150,000, cases lead to four convictions in June

Press Release

State Auditor Shad White announced the Auditor’s office concluded four cases with guilty verdicts for embezzlement and returned nearly \$150,000 to taxpayers last month.

George Nangah was convicted of embezzlement in Judge Jimmy McClure’s chambers of Tate County Circuit Court. Nangah was arrested and charged with federal and state crimes in October 2018 after he embezzled over \$200,000 from the Town of Coldwater. Nangah will have spent 8 years in federal and state prisons and up to 12 years on probation after his sentences are completed.

Both federal and state judges ordered Nangah to repay the money he stole from the Town of Coldwater.

Kappi Allen was convicted of embezzlement in the Coahoma Circuit Court chambers of Judge Albert B. Smith, III. Allen was arrested in June 2019 after she stole over \$90,000 from Coahoma County taxpayers. Judge Smith ordered her to spend 1 year on house arrest and up to 14 years on probation.

Allen must also return the money she embezzled. She will not be able to handle public money again.

Stacy Frazier and Joseph Edney were convicted of embezzlement in Union and Bolivar County Circuit Courts, respectively. Frazier will spend up to five years

in new vehicles by 2024. Almost every automaker in America entered this agreement, so its effects will be significant. Under the agreement, automakers will begin implementing changes quickly to start saving lives as soon as possible.

Automakers are beginning to make good on their commitment. Some have already implemented the system, as I have seen in my own car. Auto companies should keep up the progress, and I will continue working to make sure they uphold their pledge.

Steps Everyone Can Take

As important as safety systems are, technology is not perfect. We all have a role to play in protecting our children. A few simple steps can go a long way toward keeping them safe.

The most important step is never to leave a child alone in the car for any period of time. A parent or caretaker might think they are running into the store quickly, but it is too easy to lose track of time and forget about the child in the car.

Another helpful step is to make a habit of leaving a cell phone, keys, briefcase, or purse in the backseat in

on probation, and Edney will spend up to seven years on probation. Both were ordered to repay all the money they stole, and neither will be eligible to handle public money again.

In addition to these cases, the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor recovered and returned over \$140,000 to the city, county, or state agency where it was stolen. Over \$17,000 was returned to Harrison County as part of a demand issued to Denise Gill. The Auditor’s office collected the entire amount of the demand issued to Herb Brewer and returned it to the Town of Walls in DeSoto County.

Additionally, nearly \$12,000 was recovered from William “Bill” Walker and Joe Ziegler and returned to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

“The Auditor’s office continues to work hard every day to protect your money. The early part of this year was marked by our large case at the Department of Human Services, but all government officials need to know we are watching, even if you don’t work at a big state agency, and our cases this month prove that,” said White.

Suspected fraud can be reported to the Auditor’s office online any time by clicking the red button at www.osa.ms.gov or via telephone during normal business hours at 1-(800)-321-1275.

Mississippi mayor and wife indicted on federal fraud charges

Associated Press

A Mississippi mayor and his wife have been indicted on federal fraud charges after prosecutors said the couple raised money for mental health programs in schools

order to keep one’s attention near the child. In addition, consider arranging for a child’s school or daycare to call home if the child does not arrive as scheduled.

Lastly, when leaving an empty car, lock it so that a child does not climb inside and become trapped. Sadly, this is how two young children died a few weeks ago in Oklahoma.

These tragedies can happen to anyone – young or old, male or female, parent or grandparent, rich or poor. As caretakers, we all have a duty to educate ourselves and take precautions to protect our young ones.

but spent it on themselves for expenses that included car payments and the purchase of a pet dog.

Federal and state authorities announced the indictment of Moss Point Mayor Mario King, 33, and his wife, Natasha R. King, 32, on Friday at about the time the couple made their initial appearance before a federal magistrate judge in Gulfport.

An attorney for the couple, Tyler Cox, declined to comment about the case when contacted Friday by The Associated Press.

Mario King is a Democrat and was first elected as mayor in June 2017.

According to an indictment that was issued June 10 and unsealed Friday, Mario King and Natasha King began soliciting money in late 2018 for a March 23, 2019, event in Moss Point. A solicitation said

the “gala honors and supports organizations that are making a difference for the mental health community. Proceeds support the efforts of mental health in the City of Moss Point with a focus on the Moss Point School District, converting spaces into a therapeutic and innovative learning environment.”

The indictment said the mayor and his wife made a local television appearance to promote the event.

The indictment said some of the money raised paid for expenses of the gala, but the rest did not go to the Moss Point School District. Prosecutors say the Kings used money raised by the gala for personal purchases, including the down payments to buy vehicles, cash withdrawals and the payment of credit card debts to buy a Biewer terrier from a veterinary clinic in Hattiesburg.

Moss Point has a population of about 13,350. It is in coastal Jackson County, near the Alabama state line. The city has about a 23% poverty rate, according to the Census.

PUBLIC NOTICE

“TO THE PUBLIC AND TO THE TAXPAYERS OF HOLMES COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI:

“You are hereby notified that the real and personal property assessment rolls of the above named County for the year 2020 have been equalized according to law, and that said rolls are ready for inspection and examination, and that any objections to said rolls, or any assessment therein contained, shall be made in writing and filed with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of said County on or before the 20th day of August, 2020, at his office in the Courthouse of said County, and that all assessments to which no objection is then and there made will be finally approved by said Board of Supervisors, and that all assessments to which objection is made, and which may be corrected and properly determined by this Board, will be made final by this Board of Supervisors, and that said rolls and the assessments contained therein will be approved by this Board of Supervisors; and that,

“1. This Board will be in session for the purpose of hearing objections to the said assessments which may be filed at the Courthouse in the City of Lexington, said County and State, on the 20th day of August, 2020, and,

“2. This Board of Supervisors will remain in session from day to day until all objections, lawfully filed, shall have been disposed of and all proper corrections made in the said rolls.

“Witness the signature and seal of the said Board of Supervisors this the 6th day of July, 2020, and

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF HOLMES COUNTY

By /s/ James Young
President

By /s/ Charlie Luckett
Chancery Clerk

Ordered and Adjudged this 6th day of July, 2020.

/s/ James Young

NOTE: Said rolls are available for inspection in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room. Assistance in examining the rolls is available from personnel of the County Appraisal Office in the Courthouse. Questions regarding assessments may also be made by telephone to said Office, 662.834.3737; if no answer, call the Assessor’s Office, 662.834.2865. Blank forms for use in filing objections may be obtained from the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room.