

Week of March 24th legislative committee calendars: [House](#) | [Senate](#)



Tennessee Celebrates Ag Day on the Hill at the State Capitol

Tennessee marked Ag Day on the Hill this Tuesday, bringing together Gov. Bill Lee, state leaders, and agricultural advocates to celebrate the state's \$81 billion agriculture and forestry industry. The event featured industry showcases, a corn shelling contest among state leaders, and food prepared by Tennessee FFA and 4-H students.

At HB Strategies, agriculture is close to home—Estie holds an Ag degree, and Meagan grew up on a family farm. We were excited to see such a strong turnout celebrating Tennessee’s top industry and the hardworking farmers and foresters who drive our economy.



PRESS RELEASE



Both Meagan and Estie joined leaders at the 2025 Lipscomb Prayer Breakfast, sharing a moment of faith, fellowship, and inspiration. The event brought together community members and public figures to reflect and pray for guidance in leadership.



Lawmakers are sounding the alarm over delays in federal funding and rising construction costs. Sen. Bo Watson urged agencies to prioritize essential projects amid ongoing uncertainty.

On Tuesday, Gov. Bill Lee's amendment to the state budget will be discussed in both House and Senate Finance Committees during their regular meeting times. Lawmakers will review proposed changes and their impact on key funding priorities, including infrastructure, public safety, and economic development.

Budget highlights under review include:

- TDOT's \$30B backlog of infrastructure needs
- A \$3M increase in license plate production costs
- \$82M requested for new youth development centers
- A proposed \$275M TEMA operations center
- Ongoing delays in Arts Commission federal grants

Agencies are bracing for tighter budgets as inflation, tariffs, and federal cuts continue to affect Tennessee's financial planning.

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Governor's Race Watch: Rose Officially Launches 2026 Bid

Rep. John Rose (R-Cookeville) officially launched his 2026 gubernatorial campaign on Thursday, becoming the first Republican to formally declare. A fourth-term congressman, former state agriculture commissioner, and successful businessman, Rose is expected to emphasize his farming roots, private sector experience, and personal wealth—estimated at \$60 million.

His announcement sets up a potential primary battle with U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn, who has expressed interest in running and remains a high-profile contender. An anonymous poll circulated before Rose's announcement suggested potential vulnerabilities in Blackburn's record and tested messaging that highlights Rose's conservative platform and anti-establishment tone.

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House Panel to Consider VALOR Act for Veterans' Benefits

The Veterans Assistance for Livelihood, Opportunity, and Relief (VALOR) Act, sponsored by Rep. Gino Bulso (R-Brentwood), is set for a hearing in the House State and Local Government Committee on March 19. The bill seeks to expand financial relief for 100% permanently and totally disabled veterans, including:

- Exempting vehicle registration fees for one private vehicle
- Providing free lifetime hunting and fishing licenses
- Increasing property tax exemptions from \$175,000 to \$250,000 on a veteran's primary residence

The bill has already cleared the House Departments and Agencies Subcommittee and, if passed, would take effect on January 1, 2026.

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Bill Targeting 'HARBORING' of Immigrants Advances in Tennessee House



Bill Targeting 'Harboring' of Immigrants Advances in Tennessee House

A bill that would criminalize harboring or hiding immigrants without legal status has advanced in the House. The measure includes misdemeanor and felony charges, including a Class A felony if a minor under 13 is involved. Opponents say it could criminalize charity work and family situations in mixed-status households.

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IN THE NEWS

- **Tennessee fraud losses surge to \$157M in 2024**

The Fertility Treatment and Contraceptive Protection Act passed the Senate unanimously. It ensures access to IVF while leaving room for state regulation. The bill is set to be heard in the House Health Committee on March 25.

[WVLT.TV](#) - Mar. 19, 2025

- **Tennessee Senate passes bill to protect access to IVF**

A resolution calling for a constitutional amendment that would give judges the authority to deny bail for offenses like second-degree murder, aggravated rape of a child or aggravated rape was deferred in the Senate on Thursday.

[PRO.STATEAFFAIRS.COM](#) - Mar. 14, 2025

- **Anti-fluoride bill fails in Senate**

A bill to ban fluoride in drinking water failed in the Senate Energy, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee.

[PRO.STATEAFFAIRS.COM](#) - Mar 20, 2025

- **USDA cuts affect TN schools and farmers**

Cuts to local food programs will reduce access to fresh food in schools and cost Tennessee farmers millions in lost sales.

[TENNESSEELOOKOUT.COM](#) - Mar. 17, 2025

- **Pesticide Label Lawsuit Immunity Bill Advances**

A bill that would protect pesticide and herbicide manufacturers from

lawsuits related to federally approved labels is moving forward. Supporters argue it protects farmers; critics warn it limits accountability.

[PRO.STATEAFFAIRS.COM](https://pro.stateaffairs.com) - Mar. 17, 2025

- **TNJ: Bills to boost English requirements for licenses killed in committees**

The latest effort to require driver license exams to be given only in English failed in the House Transportation Subcommittee.

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- **House Panel Rejects Bill to Require State Detention of Noncitizens**

A bill requiring Tennessee law enforcement to detain noncitizens and transfer them to the Department of Safety failed in a House subcommittee. Officials cited a lack of detention facilities and legal authority to hold individuals after ICE detainers expire.

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- **Mortgage Interest Rate Bill Stalls in Senate Amid Debate**

A bill proposing changes to Tennessee's maximum mortgage interest rate has been delayed in the Senate following concerns about its potential impact on homeowners. Its fate remains uncertain.

[PRO.STATEAFFAIRS.COM](https://pro.stateaffairs.com) - Mar. 18, 2025

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Tennessee

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