



## Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

**Week of February 24, 2014**

This week, House members raced the clock to meet Wednesday's deadline for original floor action on Appropriation and Revenue bills originating in the House, and Thursday's deadline of reconsideration on Appropriation and Revenue bills originating in the House. House members also began addressing Senate bills this week.

Several bills authorizing tax credits to different groups emerged from the Ways and Means Committee this week onto the House calendar. [House Bill 260](#) (HB260) exempts finance charges from sales tax and use tax. Passage of this legislation would ensure that someone who has a finance or carrying charge would not incur a sales tax charge on products purchased that have been carried over on the statement. The bill passed by a vote of 116-0.

--[House Bill 1404](#) (HB1404) offers a sales tax exemption on the sale of firearms, ammunition and hunting supplies during the Second Amendment Weekend holiday, beginning the first Friday in September. This will cost the General Fund approximately \$375,000 year. It passed by a vote of 86-27.

--[House Bill 1552](#) (HB1552) exempts law enforcement officers wounded or injured while performing their official duties from paying ad valorem tax on one motor vehicle owned by that officer. In order to qualify for the exemption, the officer must have received medical treatment for his/her injury. The bill unanimously passed the House.

--[House Bill 784](#) (HB784) authorizes an income tax credit for costs paid by business enterprises to expand and relocate its employees to Mississippi. If a business expands and meets certain established criteria, the business will receive a tax credit for some relocation costs up to \$1 million statewide. HB784 passed by a vote of 111-6. Similarly, [House Bill 785](#) (HB785) offers a sales tax exemption and an income tax credit to companies moving its headquarters to Mississippi. They must create at least 20 jobs to qualify. HB785 passed the House floor by a vote of 109-8. An amendment offered on both bills to certify that these companies are in compliance with the Fair Pay Act passed.

In 2012, Governor Bryant signed into law the "Mississippi Health Care Industry Zone Act," which provides certain tax incentives for qualified businesses located within certain hospitals or medical zones. The law gives Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) permission to designate areas in counties as a Health Care Industry Zone if they meet certain criteria. Special incentives encourage health-related businesses to locate in or relocate to these areas. On the House floor this week, members passed [House Bill 1582](#) (HB1582), complimenting that law. HB1582 or the "Mississippi Healthcare Industry Zone Master Plan" will provide incentives for certain healthcare facilities within these zones. MDA will be provided a small amount of bonding capacity to assist with specific projects in healthcare zones. A special diversion of \$50,000 a month would be set aside for a healthcare job



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training fund to be administered by MDA. The training will be provided by universities and community colleges. No state General Fund dollars will be used. Local sources will issue and pay for the bonds. HB1582 passed by a vote of 117-0.

In an effort to repair and renovate the Mississippi Coliseum and construct a new Trade Mart, members voted to pass [House Bill 1608](#) (HB1608). The bill states that bonding is limited to \$55 million. The entire project is estimated to cost a little more than \$47 million. No more than \$27 million can be expended in any year. The bill passed by a vote of 117-3.

Regarding lien rights, [Senate Bill 2622](#) (SB2622) provides lien rights to subcontractors. The change comes as a result of a Fifth Circuit Court striking down the stop pay notice. The bill passed by a vote of 114-1.

House and Senate Education Committee members held a joint hearing to discuss [House Bill 765](#) (HB765) and [Senate Bill 2325](#) (SB2325). The bills are identical and create the "Equal Opportunity for All Students with Special Needs Act" for the purpose of establishing Individualized Education Funds (IEFs) for parents of eligible students with special needs. Both bills passed their respective Chambers in mid-February and establish the act as a pilot program limited to 500 children. Should this legislation become law, each student's IEF would be funded at \$6,000. The money would then be deposited into a special account on a quarterly basis and managed by the parents or legal guardian. The parents or legal guardian of the student would have the ability to customize educational services such as tuition, tutoring, therapy, and assisting technologies. The Department of Education would conduct audits to review purchases, and PEER would conduct a bi-annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Supporters of this legislation believe this is an intervention effort for specific groups whose needs are not being met in the current public education system. Opponents argue that giving public money to private entities is unconstitutional. They further contend that the \$6,000 given to these children for this program every year exceeds the amount of money MAEP pays per pupil.

Approximately 100 off-duty active Mississippi High Patrol (MHP) Troopers gathered at the Capitol Wednesday for MHP Trooper Day. They held a press conference urging legislators to support funding for a new trooper school. The last trooper school was funded in 2011. MHP is roughly 150 troopers short of their goal to have 600 troopers on the road. Another 130 troopers are eligible for retirement. The Department of Public Safety estimates a one-time cost of \$6.9 million is needed to support the school, which would graduate around 60 new troopers, equip them and pay their salaries for the first six months.