



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of January 5, 2015

On January 6, 2015, the 130th Mississippi State Legislature kicked off the last session in the four-year term.

Cold temperatures aside, members arrived at the State Capitol with warm smiles and familiar handshakes as they prepared for their first week of the 2015 Regular Session. A spark of excitement filled the air as the week began.

This year is an election year, and the deadline to qualify for election or re-election falls within the 90-day session. The deadline to file is February 27 at 5:00 p.m. As a result of the upcoming 2015 elections, many people question what issues will be addressed during session. Some people believe election year sessions avoid addressing serious issues. Many others believe that this election year, members will tackle challenging issues just as they have the last few years.

The Joint Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) and the Legislative Budget Office (LBO) provided an overview of performance budgeting to House and Senate Appropriations Committee members this week. Performance budgeting is a practice that involves allocating dollars to programs/agencies based on the results and efficiency of their use of those dollars. With the passage of the Mississippi Performance Budget and Strategic Planning Act of 1994, the Legislature approved performance budgeting. Since then, the method has been revitalized to understand the goals of a more efficient, effective, transparent and accountable state government. The budget for Fiscal Year 16 (FY16) will be the next step in implementation for performance budgeting.

Staff members of LBO also presented an overview of the FY16 budget recommendation to House members during an Appropriations Committee meeting. They provided a summary of the most recent decisions made by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) in its December meeting. The FY16 budget recommendation aims to provide adequate funding of critical state operations; build a budget utilizing only recurring funds and maintain the working cash stabilization reserve and the capital expense fund.



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Construction continues on the Capitol this year. Many areas are blocked off in the Capitol for safety. This will affect gathering areas for people and the location of press conferences this year.

Several groups visited the Capitol this week. Jackson Mayor Tony Yarber welcomed legislators back to Jackson. The Mississippi Economic Council's Capital Day was held in downtown Jackson and at the Capitol. This annual event provides a setting for business leaders around the state to gather and meet with legislators and hear from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House and other legislative leaders about the legislative agenda expected in the upcoming session. Elvis' 80th birthday was celebrated at the Capitol Thursday. Peanut butter and banana sandwiches were available for the enjoyment of visitors.