



Week of January 1, 2024

On January 2, 2024, the Mississippi State Legislature began the first session of the new four-year term. Per the Constitution of the State of Mississippi, the first session of every term is scheduled to last 125 days, as opposed to 90 days. This is to accommodate inaugurations, new committee assignments and procedural matters like choosing parking spaces and offices.

House members took the oath of office on the first day before the election of Speaker of the House and Speaker Pro Tempore. As part of the House Rules, both positions and the House Clerk are elected by the members and are sworn into office on the first day of session. Representative Jason White (R – West) was elected Speaker of the House after previously serving as Speaker Pro Tempore. Former Local and Private Chairman Manly Barton (R – Moss Point) was chosen as Speaker Pro Tempore. Andrew Ketchings was re-elected as House Clerk for his fourth term.

Members also had to elect fellow representatives to serve on both the Management and Rules committees. All members split into the four Mississippi congressional districts and nominate members to serve on these committees. Both committees are comprised of two members from each of the congressional districts, as well as the Speaker and the Pro Tempore.

Speaker Jason White announced several new House committees, including a major change to Appropriations. There will be four new standing committees within Appropriations (Appropriations B, Appropriations C, Appropriations D and Appropriations E), and these will each be comprised of eight members from the main Appropriations Committee. The Chairman of Appropriations will also serve as an ex officio voting member of the four committees. Each committee will be tasked with a portion of the state budget. Other new committees include Business and Commerce, Housing and State Affairs.

Six statewide elected officials were sworn into office by Chief Justice Michael Randolph before a joint session of the House and Senate on Thursday, January 4. The joint session also re-elected Steven Parks as state librarian.

The inauguration ceremony of Governor Tate Reeves is scheduled for next Tuesday, January 9 at 10:30 a.m. before a joint session of the House and Senate.

Early Wednesday morning, officials received a bomb threat to the Capitol, and the building was evacuated. The Mississippi Department of Public Safety conducted a thorough sweep of the premises and gave the all-clear around 11 a.m. A similar threat was made on Thursday morning to the Capitol, Mississippi Supreme Court and some Hinds County buildings. Mississippi was one of several states that received a bomb threat, and the FBI announced these were all hoaxes.

The Capitol was overflowing with guests this week due to inaugurations. Visitors to the Capitol are always welcome to meet with their legislators and witness the legislative process.