LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2022 GUIDE
Dear reader,

It appears the 2022 legislative session will be crazier than any in recent memory. Billions in surplus revenue await appropriation. Redistricting looms for congressional and legislative seats. A medical marijuana program and ballot initiative process are likely to be debated.

Then there are some optional items that appear to have strong political appetite like eliminating the personal income tax, raising teacher pay substantially and expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. And because, of course, it’s Mississippi, expect nasty fights over red meat issues like critical race theory.

No matter how you strike it, this session is likely to set policy and spending for generations to come. True transformation is on the line for our state this year. Our journalists at Mississippi Today will be in the halls of the Capitol every day, asking the tough questions of our elected officials and covering what happens.

To devote special attention to this potentially historic legislative session, we’re launching the Mississippi Legislative Guide. Here, you’ll find the basics like how a bill becomes law, key legislative deadlines and how to find and contact your lawmakers. A centerpiece of the guide, of course, will be our newsroom’s comprehensive coverage of the 2022 legislative session.

We hope this will be a helpful resource as you navigate these next few weeks, but we want to know how it could be improved. If you have questions or suggestions for us, don’t hesitate to reach out.

Thank you, as always, for reading. We appreciate your support as ever.

**Adam Ganucheau**  
Editor-in-Chief
The Legislature makes laws and funds state government, subject to approval or veto from the governor.

Mississippi has a bicameral – House and Senate – Legislature that meets in regular session once a year and can hold special sessions only upon call of the governor.

The Legislature has 174 elected members – a large body for a state with a population of just under 3 million. There are 122 members in the House and 52 in the Senate. Each Senate district represents about 55,000 people and each House district about 24,000.

The House elects its leader, the speaker, from its membership and the lieutenant governor, elected by a statewide vote, oversees the Senate. The second-ranking House officer is the speaker pro tempore and the Senate’s is the president pro tempore, each elected by their chamber’s membership.

The leader of each chamber appoints committee chairpersons who oversee panels of lawmakers dealing with legislation by topic, from appropriations to wildlife.

Most legislation must pass in committee(s) before it can be voted on by the full chambers. Typically, “money committee” chairpersons – over Finance and Appropriations in the Senate and Ways and Means and Appropriations in the House – are powerful leadership positions.

Mississippi has a citizen Legislature. Most members have other full-time jobs.
How does a bill become a law?

A bill is filed by an individual House or Senate member and referred to a committee or multiple committees dealing with the subject area of the bill by the presiding officer of the chamber – Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann in the Senate or Speaker Philip Gunn in the House.

If the bill makes it through the committee process, it can be taken up by the full chamber.

It should be pointed out that in the Mississippi Legislature, a committee chair has the option to not take up a bill before the committee or before the full chamber and to allow it to die.

But if the bill passes both committee and the full chamber, it is sent to the other chamber where the process is repeated.

It also is important to note that in committee and before the full chamber in both the House and Senate, a bill can be amended by a majority vote. In most instances, final passage of a bill also requires a majority vote, but there are higher thresholds in some instances, such as a three-fifths majority to pass a revenue or tax bill or two-thirds majority to pass a constitutional resolution.

Once the bill passes the House and Senate in the same form, it is sent to Gov. Tate Reeves. He has the option to sign it into law, to allow it to become law without his signature or to veto it.

It takes a two-thirds majority vote of both chambers to override a governor’s veto.
The Lawmakers

Gov. Tate Reeves
65th governor of Mississippi

House of Representatives

Speaker Philip Gunn
Speaker of the House

Below is a list of representatives and their district. Republicans are in red, democrats are in blue, and independents are in black.

