



**Mississippi House of Representatives  
Weekly Summary**

**Week of January 21, 2013**

On Tuesday morning, the House Education Committee met to discuss House Bill 369 (HB369) or the “Mississippi Public Charter Schools Act of 2013.” Last year, a similar bill was introduced and did not make it out of committee during conference week.

HB369 declares that a charter school is a non-profit, public school that is designed to foster innovation and increase community involvement in the education of community children. If enacted, the bill would establish a new authorizing board comprised of seven members (three appointed by the Governor; three appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and one appointed by the Department of Education). The proposed bill allows for charter schools in all districts, giving local school boards in A, B and C rated districts veto power. It caps the number of charter schools per year to 15. Under this bill, 75 percent of teachers would be required to be licensed or certified by the state.

Additionally, no extra cost to taxpayers is expected. If a student leaves an existing school to attend a charter school, the money allotted to them would follow the student to the new school. At the end of a five-year contract if a charter school is failing, it automatically closes. The full Education Committee passed HB369 by a vote of 16-14. The bill then moved to the House floor where it was debated for 10 hours. Eighteen amendments were filed with only one passing. The bill passed on a bipartisan vote of 64-55 and was held on a motion to reconsider.

House Members also voted to pass House Bill 610 (HB610) by a vote of 118-2. If enacted, the bill would issue a \$31 million bond to the University of Mississippi Medical Center to construct a new School of Medicine. Lawmakers hope the endorsement of HB610 will eliminate the doctor shortage in Mississippi by expanding the school’s capacity and thereby increasing the number of students who graduate.

The Southern States Energy Board (comprised of 16 states), along with House Energy Chairman Rep. Angela Cockerham and House Energy Vice-Chairman Rep. Gary Staples, hosted a briefing to discuss their findings from recent tours of CanmetENERGY, University of Alberta, Canada, and the Alberta Energy Office. The group also addressed methods to develop the Oil Sands



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resources in Alabama and Mississippi. This opens a new door for energy development production in Mississippi.

Governor Phil Bryant also delivered his second State of the State address during a joint session of the Legislature in the House Chamber Tuesday evening. In his speech, he outlined his priorities for the 2013 Legislative Session and covered current issues important to Mississippians. He called for numerous education and health care improvements, job growth and additional economic developments, and the importance of a responsible budget.

Members of the Appropriations Committee continued to hear from numerous state agencies that came forward to submit their funding requests for Fiscal Year (FY) 14.

Visitors to the Capitol this week included the Lanier High School National Championship Boys Basketball Team (1964-1965). They were presented with House Concurrent Resolution 33 that commended and congratulated them upon their induction into the MS Sports Hall of Fame. On the day they won the championship in Montgomery, Ala., the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led his march of 25,000 civil rights demonstrators from Selma, Ala., to Montgomery.

To recognize the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Roe v. Wade on Tuesday, several anti-abortion groups held press conferences and rallies at the Capitol. Proponents of Roe v. Wade gathered in front of the state's only abortion clinic on State Street in Jackson to show their support.

Additionally this week, Alabama Speaker of the House Mike Hubbard visited the Capitol with members of his staff. They happened to be on-hand to celebrate the annual NASA Stennis Space Center Day at the Capitol. Colonel George Zamka, a test pilot and NASA astronaut, briefly addressed House members.