

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
June 19, 2025

OFFICE OF ADVOCACY AND COUNSEL

04. Information: Report on Oral Proceedings regarding Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 100.1, State Board Policy, Chapter 100, Rule 100.1, "Compliance with State Law Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Prohibitions, Complaint Process, and Investigations [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Background Information: During the 2025 Legislative Session, the legislature passed House Bill 1193, which became effective upon passage, April 17, 2025.

House Bill 1193 is an act to prohibit public schools and public postsecondary educational institutions from taking certain actions and engaging in discrimination practices, specifically related to diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI"). It seeks to ensure that employment, academic opportunities, and student engagement are based solely on individual merit, qualifications and academic performance, without consideration of an individual's race, sex, color, national origin, or expressed opposition to, or refusal to affirm or participate in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The law requires that within 90 days of passage, the State Board of Education shall adopt a model complaint process, investigative procedures and all other policies and procedures for appropriately investigating violations under House Bill 1193.

The State Board of Education approved the MDE's request to begin to the APA process to establish Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 100.1, State Board Policy, Chapter 100, Rule 100.1, "Compliance with State Law Regarding Diversity Equity and Inclusion Prohibitions, Complaint Process, and Investigations," on May 15, 2025.

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-4.104, the MDE received the requisite number of written requests for an oral proceeding on the proposed rule adoption and scheduled a public hearing on the proposed rule. This hearing took place on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, in the 4th Floor Boardroom at Central High School. A record, including any documents submitted at the proceeding, was made, and the designated hearing officer is here to provide a summary and any recommendation.

This item references Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the *Mississippi Board of Education Strategic Plan*.

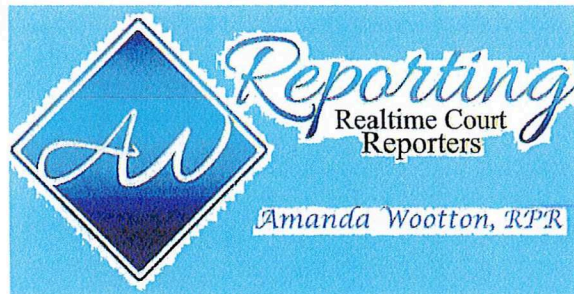
Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

House Bill 1193

**Mississippi Department of Education
Public Comment Hearing**

June 11, 2025



338 Indian Gate Circle
Ridgeland, MS 39157
601-573-0961

amanda@awreporting.com
www.awreporting.com

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RE: HOUSE BILL 1193

PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

Taken at
Mississippi Department of Education,
Central High School Building,
359 North West Street, 4th Floor Boardroom,
Jackson, Mississippi
on Wednesday, June 11, 2025,
beginning at approximately 9:38 a.m.

CATHY M. WHITE, CCR
Certified Court Reporter #1309
Notary Public

A P P E A R A N C E S

MR. MIKE D. KENT

HEARING OFFICER

ERIN MEYER, ESQUIRE

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GENERAL
COUNSEL

1 MS. MEYER: Good morning. My name is Erin Meyer.
2 I serve as general counsel to the Mississippi Department
3 of Education. I am also here with Mr. Mike Kent who is
4 the designated representative who will be facilitating
5 this public comment hearing.

6 We're here because, during the 2025 regular
7 legislative session, the Legislature passed House Bill
8 1193, which is an act to prohibit public schools and
9 public post-secondary educational institutions from taking
10 certain actions and engaging in discriminatory practices
11 specifically related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
12 It seeks to ensure that employment, academic
13 opportunities, and student engagement are based solely on
14 individual merit, qualifications, and academic
15 performance without consideration of an individual's race,
16 sex, color, national origin, or expressed opposition to or
17 refusal to affirm or participate in diversity, equity, and
18 inclusion.

19 This law requires that, within 90 days of
20 passage, the State Board of Education shall adopt a model
21 complaint process, investigative procedures, and other
22 policies and procedures for appropriately investigating
23 violations under House Bill 1193 in the local school
24 districts.

25 On May 15th, the State Board of Education took

1 action to begin the APA process to receive public comments
2 on the proposed policy. That public comment period closed
3 yesterday at 5 p.m. Please note that this House bill does
4 not authorize the State Board of Education in its policy
5 to clarify or interpret the definitions, prohibitions, or
6 exceptions that were enumerated in the House bill.

