

What's New on the Hill

Week of February 19th legislative committee calendars: [Senate](#) | [House](#)





Team HFGR had a productive and celebratory week on the hill! We were thrilled to host our clients from Oak Ridge National Laboratory at the Cordell Hull Building for nuclear education opportunities with legislators and staff. Special thanks to Representative Monty Fritts for putting this together!

Additionally, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Senator Bo Watson for his well-deserved recognition from TAMHO for his steadfast advocacy and support for behavioral health service providers in Tennessee. So well deserved, Senator Watson

Lastly, we had a wonderful Day on the Hill this week with our clients the TN Association of Optometric Physicians!



Tennessee's Grocery Tax Holiday's Future is Uncertain

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According to Department of Finance & Administration Commissioner Jim Bryson, the decision stems from stagnant revenue, contrasting sharply with the growth witnessed in previous years. The root cause of this revenue plateau appears to be traced back to the franchise and excise tax, renowned for its volatility year over year. Governor Bill Lee, however, has proposed a different approach by considering substantial cuts or complete elimination of the franchise tax, a move that has sparked debate among state lawmakers. While some Democrats argue against what they perceive as favorable treatment for corporations, Republicans defend the proposal, emphasizing its potential benefits for businesses of all sizes.

Meanwhile, this potential tax cut has fueled speculation among legislators. No definitive confirmation has been made public, leaving lawmakers to navigate a delicate balance between fiscal responsibility and risk mitigation. The fate of the

food tax holiday remains uncertain.

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House Homeland Security Committee Chair Rep. Mark Green (R-Tenn.) has announced his retirement from Congress, stating his desire to "go out with a win" after successfully impeaching Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. Green emphasized achieving border security legislation and holding the administration accountable as his primary goals. Mayorkas's impeachment, with just one vote to spare, marks the first time a sitting Cabinet secretary has been impeached since the 1870s.

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IN THE NEWS



- **Conservative Brian Beathard Officially Announces Campaign For State Representative**

Williamson County Commission Chairman Brian Beathard today officially launched his campaign for State Representative in District 65. Beathard will be a candidate in the Aug. 1 Republican primary. Incumbent Rep. Sam Whitson is not seeking another term.

[WILLIAMSONHERALD.COM](https://www.williamsonherald.com) - Feb. 15, 2024

- **TN Republicans Pushing To Mix Up Election Laws To Prevent Dual Campaigns**

When Rep. Gloria Johnson (D-Knoxville) was nearly expelled last year, she used the momentum to launch a campaign for the United States Senate while also running for re-election in her Tennessee House seat.

[WKRN.COM](https://www.wkrn.com) - Feb. 13, 2024

- **Tennessee Ag Doubts Legality Of Bill Limiting President's Ability To Federalize National Guard**

Tennessee's Attorney General issued a rare opinion, questioning the legality of a bill sponsored by 13 Republicans to limit the President's ability to federalize the state national guard.

[TENNESSEELOOKOUT.COM](https://www.tennesseelookout.com) - Feb. 14, 2024

- **Tennessee Bill To Require Earlier Requests For Absentee Ballots Passes Senate, Advances In House**

A bill that would move up the deadline for voters to request an absentee ballot passed the Tennessee Senate this week and is advancing quickly in the House.

[TENNESSEAN.COM](https://www.tennessean.com) - Feb. 14, 2024

- **Why Tennessee's Grocery Tax Holiday Is Unlikely This Year**

Tennessee isn't planning on bringing back its food tax holiday from the last few years.

[WKRN.COM](https://www.wkrn.com) - Feb. 12, 2024

- **Tennessee Bill Pushes To Ban Sale Of Cold Beer To Decrease Duis**

A bill working its way through the Tennessee legislature seeks to ban cold beer sales in the state.

[NYPOST.COM](https://www.nypost.com) - Feb. 15, 2024

- **Tennessee's Senate Passes A Backup Plan In Case Tsu's Board Dissolves This Summer. The Sponsor Hopes It's Never Used**

Tennessee's Senate passed a bill today that would put the state's higher

education commission in charge of Tennessee State University if its board of trustees sunsets this summer. Sen. Jon Lundberg, R-Bristol, who sponsored the bill, said he hopes it is never used.

[WPLN.ORG](https://www.wpln.org) - Feb. 15, 2024

- **Wetlands Have Some Protections In Tennessee. The State Legislature Might Remove Them**

Wetlands weave between land and water, connecting invisible threads in nature while teeming with plants and wildlife. These spongy soils absorb floodwaters and are considered among the most biodiverse habitats on Earth — and the most vulnerable.

[WPLN.ORG](https://www.wpln.org) - Feb. 15, 2024

- **Elvis Act Protecting Tennessee Musicians Against Ai Abuse Advances In The House**

A new bill that aims to protect Tennessee musicians from unethical uses of artificial intelligence gained traction as it passed the Tennessee House Banking and Consumer Affairs Subcommittee with a unanimous vote.

[TENNESSEAN.COM](https://www.tennessean.com) - Feb. 14, 2024



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