



Recommendations to the  
Governor's Task Force on the  
Reopening of Alabama in the  
Wake of the Coronavirus

## *State Responses to the Coronavirus: A Primer*



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The Alabama Policy Institute (API) is an independent, non-profit research and education organization that is issue-centered and solution-oriented. We provide in-depth research and analysis of Alabama's public policy issues to impact policy decisions and deepen Alabama citizens' understanding of, and appreciation for, sound economic, social, and governing principles.

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Printed 2020 by  
The Alabama Policy Institute  
Birmingham, Alabama

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# State Responses to the Coronavirus

Source: API's "State Responses to the Coronavirus: A Primer" Report

**Only 12**

other states ended their legislative session before Alabama did or have not called or started a special session

**17 States**

have called Special Sessions since March 16th

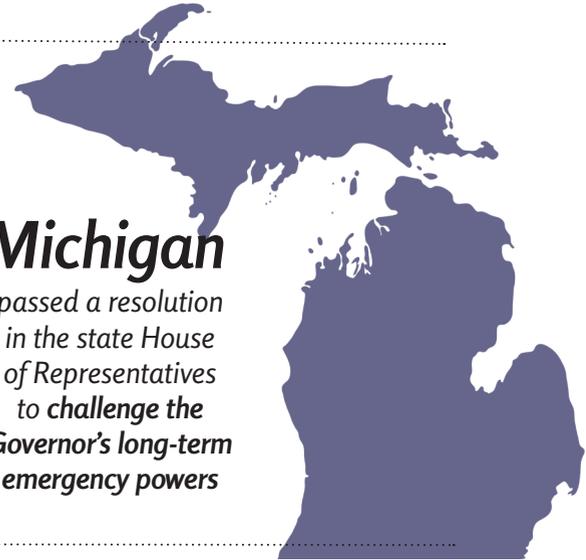


**1,500+**

As of July 1st, the number of bills other states have passed into law since the Alabama State Legislature ended its 2020 Regular Session on May 18th

*In Idaho, the Governor and Senate Pro-Tem announced **property tax relief** from the CARES Act totaling*

**\$200 Million**



**Michigan**

*passed a resolution in the state House of Representatives to challenge the Governor's long-term emergency powers*

**In Massachusetts...**

*on April 16th, 2020...*

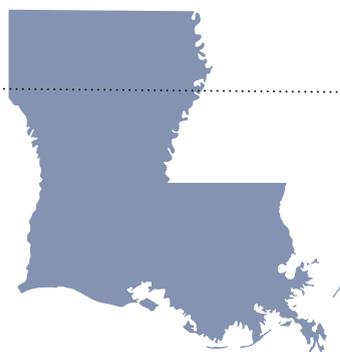
A bill to provide liability protections for healthcare workers passes a Massachusetts committee in the State Senate

*on April 17th, 2020...*

The bill is passed as final in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate, laid before the Governor, and, finally, signed by the Governor

The North Carolina State Legislature considered a bill that would give a **\$2,500 tax credit** per-student to families whose income has decreased by 10% or more, received a stimulus payment, and whose children attend a private school

**88-0**



*The vote in the Louisiana State Senate to suspend, for one year, occupational licensing renewal fees*

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## Executive Summary

COVID-19 has impacted governments on every level, and the impact on state government has been particularly unprecedented. In response to this crisis, state legislatures across the country have sought to address issues from the sudden economic fallout to the mass medical infrastructure shortcoming apparent in many states. The state of Alabama, likewise, has the potential to address these issues and is given the unique opportunity to learn from other state legislatures. Seventeen different states have called a special session during the 2020 calendar year including Georgia, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri.<sup>1</sup> As of August 1<sup>st</sup>, over 1,500 bills have passed into law since Alabama ended its 2020 regular session.

Many of the issues tackled in these bills align with the target areas of the Alabama Policy Institute's [RESTORE Alabama Plan](#),<sup>2</sup> which outlines the following policy issues that Alabama should take up in a special session in response to COVID-19.

- Legal Protections
- Shared Government Accountability in Future Crises
- Increased Broadband Access
- Tax Relief
- Extended Lessening of Licensure and Certificate of Need Restrictions
- Education Reform

In this report, there are almost 100 different bills from 19 states that have attempted to address at least one plank of the RESTORE Alabama Plan. These bills range from challenges to the executives' long-term emergency powers to the year-long suspension of occupational licensing renewal fees.

This document is divided into six sections corresponding to the API RESTORE Alabama Plan. Each section lists states where a bill connected to each of the RESTORE Alabama Plan points was introduced, a summary of the bill if available, and the last action taken on said bill. If a bill or resolution was passed, the "last action" section will denote that.

This resource has proven helpful to our organization as we sought to learn what other states were doing to address the effects of the coronavirus. We hope it proves as helpful for you.

## I. Liability Protections

Nine different state legislatures have considered bills concerning legal liability protections in the wake of the coronavirus. There are two distinct types of liability protections. The first legal protection is meant to protect private employers from frivolous lawsuits by employees or customers. The second legal protection is immunity for medical professionals and other essential workers from lawsuits that would limit them from doing their work effectively. Notably, Massachusetts and Oklahoma have already passed multiple bills to provide legal protection to business owners and frontline workers.

### Arizona

**HB 2912** - COVID-19; civil liability; evidence; penalties

Summary: *Limits enforcement actions and civil liability during the state of emergency declared by the Governors referring to the COVID-19 outbreak.*

Last Action: *Transmit to Senate. (May 21, 2020).*<sup>3</sup>

### Louisiana

**HB 856** - LIABILITY/CIVIL: Provides relative to limitations of liability in response to the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Summary: *Provides a limitation of liability to certain individuals and businesses that provide food and medical supplies and related equipment in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.*

Last Action: *Read by title, under the rules, referred to the Committee on Civil Law and Procedure (May 4, 2020).*<sup>4</sup>

### Massachusetts

**S 2640** - An Act to provide liability protections for health care workers and facilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Last Action: *Signed by the Governor, Chapter 64 of the Acts of 2020 (April 17, 2020).*<sup>5</sup>

**H 4744/S 2921** - An Act to provide liability protections

for contractors, sub-contractors and unions during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Last Action: *Bill reported favorably from Ways and Means committee (July 9, 2020).*<sup>6</sup>

**S 2700** - An Act to provide liability protections for contractors, sub-contractors and unions during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Last Action: *House concurred (June 22, 2020).*<sup>7</sup>

**H 5163** - An Act Relative to the Protection of Essential Businesses

Summary: *The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purposes, which is to provide liability protections for essential businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience*

Last Action: *In the House. Referred to the Committee on House Rules (July 6, 2020).*<sup>8</sup>

### Michigan

**HB 5751/SB889** - Health occupations; health professionals; immunity from civil or criminal liability during a declared emergency; provide for certain health care workers. Amends sec. 11 of 1976 PA 390 (MCL 30.411).

Last Action: *Presented to the Governor (July 29, 2020).*<sup>9</sup>

**SB 1024** - A bill to provide minimum requirements for claims alleging exposure to COVID-19; establishing liability standards for claims alleging exposure to COVID-19; precluding liability if conduct complies with regulations, orders, or public health guidance; and limiting liability with respect to certain products made, sold, or donated in response to COVID-19.

Last Action: *Referred to committee on economic and small business development (July 23, 2020).*<sup>10</sup>

Note: *SB 1023 provides similar protections to businesses and schools. It has been referred to the same committee.*

*Similar bills in Michigan - HB6030 and HB6031*

### Minnesota

**HF 4664** - COVID-19; limiting liability for PPE and supplies made, sold, or donated during pandemic, mini-

imum injury requirements provided for claims, premises' liability addressed, and liability precluded when conduct complied with government-issued guidance.

*Summary: Any person who designs manufactures, labels, sells, distributes, or donates household cleaning or disinfecting supplies or personal protective equipment in response to COVID-19 who does not design or manufacture such products in the ordinary course of the person's business shall not be liable in a civil action alleging an act or omission arising out of or relating to the administration or use of the product.*

*Last Action: Introduction and first reading, referred to Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division (May 11, 2020).<sup>11</sup>*

**HF 4697** - COVID-19; additional penalty imposition to a business for executive order violation prohibited.

*Summary: No board or licensing agency may impose additional penalties to a business for a violation of Executive Order 20-04 as extended, amended, and otherwise modified by Executive Order 20-10, 20-18, 20-33, and any related executive orders issued pursuant to Minnesota Statutes.*

*Last Action: Introduction and first reading, referred to Government Operations (May 17, 2020).<sup>12</sup>*

**SF 4603** - COVID-19 criminal, civil, and administrative immunity to persons engaged in health care services during the peacetime public health emergency authorization.

*Summary: a responder, acting in good faith, is immune from criminal, civil, or administrative liability for any harm or damages resulting from the responder's act or omission in the course of performing duties related to the provision of health care services, including providing, allocating, withdrawing, or delaying health care services, arising out of the state's response to the COVID-19 outbreak during the peacetime public health emergency*

*Last Action: Author added Jensen and referred to Rules and Administration (May 15, 2020).<sup>13</sup>*

## Mississippi

**HB 1783** - The Mississippi Back to Business Liability Assurance Act.

*Summary: An act to create the Mississippi back to business liability assurance act; to define duty of care for premises owners; to provide liability protection for individuals, state and local government, associations, for-profit and nonprofit*

*entities, religious and charitable organizations; to provide safe harbor for compliance with public health guidance; to provide liability protection for products made, sold, or donated in response to covid-19 and related circumstances; and for related purposes.*

*Last Action: In Senate referred to Judiciary, Division A. (June 26, 2020).<sup>14</sup>*

**HB 1779** - Health care emergency response liability protection act.

*Summary: An act to create the health care emergency response liability protection act; to provide immunity from liability to health care providers and health care facilities that provide care during a state of emergency in certain circumstances; and for related purposes.*

*Last Action: In Senate referred to Judiciary, Division A. (June 26, 2020).<sup>15</sup>*

## New Jersey

**A 3951** - Provides civil immunity for employers for damages arising from employee's injury or death related to exposure to coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") during public health emergency and state of emergency declared by Governor in Executive Order 103 of 2020.

*Summary: Provides Civil immunity for employers for damages arising from employee's injury or death related to exposure to Coronavirus disease 2019 during public health emergency and state of emergency declared by Governor in Executive Order 103.*

*Last Action: Introduced, Referred to Assembly Judiciary Committee (April 13, 2020).<sup>16</sup>*

**A 4189:** Established immunity for businesses against damage claims for COVID-19 exposure; excludes reckless or intentional conduct.

*Last Action: Introduced, Referred to Assembly Judiciary Committee (June 1, 2020).<sup>17</sup>*

**S 2502** - Establishes immunity for businesses against damage claims for COVID-19 exposure; excludes reckless or intentional conduct.

*Last Action: Introduced in the Senate, Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee (June 4, 2020).<sup>18</sup>*

**S 2509** - Protects health care professionals from retaliatory action by employers during ongoing coronavirus

disease 2019 pandemic.

Last Action: *Introduced in the Senate, Referred to Senate Labor Committee (June 4, 2020).*<sup>19</sup>

**S 2703/A4440** - Establishes general immunity for various private and public entities, and their officers, employees, and agents, against actions relating to COVID-19 pandemic or related viral strain in subsequent years; creates damage threshold for bringing lawsuits.

Last Action: *Referred to Senate Judiciary (July 22, 2020).*<sup>20</sup>

**A 4426** - Grants immunity from liability to school districts, nonpublic schools, and employees for damages resulting from coronavirus disease 2019.

Last Action: *Referred to Assembly Education (July 20, 2020).*<sup>21</sup>

*Similar Bills in New Jersey - A 4388, A 4377.*

## New York

**A 10444** - Relates to personal liability provisions in commercial leases during the COVID-19 period.

Summary: *Provides that no personal liability provision of a commercial lease or other rental agreement involving real property and to which a business impacted by COVID-19 is a party as tenant may be enforced against an individual where the default or other event allowing for such enforcement occurs during the COVID-19 period.*

Last Action: *Referred To Judiciary (May 18, 2020).*<sup>22</sup>

**S 8880/A 10887** - Limits the civil liability of employers and employees for the spread or possible transmission of COVID-19 caused by an act or omission while acting in good faith.

Last Action: *Referred To Rules (July 17, 2020).*<sup>23</sup>

## Ohio

**HB 606** - Grant immunity to essential workers who transmit COVID-19.

Summary: *Make temporary changes related to qualified civil immunity for health care and emergency services provided during a government-declared disaster or emergency and for exposure to or transmission or contraction of certain corona-*

*viruses, to expand the definition of “governmental function” regarding political subdivision tort liability in relation to emergency declarations, to expand state immunity to include actions undertaken under a duty during the COVID-19 pandemic, to make COVID-19 contracted by certain employees an occupational disease under the Workers’ Compensation Law under specific circumstances, and to declare an emergency.*

Last Action: *Passed the Senate (June 30, 2020).*<sup>24</sup>

## Oklahoma

**SB 1946** - Civil liability; establishing immunity in certain civil actions; establishing applicability. Emergency.

Summary: *SB 1946 establishes immunity from civil liability for persons or entities conducting in the business in the state from actions related to an injury from exposure or potential exposure to COVID-19 if the act or omission alleged to violate a duty of care of the person or agent was in compliance or consistent with federal or state regulations.*

Last Action: *Approved by Governor 05/21/2020 (May 21, 2020).*<sup>25</sup>

**SB 1947** - Product liability; creating the COVID-19 Product Protection Act; establishing immunity from certain civil actions; establishing applicability. Emergency.

Summary: *SB 1947 creates the COVID-19 Product Protection Act. The measure defines a qualified product to include personal protection equipment, medical devices, or supplies used to treat COVID-19 including products that are used or modified for an unapproved use to treat COVID-19 or prevent the spread of COVID-19. Entities that utilize qualified products are exempted from any civil liability that may emerge out of an injury or death related to the use of such products. The provisions of the measure also apply to persons or entities that do not manufacture or design such products in the normal course of business. This immunity shall not apply under certain circumstances. The provisions of the measure shall apply to any claim arising on or after the emergency declared by the Governor of Oklahoma related to COVID-19 by Executive Order 2020-07.*

Last Action: *Approved by Governor 05/21/2020 (May 21, 2020).*<sup>26</sup>

## Pennsylvania

**HB 2639** - An Act amending Title 35 (Health and

Safety) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, COVID-19 Disaster emergency, providing for emergency liability limitation.