7 In accordance with the Administrative Procedures
8 Act, the rules and regulations of the Secretary of State,
9 and the State Board of Education, today we're here for a
10 public comment hearing being held to receive oral feedback
11 on the proposed policy, and that is Mississippi
12 Administrative Code 7-3: 100.1, State Board Policy,
13 Chapter 100, Rule 100.1, Compliance with State Law
14 Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Prohibitions,
15 Complaint Process, and Investigations.

16 As we previously stated, everyone that's here in
17 attendance will be asked to sign in as they enter. This
18 hearing is open to the public, but it is not being live
19 streamed. If there are more people, there is overfill in
20 the auditorium downstairs. A transcript of the
21 proceedings is being recorded. We have an American Sign
22 Language interpreter present, as well. Only the
23 individuals who registered timely will be allowed to speak
24 today. Each person will be allotted three minutes to
25 comment. Speakers that are here may also submit written

1 comments or other documentation to be included in the
2 record of the hearing, but we need that today. And like I
3 said, all other written comments had to have been received
4 last night by 5 p.m., based on the APA comment period.

5 Mr. Kent will call speakers to the microphone
6 alphabetically by their last name and, in addition to
7 Mr. Kent, we have a time keeper who will assist speakers
8 in keeping track of their time. You can see you'll be
9 given three minutes. At one minute, the timekeeper will
10 raise her hand just so you're aware, and then there will
11 be a beep at the end of your allotted time.

12 As this hearing is being held to receive oral
13 feedback on the proposed policy, there will be no
14 question-and-answer period and no discussion. When the
15 speaker is called, we are asking that, before you begin
16 your comments, you state your name, any organization
17 you're affiliated with, and then state the sections of the
18 policy that your comments will address.

19 Mr. Kent, the floor is yours.

20 MR. KENT: Thank you, Ms. Meyer, and good
21 morning, everybody. Let's take a deep breath and smile,
22 and we'll be off to a good start here in a few minutes.

23 Ladies, would y'all interpret my comments
24 regarding hearing impaired?

25 Do we have anyone who is hearing impaired?

1 (No response.)

2 MR. KENT: Okay. All right. Then help us -- if
3 you have any issues as it relates to that, then give us a
4 high sign or something and one of the interpreters will
5 pick up and begin doing that. Otherwise, we probably will
6 not try to interpret every -- every word.

7 Okay. Just a couple of comments here. We will
8 produce a transcript of these proceedings. Ms. Cathy
9 White is the court reporter. She is strategically located
10 right next to the speakers so that she can capture their
11 comments as accurately as possible.

12 Again, my name is Mike Kent. I'm a retired
13 school superintendent here as a contract worker to
14 moderate this hearing. My job is to create a transcript
15 that is the formal record of the proceedings. As the
16 moderator, I have no position on the matter and I am not a
17 decision-maker as it relates to the policy.

18 We will, as Ms. Meyer said, we'll call speakers
19 alphabetically. If someone happens to be late, we will
20 just move them to the end of the list, but we'll try to
21 capture everybody as long as they arrive before we get
22 finished.

23 Speakers, when I call you up, I'll just prompt
24 you and ask you to state your name for the record and I'll
25 say that you're on the clock and, at that point, the

1 timekeeper will begin the clock, and then it will be up to
2 you to kind of monitor your progress during the three
3 minutes. At the end of that, it will be -- and I'll gavel
4 and you're done at that point.

5 Okay. I think that's everything. Can we begin?

6 First of all, Riley Houston, could you please
7 come to the podium? Riley Houston.

8 (No response.)

9 MR. KENT: All right. Kimberly Kelly to the
10 podium, please. Kimberly Kelly.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. KENT: James Thomas, please come forward.
13 James Thomas.

14 (No response.)

15 MR. KENT: Shauna Tillman.

16 MS. TILLMAN: No comment. I'm here. I didn't
17 mean to register, so no comment.

18 MR. KENT: Okay. All right. Thank you.

19 Let the record indicate that Ms. Tillman has
20 declined.

21 Finally, Molly Zuckerman. Molly Zuckerman.

22 (No response.)

23 MR. KENT: Ladies and gentlemen, I think -- let
24 me run through this list one more time.

25 Riley Houston, are you here?

1 (No response.)

