



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR
SHAD WHITE
STATE AUDITOR**

September 21, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Dr. Al Rankins Jr.
Commissioner of IHL
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, Mississippi 39211

Re: Recent Cybersecurity Incident

Dear Dr. Rankins:

I became aware of a recent cybersecurity incident affecting the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), specifically the Office of Financial Aid, which occurred earlier this month, and another at the University of Mississippi Medical Center on or about February 19, 2026.

Pursuant to OSA's statutory authority to investigate the financial affairs of state agencies, institutions, boards and commissions under Miss. Code Ann. § 7-7-211(d), and its authority to access agency cybersecurity records under Miss. Code Ann. § 25-53-201(3)(f) and (i), we are requesting the following information:

1. The date IHL first discovered the incident, and the date of notification to the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services under Miss. Code Ann. § 25-53-201(5)(c);
2. A description of the nature and scope of the incident, including systems and data affected;
3. Whether any ransom or extortion payment was requested, and if so, the amount demanded;
4. Whether any payment was made in response to that demand, including the amount, the date, the source of funds used, and the method of payment;
5. Any board or administrative approval obtained prior to making such a payment, if applicable; and
6. Copies of any incident reports, remediation plans, or third-party assessments related to the incident.

Taxpayers deserve to know what happens to their money and the IHL should be transparent with what happened here. Please provide this information within fourteen (14) days of the date of this letter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss the scope of this request, please contact the State Auditor's Office at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shad White", is written over a circular stamp.

Shad White, CFE
State Auditor