Summary: *This legislation is meant to protect those who acted on the behalf of others – doctors, nurses, hospitals, long-term care facilities, universities, hotels and other property owners who opened their facilities to care for the sick, manufacturers who retooled their operations to address the emergency, and employers who bravely reopen their businesses while using recommended safe practices. In addition, to guarantee that those who are injured receive the fullest recovery, my legislation will apply a sliding scale to the redirection of victims' damage awards to plaintiffs' attorneys and back to the victims themselves, as well as directing that punitive damages should be directed to aid older Pennsylvanians.*

Last Action: *In the House. Referred to Judiciary (June 29, 2020).*<sup>27</sup>

**HB2681** - Amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in particular rights and immunities, providing for protected operations.

Last Action: *Referred to Judiciary (July 8, 2020).*<sup>28</sup>

## South Carolina

**HJR 5527** - Face Coverings.

Summary: *A joint resolution to provide liability protections for a limited time period for health care providers and businesses that follow public health guidance in response to the coronavirus public health emergency; to state the purposes of this joint resolution to protect against liability for businesses during the coronavirus public health emergency; to provide definitions for covered entity, covered individual, coronavirus, coronavirus claim, and public health guidance; to state the liability protection for covered entities and covered individuals for coronavirus claims; to state that defenses are cumulative; to provide that the provisions of this joint resolution are severable; to provide that in the case of a conflict of law between this joint resolution any other law of this state, the provisions of this joint resolution shall prevail, and to provide for the effective date of the joint resolution to be upon approval by the governor and for its provisions to be retroactive and effective as of March 13, 2020, the date upon which the governor declared a public health emergency relating to Coronavirus.*

Last Action: *In the House (June 24, 2020).*<sup>29</sup>

## II. Shared Government Responsibility in Future Crises

Several state legislatures have debated who ought to have authority in future crises. Most of the legislation introduced in this area dealt with curbing the powers of the governor or taking back authority from unelected health officers. In seven states, lawmakers have introduced almost a dozen different bills to preserve the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches. Michigan, for example, recently adopted a resolution that would allow the Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives to challenge the Governor's actions if they seem overreaching or at odds with the best interests of the state.

### Michigan

**HR 250** - A resolution authorizing the Speaker of the House to commence legal action on behalf of the House of Representatives challenging the Governor's authority and actions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary: *Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the Speaker of the House, in his official capacity, is authorized to commence legal action on behalf of the House of Representatives, challenging the authority and actions of the Governor, and the executive branch generally, taken during the COVID-19 pandemic and take all necessary steps incidental thereto, including, but not limited to, pursuing or defending any appeals.*

Last Action: *Adopted (April 30, 2020).*<sup>30</sup>

### Ohio

**HB 618** - Limit authority to issue infectious/contagious disease orders

Summary: *to limit the authority of the Governor and the Department of Health to issue orders regarding contagious or infectious diseases, to prohibit any order from affecting the conduct of an election, to designate its provisions as the "Need Ohio Working (NOW) Act," and to declare an emergency.*

Last Action: *Refer to Committee State and Local Government (May 12, 2020).*<sup>31</sup>

**SB 311** - Limit Director of Health order-issuing authority

Summary: *Require the approval of the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review for Department of Health orders to be effective for more than fourteen days, to require the statewide Department of Health.*

Last Action: *Refer to Committee Health, Human Services and Medicaid (May 20, 2020).*<sup>32</sup>

## Pennsylvania

**HB 2455** - An Act amending the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), known as The Administrative Code of 1929, in powers and duties of the Department of Health and its departmental administrative and advisory boards, providing for local health department COVID-19 antibody testing; and providing for COVID-19 emergency testing plan and reporting.

Last Action: *Approved by the Governor (July 23, 2020)*<sup>33</sup>

**HR 879** - A Resolution urging the immediate removal or resignation of Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine.  
Last Action: *Referred to HEALTH (May 19, 2020).*<sup>34</sup>

**SB 841** - An Act amending Titles 35 (Health and Safety) and 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for the Health Care Cost Containment Council, for its powers and duties, for health care cost containment through the collection and dissemination of data, for public accountability of healthcare costs and for healthcare for the indigent; providing for COVID-19 disaster emergency; in local organizations and services, further providing for general authority of political subdivisions; and, in Uniform Unsworn Foreign Declarations Act, further providing for heading of chapter, for short title of chapter, for definitions, for applicability and for form of unsworn declaration.

Last Action: *Approved by the Governor (April 20, 2020).*<sup>35</sup>

## South Carolina

**SCR 1214** -A concurrent resolution to request that the governor rescind his executive orders closing so called non-essential businesses and prohibiting gatherings of

three or more people.

Last Action: *Referred to Committee on Judiciary (May 12, 2020)*<sup>36</sup>

**HCR 5473** - Successive states of emergency

Summary: *A concurrent resolution to express the sense of the general assembly that the governor is not authorized to declare successive states of emergency that are based upon the scope of impact of the event or occurrence that was the basis for the state of emergency. Further, to express the sense of the general assembly that a state of emergency declared by the governor may not last longer than fifteen days without the express consent of the general assembly, that the governor has a duty to request an extension if he believes that the emergency will extend beyond fifteen days, and that without express consent from the general assembly the state of emergency expires fifteen days after it is declared.*

Last Action: *Referred to Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions (May 12, 2020).*<sup>37</sup>

## South Dakota

**HB 1296** - Revise the authority of the Governor in times of a disaster, act of terrorism, or emergency and to declare an emergency.

Last Action: *Signed by the Governor (March 31, 2020).*<sup>38</sup>

## Wisconsin

**AB 1037** - Relating to: the length of time for a declared state of emergency; reporting of arrests for a violation of an order relating to the control of an outbreak or epidemic; requiring legislative approval of any statewide order mandating individuals to stay at home for reasons related to an epidemic, pandemic, or communicable disease; requiring a written report to the legislature detailing the justification for any ban of gatherings of 50 or fewer individuals.

Last Action: *Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1 (April 1, 2020).*<sup>39</sup>

**SB 923** - Relating to: the length of time for a declared state of emergency; reporting of arrests for a violation of an order relating to the control of an outbreak or epidemic; requiring legislative approval of any statewide order

mandating individuals to stay at home for reasons related to an epidemic, pandemic, or communicable disease; requiring a written report to the legislature detailing the justification for any ban of gatherings of 50 or fewer individuals.

Last Action: *Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1 (April 1, 2020).*<sup>40</sup>

### III. Increased Broadband Access

Ten states have considered bills protecting or expanding broadband for their citizens. Notably, there have been four southern state legislatures—Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina—which have all had multiple broadband expansion bills introduced to combat the disparities intensified by COVID-19. These bills could increase internet access to thousands of individuals who have previously gone without. Mississippi, for example, has had four different broadband bills introduced by members of its state legislature.

