Awaiting the much-anticipated passage of the state budget, it is possible the legislature adjourns for the first half of the 113th General Assembly by the close of April. We are told that the goal is to get the budget to the floor the week of the 17th or 24th, but that is not a guarantee.

- *All Senate committees have closed except for Finance, Ways and Means*
- *All House committees except for Finance, Ways and Means and Calendar & Rules are expected to close next week.*

EXPULSION VOTES

There are two fewer members in the State House this morning after the House's expulsion debate put Tennessee in the national spotlight.

Yesterday afternoon, the House voted to expel two Democratic lawmakers, Justin Jones of Nashville and Justin Pearson of Memphis, for breaking House rules. The vote to expel Jones was 72-25, and the vote to expel Pearson was 69-26.

The effort to expel a third Democrat, Gloria Johnson of Knoxville, failed on a 65-30 vote.

The expulsions of Justin Jones and Justin Pearson, two Democratic lawmakers in the Tennessee State House are effective immediately. As a result, there are now two vacancies in the House.

While Justin Jones and Justin Pearson were officially expelled and no longer members of the Tennessee State House, they could potentially be reappointed to their seats. The vacancies left by their expulsion will be filled by county legislative bodies, and at least 15 of Nashville's Metro Council members have pledged to send Justin Jones

back to the chamber. It remains to be seen how quickly these vacancies will be filled and whether Pearson will also seek to regain his seat.

READ FULL STORY

Putting students first: In response to the tragic shooting at Covenant School last week, Tennessee is taking a critical step to ensure the safety of our students and educators.

With the passing of HB 322 in the House, the legislature will implement additional regulations and guidelines, amending the previous school safety legislation. This is in hopes of strengthening the security and safety of schools as well as increased vigilance and threat assessment.

STATE-LEVEL SAFETY TEAM

- Under the present law, the commissioner of education is to create a safety team at the state level to assist

LOCKED EXTERIOR DOORS

- The new law requires all schools to keep exterior doors locked and limit access to the primary entrance to

both LEAs and schools in meeting the requirements of the SAVE (Schools Against Violence in Education) Act. The team must develop and periodically review templates to be used by each district for its own district-level safety plans and building-level emergency response plan.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Requires LEA to adopt and implement district-wide and building-level safety plans that cover crisis intervention, emergency response, and management. Additionally, they are to provide the school safety plans to a law enforcement agency or other emergency response organization participating in an armed intruder drill.

ANNUAL DRILLS

- Requires each school safety team to conduct at least one Armed Intruder Drill, Incident Command Drill, and Emergency Safety Bus Drill annually. It also requires the school to report the results of the drills to a local law enforcement agency and be maintained for a minimum of five years.

prevent unauthorized entry during and after school hours. Law enforcement is authorized to inspect all entrance and exit doors with no restrictions on the number of inspections.

NEWLY CONSTRUCTED SCHOOL BUILDING

- The new amendment requires new or renovated public school buildings built after July 1, 2023, to have door-locking mechanisms on each classroom door and at least one secure vestibule with two sets of lockable doors to prevent a person from entering the school building until an LEA or school employee authorizes a person to enter.

THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

- This amendment requires each Local Education Agency (LEA) to establish a threat assessment team, which must coordinate with state agencies providing support and technical assistance. They must also provide a detailed report including quantitative data on threat assessment team activities, post-incident assessments, and the team's response effectiveness, while also complying with relevant privacy laws.

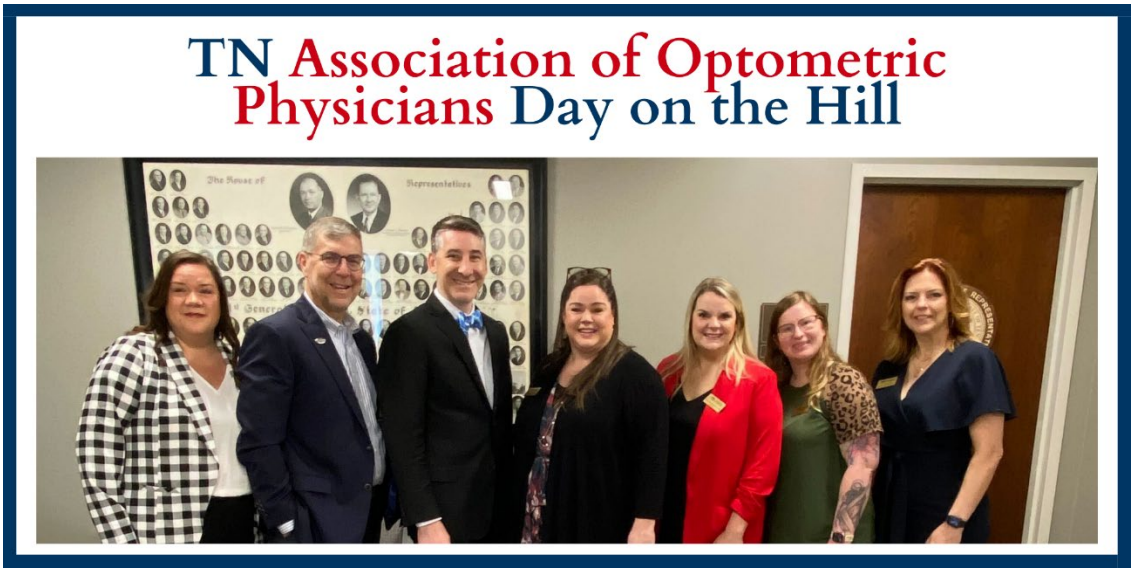
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER/SECURITY

