



Week of January 1, 2018

On January 2, 2018, the 132nd Mississippi State Legislature began the third session in its four-year term.

Four new members joined the House of Representatives this past year as a result of special elections. Stacey Wilkes, R-Picayune; Missy McGee, R-Hattiesburg; Cheikh Taylor, D-Starkville and Kevin Ford, R-Vicksburg joined the roster of representatives for the 2018 Legislative Session.

Though it is early in the session, there were a couple of bills passed through committees and introduced on the House floor. All of the bills discussed dealt with the maintenance and repair of roads and bridges, a topic which will likely be heavily discussed this session.

One measure introduced was [House Bill 354](#), which aims to set aside any state revenue growth of more than two percent for the repair and reconstruction of state, county and municipal roads and bridges. This measure passed by a vote of 118-2. Another was [House Bill 357](#), legislation that would authorize the issuance of \$50 million in bonds to cities and counties for bridge improvements. This passed by a vote of 116-4.

Finally, [House Bill 359](#) would prohibit the construction of any new roads that have not already acquired right-of-way. Supporters of the bill say this will help the state maintain the roads it already has before starting any new projects. Those opposed say this could stall economic development. The bill passed by a vote of 71-42. All three bills were held on a motion to reconsider, which means they will be brought up again in the future.

The Speaker also announced new chairmanships of several House Committees:

- Education Chairman: Richard Bennett (District 120, Long Beach)
- Gaming Chairman: Casey Eure (District 116, Saucier)
- Interstate Cooperation Chairman: Tracy Arnold (District 3, Booneville)
- Marine Resources Chairman: Timmy Ladner (District 93, Poplarville)
- Ports Harbors and Airports Chairman: Jeff Guice (District 114, Ocean Springs)
- State Libraries: Greg Haney (District 118, Gulfport)

Since the last legislative session, Mississippi celebrated its 200th year of statehood with the opening of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and Mississippi History Museum in downtown Jackson. Renovations to the Capitol are also wrapping up with the start of the New Year. Visitors are welcome to come to the Capitol City to visit their legislators and witness the legislative process.