

TAXPAYERS
PROTECTION
ALLIANCE

Brittney Thompson
Director
Office of Personal Services Contract Review (OPSCR)
501 North West Street, Suite 700-E
Jackson, MS 39201

Dear Director Thompson,

The Taxpayers Protection Alliance is urging Mississippi state officials to pursue reforms to the state procurement process to ensure transparency, accountability, and elimination of the flawed blind procurement process, which is ripe for waste, fraud, and abuse. Taxpayers, and those benefiting from public programs, deserve the peace of mind and reassurance that Mississippi state programs are run efficiently and effectively by the most qualified bidder and not the bidder with the most inside connections.

Public procurement is a critical tool, which equips states with the capacity to deliver the goods and services necessary to meet the community's needs in the most efficient way. And while the procurement process often earns a reputation for being a rather mundane topic, it is ultimately these decision-making processes that determine how the state spends the hard-earned taxpayer dollars of Mississippi citizens.

A prime example of the corruption that results from a severely flawed blind procurement process is Mississippi's Medicaid program which recently awarded \$6.2 billion in state Medicaid management contracts to three separate entities, despite historical records of waste, fraud, and abuse from almost all entities involved.¹

Although the procurement process was originally implemented to negate biases, it has since resulted in routine violations of the "blind" nature of the process. Most commonly, it enables large players to leverage their resources and signal which bid is theirs while simultaneously making generous political donations to help their bid stand out among the rest. This is a massive corruption of the system.

It is abundantly clear the current system has flaws. Beyond the systematic misuse by bidders, the blind procurement process is costing the state additional taxpayer money. Between 2018 and 2022, procurements not approved due to best practices violations cost an estimated \$272,000 to Mississippi procuring agencies, with 83 percent of that cost associated with blind scoring violations alone.

The blind procurement process lacks necessary safeguards and, in some cases, is going as far as protecting bad actors and empowering them to continue to overcharge the state and defraud

¹ <https://medicaid.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021-Annual-Report.pdf>

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taxpayers. Mississippi needs to reform its state procurement process and introduce a system that prioritizes the economic health of our state through increased transparency and accountability.

Sincerely,



David Williams
President

Cc:

Tate Reeves, Governor, 550 High St., Sillers Building, 19th Floor Jackson, MS 39201

Mississippi State Senate

Mississippi House of Representatives