#### Louisiana

**HCR 77:** Urge and requests removal of public and private barrier to accelerate the expansion of broadband in the state

Last Action: *Sent to the Secretary of State (June 4, 2020)*<sup>41</sup>

#### Massachusetts

**HD 5041** - An Act relative to internet speed during the COVID-19 outbreak

Summary: *This Legislation will ensure that Internet providers in the Commonwealth of Mass. will provide the highest bandwidth possible for residential customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Last Action: *Reported, referred to the committee on Joint Rules, reported, rules suspended and referred to the committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies (May 4, 2020).*<sup>42</sup>

#### Michigan

**HR 275** - A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to ensure that all Americans have internet access necessary to participate in telemedicine, distance learning, and telework as part of any legislation that provides relief and recovery resources related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Last Action: *Referred to Committee on Communications*

and Technology (June 10, 2020).<sup>43</sup>

## Minnesota

**HF 3029** - Broadband development grant program annual statutory appropriation provided, and money appropriated.

Last Action: *Joint rule 2.03 waived rereferred to Ways and Means (May 4, 2020).*<sup>44</sup>

**SF 4580** - Distance learning broadband access grant program establishment and appropriation; elementary and secondary school emergency relief fund equitable distribution of state education agencies reserve requirement.

Last Action: *Referred to E12 Finance and Policy (May 7, 2020).*<sup>45</sup>

## Mississippi

**HB 1797** - Appropriation; MDE for Mississippi Broadband Availability act purposes

Summary: *An act making an appropriation from the Mississippi broadband availability grant program fund to the Mississippi department of education for purposes of the Mississippi broadband availability act; and for related purposes.*

Last Action: *Law without Governor's Signature (July 9, 2020).*<sup>46</sup>

**HB 1788** - Mississippi Pandemic Broadband Availability Act; create

Summary: *An act to direct the state fiscal officer to transfer \$50,000,000 to the Mississippi pandemic response broadband availability grant program fund; to create the "Mississippi pandemic response broadband availability act"; to provide a statement of legislative intent and findings; to create the "Mississippi pandemic response broadband availability grant program fund" as a special fund in the state treasury for the purpose of providing funds for grants to Mississippi public school districts, independent schools and Native American tribal school districts; to provide that the Mississippi pandemic response broadband availability grant program shall be administered by the Mississippi department of education, for the purpose of making grants to eligible school districts and schools to provide them with grant monies for eligible expenses; to direct the Mississippi department of education*

*to develop regulations and procedures to govern the administration of the program; to prescribe the requirements for the grants; to specify that the use of grant funds shall be subject to audit and regulation of the Mississippi department of education, and noncompliance with the terms of the grant shall require repayment of grant monies to the state; to specify that all monies shall be disbursed from this special fund in compliance with the requirements of the cares act and guidelines from the united states department of the treasury regarding the use of monies from the coronavirus relief fund; to transfer undistributed monies in the fund as of December 1, 2020, to the unemployment compensation fund; to provide that a declaration of any portion of this act as invalid shall not affect the remaining portions of this act; to amend section 31-7-13, Mississippi code of 1972, to exempt public school districts and schools from the procurement and competitive bidding requirements for contracts made under the Mississippi pandemic response broadband availability act; and for related purposes.*

Last Action: *Law without Governor's Signature (July 9, 2020).*<sup>47</sup>

**HB 1800** - Appropriation; DFA for a cooperative and broadband provider grant program

Summary: *An act making an appropriation from the Mississippi electric cooperatives broadband COVID-19 grant program fund and the COVID-19 broadband provider grant program fund to the Mississippi department of finance and administration for purposes of the Mississippi electric cooperatives broadband COVID-19 grant program and the COVID-19 broadband provider grant program; and for related purposes.*

Last Action: *Law without Governor's Signature (July 9, 2020).*<sup>48</sup>

**SB 3046** - COVID-19 connectivity act; enact

Summary: *An act to create the "covid-19 connectivity act"; to define terms as used in the act; to provide legislative intent; to establish the covid-19 connectivity grant program to be administered by the public utilities staff for the purpose of expanding broadband service to unserved or underserved areas in the state; to authorize the public utilities staff to retain a certain amount of funds available under this act to pay for reasonable expenses incurred in the administration of the grant program; to provide that the grants must be issued pursuant to a competitive process and to require the public utilities staff to publish on its website its criteria for competitively scoring applications; to provide for the application process; to*

require semiannual reports from applicants awarded funds; to create the COVID-19 connectivity fund from which the grants authorized by this act shall be disbursed; to amend section 77-3-2, Mississippi code of 1972, to declare that it is the policy of the state of Mississippi to support expansion of existing and emerging technologies to foster reliable and resilient service and customer access to enhanced services; to amend section 77-3-3, Mississippi code of 1972, to include definitions of “broadband service provider,” “broadband operator,” “electric delivery system” and “enhanced grid investments”; to amend section 77-3-44, Mississippi code of 1972, to include fiber-optic infrastructure and enhanced grid investments as an economic development activity, to allow investor-owned electric utilities to permit broadband providers use of the electric delivery system to provide broadband services, to regulate easements, to allow certain entities to construct fiber-optic infrastructure on public utilities’ existing rights-of-way; and for related purposes.

Last action: Law without Governor’s Signature (July 9, 2020).<sup>49</sup>

## North Carolina

### SB 859 - Student Internet Connectivity Act

Summary: *The State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction, in collaboration with the Friday Institute at North Carolina State University, shall expand the School Connectivity Initiative to improve student access to broadband Internet outside the classroom by providing home mobile Internet access points to all students in public schools who are eligible for federally subsidized free or reduced-cost school meals.*

Last action: Passed 1st Reading (May 27, 2020).<sup>50</sup>

### HB 1205 - Expedited state leasing-broadband

Summary: *H1205 would establish a 4-month time limitation on the Department of Administration and an agency in control of real property in making a determination for new leases and lease renewals for colocation, installation and operation of equipment by a broadband provider on State property and instructs the Department and other agencies to coordinate with the Department of Information Technology to develop a streamlined process to expedite the finalization of lease agreements.*

Last Action: *In the Senate. Referred to the Rules Committee.*<sup>51</sup>

### HB 1105 - COVID/Supplementary G.R.E.A.T. Grant period

Summary: *H1105 would appropriate \$30 million in CARES Act funding to the Department of Information Technology (DIT) to be used for a special supplementary grant process for the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program to expand broadband infrastructure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the PCS would make changes to the current GREAT program statute, affecting administration of the grant program for future fiscal years*

Last Action: *In the House, Special Message Sent To Senate (June 23, 2020).*<sup>52</sup>

**HB 258 - Expand Eligibility for Utility Account Summary:** *House Bill 258 would expand the counties eligible for grants from the Utility Account from the 80 most-distressed counties under the tier system to the 87 most-distressed counties.*

Last Action: *In the House. Re-referred to the Committee on Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.*<sup>53</sup>

## Ohio

**HCR 26 - Urge Congress to prohibit internet cut off during COVID-19.**

Last Action: *Introduced and Referred to Committee Public Utilities (May 12, 2020)*<sup>54</sup>

## Pennsylvania

**HB 2637 - An act providing for emergency lifeline broadband benefit during a disaster emergency**

Last action: *In the House (June 29, 2020).*<sup>55</sup>

## South Carolina

### SB 1235 - Broadband Development Office

Summary: *A bill to amend the code of laws of South Carolina, 1976, by adding section 58-4-140 so as to establish the office of broadband development, to provide duties of the office, and to provide for annual reports.*

