



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of February 4, 2013

During the first part of the week, House members were devoted to addressing bills in committee in anticipation of Tuesday's 8 p.m. deadline to move all general bills and constitutional amendments out of committee and onto the House Calendar. Bills not reported out of committee by that deadline are dead for the Session.

By deadline on Tuesday, 77 percent of the measures submitted by members had been killed. Of the 1,470 measures introduced, 341 survived and made it to the House Calendar. The latter half of this week, House members began addressing those bills on the General and Noncontroversial Calendars. They took up 88 bills on the Noncontroversial Calendar.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee met this week and held a budget hearing for the Mississippi Department of Education. The department outlined their three goals: 1. To mobilize resources and supports to help ensure that all students exit Third Grade reading on grade level by 2015; 2. To reduce the dropout rate to 13 percent by 2015; and 3. To have 60 percent of students scoring proficient and advanced on the assessments of the Common Core State Standards by 2016 with incremental increases of three percent each year thereafter. Additionally, the department members requested full funding for the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), restoration of diverted funds that include the Teacher Supply Funds and the Public School Building Funds, and \$2.5 million for the Early Childhood Education Pilot Programs.

The House Judiciary B Committee members passed several bills out of committee on Tuesday. Some of the issues covered in the bills were human trafficking, protection of firearms, parental rights, DUI ignition locks, trespassing and domestic violence. These bills will now be added to the House Calendar and will be revisited next week.

Transportation Committee members also voted on and passed [House Bill 1344](#) (HB 1344) to the calendar where it will be addressed at a later date. This bill revises laws regarding the scrapping and dismantling of motor vehicles. Enactment of this measure creates refinements to the process by which an automobile is sold to a scrap metal or used parts recycler. This bill will provide penalties for buyers and sellers who do not follow the prescribed procedures. It also includes a reporting requirement to help local law enforcement investigate and prosecute violators by creating a database to track vehicles that have been scrapped.

On the floor, House members passed [House Bill 463](#) (HB 463) that authorizes the United States flag to be flown at half-staff when a member of the Armed Forces dies on active duty. The vote was held on a motion.



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Members unanimously voted 119-0 to pass [House Bill 1049](#) (HB 1049) that removes almost \$200 million in bonds that have been authorized through the years but not used. Some of them even date back more than 40 years and affect the state's credit. If enacted, this measure would remove them and clean up some of Mississippi's authorizations.

[House Bill 376](#) (HB376) passed by a vote of 115-5. If enacted, this measure would permit the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) to increase the speed limit on interstates from 70 mph to 75 mph.

This week members mourned the loss of colleague and friend Rep. Joe Gardner (D-Batesville) who died unexpectedly on February 4. Rep. Gardner began serving in the Mississippi House of Representatives in 2007 and was remembered by many for his kind and gentle spirit. He served as Chairman of the House Ethics Committee and was also a member of the Agriculture, Conservation and Water Resources, Education, Military Affairs, and Municipalities Committees, along with the Special Committee on Railway Development. Governor Phil Bryant has 30 days from the vacancy to set a date for the special election to fill Gardner's District 11 (Panola and Tate Counties) seat. At least 40 days notice of the election must be provided, with the qualifying deadline being 30 days before the day of the election. Members also grieved with Rep. Mark Formby over the tragic death of his five-year-old niece, Ella Formby, who passed away this week as well.

Visitors to the Capitol this week included: Alcorn State University representatives and alumni who were on hand to celebrate their National Alumni Day at the Capitol. The university's tennis team was also recognized with [House Resolution 20](#) (HR 20) commending them on their achievements through the years. Olympian Bianca Knight visited and was honored with [House Concurrent Resolution 19](#) (HCR 19) that commended her on her achievements at the 2012 London Olympic Games, where she won a gold medal as part of the American 4x100 meters relay team. Fellow Olympian Brittney Reese's mother, Carla Young, received [House Concurrent Resolution 27](#) (HCR 27) on her behalf that commended Reese on her achievements at the 2012 London Olympic Games, where she won a gold medal in the long jump.