



T H E C L A Y F I R M

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

The legislature got a late start to work this week after severe winter weather swept across the state, but that did not stop lawmakers from moving forward with their legislative agenda. Tuesday, February 3, is the deadline for committees to report general bills and constitutional amendments originating in their own house. Almost 400 general bills have already passed out of House and Senate committees with several more to come ahead of Tuesday's deadline.

One bill, [HB 3](#), is already heading to Governor Tate Reeves' desk. HB 3 revises provisions related to Certificates of Need. An important piece of HB 3 is that allowable capital expenditures are doubled without the need for a



CON. A separate CON bill, [HB 1622](#), passed out of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee this week. HB 1622 would exempt rural hospitals from the Certificate of Need law in certain situations. The bill also puts all ambulatory surgery centers under the CON law. HB 1622 now goes to the House State Affairs Committee.

While school choice has continued to dominate this session's education policy dis-

cussions, both the House and Senate Education Committees have passed several other bills aimed at improving education in the state. Both [HB 570](#) and [SB 2099](#) require school boards to adopt policy of bell-to-bell cell phone prohibitions. [HB 1203](#) allows the Mississippi Department of Education to procure their own contracts without having to go through the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services to purchase.

Governor Reeves' State of the State Addressed has been rescheduled for February 4 at 5:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Rotunda of the State Capitol Building. Both chambers will return Monday afternoon to continue work for the 2026 Legislative Session.

**L E G I S L A T U R E H O P I N G T O I M P R O V E
S T A T E ' S T E C H N O L O G Y P O L I C Y**

With technology and artificial intelligence becoming more integral in the daily lives of Mississippians, lawmakers are hoping to enact several pieces of legislation designed to modernize and strengthen the state's technology policy. Approved by the technology committees in both chambers, [HB 1723](#) and [SB 2437](#) establish an extensive statutory definition of artificial intel-

ligence. [SB 2625](#) creates a new cabinet-level position under the Governor. The Mississippi Chief Information Officer will serve as the chief policy advisor on information technology and cybersecurity and work alongside the Department of Information Technology Services and its executive director. Also to help address internet crime concerns, [SB 2636](#) creates the

Mississippi Department of Cybersecurity, assigning it the responsibility of defending and securing cyberspace across the state. [HB 1687](#) also establishes cybersecurity standards by directing the Secretary of State to work alongside county election commissioners and circuit clerks to ensure voter and election data is secure.



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Q U I C K H I T T E R S

1) In-person and mail-in absentee ballots are now available for the 2026 primary elections for US Senate, US Congress, and several judicial positions across the state. Primary elections will take place on March 10, with the deadline for Mississippians to register to vote being February 9.

Candidates for US Senate:

Sarah Adlakha (R)
Scott Colom (D)
Cindy Hyde-Smith (R), Incumbent
Albert R. Littell (D)
Ty Pinkins (I)
Priscilla W. Till (D)

Candidates for US House District 1:

Kelvin Buck (D)
Cliff Johnson, (D)
Trent Kelly, (R), Incumbent

Candidates for US House District 2:

Ron Eller (R)
Bennie Foster (I)
Bennie G. Thompson (D), Incumbent
Evan Littleton Turnage (D)
Pertis Herman Williams III (D)
Kevin Wilson (R)

Candidates for US House District 3:

Michael A. Chiaradio (D)
Michael Guest (R), Incumbent
Erik Kiehle (L)

Candidates for US House District 4:

Paul James Blackman (D)
Caryl Boyanton (I)
Mike Ezell (R), Incumbent
D. Ryan Grover (D)
Jeffrey Hulum III (D)
Sawyer Walters (R)

2) A federal judge struck down portions of Mississippi's Certificate of Need laws this week. U.S. District Judge Carlton W. Reeves held that Mississippi's moratorium on home health agencies violates the 14th Amendment. This ruling only applies to home health agencies wanting to obtain Certificates of Need, meaning the state can continue requiring CONs for other healthcare entities.

3) The federal government has appropriated \$184.1 million of the more than \$57 billion FY2026 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill for projects across Mississippi. Some of these projects include funding for control reservoirs and lakes, ports, and water and wastewater infrastructure.