- The schools are required to employ a full-time school resource officer or an armed school security officer to be stationed on the premises. The security personnel must meet high standards and

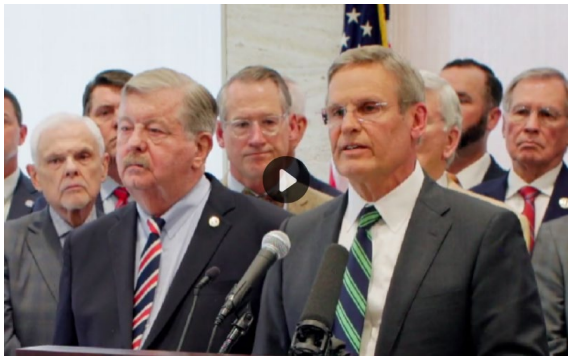
complete training, pass an examination, and undergo firearms training within 60 days of employment. Failure to comply with these regulations may result in the withholding of funds.

AG Day on the Hill!

AG Day on the Hill was a blast! Our team at Harris Frazier is proud to be part of Tennessee's vibrant agriculture industry, with Estie bringing her expertise from an ag degree and Meagan's deep roots in a family farm. It was amazing to see so many people come together to celebrate and support this essential industry!



On Monday, Governor Bill Lee, alongside Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally, Speaker Cameron Sexton, and legislative leaders, has announced further measures to strengthen safety in both public and private schools across the state. The actions include enhanced legislation, funding for an armed security guard at every Tennessee public school, additional mental health resources, and physical school security improvements.



The amended legislation includes an accountability plan for exterior school doors, requires private security guards to receive active shooter training, mandates that every school district establishes threat assessment teams, and requires every school to develop annual safety plans. The FY23-24 budget proposal includes $30 million for Homeland Security agents, $140 million for School Resource Officer grants, $20 million for public school security upgrades, $7 million for private school security upgrades, and $8 million for additional school-based behavioral health liaisons.

Since 2019, Governor Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly have prioritized investments in school safety, and in June 2021, the Governor signed Executive Order 97 to enhance school safety.

PRESS RELEASE

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- Yesterday, a bill HB1202 sponsored by Representative Ryan Williams that will allow for school teachers and staff to carry a concealed handgun was passed on to Calendar and Rules which means it will be sent to the House floor for debate and a vote. However, in the Senate Judiciary Committee, the bill was deferred until January 23, 2024 meaning the legislation will not be allowed to pass the Committee process in the Senate until next year.

- Today on the Senate floor, SJR 34 by Senator Haile failed to adopt 17-16. The failure of this legislation goes a long way in ensuring the independence of constitutional officers and it seems the opposition in the senate was focused on preserving the independence of our constitutional officers.

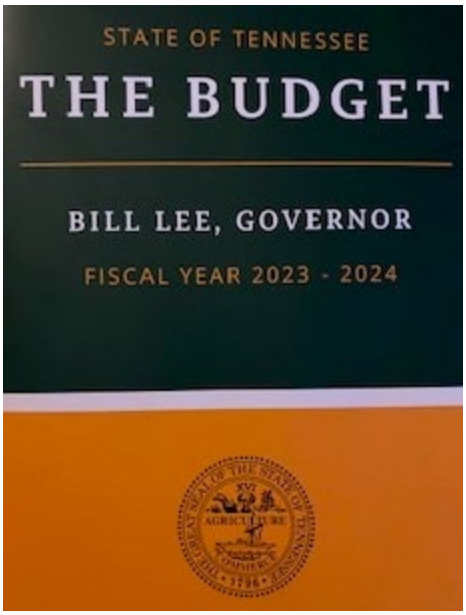
- On Wednesday, State Senator Heidi Campbell announces campaign for Nashville mayor. She recently ran to represent Tennessee's newly-redrawn 5th Congressional District but lost to Republican candidate Andy Ogles.

