



## LEGISLATIVE RECAP 2022

Building, A Better, More  
Equitable Future for  
Mississippi's Working Families



# Our Vision for a Better Mississippi

## Better Communities

Provide affordable access to healthcare for all Mississippians by expanding Medicaid.

Protect working families, their communities, and the economy by opposing the elimination of the state income tax.

Ensure that every student, regardless of who they are or where they grow up, has access to a quality education by fully funding the Mississippi Adequate Education Program.

## Better Governance

Guarantee that Mississippians can elect the representative of their choice by redrawing fair boundary lines for state, county, and political districts.

Secure the restoration of voting rights for disenfranchised individuals with felony convictions by forming a more clear, effective suffrage procedure and reforming the state's disenfranchisement laws.

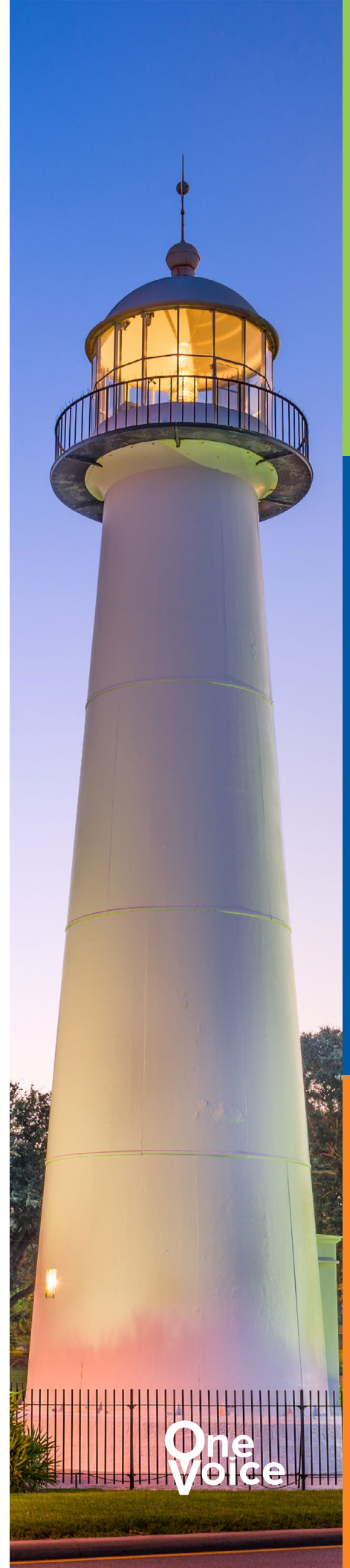
Reduce mass incarceration and disparities within the criminal justice system by revising state and local sentencing guidelines.

Improve public safety and re-entry outcomes in individuals formerly incarcerated by tackling the state's dilapidated, inhumane prisons.

## Better Opportunities

Support working families by implementing a state Earned Income Tax Credit.

Invest in people, services, and equitable policies through the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funds.



# Better Communities

## Extending Medicaid Postpartum Coverage

The MS House allowed the [Senate Bill 2033](#) to die without a vote or debate which means that 60% of pregnant women in MS, who rely on Medicaid for much needed support, will unfortunately lose their health insurance exactly two months after giving birth. This bill would have merely permitted pregnant women, who were already qualified for Medicaid, to be able to access healthcare for ten additional months.

## Medical Marijuana

Lawmakers passed [Senate Bill 2095](#), legalizing the use of medical cannabis by certain patients who have debilitating medical conditions. There are qualifying terms patients must meet and certifying practitioners must undergo medical education requirements.

## Income Tax Elimination

One Voice worked during the 2022 Legislative Session in opposition to the elimination of the state individual income tax.