2 MR. KENT: Kimberly Kelly, are you here?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. KENT: James Thomas.

5 (No response.)

6 MR. KENT: Ms. Tillman is here, but has declined
7 comment.

8 Molly Zuckerman.

9 (No response.)

10 MR. KENT: All right. Let me confer with counsel
11 here just a minute.

12 MR. BRUCE CASE: I was a little confused. I
13 would love to say something, if I could, but I didn't
14 realize you needed to sign up for it. But I could state
15 my name and share something for the record, if it's not
16 out of order.

17 (Discussion had off the record, not reported.)

18 MR. KENT: Okay. So looks like we have been
19 bailed out. So back to my list. Riley Houston? Great.
20 Number 1 on the list.

21 MS. HOUSTON: All right.

22 MR. KENT: Would you please come forward? Have a
23 seat right here.

24 MS. MEYER: And we'll -- quickly, because you
25 weren't here when I opened up --

1 MS. HOUSTON: Yes. I'm so sorry.

2 MS. MEYER: It's okay. You'll be given three
3 minutes to provide your comment. I believe you received
4 all those instructions when you registered. There's a
5 clock that is timing. The timekeeper will hold up with
6 one minute, when you've got one minute to go, and then it
7 will beep at the end.

8 MS. HOUSTON: All right. Thank you so much.

9 MR. KENT: Please have a seat. Make yourself
10 comfortable. State your name for the record and you are
11 on the clock.

12 MS. HOUSTON: All right. Good morning. My name
13 is Riley Houston. I was born here in Jackson,
14 Mississippi, and I've lived in the state my entire life.
15 I'm currently studying for my master's degree in history
16 at the University of Southern Mississippi, focusing on
17 southern social history, and I wanted to come speak today
18 on why I think that this bill is wrong.

19 It goes without saying, but will be repeated
20 here, that to limit in any way the teaching of concepts
21 surrounding race because they are too divisive is deeply
22 appropriate anywhere, but especially so in Mississippi.
23 This is the state of divisive figures such as Medgar
24 Evers, Vernon Dahmer, Fannie Lou Hamer, James Meredith,
25 the Freedom Summer Riders, and many more. Representatives

1 Bryant Clark and Jeffrey Harness, as well as Senator John
2 Horhn, have spoken powerfully on this topic already.

3 Due to lack of time, I'm going to focus
4 specifically on the part of the bill that legislates
5 against educational topics surrounding LGBT issues, as I
6 have personal experience.

7 I have taken the queer history class in
8 Mississippi. Among the history classes offered, it was
9 one of the most popular with one of the highest
10 enrollments in the History Department. Students who had
11 to drop the class due to time commitments continued to
12 discuss the reading material with their friends who
13 remained. We had documentary and film viewings every
14 Wednesday night and students would often bring friends who
15 were not even enrolled in the class, but were just
16 curious. These were college students voluntarily setting
17 aside a weeknight to watch a documentary for absolutely no
18 class credit. The students in this class were engaged,
19 attentive and went above and beyond to learn more.
20 Suffice to say, I think that the college students of
21 Mississippi can handle divisive concepts and discussions
22 of gender theory and transgender ideology, terms that
23 appear in this bill.

24 At the end of the semester, one girl told our
25 professor that she was grateful for the class. She

1 herself didn't identify as LGBT, but she planned to teach
2 high school and knew that she would have students that
3 did. She felt like, after this class, she understood
4 their perspectives better.

5 Speaking as someone who studies social history,
6 teaching about the histories of marginalized socialized
7 groups show that their lives mattered and that their
8 actions had a meaningful effect on history. When you
9 exclude diverse perspectives and stories from the teaching
10 of history, you send the message that these social groups
11 do not matter and the people they represent did not do
12 anything of real value. By extension, the people in
13 modern day who identify with those groups feel less like
14 they matter. Beyond that, open conversations regarding
15 diverse viewpoints is necessary in a democracy and it
16 helps prepare students for the real world where they will
17 encounter a diverse range of people.

18 Mississippi is already a diverse state. If this
19 bill remains, a diverse range of students will not
20 disappear, but will simply feel like people wish that they
21 would. Erasing the history of different groups in this
22 state does not make them go away. I would like to state
23 plainly that Mississippians of all types belong here and
24 that they deserve to have that reflected in their schools.

