

Opinion: Mississippi is the most regulated state in the South

Mississippi has a ways to go before challenging some of the South's strongest economies, and one key reason is more regulation and red tape than its neighbors.

New legislation proposed this session could have helped rein in government red tape, but the most significant bills failed to gain enough traction. Thus, Mississippi has a long way to go if it wants to unburden itself of the moniker "the most regulated state in the South."

In 2018, as part of a national review of state regulations, the Mercatus Center at George Mason University found Mississippi has nearly 118,000 regulatory restrictions on the books. All told, the state code book includes 9.3 million words, and it would take about 13 weeks to read if all one did was read

regulations as a full time job.

The biggest regulator in Mississippi, by far, is the Department of Health, with more than 20,000 restrictions. Coming in second is the Department of Human Services, with over 12,000 restrictions. Various state boards, commissions, and examiners have a combined 10,000 restrictions.

These regulations touch every industry in the state and impact each Mississippian in some form or fashion. The health care and assisted living sectors are particularly highly regulated. Some of these rules keep our senior citizens safe, but surely others, like restrictions on relocating or renovating medical facilities, just make the system inflexible, especially during an emergency.

The coronavirus pandemic

has revealed deep shortcomings in the regulatory system. To ensure an adequate amount of health care coverage, governors around the country have been relaxing—not increasing—regulations. This includes easing restrictions on telemedicine, recognizing medical licenses from other states, and in some states, rolling back requirements that health care facilities obtain permission from regulators before adding new equipment like hospital beds.

Overall, Mississippi's regulatory load is about average for a typical state, but when compared to some of its neighbors, a clearer picture emerges. A new Mercatus

Center analysis summarizes data from eight southern states stretching from Kentucky down to Florida and over to Louisiana. Of these states, Florida has the most regulatory restrictions at 171,000. However, if one adjusts for the fact that a bigger population tends to generate more regulation, Florida is, by that measure, actually the least regulated. Of the group, Mississippi has the most regulations per capita (and the lowest GDP per capita).

More populous states tend to have more industries, denser urban areas, and other factors that generally contribute to a higher number of regulations. This explains why California, Ohio, New York, and Texas are all among the five-most regulated states in America, despite having very different political environments.

Mississippi lawmakers had an opportunity to reduce regulatory burdens. Several bills were proposed that would have created regulatory reduction pilot programs at various state agencies.

The idea is that a small consortium of agencies should have to measure and track how much regulation they impose, and then make sensible cuts based on those measurements.

If all goes well, the pilot program can be expanded to other agencies. The state of Virginia has already implemented a pilot program like this, demonstrating that the idea is feasible, affordable, and even bipartisan.

None of the various Mississippi proposals made it into law this year. However, governors around the country have taken action by issuing red-tape reduction ex-

ecutive orders. Gov. Tate Reeves could start by reviewing regulations suspended in response to COVID-19, as Idaho has recently done. Or he could take a more aggressive approach, like Gov. Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma, who earlier this year ordered a 25 percent across-the-board regulatory reduction.

Whatever approach is taken, Mississippians need regulatory relief now. The pandemic continues to ravage the country, and the nation's regulatory system is simply not up to the task.

There is an opportunity to rectify the situation if our leaders will heed the call.

**Brett Kittredge is the Director of Marketing & Communications for Mississippi Center for Public Policy, the state's non-partisan, free-market think tank.*

At my door...

I have been asked so many questions by my family and friends concerning this epidemic/pandemic and my answer is always the same – "I don't know."

I honestly don't know how to answer 99% of the inquiries. For instance, "How long do you think this COVID-19 will last? Will you take the vaccine when it becomes available? How do you feel about the children going back to school? Do you always wear a mask?"



Peggy's Take

what I thought would only happen to others was at our door. Now I am back to staying home, getting my groceries through the generous help of others and feeling as if the zombie apocalypse is once again beginning, where we need to be scared to go outside.

