



The Mississippi Legislature convened on Monday, June 5, for a special session called by Governor Phil Bryant after the 2017 regular legislative session concluded in March.

The special session was necessary after appropriations for the Attorney General's office, the Mississippi Department of Transportation and State Aid Roads were not agreed upon during the regular session.

In addition to deciding on budgets for these entities, the Governor also called for legislators to vote on the creation of the Financial and Operational Responses that Invigorate Future Years (FORTIFY) Act and make clarifications to the Budget Transparency and Simplification Act.

The House voted first on [House Bill 2](#), which detailed appropriations for MDOT. House members removed many projects from the original bill crafted by the Senate that representatives believed would give MDOT more control over how they could spend their money. The House also passed a budget for the Attorney General's office, in the form of [House Bill 1](#), and allotted \$175 million to State Aid Road Construction in the form of [Senate Bill 2003](#), without much debate.

Discussion ensued when the FORTIFY Act, [Senate Bill 2002](#), was introduced to the House floor. The Governor included this in the special session in order to help bolster Mississippi's credit rating. The act increases the cap on the Rainy Day Fund from 7.5 percent to 10 percent. It also provides for more unencumbered cash to be directed to the Rainy Day Fund and the Capital Expense Fund, and it stops projected cash balances from being added to the estimate used to formulate the budget. There is also a section that requires the Legislative Budget Office to prepare a multi-year financial plan. The FORTIFY Act passed the House by a vote of 73-41.

Another split occurred at the introduction of [Senate Bill 2001](#), which deposits state agency special funds into the state general fund. This bill addresses approximately \$9.7 million that is located in accounts that agencies do not have the authority to spend. The bill passed the House by a vote of 73-43.

Finally, Governor Bryant added two items to the special session agenda on Monday that passed without much discussion. [House Bill 5](#) authorized the Secretary of State to make payments due to the Point Cadet Leasing Fund, providing Biloxi with its share of the revenue from leases in the Point Cadet commercial development. [House Bill 6](#) appropriated money to the Secretary of State for distribution to local governments where back taxes are owed.

The legislature avoided using additional taxpayer funds by completing the special session in one day. Each of these measures will now be signed into law.