



## Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of February 22, 2016

Monday and Tuesday, members were in and out of committee meetings all day as they prepared for the February 23, 8 p.m. deadline.

By deadline on Tuesday, 1,492 House measures had been filed, with only 271 surviving and making their way onto the House Calendar. Eighty-two percent of those bills filed are dead for this legislative year. Some pieces of legislation do, however, have companion bills on the Senate side. Some issues that appear dead on the House side, may, in fact, still be alive in the Senate.

### **Committee activity:**

[House Bill 1151](#) in the Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Committee passed and will raise current All Gaming license fees from \$17 to \$25. The fees were last changed in 1994. The additional money will go toward hiring more conservation officers, biologists and making general improvements.

[House Bill 958](#) prohibits school employees from engaging in political activity while in their official capacity.

[House Bill 938](#) requires parents to present a letter from a physician for their child to be exempt from required vaccinations for medical reasons. Such an exemption would override the county health officer.

[House Bill 1223](#) authorizes in the coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison and Jackson, the ability to establish a special entertainment district, a Leisure and Recreation District. After going through a public hearing, an adoption as a city ordinance, then submission and subsequent approval of a map to the Alcohol Beverage Control group, ABC permit holders may serve all permitted beverages in an outdoor environment so long as it is within the boundaries of the district.

### **Floor activity:**

With numerous requests for bills to be read in their entirety, the pace of the House this week was much slower than normal. As of Friday, 218 bills remain on the House Calendar. The next deadline is Thursday, March 3. If bills are not passed from the House floor by this deadline, they die for the session.



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[House Bill 880](#) allows members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) to become vested in four years. Currently, it takes eight years before a state employee can be vested. PERS is the 68<sup>th</sup> largest pension plan in the United States, with \$25.4 billion in assets.

[House Bill 868](#) revises the boundaries of Supreme Court Districts. Supporters of the bill believe that by moving Simpson County from the Southern District into the Central District, all three districts will now be more balanced from a population and racial standpoint. Opponents believe this bill unfairly tilts the Central District to a certain political and racial makeup. The bill passed by a vote of 71-50.

[House Bill 14](#) imposes a three-year moratorium on salary increases for all school superintendents. Enactment of this measure would exempt A and B districts, districts in pilot programs. Supporters of the bill believe that this will incentivize superintendents to encourage academic success. This measure gives the Department of Education oversight and accountability of what takes place in each district. Opponents argue this bill would limit a district's ability to hire superintendents due to the salary cap. They fear they will not be able to attract the best and brightest. They also believe this would permit the Legislature to micromanage local school districts. After a request was made to read the bill, which took close to six hours, the bill passed by a vote of 84-38.