



Week of March 6, 2017

Wednesday of this week marked the deadline for the House to discuss general bills that passed through the Senate earlier this session. The deadline to discuss appropriations and revenue bills passed by the Senate will occur next week.

On Monday, the House passed [Senate Bill 2680](#), which clarifies alternative relatives that may care for a child who is being abused or neglected. An amendment was adopted regarding a current divorce statute, making it easier for someone experiencing domestic violence to receive a divorce. The amendment says divorce would be allowed for people experiencing abusive physical conduct, either threatened or attempted, or abusive non-physical conduct including threats, intimidation, emotional or verbal abuse. The measure also allows for a victim to serve as the witness of the abuse. The bill passed unopposed.

On Tuesday, the House passed [Senate Bill 2710](#), which will prohibit the adoption or enactment of sanctuary cities. A sanctuary city is loosely defined as a city that welcomes refugees and illegal immigrants. Supporters of the bill say this is an extra measure of safety for Mississippi residents. Those opposed say this legislation is unnecessary. The bill passed by a vote of 76-41.

A bill meant to give a tax exemption to private entities providing affordable housing for university students sparked discussion at the proposal of an amendment. An amendment added to [Senate Bill 2509](#) would require schools to fly the state flag on their campus to receive this benefit. Proponents of the amendment said state schools should be flying the flag if they want to receive state money. Opponents said the flag is divisive and should not be forced on the schools. The bill passed by a vote of 77-42, but is being held on a motion to reconsider.

Another attempt to provide money for roads and bridges passed in the form of [Senate Bill 2939](#). Legislators offered an amendment to the tax bill that would provide \$50 million in bonds for bridge repairs and allocate use tax to the Mississippi Department of Transportation, counties and municipalities for infrastructure repair. The bill also states that in the event use tax from out-of-state sellers becomes federal law or the state experiences revenue growth, a certain percentage will be set aside for road and bridge improvements. The bill passed by a majority vote of 109-7.

These bills will all be sent back to the Senate, and if approved they will be sent to the governor to be signed into law.

The House also concurred with several bills sent back from the Senate, such as an anti-bullying bill and a bill supporting the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center.

Several groups visited the Capitol this week including the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, Mississippi Valley State University, the Veteran Affairs Board and the Mississippi Federation of Republican Women.