Last action: *In the Senate (June 23, 2020).*<sup>56</sup>

## Vermont

**H 966** - An act relating to COVID-19 funding and assistance for broadband connectivity, housing and economic relief

Summary: *The purpose of this act is to appropriate \$213,200,000 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to cover necessary broadband connectivity, information technology, housing, and economic relief expenses incurred due to, or as a result of, the COVID-19 public health emergency*

Last Action: *Signed by Governor (July 2, 2020).*<sup>57</sup>

## IV. Tax Relief

In the wake of COVID-19, states across the country are reckoning with how they can provide relief to their constituents while simultaneously spurring positive economic growth. One option is tax relief. The following tax relief proposals range from sales tax credits and a sales tax holiday in New Jersey to establishing a payroll incentive rebate program for COVID-19-impacted businesses in Louisiana. The most unique example of tax relief, however, is exemplified by Idaho. Although theirs is not legislative action, the Governor of Idaho choose to use the CARES Act money allotted to the state to provide relief in the form of property tax relief by subsidizing public safety costs that are usually covered by property taxes.<sup>58</sup>

## Arkansas

**HR 1004** - To authorize the introduction of a non-appropriation bill to amend the income tax imposed on individuals, trusts, and estates.

Last Action: *Died in House Committee at Sine Die Adjournment (April 24, 2020).*<sup>59</sup>

**HR 1005** - To authorize the introduction of a non-appropriation bill to prohibit elective procedures during the coronavirus disease 2019, also known as covid-19, public health emergency.

Last Action: *Died in House Committee at Sine Die Adjournment (April 24, 2020).*<sup>60</sup>

## California

**AB 2058** - Income taxes: credits: low-income housing.

Summary: *This bill creates a tax credit program to preserve affordable housing units and mobile home parks. Specifically, this bill:*

- 1) *Provides, for tax years 2021 through 2025, a tax credit to a taxpayer that sells a mobile home or multifamily housing development to a qualified developer who commits the property to specified purposes, including renting it to low-income households for at least 55 years.*
- 2) *Specifies that the credit is worth the lesser of \$1 million or the sum of 50% of the federal capital gains taxes*

and 50% of the state income taxes estimated to be collected from the sale of the property. The credit is limited to \$20,000 per housing unit or space in the property, and no more than \$500 million in credits may be allocated in total. and 3) Requires the Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) to run the proposed new program and specifies how a developer will reserve a credit allocation from TCAC and how the taxpayer receives it.

Last Action: In committee: Held under submission. (June 3, 2020)<sup>61</sup>

**AB 2166** - Personal Income Tax Law: net operating loss.

Summary: Provides a credit under the Personal Income Tax (PIT) Law equal to the increase in residential fire insurance premium, as specified. Specifically, this bill provides a credit, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2020, and before January 1, 2026, equal to the difference between the annual premium amount paid during the taxable year for a residential fire insurance policy for the coverage of a qualified principal residence and the annual premium amount paid during the following calendar year, whichever is later: a) The 2016 calendar year for a residential fire insurance policy for coverage of that same qualified principal residence; or, b) The calendar year in which the qualified taxpayer first purchased the residential fire insurance policy for coverage of that same qualified principal residence

Last Action: Rereferred to Com. on REV. & TAX. (May 5, 2020).<sup>62</sup>

**AB 2496** - Income taxes: credits: cleaning and sanitizing supplies: COVID-19.

Summary: This bill would allow a credit against those taxes for each taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2020, and before January 1, 2021, to a taxpayer that is a business with a physical location in the state in an amount equal to the costs paid or incurred by the qualified taxpayer during the taxable year for the purchase of cleaning and sanitizing supplies used at business locations in the state to prevent the transmission of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The bill would also include additional information required for any bill authorizing a new tax expenditure.

Last Action: Rereferred to Com. on REV. & TAX. (May 5, 2020).<sup>63</sup>

**AB 3208** - Income tax: gross income: loan forgiveness. Summary: Existing federal law, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), among other things, authorizes forgiveness of indebtedness for eligible recipients with covered loans, as defined, in an amount equal to the sum of the recipient's payroll costs, interest on mortgage obligations, rent obligations, and utility payments, subject to specified conditions and during a specified time period. Existing federal law excludes any amounts of covered loans forgiven under the CARES Act from gross income for federal income tax purposes. This bill, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2020, would exclude from gross income, for state income tax purposes, any covered loan amount forgiven pursuant to the federal CARES Act. Last Action: Rereferred to Com. on REV. & TAX. (May 6, 2020).<sup>64</sup>

## Colorado

**HB 1413** - Small Business Recovery Loan Program Premium Tax Credits.

Summary: Concerning the establishment of a state and private investor funded small business recovery loan program, and, in connection therewith, authorizing the department of the treasury to obtain the state share of funding for the program by selling insurance premium tax credits to qualified taxpayers and authorizing the state treasurer to contract with a program manager to establish and administer the program.

Last Action: Signed Act (June 23, 2020).<sup>65</sup>

## Louisiana

**HB 846** - Tax/Tax Rebates: Establishes a Payroll Incentive Program rebate for COVID-19-impacted businesses.

Summary: Establishes a rebate for any eligible COVID-19-impacted business (impacted business) assigned a North American Industry Classification Code of 44, 45, or 72 that meets certain criteria including having a physical and active operation in La. on March 13, 2020, having no more than 50 full-time employees as of March 1, 2020, filing all applicable state tax returns, and filing an initial application with DED to be recognized as an impacted business on or before Dec. 31, 2021. In order to qualify for the rebate, the impacted business shall create a minimum of five new jobs between May 15, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2021, and shall create

*a minimum new annual payroll from new jobs of at least \$40,000 before Dec. 31, 2021.*

Last Action: *Veto message from Governor read and received (June 15, 2020).*<sup>66</sup>

**HCR 72** - Suspends individual and corporate income taxes; income taxes on estates or trusts; corporation franchise taxes, including the initial tax levied on certain corporations and entities; state sales and use taxes; severance taxes; and state excise taxes levied on alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, gasoline, diesel fuels, and special fuels for a certain period of time.

Last Action: *Read by title, under the rules, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (May 13, 2020).*<sup>67</sup>

**HCR 66** - Tax/Corp Franchise: Suspends the lower tier of the corporation franchise tax levied on domestic and foreign corporations and the initial tax levied on certain business entities subject to the corporate franchise tax.

Last Action: *Taken by the Clerk of the House and presented to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Rules of the House (June 4, 2020).*<sup>68</sup>

## Michigan

**HB 5741** - Corporate income tax; credits; employee retention tax credit for certain businesses; provide for. Amends secs. 703 & 711 of 1967 PA 281 (MCL 206.703 & 206.711) & adds secs. 272a & 672.

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced (April 29, 2020).*<sup>69</sup>

**HB 5759** - Individual income tax; exemptions; certain emergency health care workers; exclude from income taxes during a declared emergency. Amends 1967 PA 281 (MCL 206.1 - 206.713) by adding sec. 280.

