



March 8, 2021

To: Members of the Mississippi Senate
From: Americans for Tax Reform

Re: Support House Bill 1263

Dear Senator,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) and our supporters across Mississippi, I urge you to support House Bill 1263, legislation that would streamline the process for new Mississippi residents to get a Mississippi occupational license. If implemented, this reform, also known as Universal License Recognition, would be a huge win for people across the Magnolia State.

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In all states, onerous occupational licensure laws keep Americans from their right to earn a living. These barriers to work – which include, but are not limited to, excessive training and expensive fees – are often put in place by the politically connected as a way to protect themselves from competition.

“Licensing laws now guard entry into hundreds of occupations, including jobs that offer upward mobility to those of modest means,” writes the authors of the second edition of License to Work, an Institute for Justice report that “examines both the scope and the specific burdens of occupational licensing” affecting 102 lower-income occupations. On average, one of these licenses requires \$267 in fees, nearly a year of education and experience, and one exam.

To put the consequences of these protectionist policies in perspective, estimates show that occupational licensure laws may result in as many as 2.85 million fewer jobs nationwide and could cost consumers as much as \$203 billion a year.

Fortunately, more and more lawmakers are recognizing the serious harm that licensing laws inflict on job seekers and are working to remove these barriers. Mississippi made some great progress on this front last year by allowing military spouses and dependents to obtain a Mississippi license based on the education and training that they have already completed in other states. Now, **Mississippi has an opportunity to build on that success through HB 1263, which would extend Universal License Recognition to all Mississippi residents.**

Arizona was the first state to implement Universal License Recognition in 2019 and six more states – Pennsylvania, Utah, Montana, Idaho, Iowa, and most recently, Missouri – have already followed suit. Representative Derek Grier, the sponsor of the Missouri reform, explained that Universal License Recognition allows new workers to “plug in right away,” and makes it so they won’t “be hindered by the government so long as there are no health, safety, and wellness concerns.”

HB 1263 would allow Mississippi residents who have unexpired occupational licenses in good standing in a previous state to immediately begin working in Mississippi, saving them countless hours of valuable time. Removing these redundant regulatory hurdles would make Mississippi a much more attractive place for workers with valuable skills, those starting new careers, and business owners. This would be a big win for all Mississippi residents, as attracting people and investment would ultimately lead to more jobs and opportunities.

It is senseless for government to get between workers and jobs by forcing those licensed in good standing in other states to begin from scratch. **ATR supports HB 1263 and urges lawmakers to vote YES.**

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist
President, Americans for Tax Reform