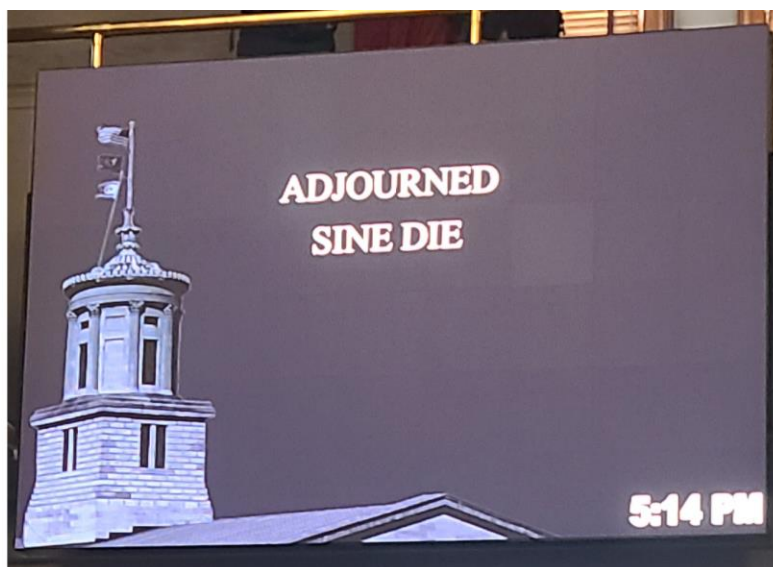


What's New on the Hill

SINE DIE

The 113th Tennessee General Assembly adjourned Sine Die yesterday afternoon, marking the end of a 15-week session. The 114th Tennessee General Assembly is scheduled to convene at noon on Tuesday, January 14, 2025.



Governor Bill Lee addressed the close of the 2024 legislative session, highlighting the passage of his \$52.8 billion budget and strategic legislation aimed at cutting taxes, investing in education, increasing public safety, and strengthening Tennessee's workforce.

Notable achievements include the Protecting Children From Social Media Act, Tennessee Disability and Aging Act, and the ELVIS Act, making Tennessee the first state in the nation to protect musicians and artists from having their voice stolen by artificial intelligence (AI).

The budget priorities include significant investments in tax relief, education, healthcare, public safety, and environmental conservation.

You can read Governor Bill Lee's full press release statement [linked here](#).

Our team is grateful for another successful session and to all of the members, colleagues, and friends who helped us to better serve our clients this session.





It is also a bittersweet end of session as we bid farewell to Sen. Art Swann, a dear friend who has dedicated countless years working for Tennesseans. As a true statesman, he has consistently answered the call to serve. [Linked here](#) is the resolution in his honor.

It was also the last day for Rep. Dale Carr, who has served with distinction in the 108th through the 113th General Assemblies. His commitment to District 12 & Tennessee are greatly appreciated. [Read more about Rep. Carr's extensive service.](#)



Kim Cox is retiring from the House Clerk's office this year. Meagan worked with Kim there years ago and they have many fun memories together. We wish her the best!!



NBJ WOMEN OF INFLUENCE



Congratulations to Estie on being selected as a 2024 Women of Influence by the Nashville Business Journal! We were honored to celebrate her at the event yesterday and recognize her incredible and well-deserved achievement.

It was truly inspiring to be surrounded by women who are making a real difference in our community and straight up crushing it! It's important that we support women in business and give them a path forward.

In addition to celebrating Estie's remarkable achievement, we had the privilege of hearing from Amy Adams Strunk, owner of the Tennessee Titans, alongside Titans executives Shannon Myers and Tina Tuggle, who shared insights on the importance of female representation in leadership roles. With around half of the

Titans' executive leadership team being women and approximately 45% of the entire business staff comprising women, the Titans exemplify the value of diversity and inclusion.

Under Amy's leadership, the Titans have seen significant growth in female representation, with programs and policies in place to support and empower female employees. This commitment to supporting women in leadership roles extends to the football side of the organization, with two female coaches breaking barriers in traditionally male-dominated roles.

[READ MORE](#)



FY24-25 \$52.8B BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS



Economic Opportunity & Tax Relief

- \$100 million investment in Tennessee's Rainy Day Fund, bringing reserves to over \$2 billion, the largest in state history.
- \$393.4 million in recurring funding for tax cuts and economic growth, along with \$1.5 billion non-recurring funding to simplify the franchise tax.

Education

- More than \$261 million to strengthen education through the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) formula growth, including teacher pay raises.
- Over \$5 million dedicated to universal reading screeners and AP Access for All, providing AP courses to students across rural and urban Tennessee.
- \$2.5 million to enhance students' reading and phonics skills.
- \$144 million allocated to establish Education Freedom Scholarships in the future, empowering parents with school choice.

Health

- \$197 million over five years from TennCare shared savings, the largest investment in rural health in Tennessee history.
- \$100 million over five years from TennCare shared savings to strengthen mental health care.
- \$26.7 million investment in services for Tennesseans with disabilities.
- More than \$3 million in additional funding to support crisis pregnancy non-profits.

Law and Order/Safe Neighborhoods

- \$17 million in funding for an additional 60 State Troopers and related support staff.
- \$8 million to expand the school-based behavioral health liaison program.

- \$750,000 allocated for Houses of Worship Security Grants.
- Funding for a National Guard recruitment incentive package.

Conservation

- \$63 million to create eight new Tennessee State Parks.
- \$15 million to expand blueway trail access, driving tourism and economic activity.
- \$20 million to improve water quality at rivers, lakes, and streams.
- \$10 million investment in the Nuclear Fund to recruit companies to establish a nuclear development and manufacturing ecosystem
- \$5 million to protect and enhance scenic beauty along major highways.
- \$3 million for Access 2030 to make Tennessee State Parks accessible to individuals with disabilities.



LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY



Franchise and Excise Tax

Lawmakers passed a massive \$1.9B franchise tax cut and refund for corporations, providing relief for taxpayers and repealing the franchise tax minimum measure. The bill includes a limited window for taxpayers to claim refunds of excess

franchise tax paid over the past three years. Governor Bill Lee is expected to sign the bill into law.

Key Points:

- The bill repeals the franchise tax minimum measure and allows taxpayers to claim refunds for excess franchise tax paid in the past three years.
- Taxpayers must file refund claims between May 15, 2024, and November 30, 2024.
- Names of taxpayers and refund ranges will be published on the Tennessee Department of Revenue's website from May 31, 2025, through June 30, 2025.

Certificate of Need Amendments

Current law requires state approval before providers can build or expand health care facilities and services. Lawmakers removed CON requirements for certain facilities and services in designated counties. The amendments also establish new rules for facility licensing and appeal procedures.

Key Points:

- The amendments remove CON requirements for various healthcare facilities and services in designated counties, with staggered implementation dates.
- CON appeal provisions are revised, limiting the ability to appeal to unsuccessful applicants.
- New rules for facility licensing are established, allowing facilities to begin operations upon receiving a CON or license, whichever comes first.

Cybersecurity Liability

The General Assembly passed legislation to provide liability protections for private and governmental entities in class action lawsuits resulting from cybersecurity events, with exceptions for willful negligence. The bill aims to address concerns following several high-profile cyberattacks.

Key Points:

- Private and governmental entities are protected from liability in class action lawsuits resulting from cybersecurity events, except in cases of willful negligence.
- Entities must meet certain requirements, including obtaining permission from school districts and law enforcement, and completing specialized training.
- The bill seeks to address the national problem of hiring enough school resource officers by allowing educators and staff to carry concealed handguns on school grounds.

Statewide School Vouchers Update

Governor Bill Lee's proposal for a universal school choice system, offering scholarships for children attending private schools, faced significant challenges during this legislative session. The idea of providing vouchers met with public backlash, with concerns raised about the allocation of state funds to support private education.

Governor Lee aimed to distribute up to 20,000 vouchers valued at \$7,075 each. However, the House and Senate presented divergent proposals from the outset. The House included additional provisions in their bill, possibly to garner support from those opposed to a standalone voucher program, while the Senate closely aligned with the governor's initial plan.

Despite months of negotiations, the chambers failed to reconcile their differences, prompting Governor Lee to halt the effort. However, Lee has indicated his intention to reintroduce the proposal next year, underscoring his commitment to advancing education choice initiatives in Tennessee. While the outcome of this session may not have met expectations, the conversation surrounding education scholarships remains open for future consideration and refinement.

Arming Teachers

Legislation that stirred major controversy passed in the final week of the session allowing teachers and school staff to carry firearms. Sponsored by Rep. Ryan Williams, the bill imposes strict requirements for those wishing to carry firearms, including psychological examinations and completion of 40 hours of law-enforcement-approved firearm training.



IN THE NEWS



- **Tennessee's tumultuous legislative session concludes after final flurry of action on education, guns and spending**

State lawmakers wrapped the 2024 session up Thursday night, having

passed two of the biggest bills in the last week.

[WPLN.ORG](https://www.wpln.org) - April 25, 2024

- **Tennessee 2024 legislative session: Highlights from the \$52.8B budget, possible new laws**

Tennessee Governor Bill Lee marked the close of the 2024 legislative session on Thursday, which includes the passage of his \$52.8 billion budget.

[FOX17.COM](https://www.fox17.com) - April 26, 2024

- **Tennessee legislative session ends with failed voucher push, tax overhaul and party feuds**

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee stood in front of cameras in November, eager to announce his plan to expand a school voucher program statewide in 2024.

[TENNESSEAN.COM](https://www.tennessean.com) - April 26, 2024

- **Tennessee lawmakers adjourn after finalizing \$1.9B tax cut and refund for businesses**

Tennessee's GOP-controlled General Assembly on Thursday adjourned for the year, concluding months of tense political infighting that doomed Republican Gov. Bill Lee's universal school voucher push. But a bill allowing some teachers to carry firearms in public schools and one adding a nearly \$2 billion tax cut and refund for businesses received last-minute approval.

[APNEWS.COM](https://www.apnews.com) - April 26, 2024

- **Highs and lows of the 2024 legislative session**

The Tennessee General Assembly adjourned sine die on Thursday, ending the regular 2024 legislative session. It ended after several weeks of debate and conflict over guns, abortion, taxes, universal school vouchers and more.

WBIR.COM - April 25, 2024

- **Tennessee lawmakers create offense of ‘abortion trafficking’**

Tennessee lawmakers have passed a bill that would criminalize people who transport minors outside of the state if they need an abortion.

WKRN.COM - April 24, 2024

- **Legislature OKs permitting armed teachers in Tennessee schools**

After hours of tense debate and impassioned cries, the Tennessee General Assembly gave the final OK for teachers to carry in K-12 schools in Tennessee, prompting fierce outcry from the gallery.

WKRN.COM - April 23, 2024

- **Flight delayed or canceled? Airlines have to give you an automatic refund now**

The Biden administration finalized rules on Wednesday requiring airlines to automatically refund passengers for canceled or significantly delayed flights and to share baggage, change, or cancellation fees upfront.

WATE.COM - April 24, 2024

- **Tennessee Kids Serve Summer Challenge is Back!**

Each summer, the First Lady invites Tennessee students to devote a portion of their summer break to serving their community through the summer challenge. The challenge is open to rising kindergarteners through rising sixth graders from June 1st to August 1st. To sign up and learn more about the challenge, [visit the First Lady’s website](#).



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