Summary: *For the 2020 tax year only, a taxpayer who is a qualified first responder or a qualified health care professional may claim a credit against the tax imposed by this part in an amount equal to his or her income tax liability under this part attributable to income earned on and after March 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020 for services performed as a qualified first responder or a qualified health care professional. Except as otherwise provided under this section, the amount of the credit allowed under this section must not exceed \$1,600.00 for a single return. If both spouses filing a joint return are either a qualified first responder or a quali-*

*fied health care worker, then the total credit under this section is limited to \$3,200.00 for a joint return.*

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced (May 5, 2020).*<sup>70</sup>

**HB 5749** - Individual income tax; deductions; deduction for income attributable to services as a qualified first responder; provide for. Amends sec. 30 of 1967 PA 281 (MCL 206.30).

Summary: *For the 2020 tax year only, a taxpayer who is a qualified first responder may deduct, to the extent included in adjusted gross income, income that is earned on and after February 15, 2020 through June 15, 2020 or through a subsequent date not later than September 15, 2020 if that subsequent date is approved by concurrent resolution of the legislature, and that income is attributable to services performed as a qualified first responder not to exceed a total deduction of \$50,000.00 for a single return. If both spouses filing a joint return are qualified first responders then the total deduction under this subsection is limited to \$100,000.00 for a joint return. The concurrent resolution to extend the date under this subdivision must be approved by a majority of the members elected to and serving in each house by a record roll call vote of each house. As used in this subdivision, "qualified first responder" means any of the following who provides services in a county that has at least 1 confirmed case of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).*

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced (May 5, 2020).*<sup>71</sup>

**SB 900** - Individual income tax; deductions; deduction for income attributable to services as a qualified first responder; provide for. Amends sec. 30 of 1967 PA 281 (MCL 206.30).

Last Action: *Referred to committee on finance (April 30, 2020).*<sup>72</sup>

## Minnesota

**HF 4616** - COVID-19; credit against taxes established. Summary: *Credit allowed. Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 295.52, a qualifying taxpayer may claim a credit against the taxes imposed under Minnesota Statutes, 1.8 section 295.52, subdivisions 1 to 4, against gross revenues received after December 31, 2019, and before January 1, 2021, for qualifying expenses.*

Last Action: *Introduction and first reading, referred to Taxes (April 30, 2020).*<sup>73</sup>

## North Carolina

**SB 848** - COVID-19 Franchise Tax Credit and Grants. Summary: *Senate Bill 848 creates three different grant programs that are predicated on the use of just federal CARES act funds to help businesses recover from the economic hardships endured during the COVID-19 pandemic and incent businesses to invest in North Carolina during and after the pandemic.* Last Action: *Passed Senate. In the House. Referred to Committee on Appropriations (June 22, 2020).*<sup>74</sup>

## New Jersey

**A 3866** - Establishes sales tax credit and sales tax holiday for portions of the state of emergency related to COVID-19 pandemic. Last Action: *Introduced, Referred to Assembly Budget Committee (March 23, 2020).*<sup>75</sup>

**A 3960** - Allows CBT and GIT tax credits to certain taxpayers that retain employees during COVID-19 pandemic. Last Action: *Introduced, Referred to Assembly Budget Committee (May 1, 2020).*<sup>76</sup>

**A 4183** - Provides gross income tax deduction for charitable contributions to certain New Jersey-based charitable organizations during COVID-19 pandemic. Last Action: *Introduced, Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee (June 1, 2020).*<sup>77</sup>

**AR 163** - Urges Congress to waive 2019 state and local tax deduction caps in light of COVID-19 pandemic. Last Action: *Introduced, Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee (June 1, 2020).*<sup>78</sup>

## New York

**A 10347** - Relates to a tax deduction for certain expenses of health care professionals and emergency medical technicians relating to the COVID-19 declared emergency. Last Action: *Referred To Ways And Means (April 29, 2020).*<sup>79</sup>

**A 10361** - Relates to providing a COVID-19 relief tax

credit to certain renters and residential rental property owners. Last Action: *Referred To Ways And Means (April 29, 2020).*<sup>80</sup>

**S 8195** - Relates to a tax deduction for certain expenses of health care professionals and emergency medical technicians relating to the COVID-19 declared emergency. Last Action: *Referred To Budget And Revenue (April 13, 2020).*<sup>81</sup>

**S 8196** - Establishes a tax credit for first responders during the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, outbreak. Last Action: *Referred To Budget And Revenue (April 13, 2020).*<sup>82</sup>

**S 8267** - Doubles the STAR property tax deduction and provides a \$1,000 refundable state income tax credit for qualified medical providers or first responders charged with caring for COVID-19 patients. Last Action: *Referred To Local Government (May 1, 2020).*<sup>83</sup>

**S 8358** - Relates to establishing the COVID-19 recovery local employment tax credit program. Summary: *Establishes the COVID-19 recovery local employment tax credit program to provide tax incentives to employers for employing local employees in full-time or part-time positions in the two years following the conclusion of the state disaster emergency declared pursuant to executive order two hundred two.* Last Action: *In Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations (May 29, 2020).*<sup>84</sup>

**S 8395** - Establishes the COVID-19 emergency property tax credit for certain persons. Summary: *Establishes the COVID-19 emergency property tax credit to provide the commissioner of taxation and finance, as soon as practicable and subject to the appropriation of funds, including federal funds, for this purpose, to implement an emergency COVID-19 property tax program in the form of a tax credit for those eligible; defines terms; makes related provisions.* Last Action: *Referred To Budget And Revenue (May 21, 2020)*<sup>85</sup>

## Ohio

**SB 307** - Authorize temporary sales tax exemption for protective equipment.

Last Action: *Refer to Committee Ways and Means (May 6, 2020).*<sup>86</sup>

## Pennsylvania

**SB 1209** - An Act amending the act of June 27, 2006 (1st Sp.Sess., P.L.1873, No.1), known as the Taxpayer Relief Act, in taxation by school districts, further providing for public referendum requirements for increasing certain taxes.

Last Action: *Referred to Finance (June 23, 2020).*<sup>87</sup>

## South Carolina

**HCR 5417** - Congress; refrain from increasing federal employment taxes until January 1, 2021.

Last Action: *Referred to Committee on Invitations and Memorial Resolutions (March 19, 2020)*<sup>88</sup>

## V. Suspension of Certificate of Need and Occupational Licensing Regulations

To allow the free market to better respond to the immediate needs of the public, states have introduced ways to lessen the restrictions of Certification of Need (CON) and licensing laws. While Governor Ivey has done similarly through her state of emergencies, many states have adopted a more permanent and certain manner of doing so through legislative action. For example, SB 1053 of California and HB 7515 of Michigan alleviate the constraints of CON laws to allow the healthcare system to handle the shifting state of the medical field more effectively. Michigan, Massachusetts, and California all put forth bills that would allow their states to recognize out-of-state medical licenses to increase the total number of medical professionals available to help the public during the pandemic.

