

MAS' WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

VOLUME 7

February 17, 2023

The 2023 Regular Legislative Session

The Seventh week of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session is now complete. The deadline for original floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments originating in own house has passed. The deadline for original floor action on appropriations and revenue bills originating in own house is Wednesday, February 22nd. In addition, the deadline for committees to report general bills and constitutional amendments originating in other house is Tuesday, February 28th.

Homestead Exemption Reimbursement Introduced as Fully Funded for the Second Year in Row (Senate Bill 3022)

Senate bill 3022 is the appropriation measure for the MS State Department of Revenue. Located in Section 7 of this bill is the appropriation line item for the homestead exemption reimbursement. This legislation currently has the reimbursement being funded at \$92,000,000.00. This represents a \$1.4 million increase from last year's reimbursement. On Thursday, February 16th, this measure past the Senate chamber by a vote of 52 to 0. This measure will now head to the house chamber for committee consideration.

Legislature Continues to Fund the Beaver Control Assistance Program (BCAP) (Senate Bill 3013)

On Thursday, February 16th, the Mississippi State Senate passed **Senate Bill 3013** by a vote of 52 to 0. Section 4 of this measure funds the Beaver Control Assistance Program at \$1.1 million. This measure will now head to the house chamber for committee consideration.

Funding for Struggling Hospitals are Still Alive (House Bill 271 & House Bill 273 and Senate Bill 2372)

House Bill 273 establishes the creation of the Health Care Impact Grant Program which is designed to provide grants to long-term care hospital facilities. **House Bill 271** is an appropriation for \$80 million that's earmarked to fund the grants established in the Health Care Impact Grant Program established in House Bill 273.

Senate Bill 2372 creates the Mississippi Hospital Sustainability Grant Program which is designed to assist struggling hospitals.

CALL TO ACTION: OPPOSE SENATE BILL 2392

Currently in **Senate Bill 2392**, there is language (*lines 73 – 76*) that could be construed to allow for the forgiveness of garbage fee debt that's owed to the counties. Based on a survey that MAS sent to its membership, we have learned that there is over \$28 million of uncollected debt owed to Mississippi counties. Please contact your local House of Representatives members and request that Senate Bill 2392 be defeated. NOTE: This measure is currently assigned to the House County Affairs Committee.

HOUSE & SENATE will reconvene on Monday at 4pm.

Join us next Friday, February 24 at 10:30 a.m. for our weekly legislative Zoom call.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3852299667>

Or Call in at: 888.788.0099

Then Enter Meeting Id Number: 385 229 9667

*Copyright. All Rights Reserved
Authors, Steve Gray and Derrick Surette

MAS 2023 Annual Convention

Date: June 12 - 15

Location: MS Coast Convention Center

More info to come on hotels and registration

Please view letter from MS PERS sent to Speaker Philip Gunn on February 8, 2023



Providing Benefits for Life

February 8, 2023

Honorable Philip Gunn
Speaker of the House of Representatives
P.O. Box 1018, Room 306
Jackson, MS 39215

Dear Speaker Gunn:

I am writing to provide additional information for your budget and planning purposes. At our upcoming February board meetings, I plan to recommend to the PERS Board that the effective date of the previously approved employer contribution rate increase be moved from October 1, 2023, to July 1, 2024. I believe the Board will vote favorably on this recommendation. This change will provide more time for planning while remaining consistent with actuarial recommendations and acting in the best interest of the membership to ensure the plan is properly funded long term. We will also discuss the potential and cost of phasing in the rate increase.

In addition, we are developing and will provide a plan with other options for PERS. In fact, the Board unanimously passed a motion at its December 20 meeting directing us to develop a potential Tier 5 for new employees and other options for consideration. This work is already underway, and I will provide an update at our February meeting. And, importantly, this comprehensive plan considering multiple facets of PERS will be developed, completed, and communicated before the new recommended effective date for the rate increase. Changing the effective date could allow better synchronization between the rate increase and the potential options for the future, while also communicating with membership and employers in the interim.

As I have mentioned several times in different forums, PERS is so very important to Mississippi in terms of dollars and people. It is essential that we all work together on solutions to challenges that have developed over decades. We at PERS must always act in the best interest of the membership, and I look forward to working with you and others on this important endeavor.

I hope this information is helpful. Thank you for your continued support of PERS.

Sincerely,

H. Ray Higgins, Jr.
Executive Director

HRH

cc: PERS Board of Trustees

- List of Board of Trustees members: Bill Benson, Kimberly Hanna, Kelly Breland, George Dale, Chris Howard, Chris Graham, Randy D. McCoy, David McRae, Brian Rutledge, Jay Smith.