

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF SUPERVISORS
2020 Regular Legislative Session
Weekly Legislative Update
May 29, 2020

STATE BUDGET SET TO FACE TOUGH CHALLENGES

On Tuesday May 26th, Mississippi's state economist (Darrin Webb) provided the Senate Appropriations committee with a financial/economic outlook regarding the state and the state budget. Webb noted that the state could start recovery from this COVID-19 recession at a quick rate, but it would still likely take years for the state to return to its pre-COVID-19 recession economic levels. Currently, projections indicate that the state might not show recovery from this economic impact until at least 2023. Fiscal Year 2020 estimates represent a loss of \$864.4 million below the November estimates. He further noted that the state would follow the overall pattern of the nation, but that it would do so at a slower pace. Webb warned the committee that his predictions are based on various assumptions and that there are still unknown factors such as the virus surging again in the fall or the U.S. Congress passing a second stimulus package that could alter his economic predictions. Webb stated, "a lot of what we have lost will never be regained. There is a loss particularly in the service sector that will never be made up." Unemployment numbers may reach 20% across the state, which will negatively impact state revenue collections. Recipients of state revenue may need to brace for the possibility of significant cuts.

BILLS OF HIGH IMPORTANCE

Below are HIGH PRIORITY legislative measures that are still alive and moving through the legislative process.

House Bill 379: This bill was amended to provide an additional use tax diversion of the "total" use tax collected at \$1 million a month into the LSBP Program beginning August 15th 2020 until July 15th 2021 to avoid a funding GAP as the 5% LSBP use tax diversion builds up. This bill currently resides in the Senate Finance Committee. It must be passed out by June 9th.

House Bill 741: This bill will allow counties to pledge up to 75% of their anticipated use tax revenue for structuring bond debt, whereas the debt will not exceed over ten years. This will give counties the ability to flexibility when structure major infrastructure bond projects. This bill currently resides in the Senate Finance Committee. It must be passed out by June 9th.

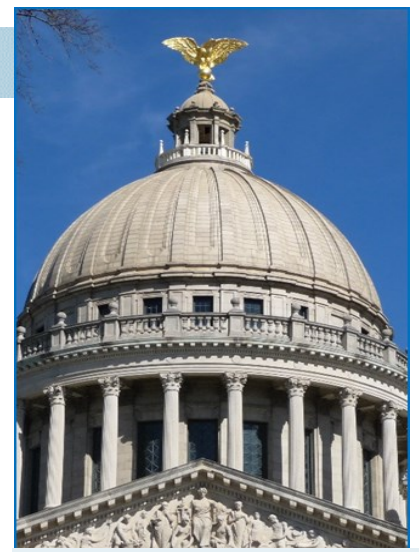
House Bill 982: This bill will provide funding assistance to counties as it pertains to the defined cancer benefit policy mandate established under the First Responder Health and Safety Act of 2019. In addition, this measure will create a residual funding stream for the Rural Fire Truck Acquisition Program. This bill current resides in the Senate Insurance and Accountability, Efficiency, and Transparency Committees. It must be passed out by June 9th.

House Bill 685 & Senate Bill 2279: Both bills extends the repealer of mandating that counties shall not pay more than the Medicaid Reimbursement Rate regarding the medical costs pertaining to pre-trial detainees and convicted inmates.

NOTE: House Bill 685 was recently passed out of the Senate Corrections Committee on Wednesday of this week. It now resides on the Senate Floor Calendar.

Senate Bill 2215: This bill exempts "Term Contracts" and "E-Rate Contracts" from the reverse auction mandate. This bill currently resides in the House Municipality Committee and the House County Affairs Committee. It must be passed out by June 9th. As social distancing and new State Capitol protocols has made it a bit challenging to operate at a high level capacity regarding the lobbying process, it will be more important than ever for the MAS membership to call their local legislative delegation and request support for our high priority bills.

(Note: This high priority list could expand as appropriation and revenue bills are currently being crafted)



The House and Senate will reconvene Monday, June 1 at 4:00 p.m.

On May 26th, the Mississippi Legislature "officially" reconvened to work toward completing the 2020 Regular Legislative Session. The timetable for processing legislation was amended to extend the regular session beyond its original timeline. Prior to the premature departure, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, the regular session was set to end around late April.

Now, the SINE DIE deadline is set for **July 12th**. Note, although the SINE DIE deadline is set for July 12th, lawmakers could still complete the regular session before then. The deadline for original floor action on appropriations and revenue bills originating in own house is **Wednesday, June 3, 2020.**

*** Note:** Bill numbers in orange are hyperlinks to the MS Legislature website where you may view the bill in its entirety.