

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

MARCH 27, 2026

As the 2026 legislative session enters its final stretch, lawmakers face critical deadlines, and several high-profile issues remain unresolved. Traditionally, legislators work through this final weekend, known as “Conference Weekend,” to finalize remaining matters. However, both the House and Senate adjourned today and will reconvene Sunday afternoon at 2:00 PM, remaining in Jackson until the session concludes.

The official last day of session is Sunday, April 5, but it is expected that business will conclude ahead of that date. Conference reports on appropriations and revenue bills are due to be filed by close of business Saturday, March 28. That said, both chambers have a gentleman’s agreement to file them by midnight tonight, although it is likely that some bills will need to be returned to conference for further deliberation on Sunday.

## FIRST VETOES OF THE 2026 SESSION

Governor Tate Reeves issued the first veto of the session on Senate Bill 2632, legislation creating a Local Governments Disaster Recovery Emergency Loan Program. In a strongly worded veto message, the Governor alleged that material changes were made to the bill after it had been presented to his office, calling the actions “plainly unconstitutional” and suggesting they may rise to criminal conduct. At the center of the dispute is a change to the bill’s interest rate language, removing the word “monthly,” which altered how loan interest would be calculated. Legislative leaders quickly pushed back with Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann stating that the Governor’s claims are “malicious” and “false,” disputing the timeline outlined in the veto message. Lawmakers argued the change corrected an error that would have resulted in a 12% annualized rate instead of the intended 1% rate. Despite the disagreement, House and Senate members have revived this loan program with minor changes in another bill, Senate Bill 1646, and it now awaits approval by the Governor.

In addition, the Governor vetoed two other bills Thursday dealing with the state’s medical cannabis program. HB 1152, known as the “Right to Try Medical Cannabis Act,” was amended to allow out-of-state residents who have been in the state less than 45 days to obtain a medical cannabis card.

The Governor said this expansion is too far reaching and is not the original intent of the bill. The second bill, [HB 895](#), would have extended the time a licensed caregiver would need to undergo a background check to maintain their license and it also removed the mandated six month follow up visit for patients. The Governor said that these safeguards are in place for a reason and expressed concern that eroding them could lead to the program being used for recreations purposes.

## PBM REFORM BILL

[House Bill 1665](#), the Pharmacy Benefit Manager Reform measure, has been one of the most closely watched debates at the Capitol this year. Representatives have faced significant pressure from independent pharmacists to concur with Senate amendments that would add an \$11.29 dispensing fee to every prescription filled statewide, citing financial strains they say threaten the viability of local pharmacies and access to care. Meanwhile, business groups, including the Mississippi Business Alliance, have opposed the Senate amendment that added the fee, warning it could drive up healthcare costs for everyone. The bill has been on the House Calendar awaiting action to either send the bill to conference for further deliberation or to the Governor for approval and on Thursday, the House declined to take the bill up and let it die on the calendar. The Speaker and House members cited lack of willingness of the independent pharmacists to negotiate as the reason for killing the bill. The Speaker has also called on the Governor to convene a special session within this regular session to address PBM reform.

## METRO JACKSON WATER AUTHORITY

Legislation to create a Metro Jackson Water Authority, [HB1677](#), is currently in conference and the conference report must be filed by Monday, March 30. This legislation would require a Board to oversee the new water authority; however, the authority's management and oversight will begin once the third-party administrator, appointed by a federal judge, is terminated. Appointments to the initial Board must be made by May 1, 2026.

## “SHIELD ACT” SENT TO GOVERNOR

The Legislature has passed [Senate Bill 2588](#), the Safeguard Honesty Integrity in Elections for Lasting Democracy (SHIELD) Act, and sent it to the Governor. The bill requires citizenship verification for voter registration and utilizes the federal SAVE database in certain cases. Supporters argue the measure strengthens election integrity, while opponents raise concerns about potential barriers to voter registration and reliance on federal databases. The bill passed despite Democratic opposition and now awaits action from the Governor. This legislation is not to be confused with the federal SAVE Act currently being considered by Congress which would require voters to provide proof of citizenship nationwide. Mississippi law already requires voter ID at the polls.

## NEWS UNDER THE DOME

This Wednesday, former Speaker Philip Gunn's portrait was unveiled in the State Capitol rotunda, recognizing his 12-year tenure as one of the longest serving Speakers in state history. His legacy includes being the first Republican elected to serve as Speaker since Reconstruction, a pro-life agenda that included overturning Roe vs Wade and changing the state flag.

In addition, Mississippi State Health Officer Dr. Daniel Edney has been mentioned as a potential candidate for Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), although reports indicate the White House is delaying a final decision. Edney's strong public support for vaccines and childhood immunizations is at odds with Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., perhaps making him a less likely pick on the Trump Administration's short list.

## UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE DEADLINES:

- Saturday, March 28 - Deadline for conference reports on appropriation and revenue bills to be filed
- Monday, March 30 - Deadline for final adoption of conference reports on appropriation and revenue bills; and deadline for conference reports on general bills and constitutional amendments to be filed.
- Wednesday, April 1 - Deadline for first consideration of conference reports on general bills and constitutional amendments
- Sunday, April 5 – SINE DIE (final adjournment)