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C A P I T O L R E P O R T

This week marked the start of the Legislature's budgeting work and the first round of action on revenue measures, all in advance of next Wednesday's deadline for original floor action on appropriations and revenue bills originating in each chamber.

To begin building the Fiscal Year 2027 budget, the House and Senate divided the appropriations legislation, with each chamber introducing half of the bills. These measures were drafted primarily following the Legislative Budget Recommendations for each state agency. Both chambers passed all agency budget bills out of



committee and off of the floor this week. This stage represents only the opening phase of the budget process, as nearly all appropriations bills will ultimately be finalized during conference weekend, the final weekend of the 2026 Legislative Session. The Legislative Budget Office's Recommended General Fund Appropriations for FY2027 total \$7,101,784,287.

March 3 is the deadline for committees to report general bills and constitutional amendments originating in the opposite chamber. While this week consisted mostly of appropriation and revenue meetings and floor action, next week will be busy with general bill committee meetings trying to meet that March 3 deadline.

S C H O O L C H O I C E U P D A T E

After the Senate Education Committee killed the House's omnibus education reform package a few weeks ago, the House has taken its own steps to halt the Senate's education measures. [HB 2](#), the Mississippi Education Freedom Act, would have, among other things, loosened restrictions on school district transfers, created Magnolia Savings Accounts, and updated the state's charter school statute.

House Education Chairman Rob Roberson held a committee meeting on Wednesday, taking up two of the Senate's education bills. He then announced that this would be the House Education Committee's final meeting of the year, meaning all of the remaining Senate education bills will be left to die without committee action. This includes [SB 2002](#), the only remaining school choice measure. SB 2002

would have allowed students to transfer between districts with approval required only from the receiving district.

Education freedom has been the signature issue for both Speaker of the House Jason White and Governor Tate Reeves. At a luncheon on Monday, Speaker White said that a special session addressing school choice is "not off of the table," signaling that legislators may continue working on the issue.



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QUICK HITTERS

1) Lawmakers are considering consolidating several divisions within the Department of Public Safety. [SB 2817](#) would reduce DPS's current 11 units down to 7, a measure supported by DPS Commissioner Sean Tindell. Tindell said that consolidating the units would reduce administrative and purchasing costs while also giving agents greater flexibility to move within the department as their careers progress.

2) Several Mississippi restaurants and liquor store shelves are running dry amid delays at the state-run Alcoholic Beverage Control warehouse. In Mississippi, all wholesale spirits and wine must go through the ABC warehouse in Gluckstadt, which operates under the state Department of Revenue. To address this crisis, the House State Affairs committee, led by Chairman Hank Zuber, held a hearing to find potential solutions. DOR Executive Director Chris Graham attributed the shipping delays to a combination

of issues with conveyor belt software and the construction of a new warehouse. Legislators have indicated that bills may be introduced in the coming days to address the issues.

3) Jackson Mayor John Horhn has appointed a new police chief for the city. A retired veteran of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, RaShall Brackney will serve as the capital city's police chief. She will replace Sheriff Tyree Jones, who served as interim police chief after the previous chief, Joseph Wade, resigned late last year. Brackney must be confirmed by the Jackson City Council before officially beginning her job. This confirmation vote could be as early as next week.

4) Along with passing legislation and approving the state budget, lawmakers are also busy confirming gubernatorial appointments to executive roles, boards, and commissions. On Thursday, the Senate approved the reappointment of

Mississippi Department of Transportation Executive Director, Brad White, to another term. White, who has served in the role since July 2021, will now continue in that capacity through April 1, 2030.