

What's New on the Hill

Adjournment & Special Session

The General Assembly adjourned yesterday evening, concluding their first half of the 113th legislative work. Upon the adjournment of the General Assembly, Governor Bill Lee released the following statement announcing that he will call for a special session to pass constitutional public safety legislation.

“After much input from members of the General Assembly and discussions with legislative leadership, we have decided to call a special session to continue our work to protect Tennessee communities and preserve constitutional rights,” said Gov. Lee. “There is broad agreement that dangerous, unstable individuals who intend to harm themselves or others

should not have access to weapons. We also share a strong commitment to preserving Second Amendment rights, ensuring due process and addressing the heart of the problem with strengthened mental health resources. I look forward to continued partnership with the General Assembly as we pursue thoughtful, practical solutions to keep Tennesseans safe.”

[READ MORE ON SPECIAL SESSION](#)

Estie's cow pants are a fun indication that it's the end of the legislative session!

Fun fact: According to Estie, she wore these pants on a Saturday session during the income tax debate in 2001 when she was upset about having to be at work on a weekend. They were a hit, and she has worn them every year since on the last day of session.

The infamous "cow pants" have now become tradition in the Tennessee State Legislature!





Our team spent Thursday at the capitol with our friends from TN Hospital Assn, who always do outstanding work advocating for better healthcare access and quality for all Tennesseans!



Tennessee approved a \$56.2 billion state operating budget for FY2024, which includes record spending on road projects, sports and entertainment facilities, school resource officers, and facility improvements at Colleges of Applied Technology.

We also commend the recognition of the needs of those who provide behavioral health services, care for the intellectually and developmentally disabled, and our state's veterans, with appropriations amendments approved by the legislative branch.

The budget passed with bipartisan support, with only five House Democrats voting against it and the Senate passing it unanimously.

**Tennessee on course to retain its #1 state ranking for
Fiscal Management and Responsibility:**

- \$3.3B for road projects
- \$140M for public school resource officers
- \$350M for Memphis sports facilities
- \$200M for Tennessee Performing Arts Center
- \$1.1B funding increase for Tennessee's new K-12 education funding formula
- \$45.8 million in business tax cuts
- \$288 million in grocery tax cuts in three-month holiday
- \$987.8M for capital improvements at Colleges of Applied Technology
- 25 new TBI forensic positions
- \$2 million to audit Tennessee State University
- \$288M for new state parks, natural areas
- \$18.5 million in one-time grant funds for volunteer fire departments, rescue squads, EMS providers and inclusion parks for the intellectual and developmentally disabled
- 142 new Tennessee Highway Patrol troopers and related support staff
- \$30 million to the state's Law Enforcement Hiring, Training and Recruitment program
- \$50 million to expand the Violent Crime Intervention Fund.
- \$5 million for state museums and cultural facilities
- \$11 million to the Department of Children's Services to increase private provider case management

- *\$900,000 to establish grant program to support worker's compensation for firefighters diagnosed with PTSD related to their work*
- *\$12 million toward pay raises for legislative and fiscal review support staff*



TN UPDATES



- State Representative Scotty Campbell resigned from his position, effective April 27, citing personal reasons. Governor Bill Lee will call a special election to fill the vacancy in House District 3, which includes parts of Washington and Unicoi counties.
- Lawmakers approve a three-month grocery sales tax holiday for August, September, and October of this year, following a one-
- Juneteenth has been designated an official state holiday in Tennessee, following final passage by the House with bipartisan support, and having passed in the Senate last month. The bill received 61 affirmative votes and 18 votes against, with 10 Republicans recorded as present not voting.
- Former President Trump garners endorsements from Tennessee's top Republicans, including Senators Marsha

month holiday in August 2022.

The tax cut proposal by Governor Lee received bipartisan support and is expected to result in an average of \$100 in tax savings per family.

- The House passed a bill to expand the state's school voucher program to Hamilton and Knox counties, but the bill's sponsor for Hamilton County refused to agree to adding Knox, and all three members of the Knox County delegation oppose the expanded version of the bill, leaving it uncertain whether the House will recede or force negotiations in a conference committee.

