



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of April 23, 2012

Redistricting was on everyone's minds as they regrouped at the Capitol this week. The reapportionment of electoral districts occurs every 10 years.

Reapportionment meetings on Wednesday were well attended by members to see how their districts might be affected should House members adopt the changes to the redistricting map and the Justice Department make the final decision to approve/disapprove the drawings. With population shifts occurring throughout the state, five new districts were drawn: two in Desoto County and one in Madison, Oktibbeha and Forrest Counties. All districts are contiguous, with no retrogression. Under this plan, there are 42 majority/minority districts, with two new performing areas in Districts 16 and 45. A performing area refers to a district with a high black voting age population (BVAP). Additionally, this plan reduces the split precincts from 537 to 172. This makes more counties whole and takes the number from five whole counties under the benchmark plan in 2002 to 13 whole counties under the 2012 plan. There will be five groups of incumbents paired to run against each other should this plan be adopted: District 34 Rep. Horan (D)/Rep. Whittington (D); District 30 Rep. Taylor (R)/Rep. Robert Huddleston (D); District 48 Rep. Malone (D)/Rep. White (D); District 64 Rep. Cecil Brown (D)/Rep. Denny (R); and in District 79 Rep. Stringer (D)/Rep. Eaton (D).

Lat Friday, the maps were unveiled to the Joint Reapportionment Committee, meeting the requirement of introduction at least 15 days before Sine Die (the last day of the Session). The issue of redistricting was brought to the House floor for discussion on Thursday. Opponents encouraged members not to support the resolution so they could have time to review the district maps and make amendments. They believe many flaws exist in this plan including the reduction of the voice of rural Democrats in the state and the tendency for the districts to be "packed." A packed district refers to the percentage of African Americans in a single district being too high. Supporters of the resolution believe this plan is fair and balanced, reflecting population shifts and preserving black majority districts. After lengthy debate, House members voted to pass Joint Resolution 1 by a vote of 70-49.

Also this week, conference members were assigned to bills the Senate and House members did not agree or "concur" on changes that the other chamber made to a bill. Conferees from the House and Senate began meeting to work on bill language, in hopes of reaching an agreement.



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The deadline to file conference reports on Appropriations and Revenue bills falls this weekend, April 28-29. Conferees must file reports, or final versions, before 8 p.m. Saturday, April 28. Monday, April 30, is the deadline for adoption of those conference reports filed.

Bills where both chambers concurred with the changes were sent to the Governor's desk. So far in the 2012 Legislative Session, Governor Bryant has signed 114 House Bills into law. Some of these signed bills originating in the House include:

- House Bill 423: determines that drug task forces shall collect prescription drugs from residential sources for disposal by Narcotics Bureau
- House Bill 484: enacts Judicial pay raise
- House Bill 585: revises the boundaries of county supervisor districts when changes to such can be effective
- House Bill 960: revises the Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act
- House Bill 1380: requires all physicians performing in an abortion clinic to have admitting privileges at a local hospital
- House Bill 1410: enacts uniform mitigation standards for insurance for homeowners
- House Bill 1452: requires State agencies to make their annual report available on the agency's official web site

On Thursday, House members voted to concur with the minor changes Senate members made to House Bill 921 (HB921), the Voter Identification Law. The motion to concur passed by a vote of 79-39. HB921 will be enrolled and sent to the Governor's desk.

Visitors to the Capitol this week included: Miss Rodeo Mississippi 2012 Samantha Golden was congratulated and commended on her achievements; the Florence High School Girls' Soccer Team and the Florence High School Football team that both had outstanding 2011-2012 seasons; friends and family of Mrs. Mary Alice Johnson Gandy, who passed away at 106 years of age and voted for the first time in the 2008 election; the East Tallahatchie School District members who were recognized for being the "Most Improved District;" the Bay St. Louis High School Boys' and Girls' Soccer Teams were recognized for their outstanding 2011-2012 seasons; the Bay St. Louis High Steppers were also recognized for winning the Mississippi High School Activities Association Class 4A State Dance Championship; the Amanda Elzy High School Boys' Basketball



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Team and Head Coach Gerald Glass were recognized for their outstanding 2011-2012 season and winning the Mississippi High School Activities Association Class 4A Boys Basketball Championship Title; the Mississippi Valley State University Women's Basketball Team and Head Coach Nate Kilbert were recognized for winning the Southwestern Athletic Conference Tournament Championship; the Mississippi Valley State University Men's Basketball Team and Head Coach Sean Woods were also commended for receiving the regular season Southwestern Athletic Conference Championship Title and upon completing a remarkable season.