Week of February 9, 2026

The sixth week of the 2026 Regular Session has concluded. The House continued advancing major legislation as key floor deadlines approached, taking up measures related to public safety, healthcare, education funding, and disaster response.

During the week, the House considered and passed several significant pieces of legislation, including:

House Bill 424, "Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)" – Authorizes courts to order assisted outpatient treatment as a community-based alternative to inpatient commitment for individuals with serious mental illness. Establishes eligibility standards, required court findings, treatment oversight procedures, and ensures the respondent's right to legal representation.

House Bill 520, "Child Support Enforcement via Gaming Winnings" – Requires the Mississippi Gaming Commission to work with the Department of Human Services to withhold or encumber gaming winnings from individuals with outstanding child support arrears. The bill establishes procedures to secure payments and aligns related statutes to support collection efforts.

House Bill 525, "Mandatory Minimum for Sexual Battery" – Establishes mandatory minimum prison sentences for certain sexual battery convictions, including a minimum of five years for specified first offenses and enhanced penalties for repeat offenders. Courts may issue criminal sexual assault protection orders prohibiting contact with victims, with penalties for violations.

House Bill 538, "Sanctuary Policies" – Expands the prohibition on sanctuary policies, requiring state and local governmental entities, including public colleges and universities, to fully cooperate with federal immigration authorities. Authorizes the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute violations and allows for waiver of sovereign immunity for noncompliance.

House Bill 669, "Direct Shipment of Distilled Spirits" – Authorizes direct sales and shipment of distilled spirits to residents of the state under specified regulations.

House Bill 672, "Sunday Alcohol Sales" – Allows counties, municipalities, tribes, or state agencies in wet areas to permit package retailers to sell alcohol on Sundays between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00

p.m. Retailers are not required to open on Sundays, and all existing restrictions and penalties for alcohol sales remain in effect.

House Bill 1224, "Mississippi Keeping Kids Safe Online Act" – Establishes requirements for online platforms to enhance protections for minors and improve parental oversight tools.

House Bill 1310, "Mississippi Open to Religion Act" – Requires public schools and nonsectarian charter schools to offer a daily voluntary period of prayer and Bible or religious text reading. Participation requires written consent and waivers of legal claims, cannot replace instructional time, and may not be broadcast over school systems. The Attorney General may provide guidance and legal defense, and the act does not limit individual prayer or other religious expression.

House Bill 1402, "Colonel Donnell Berry Memorial Highway" – Designates a one-mile segment of U.S. Highway 49 North in Yazoo County as the "Colonel Donnell Berry Memorial Highway" and requires the Mississippi Department of Transportation to install and maintain appropriate signage.

House Bill 1577, "Willful False Reports of Child Abuse" – Clarifies that a report of child abuse is criminally false only when intentionally made without credible evidence. Authorizes restitution to law enforcement and the Department of Child Protection Services for investigative costs and establishes penalties of up to one year in jail, a $5,000 fine, or both.

House Bill 1645, "State-Managed Disaster Act of 2026" – Establishes the State-Managed Disaster Assistance Program to allow MEMA to administer state-funded emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Creates the State-Managed Disaster Assistance Trust Fund and authorizes allocations to state and local agencies for disaster-related costs.

House Bill 1662, "Rebuttable Presumption for Joint Custody" – Establishes a rebuttable presumption in favor of joint custody in certain child custody proceedings.

House Bill 1677, "Metro Jackson Water Authority Act" – Creates the Metro Jackson Water Authority and outlines governance, oversight, and operational provisions.

House Bill 1763, "Public Land Purchase Restrictions" – Extends the date of the repealer on restrictions preventing certain corporations and nonresident aliens from purchasing public lands. Nonresident aliens may still acquire limited acreage for industrial or residential purposes, and banking or nonbanking corporations remain subject to existing rules and limitations.

The Capitol welcomed students, educators, and community groups this week, including MHA Emerging Leaders, UMMC Medical Students, Carthage Christian Academy, 4-H State Officers, Simpson County Youth Leadership, USM CRNA Students, the Mississippi Valley State University Choir (who performed in the Capitol), Madison County Executive Leadership, JSU NAACP, Vicksburg Junior High School, Tupelo Christian Cheerleaders, Leadership Vicksburg, Mississippi Youth Challenge Academy, the National Association of Social Workers – Mississippi Chapter,

Oakdale Elementary School, Delta Health Alliance, Lipsey Middle School, Heritage Academy, Leadership DeSoto, Natchez High School, and the Secretary of State Student Ambassadors.