



Week of February 18, 2019

With general House Bills out of the way, representatives began working on House Appropriations Bills, which will determine how much money is given to various state agencies.

The House was responsible for looking at the preliminary budgets of about 50 state agencies, including the Departments of Education, Transportation, Health, Medicaid and Human Services. These bills represent half of the state's budget; the other half is currently being considered by the Senate and will be sent to the House for consideration later in the legislative session.

Budgets included reverse repealers, a clause which ensures that a bill cannot become law before going to a conference committee for further revisions. With reverse repealers in place, many appropriations bills were voted on in a block to help speed up the process.

The FY20 budgets for these state agencies were level-funded, meaning they received roughly the same amount as last year, plus increases for retirement contributions and health insurance premiums. These budgets will not be complete until the end of the legislative session when they go to conference committees.

The House Ways and Means committee also took up several bills on the House floor this week.

[House Bill 728](#) would increase the amount of short-term debt that the Department of Finance and Administration may incur to make improvements to the Capitol Complex Improvement District, which encompasses parts of the City of Jackson. The bill passed with a bipartisan vote of 107-8 and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

Under [House Bill 1160](#), bonds would be issued to construct the Mississippi Center for Medically Fragile Children. The center would be an extension of the University of Mississippi Medical Center and Batson Children's Hospital and would be a pediatric long-term care facility. One amendment was offered on the floor during debate to name the facility after Representative Alyce G. Clarke (D-Hinds) because of her interest in the project for several years. The bill passed as amended with a bipartisan vote of 108-4 and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

Next Wednesday, Feb. 27 is the deadline for original floor action on House appropriations and revenue bills. After that, House committees will begin considering bills which passed through the Senate.

On Thursday, the House recognized Terry, Mississippi native Sheena Allen for being named to *Forbes'* 30 under 30 List for 2019. [House Concurrent Resolution 63](#) commended Allen for her work as a social entrepreneur. She is the creator of two successful start-ups: a media tech company called Sheena Allen Apps and a neo-bank called CapWay.

Several groups visited the Capitol this week, including pharmacy students from the University of Mississippi Medical Center and William Carey University, the MS Fire Chiefs and Firefighters Association, Mississippi Public Broadcasting and the Links, Inc.