25 Thank you very much.

1 MR. KENT: Thank you. Thank you.

2 THE WITNESS: Do I need to remain here or do I
3 need to --

4 MR. KENT: Oh, you may remain, certainly.

5 MS. HOUSTON: Thank you so much.

6 MR. KENT: Okay. Let me move back down my list
7 one more time.

8 Kimberly Kelly.

9 (No response.)

10 MR. KENT: James Thomas.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. KENT: Ms. Tillman has declined.

13 Molly Zuckerman.

14 (No response.)

15 MR. KENT: Ladies and gentlemen, in a spirit of
16 cooperation, I guess for lack of a better word, we're
17 going to adjourn for a few minutes and reconvene at 10:15
18 in case there are issues with travel, people running late,
19 that kind of thing. We published our rules and
20 procedures. We cannot deviate from that. But in an
21 effort to be as cooperative, I guess for lack of a better
22 term, as possible, again, we'll adjourn and reconvene at
23 10:15 by that clock on the wall right there. All right.
24 We're adjourned for a few minutes.

25 (Recess.)

1 MR. KENT: All right. If we may, we're going to
2 resume. It's 10:15 and so we will go back to our list.

3 Has Kimberly Kelly arrived? Kimberly Kelly.

4 (No response.)

5 MR. KENT: James Thomas.

6 (No response.)

7 MR. KENT: Ms. Tillman has declined comment.

8 Molly Zuckerman. Molly Zuckerman.

9 (No response.)

10 MR. KENT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, I
11 think we have met our obligation.

12 Ms. Meyer, any closing comments?

13 MS. MEYER: Yes. So in light of all that have
14 signed in and attended here, what we are going to do to
15 give an opportunity -- we cannot deviate from our process.
16 We provided full notice and the guidelines to how to
17 register to speak. As I previously stated, last night at
18 5 p.m., the written public comment period closed. To
19 grant you all the opportunity, and only those who have
20 signed in, the opportunity, we are going to extend the
21 written comment period until 5 p.m. today. So you may
22 email written comments. That is to the attention of me,
23 so that is emeyer@mdek12.org. So emeyer@mdek12.org. The
24 only comments that we will acknowledge and include as
25 backup for our comment period will be from those

1 individuals who have signed in. So any additional ones
2 will be excluded.

3 MR. CASE: Would you repeat that one more time,
4 your email?

5 MS. MEYER: Sure. It is emeyer@mdek12.org.

6 MR. CASE: Thank you.

7 MS. MEYER: And that concludes this public
8 hearing. Thank you.

9 MR. KENT: Thank you for coming.

10 (Whereupon the hearing was concluded at
11 10:18 a.m. the same day.)
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1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

2 I, Catherine M. White, CSR, and Notary Public
3 in and for the County of Rankin, State of Mississippi,
4 hereby certify that the foregoing pages, and including
5 this page, contain a true and correct transcript of
6 the hearing, as taken by me at the time and place
7 heretofore stated, and later reduced to typewritten
8 form by computer-aided transcription under my
9 supervision and to the best of my skill and ability.

10 I further certify that I am not in the employ
11 of or related to any counsel or party in this matter,
12 and have no interest, monetary or otherwise, in the
13 final outcome of the proceedings.

14 Witness my signature and seal this the 12th
15 day of June, 2025.

16 

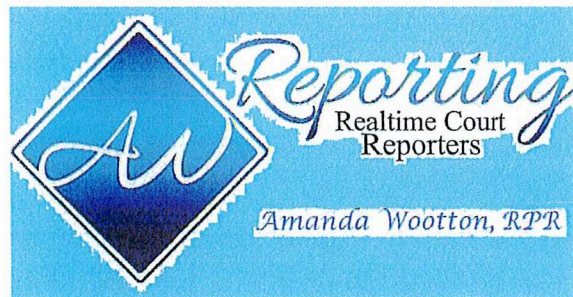
17 CATHERINE M. WHITE, CSR No. 1309

18 My Commission Expires:
19 February 1, 2026
20
21
22
23
24
25

House Bill 1193

**Mississippi Department of Education
Public Comment Hearing**

June 11, 2025



338 Indian Gate Circle
Ridgeland, MS 39157
601-573-0961

amanda@awreporting.com
www.awreporting.com

1	MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	3	MS. MEYER: Good morning. My name is Erin Meyer.
2	RE: HOUSE BILL 1193	4	I serve as general counsel to the Mississippi Department
3		5	of Education. I am also here with Mr. Mike Kent who is
4		6	the designated representative who will be facilitating
5		7	this public comment hearing.
6	*****	8	We're here because, during the 2025 regular
7	PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING	9	legislative session, the Legislature passed House Bill
8	*****	10	1193, which is an act to prohibit public schools and
9		11	public post-secondary educational institutions from taking
10		12	certain actions and engaging in discriminatory practices
11		13	specifically related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
12	Taken at	14	It seeks to ensure that employment, academic
13	Mississippi Department of Education,	15	opportunities, and student engagement are based solely on
14	Central High School Building,	16	individual merit, qualifications, and academic
15	359 North West Street, 4th Floor Boardroom,	17	performance without consideration of an individual's race,
16	Jackson, Mississippi	18	sex, color, national origin, or expressed opposition to or
17	on Wednesday, June 11, 2025,	19	refusal to affirm or participate in diversity, equity, and
18	beginning at approximately 9:38 a.m.	20	inclusion.
19		21	This law requires that, within 90 days of
20		22	passage, the State Board of Education shall adopt a model
21	*****	23	complaint process, investigative procedures, and other
22	CATHY M. WHITE, CCR	24	policies and procedures for appropriately investigating
23	Certified Court Reporter #1309	25	violations under House Bill 1193 in the local school
24	Notary Public		districts.
25			On May 15th, the State Board of Education took
2		4	
1	A P P E A R A N C E S	1	action to begin the APA process to receive public comments
2		2	on the proposed policy. That public comment period closed
3	MR. MIKE D. KENT	3	yesterday at 5 p.m. Please note that this House bill does
4	HEARING OFFICER	4	not authorize the State Board of Education in its policy
5		5	to clarify or interpret the definitions, prohibitions, or
6	ERIN MEYER, ESQUIRE	6	exceptions that were enumerated in the House bill.
7	MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GENERAL	7	In accordance with the Administrative Procedures
8	COUNSEL	8	Act, the rules and regulations of the Secretary of State,
9		9	and the State Board of Education, today we're here for a
10		10	public comment hearing being held to receive oral feedback
11		11	on the proposed policy, and that is Mississippi
12		12	Administrative Code 7-3: 100.1, State Board Policy,
13		13	Chapter 100, Rule 100.1, Compliance with State Law
14		14	Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Prohibitions,
15		15	Complaint Process, and Investigations.
16		16	As we previously stated, everyone that's here in
17		17	attendance will be asked to sign in as they enter. This
18		18	hearing is open to the public, but it is not being live
19		19	streamed. If there are more people, there is overfill in
20		20	the auditorium downstairs. A transcript of the
21		21	proceedings is being recorded. We have an American Sign
22		22	Language interpreter present, as well. Only the
23		23	individuals who registered timely will be allowed to speak
24		24	today. Each person will be allotted three minutes to
25		25	comment. Speakers that are here may also submit written

