



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of January 14, 2013

This week members mourned the loss of colleague and friend Rep. David Gibbs (D-West Point) who died on January 13. Rep. Gibbs began serving in the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1993 and was remembered by many for his quiet leadership. He served as a member of the Agriculture, Appropriations, County Affairs, Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) and Youth and Family Affairs Committees. Governor Phil Bryant has 30 days from the vacancy to set a date for the special election to fill Gibbs' District 36 (Clay, Lowndes and Monroe 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.

This week members of the Appropriations Committee heard from numerous state agencies that came forward to submit their funding requests for Fiscal Year (FY) 14. The Mississippi State Personnel Board was among the agencies that prepared presentations for the committee. The group shared interesting facts about our state employees. The state has 89,893 full-time employees as of June 30, 2012. The average service time is 10 years. Sixty-one percent of employees have served 10 years or less, and their average age is 45. The workforce statistics are representative of a diverse makeup: 61 percent are female, and 39 percent are male. The racial makeup is approximately 50 percent African American, 49% Caucasian and one percent all other races. The average salary of our state employees is \$34,259, and 61 percent of our employees make less than that.

The House and Senate Appropriations committees heard a presentation on "Results First" performance based budgeting presented by the PEW Center. With the leadership of both House and Senate embracing the concept, Mississippi has become the latest of 13 states to participate in "Results First," which originally was developed in Washington State. If implemented, Mississippi budgeters will have a much clearer understanding of which programs work, and which don't, thereby allowing for better choices when appropriating limited resources.

Legislators received a State Budget briefing from State Economist Darrin Webb and Treasurer Lynn Fitch on Thursday. Webb confirmed that the US economy is growing but lacks momentum, with housing and vehicle sales being the bright spots.



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Speaker Philip Gunn hosted a press conference this week regarding protection of Mississippians' Second Amendment rights. He was joined by Governor Phil Bryant and a bipartisan group of House members who vowed to support citizens' Constitutional rights to protect themselves.

The Democratic Caucus held a press conference this week to address concerns about the Mississippi Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). Democratic members voiced opposition to making any changes in the current system.

With the 8:00 p.m. deadline to request general bills and constitutional amendments on January 16, another deadline quickly approaches. Monday, January 21, marks the deadline to introduce those measures. This is an especially busy time for the Legislative Services staff members who provide the invaluable service of drafting what will be nearly 2,000 bills to be introduced in the House this session.