

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



Proclamation

WHEREAS, although Mississippi and federal laws prohibit the sale of tobacco and vapor products to underage persons, according to FDA reports of government studies, underage youth vaping has risen at alarming levels; and

WHEREAS, *We Card Awareness Month* is a retail education and training effort to boost Mississippi retailers' awareness of and participation in responsible retailing efforts to comply with federal, state and local laws and identify, prevent and deny tobacco and vapor products and other age-restricted product sales to underage youth; and

WHEREAS, 2023 marks 28 years of education and training of the national non-profit organization, THE "WE CARD" PROGRAM INC. – which has been helping retailers comply with age-restricted product laws and serve their communities as responsible retailers; and

WHEREAS, *We Card* is working to create greater retailer and public awareness of social sources of tobacco and vapor products, which, according to CDC research data, comprises approximately 80% of the ways in which those underage report getting tobacco & vapor products (such as adult-for-underage purchases, bumming and borrowing); and,

WHEREAS, *We Card* is endorsed by the Mississippi Wholesale Distributors Association, Retail Association of Mississippi, and Mississippi Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Stores Association; and

WHEREAS, retailers are taking the "We Card Retailer Pledge" to identify and prevent underage youth attempts to purchase tobacco and vapor products and to identify and deny adult purchases where there is a reasonable suspicion that an adult customer will be providing age-restricted products to an underage person; and

WHEREAS, *We Card* in-store training and educational materials, as well as its online training program and its mystery shopping service "ID Check-Up" are available to all Mississippi retailers through *We Card's* website; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi will benefit from a responsible retail community that successfully prevents tobacco and other age-restricted product sales to minors.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tate Reeves, Governor of the State of Mississippi, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2023 to be

"WE CARD AWARENESS MONTH"

in Mississippi and encourage all Mississippi retailers to participate in "*We Card Awareness Month*" and to let their customers know that "In Mississippi, we do not sell tobacco, vapor products and other age-restricted products to kids!"



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, on the 17th day of August in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-eighth.

Tate Reeves

TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR