

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

The Mississippi Legislature has adjourned for the sixth week and will resume floor activity on Monday afternoon. Thursday marked a key floor deadline requiring all general bills to pass out of their chamber of origin and the measures that met the deadline will now move to the opposite chamber for further consideration. Over 80 bills from both chambers were not considered and left on the calendar to die. The focus will now turn to appropriations and revenue matters as general bill measures have been siphoned down.

IHL FUNDING FORMULA ADVANCES

The Senate passed [SB 2523](#), authored by Senate Universities & Colleges Chairman Nicole Boyd (R-Oxford), by a vote of 32–20 on deadline day. The legislation restructures how Mississippi funds its public universities by requiring the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) to implement a performance-based funding model for distributing state general operating funds. The bill sets guidelines for a performance-based funding model, directing additional resources toward universities demonstrating strong competitive outcomes. However, the proposal has raised concerns among institutions already experiencing enrollment declines and financial pressures.

BALLOT INITIATIVE PROPOSAL TABLED

The Senate tabled legislation that sought to restore Mississippi voters' ability to place initiatives on the ballot, effectively ending this year's effort to reinstate the process. Mississippi's ballot initiative framework has been invalid since a 2021 Mississippi Supreme Court decision struck down the prior system on technical grounds. If approved, the proposal would have required statewide voter ratification to amend the Constitution and included additional legislative review before final passage. The House did not advance a companion measure this session.

RURAL HOSPITALS AND CERTIFICATE OF NEED REFORM

Both chambers advanced legislation aimed at supporting rural hospitals through modifications to the state's certificate of need (CON) law. The Senate unanimously passed a bill creating a pilot program allowing the state health officer to license a limited number of outpatient dialysis units, ambulatory surgery centers, and geriatric psychiatric facilities affiliated with rural hospitals within a five-mile radius of the main campus.

The House previously passed a broader measure exempting 55 rural hospitals from CON requirements, allowing them to add services or make improvements within a five-mile radius without prior state approval. The House proposal also includes broader geographic exemptions in certain counties. The House and Senate must now reconcile differences between their respective approaches.

ALCOHOL LEGISLATION

The House passed two bills that would significantly revise Mississippi's alcohol laws. [House Bill 669](#) would allow the direct shipment of liquor to Mississippi residents, building on last year's legalization of direct wine shipments. The bill imposes a 15.5% tax on distilled spirits sold through direct shipment and establishes permitting requirements similar to those used for wine distribution. The measure passed 75–32 and now moves to the Senate. [House Bill 672](#) would authorize local governments in “wet” jurisdictions to permit Sunday alcohol sales by package retailers through local ordinance. The bill passed 62–47 and advances to the Senate.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

- Wednesday, February 25 – Deadline for original floor action on appropriations and revenue bills in their chamber of origin
- Tuesday, March 3 – Deadline for committees to report general bills originating in the other chamber