<p>5</p> <p>1 comments or other documentation to be included in the</p> <p>2 record of the hearing, but we need that today. And like I</p> <p>3 said, all other written comments had to have been received</p> <p>4 last night by 5 p.m., based on the APA comment period.</p> <p>5 Mr. Kent will call speakers to the microphone</p> <p>6 alphabetically by their last name and, in addition to</p> <p>7 Mr. Kent, we have a time keeper who will assist speakers</p> <p>8 in keeping track of their time. You can see you'll be</p> <p>9 given three minutes. At one minute, the timekeeper will</p> <p>10 raise her hand just so you're aware, and then there will</p> <p>11 be a beep at the end of your allotted time.</p> <p>12 As this hearing is being held to receive oral</p> <p>13 feedback on the proposed policy, there will be no</p> <p>14 question-and-answer period and no discussion. When the</p> <p>15 speaker is called, we are asking that, before you begin</p> <p>16 your comments, you state your name, any organization</p> <p>17 you're affiliated with, and then state the sections of the</p> <p>18 policy that your comments will address.</p> <p>19 Mr. Kent, the floor is yours.</p> <p>20 MR. KENT: Thank you, Ms. Meyer, and good</p> <p>21 morning, everybody. Let's take a deep breath and smile,</p> <p>22 and we'll be off to a good start here in a few minutes.</p> <p>23 Ladies, would y'all interpret my comments</p> <p>24 regarding hearing impaired?</p> <p>25 Do we have anyone who is hearing impaired?</p>	<p>7</p> <p>1 timekeeper will begin the clock, and then it will be up to</p> <p>2 you to kind of monitor your progress during the three</p> <p>3 minutes. At the end of that, it will be -- and I'll gavel</p> <p>4 and you're done at that point.</p> <p>5 Okay. I think that's everything. Can we begin?</p> <p>6 First of all, Riley Houston, could you please</p> <p>7 come to the podium? Riley Houston.</p> <p>8 (No response.)</p> <p>9 MR. KENT: All right. Kimberly Kelly to the</p> <p>10 podium, please. Kimberly Kelly.</p> <p>11 (No response.)</p> <p>12 MR. KENT: James Thomas, please come forward.</p> <p>13 James Thomas.</p> <p>14 (No response.)</p> <p>15 MR. KENT: Shauna Tillman.</p> <p>16 MS. TILLMAN: No comment. I'm here. I didn't</p> <p>17 mean to register, so no comment.</p> <p>18 MR. KENT: Okay. All right. Thank you.</p> <p>19 Let the record indicate that Ms. Tillman has</p> <p>20 declined.</p> <p>21 Finally, Molly Zuckerman. Molly Zuckerman.</p> <p>22 (No response.)</p> <p>23 MR. KENT: Ladies and gentlemen, I think -- let</p> <p>24 me run through this list one more time.</p> <p>25 Riley Houston, are you here?</p>
<p>6</p> <p>1 (No response.)</p> <p>2 MR. KENT: Okay. All right. Then help us -- if</p> <p>3 you have any issues as it relates to that, then give us a</p> <p>4 high sign or something and one of the interpreters will</p> <p>5 pick up and begin doing that. Otherwise, we probably will</p> <p>6 not try to interpret every -- every word.</p> <p>7 Okay. Just a couple of comments here. We will</p> <p>8 produce a transcript of these proceedings. Ms. Cathy</p> <p>9 White is the court reporter. She is strategically located</p> <p>10 right next to the speakers so that she can capture their</p> <p>11 comments as accurately as possible.</p> <p>12 Again, my name is Mike Kent. I'm a retired</p> <p>13 school superintendent here as a contract worker to</p> <p>14 moderate this hearing. My job is to create a transcript</p> <p>15 that is the formal record of the proceedings. As the</p> <p>16 moderator, I have no position on the matter and I am not a</p> <p>17 decision-maker as it relates to the policy.</p> <p>18 We will, as Ms. Meyer said, we'll call speakers</p> <p>19 alphabetically. If someone happens to be late, we will</p> <p>20 just move them to the end of the list, but we'll try to</p> <p>21 capture everybody as long as they arrive before we get</p> <p>22 finished.</p> <p>23 Speakers, when I call you up, I'll just prompt</p> <p>24 you and ask you to state your name for the record and I'll</p> <p>25 say that you're on the clock and, at that point, the</p>	<p>8</p> <p>1 (No response.)</p> <p>2 MR. KENT: Kimberly Kelly, are you here?</p> <p>3 (No response.)</p> <p>4 MR. KENT: James Thomas.</p> <p>5 (No response.)</p> <p>6 MR. KENT: Ms. Tillman is here, but has declined</p> <p>7 comment.</p> <p>8 Molly Zuckerman.</p> <p>9 (No response.)</p> <p>10 MR. KENT: All right. Let me confer with counsel</p> <p>11 here just a minute.</p> <p>12 MR. BRUCE CASE: I was a little confused. I</p> <p>13 would love to say something, if I could, but I didn't</p> <p>14 realize you needed to sign up for it. But I could state</p> <p>15 my name and share something for the record, if it's not</p> <p>16 out of order.</p> <p>17 (Discussion had off the record, not reported.)</p> <p>18 MR. KENT: Okay. So looks like we have been</p> <p>19 bailed out. So back to my list. Riley Houston? Great.</p> <p>20 Number 1 on the list.</p> <p>21 MS. HOUSTON: All right.</p> <p>22 MR. KENT: Would you please come forward? Have a</p> <p>23 seat right here.</p> <p>24 MS. MEYER: And we'll -- quickly, because you</p> <p>25 weren't here when I opened up --</p>

