



The Mississippi Legislature is entering their fifth week of work for the 2016 Legislative Session. It has been a relatively slow start this year as both the House and Senate spent the first few weeks getting organized with the beginning of this new four year term. Under the deadline schedule adopted by the House Wednesday, the 125-day session, originally set to end May 8, will wrap up April 24. The deadline to introduce general legislation will now be Thursday of this week and committees have to act on those bills by Feb. 23. The Senate should vote this week on these proposed deadlines. Committee work will begin in earnest this week. You will find the current list of MAR's Legislative Priorities [HERE](#)

Some quick highlights from the first few weeks include:

- Representative Phillip Gunn (R-Clinton) was reelected as Speaker of the House by unanimous vote.
- Representative Greg Snowden (R-Meridian) was reelected Speaker Pro-Temp of the House by Unanimous Vote
- Senator Terry Burton (R-Newton) was elected Senate Pro-Temp by unanimous vote.
- The House of Representatives recommended overturning a Democratic lawmaker's victory in an election that went to a tiebreaker. The House voted to seat Republican challenger Mark Tullos of Raleigh rather than Democratic Rep. Bo Eaton of Taylorsville. The two tied in the November election in District 79 in Smith and Jasper counties. Eaton won a tiebreaker in a drawing of straws overseen by the governor and secretary of state. Tullos filed an appeal and asked the House to declare him the winner. He said the election never should have been tied because he believes some votes were improperly counted.
- The Mississippi Senate confirmed Democrat Bob Dearing as the winner of a contested election. Senators rejected a challenge filed by Republican Melanie Sojourner, who sought to be declared the winner by saying there was election misconduct in parts of the district. Dearing and Sojourner ran in District 37 in Adams, Amite, Franklin and Pike counties. Dearing won by 64 votes in November.
- Gov. Phil Bryant announced he's having to make cuts and dip into the rainy day fund -- for a total of \$75 million -- to balance the current year's budget with revenue falling short of predictions used to set the budget. The Mississippi Adequate Education Program, Medicaid, university students' financial aid, veteran's services, state debt payments and the entire Department of Public Safety are exempt from the cuts. Mississippi started fiscal 2016 last July 1 with a budget of \$6 billion. Bryant said he was making a \$75 million "adjustment" to the budget. That translates into cutting \$39.8 million and taking \$35.2 million from the state's cash reserves in what's commonly called the rainy day fund.
- New Committees were added to the House and Senate. The Senate added one new committee with jurisdiction over Medicaid to mirror the same committee in the House. Speaker Phillip Gunn announced that he is creating four new committees: the Technology Committee, Drug Policy, General Bills and Performance Based Budgeting committees.

- Chairs and Vice Chairs of House committees that handle legislation important to REALTORS® are listed below. A full list of House Committees can be found [HERE](#).
  - Appropriations: Herb Frierson, R- Poplarville; Mac Huddleston, R-Pontotoc.
  - Banking and Financial Services: Hank Zuber, R-Ocean Springs. Vice Chairwoman Kimberly Campbell, D-Jackson.
  - Conservation and Water Resources: John Read, R-Gautier; Bryant Clark, D-Lexington.
  - Insurance: Gary Chism, R-Columbus; Brad Touchstone, R-Hattiesburg.
  - Judiciary A: Mark Baker, R-Brandon; Cory Wilson, R-Madison.
  - Judiciary B: Andy Gipson, R-Braxton; Joey Hood, R-Ackerman.
  - Revenue and Expenditure General Bills: Mark Formby: RPicayune; Randy Boyd, R-Matachie.
  - Transportation: Charles Busby, R-Pascagoula; Steve Massengill, R-Hickory Flat.
  - Ways and Means: Jeff Smith, R-Columbus; Trey Lamar, R-Senatobia.
- Chairs and Vice Chairs of Senate committees that handle legislation important to REALTORS® are listed below. A full list of Senate Committees can be found [HERE](#).
  - Appropriations: Eugene “Buck” Clarke, R-Hollandale; Briggs Hopson, R-Vicksburg.
  - Business & Financial Institution: Rita Parks, R-Corinth, Vice Chair is open
  - Finance: Joey Fillingane, R-Sumrall; Dean Kirby, R-Pearl.
  - Highways and Transportation: Willie Simmons, D-Cleveland; Dennis DeBar, R-Leakesville.
  - Insurance: Videt Carmichael, R-Meridian; Kevin Blackwell, R-Southaven.
  - Judiciary A: Sean Tindell, R-Gulfport; Sally Doty, R-Brookhaven.
  - Judiciary B: Hob Bryan, D-Amory; Chris McDaniel, R-Ellisville.