I know like me you are so tired of seeing this on television, keeping up with the numbers, EVERYBODY talking about it ALL THE TIME!

So, I have decided that I am going to live my life as normally as I can, considering our new normal, and of course that means wear a mask, stay six feet apart, wash my hands regularly and so on and so on.

If I see you in the stores, I am going to speak and probably stop and talk to you, (not too close), and maybe even bump a fist until I can hug you again, and I will do that soon I believe.

It's too hot to cook a good meal now at supper time so I try to talk my husband into something lighter and easier, (on me). This is my Tuna Salad Recipe – 1 large can of water packed tuna, drained. Add ¾ cup of mayonnaise, ¼ cup sweet pickle relish, ½ chopped red apple, ¼ cup of chopped sweet onion, ½ cup of finely chopped celery with tops and 3 chopped hard boiled eggs. Mix well and eat as a sandwich or with crackers.

**Peggy Sims is a life-long resident of Attala County and columnist.*

CLASSIFIED ADS

**City of Durant
EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENT**

OPEN DATE: July 7, 2020
POSITION: Part-time City Worker
CLOSING DATE: July 31, 2020
EXPERIENCE/EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:

Education:
 Graduation from a standard four-year high school or equivalent.

Requirements:
 Applicant must possess a Valid Mississippi Driver's License.
 Certified lineman preferred but not required.
 Applications may be obtained from City Hall and should be submitted directly to the City Hall for processing, before the closing date.
 Citizen of Durant preferred.

The City of Durant is an equal opportunity employer.

**The Holmes County
Tax Assessor/Collector's Office
is now accepting resume's for a
Deputy Collectors position.**

**Interested persons should
bring their resume to
Linda Rollins, Holmes County
Tax Assessor/Collector.
1 Court Square
Lexington, MS
662-834-2865**

**NOTICE
CITY OF LEXINGTON HISTORIC
PRESERVATION COMMISSION
VACANCY**

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. 1972, Sec. 39-13-5, 39-15-7 and 39-13-9 as amended, and in accordance with the provisions of City Ordinance 304, Section III, adopted on 04/02/2002, the City established on 04/02/2002, an historic preservation commission to preserve, promote, and develop the city's historic resources and to advise the city on the designation of historic districts, landmarks and landmark sites and perform such other functions as may be provided by law.

The City is currently soliciting responses from citizens who are professionals in the primary historic preservation-related disciplines such as urban planning, American studies, American civilization, cultural geography, cultural anthropology, interior design, law, history, architectural history, architecture and related fields as well as interested lay persons who are willing to serve on the commission.

Resumes are to be mailed to Lexington City Hall at 112 Spring Street, Lexington, MS 39095 or hand delivered to the City's Drop Box.

Resumes must be returned to City Hall by 5 p.m. on August 14, 2020.

NOTICE

The Board of Levee Commissioners for the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, Clarksdale, Mississippi is now accepting applications only until 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2020 for the following:

CREWMAN

All applicants must be 21 years of age and possess a valid driver's license as well as a CLASS B Commercial driver's license or be able to obtain a Class B Commercial driver's license within 90 days of employment. The applicant must be physically fit. A list of job duties can be obtained from the Levee Board office. The successful candidate must report to work on time and on a regular basis. The successful candidate must have a positive attitude, follow instructions, and work well with others.

Applicants must provide two (2) previous employers references. All references provided will be contacted. The successful candidate will be required to pass a drug test before being employed. The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board does participate in a random drug testing program.

The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or disability.

Anyone interested in completing an application can do so by calling 662-624-4397 to pick up an application at the Levee Board Office at 140 Delta Avenue, P.O. Drawer 610, Clarksdale, Mississippi 38614 or download the application from levee-board.org the Levee Board's website.

**JIMMY SCOTT, PRESIDENT
YAZOO-MS DELTA LEVEE BOARD**