<p>9</p> <p>1 MS. HOUSTON: Yes. I'm so sorry.</p> <p>2 MS. MEYER: It's okay. You'll be given three</p> <p>3 minutes to provide your comment. I believe you received</p> <p>4 all those instructions when you registered. There's a</p> <p>5 clock that is timing. The timekeeper will hold up with</p> <p>6 one minute, when you've got one minute to go, and then it</p> <p>7 will beep at the end.</p> <p>8 MS. HOUSTON: All right. Thank you so much.</p> <p>9 MR. KENT: Please have a seat. Make yourself</p> <p>10 comfortable. State your name for the record and you are</p> <p>11 on the clock.</p> <p>12 MS. HOUSTON: All right. Good morning. My name</p> <p>13 is Riley Houston. I was born here in Jackson,</p> <p>14 Mississippi, and I've lived in the state my entire life.</p> <p>15 I'm currently studying for my master's degree in history</p> <p>16 at the University of Southern Mississippi, focusing on</p> <p>17 southern social history, and I wanted to come speak today</p> <p>18 on why I think that this bill is wrong.</p> <p>19 It goes without saying, but will be repeated</p> <p>20 here, that to limit in any way the teaching of concepts</p> <p>21 surrounding race because they are too divisive is deeply</p> <p>22 appropriate anywhere, but especially so in Mississippi.</p> <p>23 This is the state of divisive figures such as Medgar</p> <p>24 Evers, Vernon Dahmer, Fannie Lou Hamer, James Meredith,</p> <p>25 the Freedom Summer Riders, and many more. Representatives</p>	<p>11</p> <p>1 herself didn't identify as LGBT, but she planned to teach</p> <p>2 high school and knew that she would have students that</p> <p>3 did. She felt like, after this class, she understood</p> <p>4 their perspectives better.</p> <p>5 Speaking as someone who studies social history,</p> <p>6 teaching about the histories of marginalized socialized</p> <p>7 groups show that their lives mattered and that their</p> <p>8 actions had a meaningful effect on history. When you</p> <p>9 exclude diverse perspectives and stories from the teaching</p> <p>10 of history, you send the message that these social groups</p> <p>11 do not matter and the people they represent did not do</p> <p>12 anything of real value. By extension, the people in</p> <p>13 modern day who identify with those groups feel less like</p> <p>14 they matter. Beyond that, open conversations regarding</p> <p>15 diverse viewpoints is necessary in a democracy and it</p> <p>16 helps prepare students for the real world where they will</p> <p>17 encounter a diverse range of people.</p> <p>18 Mississippi is already a diverse state. If this</p> <p>19 bill remains, a diverse range of students will not</p> <p>20 disappear, but will simply feel like people wish that they</p> <p>21 would. Erasing the history of different groups in this</p> <p>22 state does not make them go away. I would like to state</p> <p>23 plainly that Mississippians of all types belong here and</p> <p>24 that they deserve to have that reflected in their schools.</p> <p>25 Thank you very much.</p>
<p>10</p> <p>1 Bryant Clark and Jeffrey Harness, as well as Senator John</p> <p>2 Horn, have spoken powerfully on this topic already.</p> <p>3 Due to lack of time, I'm going to focus</p> <p>4 specifically on the part of the bill that legislates</p> <p>5 against educational topics surrounding LGBT issues, as I</p> <p>6 have personal experience.</p> <p>7 I have taken the queer history class in</p> <p>8 Mississippi. Among the history classes offered, it was</p> <p>9 one of the most popular with one of the highest</p> <p>10 enrollments in the History Department. Students who had</p> <p>11 to drop the class due to time commitments continued to</p> <p>12 discuss the reading material with their friends who</p> <p>13 remained. We had documentary and film viewings every</p> <p>14 Wednesday night and students would often bring friends who</p> <p>15 were not even enrolled in the class, but were just</p> <p>16 curious. These were college students voluntarily setting</p> <p>17 aside a weeknight to watch a documentary for absolutely no</p> <p>18 class credit. The students in this class were engaged,</p> <p>19 attentive and went above and beyond to learn more.</p> <p>20 Suffice to say, I think that the college students of</p> <p>21 Mississippi can handle divisive concepts and discussions</p> <p>22 of gender theory and transgender ideology, terms that</p> <p>23 appear in this bill.</p> <p>24 At the end of the semester, one girl told our</p> <p>25 professor that she was grateful for the class. She</p>	<p>12</p> <p>1 MR. KENT: Thank you. Thank you.</p> <p>2 THE WITNESS: Do I need to remain here or do I</p> <p>3 need to --</p> <p>4 MR. KENT: Oh, you may remain, certainly.</p> <p>5 MS. HOUSTON: Thank you so much.</p> <p>6 MR. KENT: Okay. Let me move back down my list</p> <p>7 one more time.</p> <p>8 Kimberly Kelly.</p> <p>9 (No response.)</p> <p>10 MR. KENT: James Thomas.</p> <p>11 (No response.)</p> <p>12 MR. KENT: Ms. Tillman has declined.</p> <p>13 Molly Zuckerman.</p> <p>14 (No response.)</p> <p>15 MR. KENT: Ladies and gentlemen, in a spirit of</p> <p>16 cooperation, I guess for lack of a better word, we're</p> <p>17 going to adjourn for a few minutes and reconvene at 10:15</p> <p>18 in case there are issues with travel, people running late,</p> <p>19 that kind of thing. We published our rules and</p> <p>20 procedures. We cannot deviate from that. But in an</p> <p>21 effort to be as cooperative, I guess for lack of a better</p> <p>22 term, as possible, again, we'll adjourn and reconvene at</p> <p>23 10:15 by that clock on the wall right there. All right.</p> <p>24 We're adjourned for a few minutes.</p> <p>25 (Recess.)</p>


