



## Week of February 5, 2024

This was the sixth week of the 2024 Legislative Session. House members had a busy week full of committee meetings. The deadline for the introduction of general bills and constitutional amendments is Monday, February 19, so members will remain busy over the next few weeks deciding which drafted bills will make it onto the House floor. This week, several bills were brought out of committee ahead of the deadline.

The Mississippi Prior Authorization Reform Act, or [Senate Bill 2140](#), would regulate how insurance companies can use prior authorization, which is when a doctor or provider must check with a patient's insurance to see if certain non-emergent medications or procedures are covered. The bill would require insurance companies to create a web portal for doctors to submit prior authorization applications. SB 2140 passed by a vote of 115-0 and has been returned to the Senate for concurrence.

[House Bill 777](#) would end the alcohol prohibition as state policy and would automatically legalize the sale of wine and spirits in municipalities with less than 5,000 residents. Currently, cities with more than 5,000 residents in "dry" counties can vote to become a "wet" city. HB 777 would allow these smaller municipalities to opt back into being dry if they place a referendum on their local ballot. The bill passed by a vote of 93-21 and has been sent to the Senate.

[House Bill 331](#) would authorize counties and municipalities to choose not to require construction permits. Proponents of the bill said this would cut down on red tape and give more freedom to residents. Opponents argued that these permits are safeguards that guarantee that the construction work is done correctly. The bill passed 82-29 and will now go to the Senate.

[House Bill 970](#) would extend the date of repealers on the services and managed care provisions of the Mississippi Division of Medicaid. This bill is usually referred to as the "Medicaid Tech" bill, and it outlines the framework for the Division of Medicaid. HB 970 passed by a unanimous vote of 119-0 and has been sent to the Senate.

The House also adopted [House Concurrent Resolution 26](#), which is the Joint Rules for the Legislature. These rules are updated every four years at the start of a new term contain the procedures the Legislature must follow. After adopting [Amendment 2](#), HCR 26 passed 118-0.

Two Representatives presented bills for the first time before the House. Representative Elliot Burch (R – Leakesville) presented [House Bill 295](#), which would authorize the use of electronic search warrant applications and signatures. The bill passed 83-35 before being held on a motion to reconsider. Representative Celeste Hurst (R – Sandhill) presented [House Bill 634](#), which would allow an employing

agency to determine the amount to be paid for a sidearm of a retired or deceased law enforcement officer. HB 295 passed 117-1 and has been sent to the Senate for consideration.

With the Dixie National Rodeo in the Jackson area next week, Miss Rodeo America 2024 Emma Cameron and Miss Dixie National 2024 Emma Watts were recognized by the House for their accomplishments.

Visitors this week included the Mississippi Arts Commission, Leadership Jones County, the Mississippi Court Reporters Association, Mississippi 4-H Officers and Ambassadors, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians.