



## Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

**Week of March 18, 2013**

House members passed a variety of bills this week in advance of deadlines coming up in the last few weeks of the 2013 Legislative Session. Most of the bills were before the House for concurrence or non-concurrence. If the House voted to concur with Senate amendments, the bill was sent directly to Governor Bryant to sign into law. However if the decision was not to concur but to invite conference, the bill is sent to a conference committee of three members each from the House and Senate.

On the House floor Monday, members addressed [Senate Bill 2907](#) (SB2907), a strike-all amendment that includes language from [House Bill 1698](#) (HB1698). This measure would incentivize oil companies and drillers to expand operations in southwest Mississippi relative to the Tuscaloosa Marine Shale Project. Horizontally drilled wells, a rare and complicated form of drilling used for this project, require special knowledge and equipment to produce oil. This bill reduces the rate of severance tax to 1.5 percent for the first two years on oil and gas produced from these wells. Supporters believe this will be an economic boom for southwest Mississippi much like North Dakota has experienced where unemployment rates are at an all-time low, and sales tax revenues are at an all-time high. Opponents contend this work will be done at the taxpayers' expense in the name of economic development, and that incentives offered will take money away from the counties. The bill passed 76-39 and will head to conference where the committee members will work out the differences in the bill's language.

Some of the bills to which the House concurred with Senate changes include:

--[House Bill 1002](#) (HB1002), which revises the manner of issuance for commercial fishing licenses for resident and non-resident fisherman. The motion to concur passed by a vote of 114-1.

--[House Bill 1139](#) (HB1139) allows hunters to use a weapon of choice for deer hunting on private land after November 30, 2014.

--[House Bill 879](#) (HB879) permits parents or legal guardians of students of military personnel to choose a school or school district of enrollment. The House's motion to concur passed by a vote of 116-0.

For those bills going to conference, the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor each assign conferees from their respective Chambers who will work together to reach an agreement on the language of the bills. Once the conference committee members agree on the language,



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the bills are taken back to each chamber and voted to either pass or recommit the report for further conference.

A few of the bills House members sent to conference this week include:

--[House Bill 716](#) (HB716) requires school district consolidation in certain school districts.

--[House Bill 369](#) (HB369) creates the Mississippi Charter Schools Act. The main difference between the House and Senate version of the bill is the Senate version removes a local school board's authority to deny establishment of a charter school in a C-rated district beginning in 2016.

--[House Bill 955](#) (HB955) establishes the Reading Proficiency Program in public schools to achieve grade level reading by the end of third grade.

--[House Bill 1009](#) (HB1009) authorizes the Department of Human Services to contract with outside vendors to improve the child support program.

Thursday, the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) led by the Speaker of the House Philip Gunn met to adopt revisions to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 General Fund Revenue Estimate and the FY2014 General Fund Revenue Estimate. Committee members voted against the effort to adopt the revisions to FY2013, which was \$60.1 million more than the November revised estimate. Committee members then voted to adopt the changes to FY2014 for a total of \$5.08 billion, which is \$97.6 million more than the November estimate.

The deadline to file conference reports on Appropriation and Revenue bills falls on Saturday, March 30. House members voted to invite conference on all 53 House Appropriations bills addressed this week. In addition to language differences between the House and Senate versions of FY2013 appropriations, there is also a \$6.9 million difference between the two chambers. Once conferees are named, the conference committee will then meet. Next week, conferees will come to an agreement and file reports by Saturday night, March 30. House members will then take those bills up starting Sunday afternoon, March 31. On Monday, April 1, members will have to adopt all conference reports filed. These decisions affect how much each state agency will receive in state funds.

Visitors to the Capitol this week included Dr. John Hilpert, Delta State University's seventh president. House and Senate members honored his 10 years of dedicated service with [Senate Concurrent Resolution 590](#) (SCR590). G. C. Cameron of "The Spinners" fame also visited House members this week.