



Week of January 23, 2017

Committees met frequently during the fourth week of the 2017 legislative session, as next Tuesday's deadline to have House Bills out of their corresponding committees quickly approaches.

After Tuesday, Jan. 31, no additional bills will be added to the House calendar for consideration, and members of the House will begin meeting as a whole for longer hours to discuss the bills that made it out of committees.

While most work was done in committee meetings this week, a few bills were introduced to the House floor on Tuesday and Wednesday for discussion.

[House Bill 555](#), which initially failed last week by a vote of 58-60, was reintroduced to the floor after a motion to reconsider kept the bill on the calendar. This time the legislation passed by another close vote of 63-56. If enacted, the law would require a three-member committee – consisting of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State – to approve the Attorney General's use of outside attorneys in high stakes legal cases.

Members of the House Drug Policy Committee introduced [House Bill 515](#) to the floor. This law would enhance the penalty for the illegal sale of controlled substances within close proximity to drug or alcohol rehabilitation facilities. The bill has been set aside for the Speaker to review how this measure might coincide with previous laws on drug penalties, but it should come up again for a vote within the next week.

The House voted unanimously in favor of [House Bill 680](#), which would rename the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Building in Jackson as the "Patrick Alan Nunnelee Building" in honor of the late Mississippi Congressman.

A number of bills were introduced regarding the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration. These bills aim to clarify and update inventory of state real properties, authorize the sale of certain state owned real property, and require a report on the department's monetary needs.

Among the groups visiting the Capitol this week were members of the Mississippi Optometric Association, the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the Mississippi Tourism Association, the Mississippi Nurses Association and the National Guard Association of Mississippi.