

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FEBRUARY 6, 2026

The Mississippi Legislature has adjourned for the week and will resume floor activity on Monday, with the Senate convening at 2:00 p.m. and the House at 4:00 p.m. This week marked one of the most consequential deadlines of the 2026 legislative session. Tuesday, February 3, was the deadline for general bills and constitutional amendments to be approved by committee. Legislation failing to meet the deadline is no longer eligible for consideration this session. The next major deadline is Thursday, February 12, when surviving legislation must be approved by its chamber of origin to remain alive. Both chambers spent Wednesday and Thursday working through extensive general bill calendars, reflecting the urgency of moving priority legislation ahead of next week's floor deadline.

SCHOOL CHOICE PROPOSAL DIES IN SENATE COMMITTEE

A defining development this week was the Senate Education Committee's unanimous vote to kill [HB 2](#), the Mississippi Educational Freedom Act, on Tuesday. Two committee members were not present. Notably, HB 2 was not subject to the February 3 deadline, underscoring that its defeat was a deliberate decision rather than a procedural one. HB 2 had been the most closely watched bill of the session, with strong support from Speaker Jason White and Governor Tate Reeves. Following the committee vote, both leaders publicly criticized Senate leadership, accusing them of blocking a top conservative priority. In contrast, Mississippi educators applauded the committee's action. The political fallout is expected to extend beyond education policy, as unrelated legislation may now be leveraged in broader negotiations between the chambers. The defeat of HB 2 is likely to influence the trajectory of other education-related proposals, including education savings accounts, charter school expansion, teacher pay, adolescent literacy initiatives, math instruction reforms, and open enrollment policies. In this fractured environment, House leadership may increasingly look to surviving code sections as amendment vehicles, either to advance alternative policy approaches or to apply pressure on the Senate as negotiations intensify.

FUNDING MISSISSIPPI'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM THROUGH ONLINE SPORTS GAMING

Earlier in the session, the Senate took up [SB 2004](#) to address the ongoing PERS funding challenge by committing an initial \$500 million to the retirement system from the Capital Expense Fund. With an additional \$500 million in \$50 million dollar increments to come over a ten-year span. This week, the House rolled out their proposed plan to address the issue. [HB 1581](#) which would legalize mobile sports gambling in Mississippi in hopes that this new revenue stream could help the retirement system. PERS currently is facing \$26 billion in unfunded liability. Chairman Hank Zuber (R - Ocean Springs) made an amendment from the floor for a one-time cash infusion of \$600 million contingent that the PERS board reports an annual rate of return of no less than 7.75 percent. Mobile sports betting in Mississippi is expected to generate between \$40 million and \$60 million in taxes and fees, with upwards of \$100 million annually as the industry grows. This bill also has a safeguard fund which will send \$6 million dollars annually to the brick-and-mortar casinos annually until 2030 to make sure they are made whole by any lost revenues due to mobile gaming. The bill now heads to the Senate for further debate.

MISSISSIPPI REOPENS PBM DEBATE

On Wednesday, the House took up [HB 1665](#) which aimed to create more regulation and transparency from the state's pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). This issue has caused significant controversy over the last year between independent pharmacies and the business community. The pharmacists have made the argument that this is critical for their long-term survival in the state, as well as protecting patients in rural areas and the rising cost of prescription drugs. The bill passed by a vote of 76-38. It requires the PBM's, often described as "the middlemen" between drug manufacturers, insurers, and pharmacies, to reimburse the pharmacists at least their cost for acquiring the drug. It will also prohibit directing the patient use a particular pharmacy that is affiliated with the PBM. The practice of spread pricing will also not be allowed under this legislation. The Senate, however, was unable to get their version of this bill out of committee by Tuesday's committee deadline, which makes this house bill the only vehicle moving forward for PBM reform. The bill now goes to the Senate for continued debate.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

- 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
- Tuesday, March 3 – Deadline for committees to report general bills originating in the other chamber