



Week of March 21, 2022

This was the twelfth week of the 2022 Legislative Session. At this point in the session, bills have either been sent to the governor to be signed or are being discussed in conference.

Conference on a bill occurs when further discussion is needed to reach the best solution. A conference consists of three representatives and three senators who work together to finalize a bill. More than 225 bills are currently in conference, including those that deal with the state budget. Once a bill is out of conference, it must go to both the House and Senate for a vote before being sent to the governor.

Along with holding conferences all week, the House did meet to discuss and pass local and private bills, suffrage bills and resolutions and to honor special guests. The House also brought up and voted on several conference reports that have already been filed.

On Tuesday, the House took up the conference report on [House Bill 530](#), or the START Act. The almost \$250 million plan includes an average pay raise of \$5,140 for teachers and a \$2,000 pay raise for assistant teachers starting in the 2022-2023 school year. Starting teacher salary will go to \$41,638, which is higher than both the regional and national averages. The plan also includes step increases of at least \$400 annually, a \$1,000 bump every five years and a \$2,500 increase the 25th year. With little debate, the final plan passed the House 117-5, and House Bill 530 has been sent to Governor Reeves for his signature.

On Wednesday, the House presented a conference report of the Mississippi Tax Freedom Act of 2022 ([House Bill 531](#)) to the Senate. As part of the proposal, the state would cut \$100 million of the personal income tax every year until it is eliminated entirely. There is a repealer in the report, which would ensure that the Legislature reauthorize the tax cut after six years. Final details will have to be decided Saturday at 8 p.m., the deadline for conference reports on appropriations and general bills.

The House also took up a bill that would codify the 2011 eminent domain ballot initiative. The original initiative prohibited the state and local governments from taking private property by eminent domain and then reselling to other persons/businesses for a period of ten years. Because the Mississippi Supreme Court struck down the ballot initiative process in May 2021, the language from the eminent domain initiative needed to be added to the Mississippi Code. [Senate Concurrent Resolution 583](#) suspended the rules to allow [House Bill 1769](#) to be introduced. HB 1769 passed the House 119-3.

With only one week left in the 2022 Session, legislators will remain in Jackson to work through the weekend. The deadline for bills to come out of conference and pass in both houses occurs next week. Any bills that are passed will then be sent to the governor to be signed into law.