



# CAPITOL *comments*

*The Voice of Agriculture®*

February 3, 2012

Week 5

## This Week at the Capitol

Governor Bryant unveiled his Executive Budget Recommendations (EBR) on Tuesday of this week. The theme of the budget was reform. Most state agencies will receive a 5% cut with the Governor's office receiving 6% cut. Some agencies were spared from cuts and will receive level funding including, Corrections, Highway Patrol, MTAG, National Guard, and a few others. The Mississippi Development Authority will also only receive a 3% cut to its budget. The Governor always introduces an EBR, but the House and Senate committees will make the final decisions on where to cut.

Lt. Governor Reeves unveiled his legislative agenda on Wednesday and it included the following items:

- **Transparency and Accountability**  
Sunshine Legislation and Transparency in Government
- **Improving Educational Outcomes**  
Charter School and School District Consolidation
- **Optimizing State Services**
- **Returning to Fiscal Responsibility**  
Fund the rainy day fund and reign in bonding
- **Protecting Our Families**  
Child Protection Act

The House debated its first bill, Mississippi Child Protection Act, for almost 4 hours on Thursday. There were 11 amendments filed to the bill during the debate, a point of order was also called but later withdrawn. The bill passed with 106 votes in favor and 9 votes against.

The Senate has released 301 bills and the House released 16 bills. Most of the House and Senate committees are holding briefings on issues or meeting to introduce state agencies to the committee members. We just wrapped up the fifth week of the session and are approaching the first deadline.

## Bills of Interest

### Transportation

**H.B. 13** Authorizes low-speed vehicles moving on certain highways, roads, and streets. **STATUS:** H.B. 13 has been referred to House Transportation Committee. Introduced by Rep. Jessica Upshaw.

## 2012 MFBF *Legislative Priorities*

*Production Agriculture—Much of Mississippi's economy is derived from farming or farm-related activities. Agriculture is Mississippi's largest industry worth \$7 billion dollars a year. In addition, agriculture makes up 29% of the workforce in Mississippi.*

*Taxation—The taxes farmers pay should be used to aid the citizens of Mississippi, but taxation must not be allowed to increase to a point that economic development is hindered.*

*Environment—In order to further conservation efforts in agriculture, attention should be focused toward economic approaches to land management.*

*Energy—The depletion of fossil fuels and the increasing energy prices have caused an emphasis to be placed on renewable fuels. Farmers have the resources through general farm practices to generate energy.*

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## comments

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### Bills of Interest (Continued)

#### Food Stamps

**S.B. 2293** Authorizes Department of Human Services to limit the S.N.A.P (food stamps) program to healthy foods and beverages. **STATUS:** S.B. 2293 has been referred to Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. Introduced by Sen. Bill Stone.

#### Insurance

**S.B. 2108** Requires insurance before receiving a tag. **STATUS:** S.B. 2108 has been double referred to Senate Insurance and Finance committees. Introduced by Sen. Kelvin Butler.

#### Pay Raise

**S.B. 2142** Increases and establishes funding for the salary of judges, district attorneys, and assistant district attorneys. **STATUS:** S.B. 2142 has been double referred to Senate Accountability, Transparency, and Efficiency, and Appropriation committees. Introduced by Sen. Derrick Simmons.

#### Tax Holiday

**S.B. 2276** Authorizes a hunting supply tax holiday. **STATUS:** S.B. 2276 has been double referred to Senate Finance and Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks committees. Introduced by Sen. Chris McDaniel.

#### Right to Work

**S.B. 2144** Prohibits private and public employees from payroll deducting union political activities. **STATUS:** S.B. 2144 has been referred to Senate Judiciary A Committee. Introduced by Sen. Merle Flowers.

#### PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES BY EMAIL

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### 2012 Legislative Calendar

**February 10-12** — Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference in Tunica

**February 12- 16** — National Food Checkout Week

**March 1** — Ag Day at the Capitol

**March 6** — Women's Day at the Capitol

Mississippi Farm Bureau® Federation

Post Office Box 1972

Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1972

[www.msfb.org](http://www.msfb.org)



Samantha Cawthorn  
Public Policy Director  
601.977.4020 (office)  
601.503.3273 (cell)  
[scawthorn@msfb.org](mailto:scawthorn@msfb.org)