



THE CLAY FIRM

NEWSLETTER

CAPITOL REPORT

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The Mississippi Legislature hit another major checkpoint this week, as Tuesday marked the deadline for committees to report general bills and constitutional amendments originating in the opposite chamber. Many measures that survived in their home chamber did not survive when crossing the hall. On Tuesday's committee deadline, the House killed 127 Senate bills, and the Senate killed 121 House bills, including several key pieces of legislation.

Although both the House and Senate Education Chairmen had previously signaled they would not advance the other chamber's school choice proposals, Tuesday's deadline made it official. Both [HB 2](#) and [SB 2002](#) were killed, leaving no active vehicle on school choice moving forward.



Two alcohol-related measures also failed to advance before Tuesday's committee deadline. [HB 670](#), which would have increased the number of package retailer permits an individual may hold, and [HB 672](#), which would have allowed liquor stores to open on Sundays, both died in committee.

Despite the high number of bills that died at the deadline, lawmakers did advance a num-

-ber of measures they consider priorities. [HB 1760](#) and [SB 2726](#), both focused on restructuring the state's Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Council, cleared committee and passed their respective chamber floors. [HB 1677](#), which creates the Metro Jackson Water Authority Act, was amended in the Senate Energy Committee to give the mayors of Byram and Ridgeland direct appointment authority to the new board without requiring approval from the Jackson City Council.

The next legislative deadline is Wednesday, March 11, the deadline for floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments originating in the other chamber. Both the House and Senate have adjourned until 4:00 p.m. on Monday.

“IT'S NOT DEAD UNTIL IT'S DEAD, DEAD, DEAD”

At the start of this year's session, both chambers identified revising the state's Public Employees' Retirement System and increasing teacher pay as priorities. [HB 2](#) and [SB 2909](#) each proposed reducing the service requirement for the newly created PERS Tier 5 from 35 years to 30 years for all state employees. Despite aligning on this goal, the House and Senate ultimately killed each other's bills. Both teacher pay raise bills also failed to advance. The House's proposal, [HB 1126](#), would have raised teacher pay by \$5,000 annually, and the

Senate's bill, [SB 2001](#), would have raised teacher pay by \$2,000 annually.

While these two issues appeared to be dead after Tuesday's deadline, the House has since revived both measures to keep the discussion moving. [SB 2103](#) was originally intended to update school counselor requirements, but on the floor this morning, House Education Chairman Rob Roberson amended the bill to include the teacher pay raises and PERS changes. The House is again proposing a \$5,000 teacher pay raise per year, along with a

\$3,000 salary increase for special education teachers and assistant teachers. The plan also includes a cap on district superintendent salaries, limiting them to 250% of a teacher's salary. As for PERS, the new language would allow first responders to retire after 25 years of service, while all other state employees could retire after 30 years.

The bill passed the House unanimously and has been sent to the Senate, where members will decide whether to concur with the changes or invite conference.



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

1) Mississippi revenue collections declined in February as collections for the month came in \$65.3 million, or 13.25% below legislative estimates. However, with four months left in the current fiscal year, year-to-date state revenue collections remain \$99.5 million, or 2.14% above estimates. The full year state revenue estimate is \$7.552 billion. General fund collections came in \$55.7 million, or 11.53% below February of last year, sales tax collections were below the prior year by \$8.6 million, and corporate income tax collections were also below the prior year by \$6 million. Individual income tax collections for the month were above the prior year by \$12.6 million. Fiscal year-to-date total revenue collections through February 2026 were \$76.4 million, or 1.64% above the prior year's collections.

2) Another data center is coming to Mississippi. Clinton Mayor Will Purdie announced Thursday that a \$750 million

facility is planned for the Clinton Industrial Park, where a 730,000-square-foot building constructed in 1972 will be renovated to house the project. The name of the company behind the investment has not yet been released. This development adds to a growing list of data center projects planned across the state, including sites in DeSoto County, Meridian, and Brandon.

3) Secretary of State Michael Watson announced this week that he will not seek a third term, though his name will still appear on the ballot. While he did not specify which office he plans to pursue next, speculation has centered on a potential run for Lieutenant Governor, as current Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hosemann is term-limited. Watson said a formal announcement about his upcoming candidacy will be made in the near future.