



Week of January 24, 2022

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

After Tuesday, Feb. 1, no additional general bills will be added to the House calendar for consideration. Members will also meet in session for longer periods to discuss the bills that make it out of their respective committees. Close to 200 House bills have made it out of committee thus far, and this number should increase before the deadline.

One of the bills that reached the House floor this week was [House Bill 1509](#). The bill would prohibit state and local officials from imposing a COVID-19 vaccine mandate. After much debate, HB 1509 passed the House by a vote of 75-41. The bill was then held on a motion to reconsider.

[House Bill 607](#), or Parker's Law, would create the crime of unlawful delivery of a controlled substance that results in death. In the original bill, a person who sells a controlled substance that directly leads to the user's death could be charged with first-degree murder. After the introduction of Parker's Law, a debate ensued regarding controlled substances and the prevalence of fentanyl in these drug-related incidents. An [amendment](#) was brought forth changing all of the mentions of "controlled substances" to "fentanyl," and Amendment 2 passed overwhelmingly by voice vote. HB 607 passed the House by a vote of 102-7 and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

[House Bill 169](#) would add athletic umpires and referees to the list of people for which the act of simple assault is elevated to aggravated assault. Under Mississippi law, simple assault carries a penalty of up to five years in prison and a \$1,000 fine, while a person charged with aggravated assault could face a penalty of one to twenty years in prison and up to a \$5,000 fine. After many questions and debate, HB 169 was laid on the table subject to call and remains on the House calendar.

Many other bills were passed with topics including subpoenas, allowing organ donor indication on hunting and fishing licenses, the correctional system, county affairs and municipalities.

The conference report on [Senate Bill 2095](#) (Mississippi Medical Cannabis Act) was adopted by both the House and Senate this week. The final version of the bill has been sent to Governor Tate Reeves where he can either sign or veto the bill.

The House honored Joe F. Sanderson, Jr., CEO and board chairman of Sanderson Farms, with [House Resolution 9](#). The resolution commends Mr. Sanderson on his 75th birthday and highlights his successful

leadership of his family's company, as well as his philanthropic endeavors. Mr. Sanderson was joined by his wife, Kathy, during the HR presentation.

On Tuesday, Governor Tate Reeves delivered his third State of the State address before a Joint Session of the House and Senate. He discussed several topics important to Mississippians, including education, the economy, crime and the prison system.

Visitors at the Capitol this week included the Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable, the Mississippi Chapter of Americans for Prosperity, the Junior League of Jackson and medical students from both University of Mississippi Medical Center and William Carey University.