



March 11, 2022

Rep. Robin Smith Resigns

Rep. Robin Smith (R-Hixson) resigned Monday upon being charged with honest services wire fraud. The following day she accepted a plea deal and agreed to work with the federal government moving forward. Her resignation and plea deal are preceded by an investigation spanning two years of former House Speaker Glen Casada (R-Franklin) and his former aide, Cade Cothren. Federal prosecutors allege that the misconduct arose from a political consulting firm called Phoenix Solutions set up under a false identity, Matthew Phoenix. In a statement, Smith said the following regarding the charges and subsequent resignation:

"There are no excuses. I intend to cooperate fully as a witness with the federal government and do whatever I can to assist the government in this regard. I have resigned as Representative of the Tennessee House. I did so out of respect for the honor of Tennesseans, my commitment to public service over the last several decades, and of course, my Christian faith. I believe in forgiveness, and I hope to earn yours over time."

TN Investment in Student Achievement Information

This week, the Tennessee Department of Education released additional resources about the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) to explain how the proposed student-based public school funding formula prioritizes students over systems and reflects Tennesseans' values. The Department provided the following information in a press release:

Starting in the 2023-24 school year, the TISA would invest an estimated \$9 billion in education funding for the state, including state and local funds, which would include an additional recurring state investment of \$1 billion. The TISA is designed to empower each student to read proficiently by third grade, prepare each high school graduate for postsecondary success, and provide resources needed to all students to ensure they succeed.

Many helpful resources are available at FundingforStudentSuccess.org including:

- TISA By the Numbers: This overview provides a high-level breakdown of Tennessee education numbers associated with the funding review public engagement process and proposed student-based public school funding formula.
- Understanding Local Contribution: An animated video to explain how local and county governments contribute to public school funding.
- TISA FAQs: Developed after conversations with directors of schools across the state, these FAQs provide more detail on implementation of the proposed formula.

Continued

Lt. Gov. McNally Resolution Condemning Russia

Lt. Gov. Randy McNally (R-Oak Ridge) sponsored a resolution this week condemning Russia for its recent attacks against Ukraine, calling the country's actions a "heinous, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has brought death and despair to the Ukrainian people and threatened the peace and security of Europe." The resolution encourages President Biden and the United States Congress to utilize all available options to effect the full removal of Russian financial institutions from Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) as an appropriate and effective sanction against Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

General Legislative Updates

- Budget appropriation amendments are due in the House by March 14 and in the Senate by March 24.
- It's always great to catch up with Governor Lee during these busy weeks at the Capitol. We appreciate him making time for the Harris Frazier team and clients.