## California

**AB 2288** - Nursing programs: state of emergency.

Summary: *This bill waives, during a state of emergency, a number of provisions in existing law related to training for nurses, mirroring waivers granted this year through executive order under the California Governor's emergency authority in light of the COVID-19 crisis.*

Last Action: *In the Senate. Amended and re-referred to committee (August 4, 2020).*<sup>89</sup>

**AB 2253** - Professional Licensure.

Summary: *Defines "qualifying experience" and "experience required for licensure," for purposes of licensing exemptions for government workers, as experience towards a license in psychology and behavioral health.*

Last Action: *In the Senate. Read second time. Ordered to consent calendar (August 3, 2020).*<sup>90</sup>

**SB 1053** - Licensed registered nurses and licensed vocational nurses: Nurse Licensure Compact.

Summary: *Enacts the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) which would authorize the Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) to issue a multistate license to practice as a registered nurse (RN) and the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT) to issue a multistate*

*license to practice as a licensed vocational nurse (LVN), in all party states under a multistate licensure privilege and designates the BRN and the BVNPT to alternate as the administrator of the NLC for California.*

Last Action: *Set for first hearing. Failed passage in committee. (Ayes 4. Noes 5. Page 3549.) Reconsideration granted (May 18, 2020).*<sup>91</sup>

## Louisiana

**HCR 71** - Licensing: Authorizes and directs suspension of licensing fees imposed on businesses by state agencies and licensing boards

Last Action: *Taken by the Clerk of the House and presented to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Rules of the House. (June 4, 2020)*<sup>92</sup>

## Massachusetts

**HD 4980** - An Act providing out-of-state medical licensing reciprocity during the COVID-19 emergency.

Last Action: *Reported, referred to the committee on Joint Rules, reported, rules suspended and referred to the committee on Public Health (April 13, 2020).*<sup>93</sup>

## Michigan

**HB 5715** - Health facilities; certificate of need; certain regulatory requirements of health care facilities; suspend during a declared emergency.

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced (April 28, 2020).*<sup>94</sup>

**HB 5723** - Health occupations; emergency medical services personnel; certain restrictions and requirements governing the provision of emergency medical services; suspend during a declared emergency.

Summary: *House Bill 5723 would amend the Public Health Code to provide that, generally, during the current states of emergency and disaster, certain licensing requirements for emergency medical services would be suspended. With the exception of providing exemption from liability for certain emergency service personnel and life support agencies, the bill would codify into law Executive Order 2020-39.*

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced 04/30/2020 (April 28, 2020).*<sup>95</sup>

**HB 5724** - Health occupations; health professionals; certain restrictions and requirements governing the provision of medical services; suspend during a declared emergency.

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced (April 28, 2020).*<sup>96</sup>

**HB 5730** - Occupations; individual licensing and registration; pesticide applicator licensing; extend during a declared emergency.

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced (April 28, 2020).*<sup>97</sup>

**HB 5733** - Mental health; facilities; certain regulatory requirements of health care facilities; suspend during a declared emergency.

Last Action: *Bill electronically reproduced (April 28, 2020).*<sup>98</sup>

**HB 5929** - Health Occupations; health professionals; reciprocity requirements for an individual licensed in Canada; modify.

Last Action: *In the House, Referred to Committee on Health Policy (June 25, 2020).*<sup>99</sup>

## Minnesota

**SF 2939** - Removing an unnecessary criminal background fee for certain health boards; modifying occupational therapy provisions; modifying provisions for social work practice; modifying licensing requirements for dentists; permitting payment of certain retirement annuities during employment for peacetime emergency.

Last Action: *Signed by the Governor (May 12, 2020).*<sup>100</sup>

## New Jersey

**A 3919** - Extends certain permits, approvals, and deadlines during COVID-19 emergency.

Last Action: *Passed Senate (Passed Both Houses) (July 1, 2020).*<sup>101</sup>

## North Carolina

**HB 902** - Military-Trained/Spouse Licensure Practices.

Last Action: *Signed by Governor (July 2, 2020).*<sup>102</sup>

## Ohio

**HB 598** - Authorize EMTs to perform medical services in hospitals.

Last Action: *Refer to Committee Health (May 5, 2020)*.<sup>103</sup>

**HB 600** - Authorize commercial driver license to drive ambulance.

Last Action: *Refer to Committee Transportation and Public Safety (May 5, 2020)*.<sup>104</sup>

## VI. Education Reform

Education reform is one of the areas recommended by the RESTORE Alabama Plan in which state legislators can have a monumentally-important role that is less available to the Governor. Several states have introduced bills specifically to expand parents' options when it comes to educational choice. These options range from Louisiana's push for the State Board of Education to develop and provide online education options and resources for children to North Carolina's SB 587 that creates tax incentives for families who choose to send their children to a private or home school. Another example is Mississippi's TIDAL Act, which aims to increase technology access for school children and equity in distance learning.

### Louisiana

**SCR 22** - BESE: Requests the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to create a task force to develop and oversee continuous learning outside of normal practices.

Last Action: *Accepted by the Senate (May 15, 2020)*.<sup>105</sup>

**SR 38** - BESE: Requests the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop and provide online educational resources to public school students for the 2020-2021 school year.

Last Action: *Enrolled. Signed by the President of the Senate and sent to the Secretary of State (June 30, 2020)*.<sup>106</sup>

### Massachusetts

**S2741** - An Act relative to summer courses at virtual schools

Summary: *This act would allow students and families to directly enroll in summer school courses at a Commonwealth Virtual School as described in Section 94 of Chapter 71 in the Massachusetts General Laws without first establishing an agreement between the virtual school and the sending school district. The summer courses will be available at cost to the individual families.*

Last Action: *Accompanied a study order (July 6, 2020)*.<sup>107</sup>

## Mississippi

**HB1786** - “Technology Instruction and Digital Access to Learning (TIDAL) Act”; to establish digital learning programs for K-12 education and provide grants for electronic devices used in instruction.

Summary: *An act to create the “technology instruction and digital access to learning (tidal) act,” which shall be administered by the state department of education to provide structured guidance, technical and financial assistance to local school districts and public charter schools in the ability to provide distance learning and online instruction; to prescribe the legislative findings and statement of intent; to define terminology; to require the department to solicit requests for bid proposals from technology vendors to establish an express products list (EPL), or to allow the department to use the EPLS compiled by the Mississippi department of information technology services (MDITS) for the purchase of information technology, electronic devices, telecommunications equipment and software programs; to authorize the department to revise EPL categories based upon purchasing demands, which are consistent to provide school districts and charter schools with structured choice in the selection of the brand and type of electronic devices available for purchase; to permit school districts and charter schools to acquire devices, equipment and/or software outside of the EPLS and structured choice recommendations of the department upon the district’s demonstration that such devices, equipment and/or software meet or exceed the technological specifications and functionality required by the department and can be purchased at an optimal price point less than offered on the department’s EPLS; to provide the state department of education and local school districts or charter schools acting as their own procurement agent with immunity from civil liability for any damages arising from the public procurement of personnel, property, supplies or services necessary to administer the provisions of this act; to amend section 37-67-1, Mississippi code of 1972, which establishes the distance learning collaborative, to include charter schools; to amend section 31-7-13,*

Last Action: *Became Law without Governor’s Signature (July 9, 2020).*<sup>108</sup>

**SB3044** - Equity in distance learning act; enact

Summary: *An act to establish the “equity in distance learning act” to be administered by the mississippi department of education to provide guidance, technical support and financial reimbursement to schools to provide distance learning*