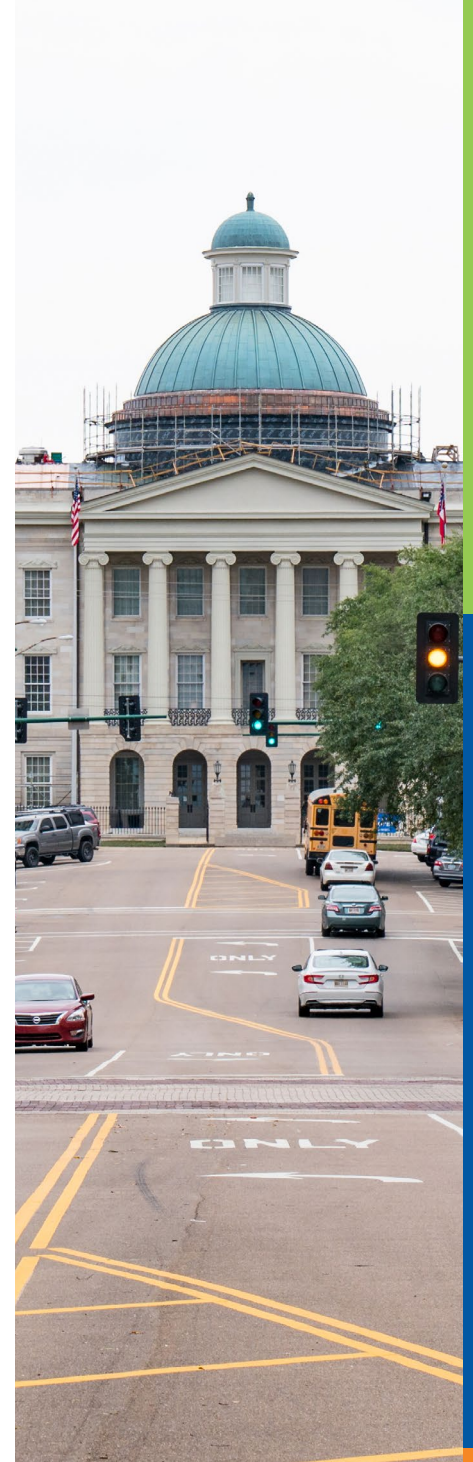
During the 2022 Legislative session, state lawmakers proposed seven different tax plans to eliminate the state individual income tax. Overall, the battle over tax cuts occurred between state lawmakers who wanted to fully eliminate the state individual income tax and those who wanted to take a more cautious approach to state revenue reductions.

### The first tax plan, [House Bill 531](#) proposed the following:

- The elimination of the state individual income tax;
- An increase the state's general sales tax rate to 8.5% from 7%;
- A reduction in the state's sales tax on groceries to 4% from 7%; and
- A reduction in the tax on car tags by 35%.

### The Mississippi Senate then proposed [Senate Bill 3164](#), which included the following:

- The elimination of the state's 4% income tax bracket;
- A reduction in the state's sales tax on groceries to 5% from 7%;
- A cut of the portion of the state's car tag fees that goes to the General Fund; and
- A one-time income tax rebate ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 in 2022 for Mississippians who paid taxes in 2021.
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Ultimately, the House and Senate bills went to conference and state lawmakers passed [House Bill 531](#), the Mississippi Tax Freedom Act of 2022. When fully implemented, [House Bill 531](#), will establish a 4 percent “flat tax” in Mississippi and blow a hole in our state budget to the tune of approximately \$535 million a year.

None of the more targeted tax cuts proposals — such as grocery or car tag tax reductions — made it to the final plan, and what was left was a plan that delivers nearly all its benefits to those with the highest incomes. In addition to providing a tax cut that disproportionately benefits the state’s wealthiest, the tax plan will seriously limit the state’s ability to provide good schools, safe roads and bridges, and other priorities our state needs to expand opportunity and support our economy.

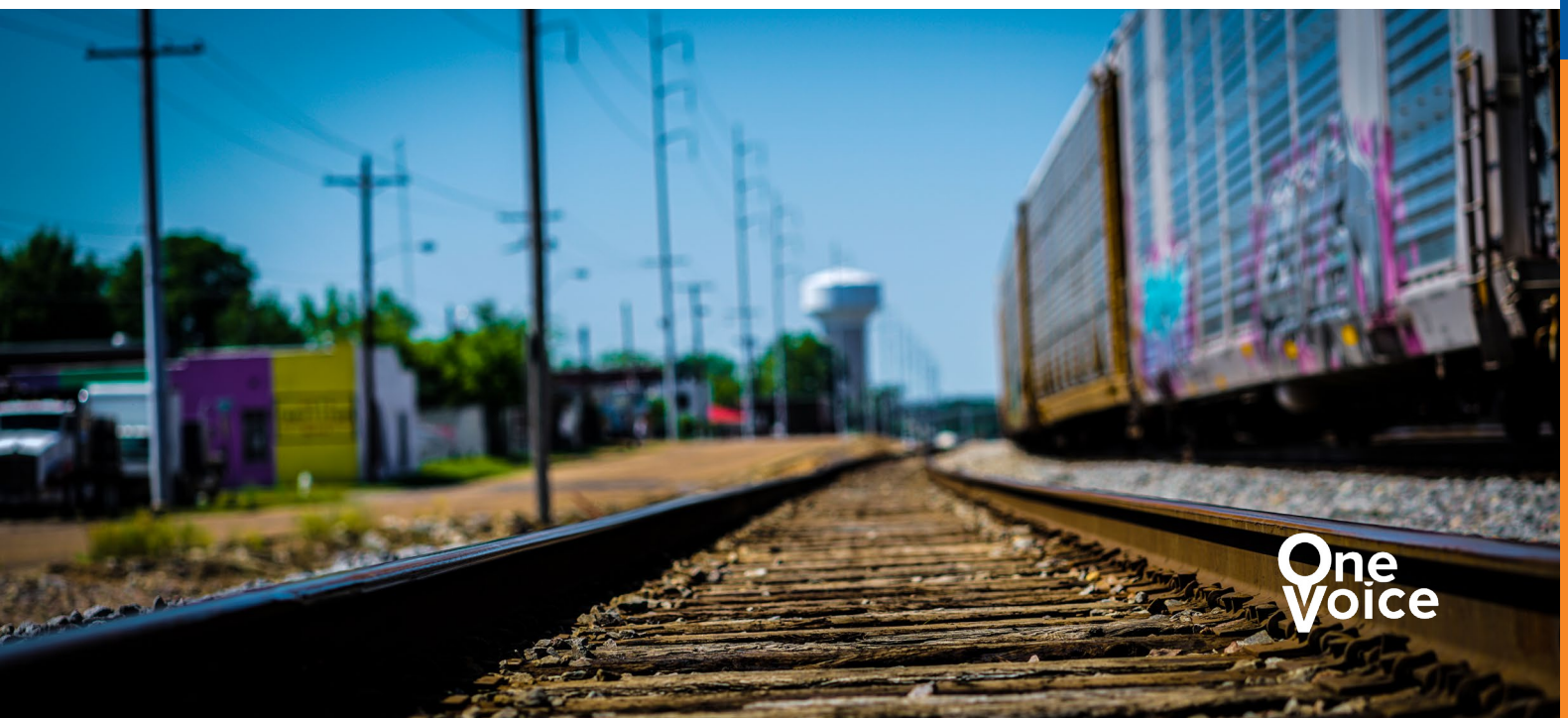
One Voice will continue to push for a more equitable tax and budget system in Mississippi. We encourage state lawmakers to consider targeted tax cuts like the grocery tax cut and tax credits for workers and families with children like a state EITC, as well as revenue-raising tax policies like the reinstatement of the corporate tax and estate tax and the expansion of the sales tax base to include internet businesses and travel companies.

