



## Week of February 19, 2024

This was the eighth week of the 2024 Legislative Session. The deadline for introducing general bills and constitutional amendments was on Monday night.

Next week, committees will meet even more frequently as the Legislature approaches the next deadline. After Tuesday, March 5, no additional bills will be added to the House calendar, and members will meet in session for longer periods to discuss the bills that have made it out of committee. If a bill is not passed out of committee by this deadline, it is considered dead.

Although most work is still happening in committees, the House was busy taking up legislation this week.

[House Bill 922](#) would make the office of county election commissioner nonpartisan. The bill passed the House by a vote of 112-6 before being held on a motion to reconsider.

[House Bill 1035](#) would amend the “Nonpartisan Judicial Election Act” to include justice court judges. The bill passed 106-11 before being held on a motion to reconsider.

[House Bill 438](#) would increase the penalty for shoplifting. Currently, the fine for the first shoplifting conviction is \$1,000, the fine for the second is \$2,500 and the fine for the third is \$3,000. Under HB 438, these would increase to \$1,500, \$3,000 and \$4,000, respectively. The bill passed by a vote of 89-28, and it has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

[House Bill 313](#) would create the Board of Cosmetology and Barbering to regulate their respective professions. There are two separate boards which oversee cosmetologists and barbers, and HB 313 would combine them into one board. The bill passed 115-0 and has been sent to the Senate.

[House Bill 1105](#) would remove the prohibition on using the words “partnership” and “limited partnership” when providing a name for a limited liability company. HB 1105 passed unanimously 120-0 and will now go to the Senate.

Eight Representatives presented bills for the first time before the House:

- Representative Justin Keen (R – Byhalia) presented [House Bill 697](#), or the Mississippi Aviation Safety Act.
- Representative Josh Hawkins (R – Batesville) presented [House Bill 940](#), which would revise publication and bid requirements for Design-Build projects for the Mississippi Transportation Commission.

- Representative Steve Lott (R – Lucedale) presented [House Bill 751](#), which would extend the repealer on the authority of the Commissioner of Public Safety to create a voluntary inspection program of commercial motor vehicles.
- Representative Fabian Nelson (D – Jackson) presented [House Bill 873](#), which would establish the Purple Alert as an additional means to aid the search for missing persons with cognitive disabilities.
- Representative Grace Butler-Washington (D – Jackson) presented [House Bill 1121](#), which would make minor, non-substantive changes regarding the swearing-in of state officers.
- Representative Chuck Blackwell (R – Ellisville) presented [House Bill 1149](#), which would authorize counties to only maintain an electronic format of law books in county courtrooms and public county law libraries.
- Representative Clay Mansell (R – Clinton) presented [House Bill 628](#), which would extend the repealer on the statute granting persons the right to access public records.
- Representative Kimberly Remak (R – Olive Branch) presented [House Bill 653](#), which would extend the expiration date of the moratorium on the application of the trip optimizer system to state agencies.

On Tuesday, the House Medicaid Committee conducted a hearing on the potential impact of Medicaid expansion for Mississippi workers. The House State Affairs Committee also conducted a hearing this week on Mississippi’s Certificate of Need. Both issues greatly impact the state’s health care system.

Last week, the House passed [House Concurrent Resolution 29](#), calling for a joint session of the Legislature to hear the State of the State address from Governor Tate Reeves. The address is scheduled for Monday, February 26 at 5 p.m. and will be held on the south steps of the Capitol, weather permitting.

Visitors this week included the Jackson Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., Mississippi Valley State University, the Department of Child Protective Services, the DuBard School of Language Disorders at USM, the Florence High School Dance Team, the Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, the GRAMMY Museum Mississippi and Delta State University.