Jason White, Speaker Pro Tempore - 48

Shane Aguirre - 17
Lester Carpenter - 1
Jeffrey S. Guice - 114
Jay McKnight - 95
Donnie Scoogg - 89
Jeramey Anderson - 110
Bryant W. Clark - 47
Jeff Hals - 24
Dana McLean - 39
Omena Scott - 80
Brent Anderson - 122
Alyce G. Clarke - 69
Greg Haney - 118
Doug McLeod - 107
Fred Shanks - 60
Otis Anthony - 31
Angela Cockerman - 96
Jeffery Harness - 85
Carl Mickens - 42
Troy Smith - 84
William Tracy Arnold - 3
Carolyn Crawford - 121
John W. Hines, Sr. - 50
Tom Miles - 75
De’Keith A. Stamps - 66
Willie Bailey - 49
Sam Creekmore IV - 14
Stacey Hobgood-Wilkis - 108
Sam C. Mims, V - 97
Jody Steverson - 4
Nick Bain - 2
Dana Criswell - 6
Gregory Holloway, Sr. - 76
Ken Morgan - 100
Rufus Straughter - 51
Earle S. Banks - 67
Ronnie C. Crudup - 71
Joey Hood - 35
Gene Newman - 61
Zakiya Summers - 68
Shane Barnett - 86
Becky Currie - 92
Steve Hopkins - 7
Karl Oliver - 46
Cheikh Taylor - 38
Manly Barton - 109
Jerry Darnell - 28
Kevin Horan - 34
Solomon C. Osborne - 32
Rickey Thompson - 16
Oscar Denton - 55
Stephen A. Horne - 81
Jansen Owen - 106
Joseph Tubb - 87
Donnie Bell - 21
Clay Deweese - 12
Mac Huddleston - 15
Orlando Paden - 26
Mark Tullios - 79
Christopher M. Bell - 65
Dan Eubanks - 25
Lataisha Jackson - 11
Randall Patterson - 115
Jerry R. Turner - 18
Richard Bennett - 120
Casey Eure - 116
Robert L. Johnson III - 94
Bill Pigott - 99
Kenneth Walker - 27
Edward Blackmon, Jr. - 57
Michael T. Evans - 45
Kabir Karriem - 41
Daryl Porter - 98
Price Wallace - 77
Joel Bomgar - 58
Bob Evans - 91
Bill Kinkade - 52
Brent Powell - 59
Percy W. Watson - 103
C. Scott Bounds - 44
John G. Faulkner - 5
Timmy Ladner - 93
John Read - 112
Tom Weathersby - 62
Randi P. Boyd - 19
Kevin Felsher - 117
John Thomas "Trey" Lamar, III - 8
Thomas U. Reynolds - 33
Sonya Williams-Barnes - 119
Chris Brown - 20
Kevin Ford - 54
Jon Lancaster - 22
Rob Roberson - 43
Brady Williamson - 10
Bo Brown - 70
Jill Ford - 73
Vince Mangold - 53
Robin Robinson - 88
Joseph L. Wright - 37
Cedric Burnett - 9
Stephanie Foster - 63
Steve Massengill - 13
Tracey T. Rosebud - 30
Lee Yancey - 74
Charles Busby - 111
Karl Gibbs - 36
Kent McCarty - 101
Randy Rushing - 78
Shanda Yates - 64
Larry Byrd - 104
Debra Gibbs - 72
Hester Jackson McCray - 40
Robert L. Sanders - 29
Charles Young, Jr. - 82
Billy Adam Calvert - 83
Dale Goodin - 105
Missy McGee - 102
Noah Sanford - 90
Henry Zuber III - 113
Below is a list of state senators and their district. Republicans are in red and democrats are in blue.

**Dean Kirby,** President Pro Tempore - 30

Juan Barnett - 34
Kathy L. Chism - 3
David Jordan - 24
Derrick T. Simmons - 12
Jason Barrett - 39
Dennis DeBar, Jr. - 43
Dean Kirby - 30
Sarita Simmons - 13
Barbara Blackmon - 21
Scott DeLano - 50
Tyler McCaughn - 31
Melanie Sojourner - 37
Kevin Blackwell - 19

Jeremy England - 51
Chris McDaniel - 42
Daniel H. Sparks - 5
David Blount - 29
Joey Fillingane - 41
Michael McLendon - 1
Benjamin Suber - 8
Nicole Boyd - 9
Hillman T. Frazier - 27
Chad McMaham - 6
Jeff Tate - 33
Jennifer B. Branning - 18
Josh Harkins - 20
J. Walter Michel - 25

Joseph Thomas - 22
Hob Bryan - 7
Rod Hickman - 32
Philip Moran - 46
Mike Thompson - 48
Albert Butler - 36
Angela Burks Hill - 40
Sollie B. Norwood - 28
Angela Turner-Ford - 16
Kelvin Butler - 38
W. Briggs Hopson III - 23
David Parker - 2
Neil S. Whaley - 10
Joel R. Carter, Jr. - 49

John Horhn - 26
Rita Potts Parks - 4
Brice Wiggins - 52
Chris Caughman - 35
Robert L. Jackson - 11
John A. Polk - 44
Bart Williams - 15
Lydia Graves Chassaniol - 14
Chris Johnson - 45
Joseph M. Seymour - 47
Chuck Younger - 17

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**The Districts**

[Interactive Map Link]

**Current Mississippi Congressional Districts**

Map is labeled by color according to the party affiliation of that district’s representative.

