



Mississippi House of Representatives Weekly Summary

Week of January 7, 2013

On January 8, 2013, the 128th Mississippi State Legislature kicked off the second session in the four-year term.

The opening week of the Legislature brought friendly greetings among the lawmakers. The mood resembled the first of day of school, with legislators hugging one another and shaking hands. On opening day, new member Rep. Bill Kinkade (R-Byhalia) was sworn in to his seat in the Mississippi House of Representatives. Rep. Kinkade fills the vacancy of former Rep. Tommy Woods, who retired last year. Also this week, Brent Powell (R-Brandon) won the January 8 special election to fill the seat vacated by Rep. Kevin McGee. Rep-elect Powell will be sworn in Friday, January 11.

Because this session lasts 90 days, it will proceed at a much faster pace than last year's 125-day session. Deadlines occur much earlier on the calendar. The deadline for requesting a general bill to be drafted is January 16. In anticipation, several House committees met this week to prepare for issues that will be addressed before the session adjourns sine die on Sunday, April 7. Some of those items include reforming education, addressing Medicaid and healthcare exchanges, creating a bond bill and agreeing on the budget. The staff of attorneys in Legislative Services will be working late nights and through the weekend in order to assist members in drafting and introducing bills.

Many members and outside groups noticed several changes to the Capitol since their last visits. In an effort to save money and resources, the Capitol is making a move to go paperless. Lobbyists and outside groups will now be responsible for printing bills themselves or going online for bill access. Bills and other information related to the legislature can be accessed through the newly revamped web site at www.legislature.ms.gov. Security has also been enhanced. Additional metal detectors and law enforcement personnel are set up throughout the Capitol to ensure the safety of members, staff and the public.

Visitors to the Capitol this week included supervisors from all around the state, who were in town for their annual Mississippi Association of Supervisors meeting and reception. The Mississippi Economic Council's Capital Day was also held Thursday in downtown Jackson and at



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the Capitol. This annual event provides a setting for business leaders around the state to gather and meet with legislators and hear from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House about the legislative agenda expected in the upcoming session.