### Teacher Pay

Lawmakers passed the Strategically Accelerating the Recruitment and Retention of Teachers Act of 2022 ([House Bill 530](#)) to increase teacher pay. Beginning for the 2022-2023 school year, teacher pay will increase by \$5,140. The strategy is to increase the pay for teachers at five-year intervals. Mississippi’s teacher pay is by far the lowest in the country along with the state also struggling with a teacher shortage since the beginning of the pandemic. The minimum starting pay for teachers without a bachelor’s degree and with no experience will be \$41,500. This plan would also include a \$2,000 raise for all teacher assistants while improving starting teachers’ pay above the national average and the Southeastern.

### Equal Pay

Mississippi Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (House Bill 770) was passed by lawmakers establishing an “actionable right” for any employee that is being discriminated against and paid less for equal pay based solely on their sex. However, this bill does allow for that. It does not include supportive policies for women and caregivers, and it only applies to those who work full time, 40 hours or more per week. Information provided by our partner, Mississippi Black Women’s Roundtable



# Better Governance

## Congressional and Statewide Redistricting

In an effort to increase the number of majority-Black legislative districts, Democrats offered amendments to the proposed redistricting plan, pushing for majority-Black districts. However, their amendments failed. Under the leadership's plans, 29% of the Senate districts are majority-Black while 34% of the House districts are. Based on the 2020 Census, the state's Black population is 38% while the white population is 59%. The remaining percentage fits in "other" categories including multiple racial groups, under the categories developed by the U.S. Census. The redistricting plan dilutes the Black voter strength and is not representative of the population of Mississippi.

Information provided by Mississippi Today

## Voter Disenfranchisement

Lawmakers passed [House Bill 1510](#) to further suppress voting rights in the state of MS. This bill would allow election commissioners to use the Statewide Elections Management System to identify non-citizens as registered voters and ultimately, purge inactive voters.

## Voter Restoration

[House Bill 630](#) would have restored suffrage rights for citizens convicted of disenfranchising crimes. However, lawmakers allowed this bill to die.

## Ballot Initiative Process

The Mississippi Legislature ended the 2022 session killing [House Concurrent Resolution 39](#). Lawmakers agreed not to reinstate the initiative process that gave citizens the freedom to express issues on the ballot for voters to decide.

# Better Opportunities

## American Rescue Plan

During the 2022 Legislative Session, state lawmakers allocated \$1.5 billion of the \$1.8 billion in federal pandemic relief aid provided by the American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. ARPA-related bills included the creation of and funding for water, sewer, and other infrastructure projects, as well as money for workforce development, tourism, mental health services, child protective services, private colleges and universities, death benefits for law enforcement and firefighters who died from COVID-19, and other matters.

## Earned Income Tax Credit

Representatives Johnson and Watson both introduced state EITC bills—[House Bill 214](#) and [House Bill 804](#), respectively. Both proposals included a refundable tax credit set at 10 percent of the federal credit. Both bills died in the House Ways and Means Committee.





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