



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of March 2, 2015

This week, members mourned the loss of friend and colleague former Speaker of the House Tim Ford who died on February 27. Speaker Ford presided over the House for 16 years. He began serving the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1980. He was then elected Speaker in 1988, where he served until 2004. Speaker Ford was remembered by House members during a memorial service held in the House chamber on Thursday afternoon. Members adopted [House Concurrent Resolution 82](#) (HCR82) commending his life and public service.

On Tuesday, deadline day to move all general bills received from the Senate out of committee and onto the House Calendar, the majority of House committees met and worked hard to clear their committee agendas of any bills.

Wednesday and Thursday, members covered a lot of ground on the House floor as they addressed numerous Senate bills, many mirroring previous House bills. A large number of the Senate bills that passed adopted the “Strike-All Amendment” put in place by House members. When a “Strike-All Amendment” is adopted, the House language (often called a companion bill) is inserted into the Senate version of the bill. In most instances, the language between the two chambers is identical, except for minor changes. However in other instances, the nature of the bill is changed more dramatically. In either case, the bill goes to “conference,” whereas three members from each chamber meet to reach a compromise on the wording of the bill.

Some of those bills where the Strike All was taken up include:

[Senate Bill 2804](#) (SB2804) exempts the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Central Office from under the State Personnel Board (SPB) for one year. Before any changes can be made, the MDOC Commissioner must consult with the Attorney General’s office. Supporters of the bill believe this effort will assist in the restructuring of the Central Office. Opponents argue that removing state agencies from under the SPB compromises accountability. They believe oversight is important. The bill passed by a vote of 82-37.

[Senate Bill 2071](#) (SB2071) provides consistency in procedures for the seizure and disposal of light wine and beer in both wet and dry counties. The bill passed by a vote of 114-5.

[Senate Bill 2581](#) (SB2581) requires insurance companies to offer autism coverage for children ages 2-8. However, employers with less than 100 employees will have the option of passing along the increased insurance premium cost (due to the inclusion of covering autism) on to the employees. Should that



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option be pursued, those employees could expect an estimated insurance cost increase of \$0.32 a month. The bill passed unanimously.