13

1 MR. KENT: All right. If we may, we're going to
2 resume. It's 10:15 and so we will go back to our list.
3 Has Kimberly Kelly arrived? Kimberly Kelly.
4 (No response.)
5 MR. KENT: James Thomas.
6 (No response.)
7 MR. KENT: Ms. Tillman has declined comment.
8 Molly Zuckerman. Molly Zuckerman.
9 (No response.)
10 MR. KENT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, I
11 think we have met our obligation.
12 Ms. Meyer, any closing comments?
13 MS. MEYER: Yes. So in light of all that have
14 signed in and attended here, what we are going to do to
15 give an opportunity -- we cannot deviate from our process.
16 We provided full notice and the guidelines to how to
17 register to speak. As I previously stated, last night at
18 5 p.m., the written public comment period closed. To
19 grant you all the opportunity, and only those who have
20 signed in, the opportunity, we are going to extend the
21 written comment period until 5 p.m. today. So you may
22 email written comments. That is to the attention of me,
23 so that is emeyer@ndek12.org. So emeyer@ndek12.org. The
24 only comments that we will acknowledge and include as
25 backup for our comment period will be from those

14

1 individuals who have signed in. So any additional ones
2 will be excluded.
3 MR. CASE: Would you repeat that one more time,
4 your email?
5 MS. MEYER: Sure. It is emeyer@ndek12.org.
6 MR. CASE: Thank you.
7 MS. MEYER: And that concludes this public
8 hearing. Thank you.
9 MR. KENT: Thank you for coming.
10 (Whereupon the hearing was concluded at
11 10:18 a.m. the same day.)
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1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER
2 I, Catherine M. White, CSR, and Notary Public
3 in and for the County of Rankin, State of Mississippi,
4 hereby certify that the foregoing pages, and including
5 this page, contain a true and correct transcript of
6 the hearing, as taken by me at the time and place
7 heretofore stated, and later reduced to typewritten
8 form by computer-aided transcription under my
9 supervision and to the best of my skill and ability.
10 I further certify that I am not in the employ
11 of or related to any counsel or party in this matter,
12 and have no interest, monetary or otherwise, in the
13 final outcome of the proceedings.
14 Witness my signature and seal this the 12th
15 day of June, 2025.
16
17 
18 CATHERINE M. WHITE, CSR No. 1309
19 My Commission Expires:
20 February 1, 2026
21
22
23
24
25

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