



THE CLAY FIRM

NEWSLETTER

CAPITOL REPORT

120 North Congress Street,
Suite 903,
Jackson, Mississippi, 39201

P.O. Box 217 Jackson, MS
39205

Phone: 601-353-0559

Fax: 601-354-0597

- Beth Clay,
beth@clayfirm.com
- Stephen Clay,
stephen@clayfirm.com
- Terri Buford,
terrib@clayfirm.com
- Hope Ladner,
hope@clayfirm.com
- Tyler Clarke,
tyler@clayfirm.com

The Legislature cleared another major deadline this week, as Wednesday marked the deadline for floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments originating in the opposite chamber. Several measures have now passed both the House and Senate and are headed to the Governor's desk, while others will move into conference committees. Conference committees are made up of three members from each chamber who will work to resolve differences and finalize bill language before the measures return to the floors for a final vote. Conferees are expected to be named over the next two weeks.

Tuesday, March 17, is the deadline for original floor action on appropriation and revenue bills originating in the opposite



chamber. After this deadline, the appropriations process will move into full swing, with legislators turning their full attention to finalizing spending plans for the upcoming fiscal year and determining the appropriate funding for each state agency.

After the House amended an [education bill](#) last week to include a \$5,000 teacher pay raise, the Senate advanced its own teacher pay proposal on

Wednesday. [HB 1395](#), which originally aimed to revise provisions related to the sale of unused property, was transformed through a strike-all amendment to authorize \$2,000 raises for teachers over three years, totaling a \$6,000 increase. Special education teachers would receive an additional \$3,000 over the same period, bringing their total increase to \$9,000 above the general raise, and assistant teachers would receive a one-time \$2,000 salary bump.

A few bills that did not survive Wednesday's deadline include [HB 1241](#), which would have required the Secretary of State to develop a centralized, statewide election night reporting system, and [SB 2801](#), which increased civil penalties for texting while driving.

PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGERS REFORM

For several sessions, lawmakers have pursued reforms to the policies governing Pharmacy Benefit Managers. Earlier this year, the House advanced [HB 1665](#), a measure designed to eliminate PBM clawbacks and ensure independent pharmacists do not lose money when they fill prescriptions for medications. The bill would require that reimbursement rates paid to any pharmacist meet or exceed the actual purchase cost of the drug. It also establishes firm deadlines for PBMs to pay claims, prohibits pharmacy steering and spread pricing, and

shifts regulatory oversight to the Department of Insurance.

When the bill reached the Senate, the Public Health and Welfare Committee adopted a strike-all amendment that substantially rewrote the measure. Key changes included removing the prohibition on PBM steering, retaining regulatory authority under the Board of Pharmacy, and requiring a mandatory dispensing rate for pharmacists. During floor debate, multiple Senators raised concerns about the revised language, particularly its im-

-pact on the State and School Employees' Health Plan and confusion over that some independent pharmacists favored the House version. Despite the objections, the bill passed the Senate 44-7.

The bill now returns to the House, where members will decide whether to concur with the Senate's changes or invite conference. Speaker Jason White said the chamber is reviewing the Senate's strike-all language "through the lens of seeking relief for independent pharmacists."



THE CLAY FIRM

120 North Congress Street, Suite 903
P.O. Box 217
Jackson, MS 39205
Phone: 601-353-0559
Fax: 601-354-0597
E-mail: beth@clayfirm.com

Focused, Driven, Direct, Proven.

Delivering direct access to Mississippi's decision makers for more than 40 years. Located in the heart of the Capitol complex and recognized by Mississippi policy-makers for superior government relations and advocacy, the Clay Firm provides top-tier lobbying and public affairs services.

QUICK HITTERS

1) Mississippi held primary elections for its congressional seats on Tuesday. Candidates who secured their party's nomination will advance to the general election on November 3. Results of the primary elections are below:

US Senate – Democratic

Scott Colom: 73.0%
Priscilla Till: 18.5%
Albert Littell: 8.5%

US Senate – Republican

Cindy Hyde-Smith (incumbent): 80.8%
Sarah Adlakha: 19.2%

US House District 1 – Democratic

Cliff Johnson: 63.6%
Kelvin Buck: 36.4%

US House District 1 – Republican

Trent Kelly (incumbent) – uncontested

US House District 2 – Democratic

Bennie Thompson (incumbent): 86.1%
Evan Turnage: 12.6%
Pertis Williams: 1.3%

US House District 2 – Republican

Ron Eller: 50.9%
Kevin Wilson: 49.1%

US House District 3 – Democratic

Michael Chiaradio: uncontested

US House District 3 – Republican

Michael Guest (incumbent): uncontested

US House District 4 – Democratic

Jeffrey Hulum: 57.6%
Paul James Blackman: 27.7%
D. Ryan Grover: 14.6%

US House District 4 – Republican

Mike Ezell (incumbent): 84.1%
Sawyer Walters: 15.9%

2) After all school choice measures died this session, Governor Tate Reeves said he is still considering calling a special session to continue work on the issue. Reeves noted the idea remains “premature,” as lawmakers will not gavel out until April 5, but confirmed his office is weighing a special session if the next

three and a half weeks pass without progress on school choice or teacher pay. Because he only has one year left as Governor before he is termed out, Reeves said he wants to prioritize issues that are important to him, including expanding educational options for families.