

The General Assembly entered the stretch drive of the 2021 Session last week, the last five-day work week of this session. When adjournment came on Friday there were only 6 legislative days remaining to wrap up legislative business for this session.

Here is a quick run down of the remaining [calendar](#):

March 8-10 – Conference Committee Days – A new concept where the legislature will have public Budget conference and other committee meetings, but wont actually meet to conduct floor actions.

March 11-12 – Legislative Days – These are the last two ordinary session days marked on the calendar.

March 15-16 – Concurrence Days – Typically these days are used to concur in amendments from the second chamber, but if needed can be used to bring final action to bills before the veto recess starts.

March 29-30 – Veto Override Days – The legislature will reconvene for the final two days of the session to finalize action on bills and adjourn Sine Die.

With the end of the session in sight, the volume of legislative activity last week was heavy with notably longer floor sessions and much longer committee agendas. The prospects for a bill that has not passed the originating chamber at this point are not good. While this week is not a full week of floor action, we still expect a great deal of legislative activity, with nearly 20 standing committee meetings scheduled.

Key Bills

With the session nearing its end there were a number of important developments:

– Budget – It was announced that the budget conference committee will meet at 1pm on Monday and 9am on Tuesday. We have heard that unofficially a budget agreement is in place, but that additional public discussions are necessary. Additionally, a special joint meeting of the Senate and House Appropriations & Revenue committees is scheduled for Wednesday morning and has raised hopes that the budget will be made public at that time with floor action scheduled for Thursday.

– Broadband – There was activity on broadband issues this week. [HB 320](#) (Rep. Reed) was passed by the House with an appropriation of \$250 million to provide broadband service to unserved or underserved households and businesses and language was included to allow electric distribution cooperatives to capitalize broadband affiliates with their electric assets. [HB 348](#) (Rep. Pratt) to administratively move the Broadband Deployment Fund to the Dept of Agriculture was recommitted to House A&R on March 2.

– Infrastructure Funding – Supporters of increased funding for transportation infrastructure improvement continued to advocate for [HB 561](#) (Rep. Santoro). Though

committee action may be unlikely at this point in the session supporters hold out hope for an agreement through the budget negotiation process.

– COVID Liability Relief – [SB 5](#) (Sen. Stivers), COVID liability relief bill, passed the Senate and is now in the House Judiciary committee where it is posted for hearing. The House version of COVID liability relief, [HB 10](#) (Rep. Rowland), remains in the Senate committee.

– Unemployment Insurance – [SB 7](#) (Sen. Givens) to allow the Department of Labor to waive UI overpayments and establish a program integrity fund passed the House on Friday and Rep. Webers [HB 413](#) to control employer tax rates and surcharges is in Senate committee with two readings.

– Return to School – The legislature brought final passage and the Governor has signed HB 208 to establish parameters to bring public schools back into in-person classes.

– Immunizations – [SB 8](#) Sen. Wilsons exceptions to state mandated immunizations was heard in House Health & Family Services and favorably reported to the full house.

Looking Ahead

In addition to the bills above, listed below are a few items of unfinished business for the 2021 General Assembly session heading into the final four legislative days before the Veto recess.

– Legislative Sessions – [HB 4](#) & [SB 181](#) would alter the structure of legislative sessions, removing the current constitutional adjournment dates, allow for additional session days, and allow bills to carry over from one session to the next.

– Criminal Justice Reforms – [HB 126](#) (Increasing Felony Theft Threshold), [SB 4](#) (No Knock Warrant Reforms), [SB 84](#) (Dignity for Female Prisoners), and [HB 497](#) (Re-entry Reforms) are all awaiting final action.

– Public Employee Pension Reforms – [HB 8](#), [HB 9](#), and [HB 258](#) all related to either state or teacher pension reforms all await final action.

– Social Justice Reform – [SB 10](#) (Commission on Race) and [HB 587](#) and [HB 588](#) creating an economic opportunity zone in the West End of Louisville are all still on the legislature's docket.

– Healthcare Issues – Several bills impacting health care and health insurance are still pending in the General Assembly session: [HB 95](#) (insulin copays), [HB 438](#) (Medicaid provider credentialing), [HB 48](#) (pharmacist reimbursement), [SB 44](#) (charity payment of premiums), [SB 45](#) (drug coupons), [HB 140](#) (telehealth expansion), [HB 183](#) (hospital rate improvement), [HB 556](#) (rural hospital revolving loan fund), and [SB 51](#) (Removal of PA for MAT).

– Energy Issues – [HB 207](#) the all fuels bill and [HB 303](#) reforms to the call before you dig law are waiting to cross the finish line.

Executive Powers Litigation

Litigation between Governor Beshear and the General Assembly over priority legislation to limit the Governors executive powers continued this week. In January, Governor Beshear vetoed [SB 1](#), [SB 2](#), and [HB 1](#) and the General Assembly overrode those vetoes. In February, a temporary restraining order was issued preventing the implementation of HB 1. This week, the temporary restraining order on HB1 was extended, and the Court also issued restraining orders on SB1 and SB 2. An appeal is expected.

Source: GLI Advocacy