



Week of March 11, 2019

This was the tenth week of the 2019 Legislative Session. Wednesday of this week was the deadline for the House to discuss general Senate bills. Any Senate bills that did not make it off the calendar died. The deadline to discuss Senate appropriations and other revenue bills will occur Tuesday, March 19. Many Senate general bills were discussed and debated, including the following:

[Senate Bill 2770](#) would give teachers and assistant teachers a pay raise for the first time since the last raises were authorized over a two year period beginning in 2014. Initially, the bill stated that salaries would increase \$1,000 to be phased in over two years. During Tuesday's floor action, the House Education Committee introduced the bill with a strike-all amendment with the same \$1,000 raise. Representative Steve Holland (D-Lee) offered an amendment to the strike-all raising the amount of the increase for teachers only from \$1,000 to \$4,000. The increase for assistant teachers remained the same. Rep. Holland and several others stated that the raise is long overdue and just \$500 a year would not be sufficient. A motion to table this amendment was raised because several House members argued that the final numbers of the raise would be decided in conference, along with the rest of the state budget. The motion to table the amendment failed 50-55, and the amendment passed after a voice vote. The final vote for the entire bill was a bipartisan vote of 112-2, and the bill has been returned to the Senate.

Another highly debated bill that had floor action this week was [Senate Bill 2116](#). The bill would prohibit an abortion of an unborn fetus with a detectable heartbeat. If enacted, the law would be one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the United States. The House passed a similar bill earlier this session ([HB 732](#)), but the bill died on the Senate calendar. Senate Bill 2116 passed as amended with a vote of 78-37 and has been returned to the Senate.

[Senate Bill 2716](#) would amend the state's Landlord Tenant Act to remove the grace period tenants who are behind on rent had been given before being evicted. Proponents of the bill argued that landlords are losing money and the elimination of the grace period would make the eviction process smoother. Opponents argued that the bill was unfair to lower income tenants who are already struggling to make ends meet and that the grace period offers them a cushion to figure things out. The bill passed 72-40.

[Senate Bill 2892](#) would allow community hospitals around the state to begin servicing areas that are outside the State of Mississippi. The bill was amended in the House Public Health and Human Services Committee to give further clarification. SB 2892 passed as amended 78-28 and has been returned to the Senate.

The House approved a number of appropriations bills from the Senate this week. These bills are budgets for various state agencies, including the Veterans Affairs Board, the Department of Banking and Consumer Finance, the Board of Veterinary Examiners and the Department of Employment Security. Most of these bills were brought up and voted on in a block to speed the process along. All budgets include reverse repealers, ensuring that a bill will go to a conference committee.

The calendar also included several House bills that were passed earlier in the session, sent to the Senate and are now back before the House. With this process, the representatives will vote on whether to concur with the changes the Senate made, or to invite conference for possible further revisions before becoming law or dying.

Several groups visited legislators at the Capitol this week, including the Mississippi Library Commission, the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Women, Planned Parenthood, the Mississippi Arts Commission and the Hattiesburg and Jackson Zoos.