



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of February 1, 2016

On the first day of the 2016 Session, members voted to change the makeup of the House Management and Rules committees.

For years, the Management committee was comprised of two members from each of the five Congressional districts. With Mississippi actually having four districts, House members voted to change the makeup of Management to accurately reflect the current Congressional district number. This week, Management and Rules met with all members of each of the four districts to review basic housekeeping issues.

With the naming of House committees at the end of last week, the first part of this week was devoted to committee organization. Rules; Appropriations; Accountability, Efficiency and Transparency; Ways and Means; Education; Insurance; Public Property; Public Utilities; Transportation and Youth and Family Affairs all met to welcome new committee members and provide overviews of each committee's responsibilities and rules. The remaining committees will meet in the coming days to organize for the term.

Inclement weather was a concern again for many members this week. Tornadoes and flooding damaged areas in the counties of Copiah, Franklin, Kemper, Lauderdale, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Rankin, Simpson and Scott.

Darrin Webb, the State Economist, met with Appropriations members to provide the latest economic outlook for Mississippi. He said the state's economy is growing, but at a slower pace than the rest of the country.

The Legislative Budget Office (LBO) also presented highlights of the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) budget to the Appropriations committee. LBO members emphasized that in FY17, there are no across-the-board budget cuts; only recurring funds are being used to support recurring expenditures; the continued suspension of the two percent set aside and a remaining amount of \$393 million in the Working Cash Stabilization Reserve Fund.

Wednesday, Speaker of the House Philip Gunn and Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves both adjourned their respective chambers until Monday due to Governor Bryant calling an



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extraordinary, or special session, to occur on Thursday. A special session is a meeting of legislative bodies outside of the normal, regular session. It typically expedites the legislative process to focus on one particular issue.

Therefore, on Thursday, members discussed a bill related to two economic development projects.

“Project Potter,” involving a tire production company, would be a \$1.45 billion company investment, bringing 2,500 jobs to the Central Mississippi area. This project has been in the works since 2014. “Project Crawfish” would be a \$68 million company investment by a privately-held global maritime company based in Louisiana, slated to bring 1,000 jobs to the Port of Gulfport.

Incentives for both projects include provisions for workforce development training and infrastructure improvements. Both companies plan to hire locally and utilize Mississippi contractors for at least 70 percent of construction.

The House passed the bill by a vote of 118-3, making it the largest job creation bill in the state’s history. The Senate subsequently passed the bill without making any changes, and the Governor is expected to sign it into law.

Monday, February 8, marks the deadline for the “introduction of general bills and constitutional amendments.” To “introduce a bill,” a member submits the legislation to the Clerk’s Office, the drop box on the House floor or to the Speaker’s Office. Once bills have been introduced, they are referred to committees. Members and staff spent many hours drafting legislation and introducing bills.

Over the next few weeks, members will focus their attention on meeting the February 23 deadline to report bills out of committee. Committee members discuss the bills and decide to either pass them to the House floor or to oppose them, essentially “killing” them. If a bill does not make it out of a committee, it will not make it to the House calendar.