*and online services; to state legislative findings and intent; to define terms; to establish the “equity in distance learning grant program”; to provide that allocations under the program shall be made based on average daily attendance; to highly encourage each school to commit a portion of its federal elementary and secondary school emergency relief (esser) funds to purchase equipment for its distance learning plan; to require the department to inform each school of its portion of available funds, to develop regulations and procedures to govern the grant program and to compile an express products list; to prescribe the eligibility requirements for schools to be reimbursed under the grant program; to create a special fund in the state treasury to be known as the “equity in distance learning fund”; to provide that the provisions of this act are severable; and for related purposes.*

Last Action: *In the House, Referred To Rules (June 23, 2020).*<sup>109</sup>

## North Carolina

**SB 857** - Private School Families Tax Incentive.

Summary: *This bill could give tax credits of up to \$2,500 per student for North Carolina families who send their children to private schools and up to \$500 per child if they homeschool them. Taxpayers would have to meet eligibility requirements such as having received a federal CARES Act stimulus check and seen a drop of at least 10% in their adjusted gross income.*

Last Action: *Passed 1st Reading (May 27, 2020)*<sup>110</sup>

## Pennsylvania

**SB 1230** - Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled “Anact relating to the public school system, including certainprovisions applicable as well to private and parochialschools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing thelaws relating thereto,” establishing the Back on TrackEducation Scholarship Account Program; and imposing duties onthe Department of Education and the State Treasurer.

Last Action: *Referred to Education (July 13, 2020).*<sup>111</sup>

## South Carolina

**SJR 1209** - Palmetto Fellows and LIFE scholarships

Summary: *A joint resolution to mitigate the negative impact of the Covid-19 virus on student eligibility for certain state*

*scholarships and loans by temporarily waiving certain provisions of section 59-104-20, code of laws of South Carolina, 1976, relating to minimum test scores for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, section 59-149-50, relating to minimum test scores for Life Scholarships, and related regulations, all so as to allow graduating seniors who earn a qualifying act score through July of 2020 to meet initial eligibility criteria for these scholarships, by temporarily waiving certain regulatory provisions concerning continuous enrollment requirements for these scholarships so as to allow eligible students to postpone enrollment until Spring 2021, and by waiving certain regulations concerning South Carolina teacher loan program standardized test score requirements for freshmen during the 2020-2021 academic year.*

*Last Action: Introduced, read first time, placed on calendar without reference (May 12, 2020).<sup>112</sup>*

## Endnotes

- 1 National Conference of State Legislatures, “2020 Session Calendar.” [https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/NCSL/2020\\_session\\_calendar1.pdf](https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/NCSL/2020_session_calendar1.pdf)
- 2 <https://restoreal.org>
- 3 House Bill 2912, 2020 Arkansas Legislative Session (available at <https://apps.azleg.gov/BillStatus/BillOverview/74239>)
- 4 House Bill 856, 2020 Louisiana Legislative Session (available at <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=20RS&cb=HB856>)
- 5 Senate Bill 2640, 2020 Massachusetts Legislative Session (available at <https://malegislature.gov/bills/191/s2640>)
- 6 Senate Bill 2921, 2020 Massachusetts Legislative Session (available at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/s2921>)
- 7 Senate Bill 2912 accompanied by Senate Bill 2700, 2020 Massachusetts Legislative Session (available at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/SD2921>)
- 8 House Bill 5163, 2020 Massachusetts Legislative Session (available at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/HD5163>)
- 9 House Bill 889, 2020 Michigan Legislative Session (available at [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(pt0fx5kbc5jezd5fimjxm4sg\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=GetObject&objectname=2020-SB-889](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(pt0fx5kbc5jezd5fimjxm4sg))/mileg.aspx?page=GetObject&objectname=2020-SB-889))
- 10 Senate Bill 1024, 2020 Michigan Legislative Session (available at [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(hnxhq3zrfeurecevtgedyvq\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=BillStatus&objectname=2020-SB-1024](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(hnxhq3zrfeurecevtgedyvq))/mileg.aspx?page=BillStatus&objectname=2020-SB-1024))
- 11 House Bill 4664, 2020 Minnesota Legislative Session (available at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=house&f=HF4664&cssn=0&cy=2020>)
- 12 House Bill 4697, 2020 Minnesota Legislative Session (available at <https://legiscan.com/MN/bill/HF4697/2019>)
- 13 Senate Bill 4603, 2020 Minnesota Legislative Session (available at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=Senate&f=SF4603&cssn=0&cy=2019>)
- 14 House Bill 1783, 2020 Mississippi Legislative Session (available at <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2020/html/HB/1700-1799/HB1783IN.htm>)
- 15 House Bill 1779, 2020 Mississippi Legislative Session (available at <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2020/html/HB/1700-1799/HB1779IN.htm>)
- 16 Assembly Bill 3951, 2020 New Jersey Legislative Sessions (available at [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4000/3951\\_I1.HTM](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4000/3951_I1.HTM))
- 17 Assembly Bill 4189, 2020 New Jersey Legislative Sessions (available at [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4500/4189\\_I1.HTM](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4500/4189_I1.HTM))
- 18 Senate Bill 2502, 2020 New Jersey Legislative Sessions (available at [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S3000/2502\\_I1.HTM](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S3000/2502_I1.HTM))
- 19 Senate Bill 2509, 2020 New Jersey Legislative Sessions (available at [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S3000/2509\\_I1.HTM](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S3000/2509_I1.HTM))
- 20 Senate Bill 2703, 2020 New Jersey Legislative Session (available at <https://legiscan.com/NJ/bill/S2703/2020>)
- 21 Assembly Bill 4426, 2020 New Jersey Legislative Session (available at [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4500/4426\\_I1.PDF](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4500/4426_I1.PDF))
- 22 Assembly Bill 10444, 2020 New York Legislative Sessions (available at <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2019/a10444>)
- 23 Senate Bill 8800, 2020 New York Legislative Session (available at <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2019/s8800>)
- 24 House Bill 606, 2020 Ohio Legislative Sessions (available at <https://legiscan.com/OH/text/HB606/2019>)
- 25 Senate Bill 1946, 2020 Oklahoma Legislative Sessions (available at <https://trackbill.com/bill/oklahoma-senate-bill-1946-civil-liability-establishing-immunity-in-certain-civil-actions-establishing-applicability-emergen/1922442/>)
- 26 Senate Bill 1947, 2020 Oklahoma Legislative Sessions (available at <https://legiscan.com/OK/text/SB1947/2020>)
- 27 House Bill 2639, 2020 Pennsylvania Legislative Sessions (available at <https://legiscan.com/PA/text/HB2639/2019>)
- 28 House Bill 2681, 2020 Pennsylvania Legislative Session (available at <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&csInd=0&tbody=H&ctype=B&bn=2681>)
- 29 House Bill 5527, 2020 South Carolina Legislative Sessions (available at [https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess123\\_2019-2020/bills/5527.htm](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess123_2019-2020/bills/5527.htm))
- 30 House Bill 250, 2020 Michigan Legislative Session (available at <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr250/BILLS-116hr250ih.pdf>)
- 31 House Bill 618, 2020 Ohio Legislative Session (available at <https://legiscan.com/OH/text/HB618/id/2182525/Ohio-2019-HB618-Introduced.pdf>)
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