Blackburn and Bill Hagerty, Representatives John Rose, Mark Green, Chuck Fleischmann, Diana Harshbarger, and former Representative Jimmy Duncan, following his attendance at a major GOP donor retreat in Nashville.

- The General Assembly has passed and voted to fund the Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship Act, which is a priority for education advocacy group SCORE. The scholarship will support 1,000 more Tennesseans in becoming teachers over the next five years.
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The governor's recent call for addressing gun related public safety has sparked controversy from both sides of the aisle. The proposed legislation includes an Order of Protection proposal that would allow the court to temporarily restrict access to firearms for individuals who pose a threat to the community. The proposal builds on existing legal frameworks and applies to those who threaten to attack churches, schools, and other areas of the community. If law enforcement officers investigate and find sufficient evidence, they can file a petition with the court. If the court grants the order of protection, firearms may be removed for up to 180 days, and the judge will consider alternatives before issuing the order. The proposal has generated significant debate and will be closely watched by advocates and opponents of gun control measures. Governor Bill Lee has called for a special session to address public safety concerns. [Watch >>>](#)



In addition to Governor Bill Lee's proposed public safety control measures, mothers and women have been showing up day after day at the state capitol to demand action on gun violence. On Tuesday evening, a coalition of parents and children from several public and private schools, including Covenant, staged a three-mile "human chain" event. Thousands of people locked arms between the children's hospital at Vanderbilt and the state capitol to call for changes in gun laws.



IN THE NEWS



Sen. Yarbrow attempts to force vote on gun reform bill similar to Gov. Lee's

Democratic Sen. Jeff Yarbrow made a Hail Mary attempt to force a Senate vote Thursday on a bill to keep guns out of the hands of people who pose a threat to themselves or others — but Republicans in the chamber blocked the effort.

tennessean.com - April 20, 2023

Tennessee governor signs bill creating paid 'choice lanes' on state roads

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WZTV) — Gov. Bill Lee has signed legislation creating toll lanes for Tennessee drivers on state roads. The Transportation Modernization Act, a \$3.3 billion investment, will add "choice lanes," paid lanes Tennessee drivers can use to avoid congestion during peak times.

fox17.com - April 17, 2023

Tennessee Republicans reluctant to act on Gov. Lee's gun reform proposal, Democrats seek vote

Some Republican leaders say Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee's 11th-hour proposal to keep firearms out of the hands of people who are a threat to themselves or others likely does not have support to pass before the end of the legislative session — or, some say, ever.

columbiadailyherald.com - April 19, 2023

Poll: Nashville voters say 'dealing with legislature' will be priority for next mayor

A new Vanderbilt poll finds nearly nine in 10 Nashville voters agree that "dealing with the state legislature" will be a priority for the city's next mayor. About 56% said they believe the capital city is on the wrong track — about twice as many as when the school first started asking the question of voters in 2017.

[Onthehill.tnjournal.net](https://onthehill.tnjournal.net) - April 19, 2023

State GOP names own panel to oversee disputed leadership vote in Williamson County

The state Republican Party has stepped into named a special committee to oversee a disputed leadership election in Williamson County after the previous panel resigned in protest.

[Onthehill.tnjournal.net](https://onthehill.tnjournal.net) - April 17, 2023

Trump lands endorsements among Tenn. congressional delegation

U.S. Sens. Marsha Blackburn of Brentwood and Bill Hagerty of Nashville are backing Donald Trump's renewed presidential bid. Also announcing their support this weekend were U.S. Reps. Diana Harshbarger of Kingsport and John Rose of Cookeville.

[Onthehill.tnjournal.net](https://onthehill.tnjournal.net) - April 17, 2023

These bills passed by the general assembly would significantly impact Metro Nashville

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WKRN) — The first half of the legislative session is winding down, with lawmakers set to conclude their business for the year Friday. But one of their final acts before recessing until next year was passing a series of bills that would have a direct impact on Metro Nashville.

wkrn.com - April 21, 2023



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