

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

JANUARY 23, 2026

The third week of the legislative session was marked by weather-related disruptions alongside continued committee activity and policy movement across several key issue areas. As a winter storm approached the state, the Legislature adjourned Thursday and will reconvene Monday, with a contingency plan to delay an additional day should winter weather continue to impact travel. In response to the storm, the Governor has declared a state of emergency.

HB 3, the remake of the 2025 Certificate of Need bill, is moving quickly through the process and has crossed over to the Senate and has been referred to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. In addition, the House Public Health and Human Services Committee met Tuesday afternoon and passed five bills for full House consideration. Among them was HB 314, which would allow clinical trials of ibogaine, a psychedelic drug that has shown promise in treating PTSD, particularly among veterans, and in assisting with opioid withdrawal. Committee Chairman Rep. Sam Creekmore (R-Amory) emphasized that the drug would be administered only in controlled clinical settings under physician supervision, with extensive health screenings required. Because ibogaine is currently classified as a Schedule I controlled substance in the United States, individuals seeking treatment often travel abroad.

Appropriations hearings with state agencies are now in full swing, signaling that budget-focused work is well underway as the session progresses. These will conclude soon, and appropriations will pick their work back up in a couple of weeks as their first deadline approaches in late February.

Education policy continues to see significant engagement. The Senate Education Committee met for more than two and a half hours on Thursday and passed several bills aimed at strengthening K-12 outcomes. This is a sharp contrast to last session's limited committee activity. Measures advanced by the committee include legislation to expand financial literacy instruction, establish a focused fourth through eighth grade reading initiative, improve statewide math instruction through the Mississippi Math Act, and require a standalone civics course prior to graduation. These proposals are designed to better prepare students for long-term success beyond the classroom. Notably, House Bill 2 contains similar provisions to several of the Senate education measures, suggesting early areas of alignment between the chambers. School choice advocate Tim Tebow was also in town this week promoting education freedom initiatives.

This week the Senate passed SB 2017 which proposes to eliminate 22 boards and commissions. Shrinking government has been a top priority under Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann. Senator Tyler McCaughn (R-Newton), chairman of the Senate Government Structure Committee, presented the bill on the floor. He cited that his committee had determined throughout the last year that these 22 boards and commissions listed had either not met at all, met and not filed their minutes, or met and not fulfilled the duties that they were designed to do. Lt. Governor Hosemann touted the legislation on social media after the vote stating, “by running state government like a business we have cut taxes by more than \$1 billion a year, made historic investments in infrastructure and education, paid off over one-third of Mississippi’s debt”. The bill now goes to the House of Representatives for further debate.

In addition, Youth Court judges were at the Capitol this week meeting with lawmakers to discuss juvenile justice issues and physicians from around the state joined in for the annual “White Coat Day.” The Capitol was full of visitors all week.

Outside of formal legislative proceedings, the Mississippi Business Alliance hosted its first “Capitol Connect” event. The organization, newly formed from the merger of the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, Mississippi Economic Council, and Business and Industry Political Education Committee, marked its debut with strong participation from the business community.

#### Upcoming Deadlines:

- Tuesday, February 3 – Deadline for committees to report bills originating in their own chamber
- Tuesday, February 12 – Deadline for original floor action on bills originating in their own chamber
- Wednesday, February 25 – Deadline for original floor action on appropriations and revenue bills in their own chamber