**Mississippi House Districts**

as adopted May 2, 2012

**Mississippi Senate Districts**

effective as of April 3, 2019
Both the speaker and governor have proposed phasing out the income tax, which accounts for about one-third of state general fund revenue. Because of the state’s strong tax collections, Reeves has proposed a five-year phase out. Last year Gunn proposed increasing the sales tax on various retail items to help offset the elimination of the income tax and to offset his proposal to also cut the 7% sales tax on groceries in half.

What, if anything happens on the income tax, could have a direct impact on another issue: teacher pay.

Unprecedented revenue growth, fueled at least in part by circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in a staggering state surplus in funds. That surplus includes $1.8 billion in federal American Rescue Plan funds that are designed to help deal with the pandemic.

But legislators have considerable discretion in how those funds are spent. Hosemann has said he wants to ensure the impact for the state in the spending of the unprecedented funds “is generational, not for one or two years, but for one or two generations.”

Legislators also must be aware that the recent rapid growth in the tax collections will likely slow dramatically as circumstances surrounding the pandemic change.

In May 2021, the Mississippi Supreme Court in a landmark and controversial ruling said that the state’s initiative process was invalid. The court made the ruling based on the fact the constitutional language setting up the initiative process said signatures to place issues on the ballot must be gathered equally from five U.S. House districts. The state has had only four districts since the 2000 U.S. Census, making it impossible for initiative sponsors to carry out that mandate.

It will take agreement from a two-thirds majority from each chamber to place an issue on the ballot to allow citizens to reinstate the process by which they can garner signatures to place issues on the ballot. Most likely, there will be an effort to change the old process so that citizens gather signatures to place issues on the ballot to change or amend state law instead of the Constitution.

Mississippi is one of only 12 state not to expand Medicaid and receive literally billions in federal funds to provide health coverage for between 150,000 and 300,000 Mississippians who primarily work, but in jobs that do not provide health insurance.

The federal government normally pays 90% of the costs of Medicaid expansion, but because of congressional action in response to the coronavirus, the feds will now pay even more to states that expand.

Gunn and Reeves have voiced strong opposition to expansion. Hosemann has indicated he would be willing to study the issue and had indicated Senate committees would before the 2022 session began, but they did not.
The Legislature is slated to take up the redrawing of the four U.S. House seats and 174 state legislative seats during the 2022 session to adhere to population shifts found by the 2020 U.S. Census.

The drawing of the state legislative districts, in particular, has the potential to be contentious because it impacts each lawmaker’s ability to be reelected.

When the Supreme Court struck down the initiative process, it did so in a ruling on a lawsuit challenging the validity of a November 2020 vote on an initiative that legalized medical marijuana. Results from that election, of course, were also thrown out.

All of the state’s top political leaders — Speaker Philip Gunn, Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann and Gov. Tate Reeves — said they want to legalize medical marijuana during the 2022 session. But Reeves has said he will veto legislation in its current form because it allows too large of a quantity of marijuana to be disbursed to individuals.

Mississippi teachers remain on or near the bottom in the region and nationally in terms of pay. Legislative leaders and the governor have indicated that a significant raise will be passed in the 2022 session on the heels of the $1,000 raise approved last session.

In his 2019 gubernatorial campaign, Reeves committed to a multi-year, $4,300 raise for teachers. But in his first budget proposal after being elected, he said nary a word about a teacher pay raise.

But coming into this session, the governor has proposed a $3,300 raise phased in during three years. The Senate leadership, in particular, has said not only the salary, but other items, such as the cost of health insurance for teachers, should be considered this session as part of any teacher pay consideration.

Both Gunn and Reeves have voiced their support of legislation banning the teaching of critical race theory, which the state Department of Education has said repeatedly is not being taught in Mississippi schools.

The issue could be one of the most contentious taken up during the session. Many fear that any ban of critical race theory, which is in general terms a collegiate level academic field, would prevent the teaching of the impact of race and racism on the state and country and also conflict with an existing state law calling for the teaching of civil rights and its history in Mississippi.