- HB0433 sponsored by Rep. Mark White is an effort to expand Tennessee's ESA school voucher bill, deferred by the House committee for the fifth time yesterday, to be rescheduled for consideration by The House Education Administration Committee on April 12th, 2023.

- Governor Bill Lee announced new funding for school security, including $140 million for public schools to hire School Resource Officers and highly-trained guards, a new grant fund for both public and non-public schools and increased mental health funding.

- An FAA official has intervened in SB1326/HB1176, a proposed bill to move Metro Nashville Airport Authority board appointments to the governor and speakers of the general assembly as appointing authorities for board positions currently held by the executive officer of the local government. The bill which has received majority support from the Senate and is scheduled to be heard in Finance, Ways, and Means Committee for 4/11/2023.

2023 - 2024 Budget Links



Gov. Bill Lee's budget proposal for 2023-24

Commissioner Jim Bryson's Presentation - Fiscal Year 2024 Recommended Budget

2023-2024 Recommended Budget Overview

In the News

Tennessee politics: Transportation bill headed to Gov. Bill Lee's desk

NASHVILLE -- Tennessee lawmakers last week gave final approval to Gov. Bill Lee's $3.3 billion Transportation Modernization Act, which among other aims will expand taxpayer-funded interstates in rural areas from two to three lanes while also providing authority to introduce new publicly owned but privately funded and operated toll or "choice" lanes in Hamilton County and other congested urban areas in the state.

timesfreepress.com - April 2, 2023

Tennessee lawmakers must understand rape when drafting exceptions to abortion ban

To the ordinary citizen who follows the activities of the Tennessee General Assembly, the launch of the 2023 legislative session might have appeared more hectic and disorganized than usual. Such has been particularly evident around the abortion issue, as some Republicans have proposed exceptions to the Volunteer State's abortion ban.

tennesseelookout.com - April 3, 2023

School Safety

Gov. Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly have prioritized investments in school safety every year since 2019. In June 2021, the Governor signed Executive Order 97 and launched a statewide effort to enhance school safety by boosting collaboration among parents, schools and local law enforcement across the state.

Tn.gov - April 3, 2023

Gov. Lee, Legislative Leadership Present Strong School Safety Actions

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Today, one week after the tragic shooting at The Covenant School, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally, Speaker Cameron Sexton and legislative leadership announced additional actions to strengthen safety at public and private schools across Tennessee.

Tn.gov - April 3, 2023

Tennessee Advances Bill to Arm Teachers After Deadly Nashville School Shooting

Republican lawmakers in Tennessee advanced a bill through a House committee on Wednesday that would allow teachers to carry firearms in their classrooms – a move being criticized by Democrats, civil rights leaders and gun safety advocates as tone deaf in the wake of a shooting last week at a Nashville elementary school that killed three 9-year-olds and three school staff members.

usnews.com - April 5, 2023

FAA intervenes in political dispute over Nashville Airport leadership

A Federal Aviation Administration official has intervened in a plan from Tennessee Republicans to take charge of Metro Nashville Airport Authority board appointments, according to a letter provided to The Tennessean.

Tennessean.com - April 3, 2023

Narrow abortion exception bill heads to Tennessee governor

The long and winding effort to add an exception to Tennessee's strict abortion ban cleared one of its final hurdles Wednesday.

Axios.com - April 3, 2023

Bill would create new Tennessee commission to review historic monument

removal requests

A bill to create a new "Tennessee Monuments and Memorials Commission" to review any petitions to remove or relocate historical memorials on public property advanced in the legislature.

Timesfreepress.com - April 6, 2023

Tennessee bill to ax policy giving teens access to vaccines without parental permission advances

The policy, the so-called “Mature Minor” doctrine, was subject of GOP blowback during the height of the COVID pandemic. A bill that effectively ends the so-called “Mature Minor” doctrine that has allowed some Tennessee teens to get vaccines without parental permission advanced in the legislature Wednesday.

Wkms.org - April 6, 2023

Narrow abortion exemption bill passed by Tennessee lawmakers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tennessee’s GOP-dominant Senate gave final approval Wednesday to legislation that would add a narrow exemption to one of the strictest abortion bans in the United States, with it now heading to Gov. Bill Lee’s desk for his approval.

Apnews.com - April 6, 2023

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