



Mississippi Senate Weekly Report, March 8, 2024

In the 10th week of the 2024 Legislative Session, the Senate passed [Senate Bill 2332](#), that would revise the Mississippi Adequate Education Program Funding formula, to the tune of an additional estimated \$206 million, according to Senate Education Committee Chairman Dennis DeBar, Jr., who said the updated formula mirrors the realities of running a school district.

Among the revisions [Senate Bill 2332](#) would make are:

- Revising the inflationary factor connected to the formula to reflect an average rate over 20 years.
- Providing that 90% of state funds must be used on expenses other than administrator and principal salaries.
- Holding harmless for one year 10 districts which will lose money under the revised formula because of a loss of students (\$2.1 million).
- Requiring charter schools to return a pro rata share of education funds to the public school district the student came from if the student returns to that school district during the year.

Passage of [Senate Bill 2685](#), would allow retired teachers to continue receiving PERS retirement benefits while again returning to the classroom as full time educators earning a check in certain critical shortage areas.

[Senate Bill 2627](#), seeks creation of a state law forbidding ownership, manufacture or use of weapon conversion devices that make semi-auto weapons fire in fully automatic mode. Currently, possession of a “switch” or “Glock switch,” is a federal violation, but if made law, Senate Bill 2627 would allow Mississippi prosecutors to give a 10-year maximum state prison sentence and a \$10,000 fine for a first conviction. It was amended to be known as the Jeremy Todd Malone Law, in honor of a George County Deputy who was shot and killed January 4, 2024, during a traffic stop.

Among other bills passed were:

- [Senate Bill 2841](#) would create the "State Treasury Efficiency and Transparency Act," encouraging certain state agencies to place unspent money “when it is reasonably feasible to do so,” into a master account which would be invested in interest bearing accounts.

- [Senate Bill 2848](#), would allow the transfer of \$144 million in remaining federal American Rescue Plan Act, (ARPA), funds to be placed in the state treasury until it is reallocated, since it is not expected to be spent by the deadline date.
- [Senate Bill 2470](#), moves the back-to-school sales tax holiday to the second Friday in July, making it occur earlier than it would in surrounding states to draw in more shoppers to Mississippi. It exempts sales tax on school related items like clothing, shoes, and school supplies retailing for less than \$100.
- [Senate Bill 2444](#), would expand the Central Mississippi Pilot Prison Industries program to all state, regional and private correctional facilities. The program allows certain inmates to hold job while incarcerated. They can earn money to pay fines, save towards their release dates and learn a skill or trade. Of the 51 inmates who participated in the pilot program, only two committed violations that placed them back in prison.
- [Senate Bill 2339](#), would allow high school graduation credits for students who chose to learn sign language as their foreign language requirement.
- [Senate Bill 2169](#), would prohibit school districts from reducing the local salary supplement for assistant teachers who received the state minimum raise.
- [Senate Bill 2288](#), would create a criminal charge for digitally altering a person's likeness in a graphic manner. The bill makes the use of “AI” or artificial intelligence to perform such tasks a crime.
- [Senate Bill 2196](#), amends Mississippi’s Terroristic Threats Law to include a five-year prison sentence for anyone convicted of making a threat against an airport.
- [Senate Bill 2125](#), seeks creation of a health savings accounts for state employees who are enrolled in a cafeteria plan that allows them to use pretax deductions for certain known health benefits. Currently, whatever money in the plan is not used is lost at year’s end. The intent of the bill is to allow leftover money to be rolled over into an investment plan.
- [Senate Bill 2340](#), extends the repeal date until 2027 for Harper Grace's Law – authority for University of Mississippi Medical Center to research and dispense cannabidiol (CBD oil) for medical purposes, specifically for treatment of severe epileptic seizures.
- [Senate Bill 2250](#), bans operation of squatted vehicles on public roads. Squatting a vehicle requires lifting the front end and the squatting the rear end, which lessens the field of vision for a driver.
- [Senate Bill 2016](#), amends existing law to increase penalties for illegal dumping, including seeking up to a \$75,000 fine and a five-year prison sentence for those convicted of dumping objects more than 500 pounds or 100 cubic feet in volume, or hazardous waste.
- [Senate Bill 2708](#) authorizes the Department of Public Safety to sell or lease the 9.6 acres of property the current headquarters occupies in Jackson once they move operations to Rankin County.
- [Senate Bill 2495](#), allows county boards of supervisors to assign their board attorney as hearing officer in disputes regarding delinquent solid waste fees.
- [Senate Bill 2519](#), creates the Mississippi Foreign Land Ownership Act, which would limit the ability of non-resident aliens from countries considered to be foreign adversaries, from owning Mississippi agricultural and forestry land.

On Friday, March 8, 2024, the Senate passed [Senate Resolution 34](#), and stood in a moment of silence to honor the memory of former Mississippi Public Service Commissioner-Southern District Samuel F. (Sam) Britton of Laurel, who passed on October 16, 2023. Britton was the husband of Senator Robin Robinson.

On Tuesday, March 5, 2024, American Red Cross North Mississippi Chapter Executive Director KC Grist, of Tupelo, addressed the Senate and accepted a proclamation from Senator Hob Bryan and Senator Chad McMahan. March is American Red Cross Month.

On Tuesday, March 5, 2024, Senator Briggs Hopson, and Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann visited with the Vicksburg High School Choir, and the Warren Central High School Choir, who performed at the second-floor rotunda, as part of Lt. Governor Hosemann's tradition of allowing students to share their talents which gives lawmakers time to reflect on the importance of the job they are at the Capitol to do.

The Virginia Glee Club from Charlottesville, Va., performed on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at the invitation of Senator Hob Bryan, during their tour of the South.

The Senate passed a Tuesday, March 5, 2024, deadline for committees to report general bills and constitutional amendments that originated in the Senate. The Senate faces a Thursday, March 14, 2024, deadline for original floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments originating in the Senate, and a Friday, March 15, 2024, deadline for reconsideration and passage of general bills and constitutional amendments originating in the Senate.