



Tennessee

NEWS

Week of March 3rd legislative committee calendars: [House](#) | [Senate](#)



The YMCA State Alliance Day on the Hill this week took advantage of the good weather by meeting with Meagan outside.



The TN Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities enjoyed their Day on the Hill this week as well.



The Tennessee Pharmacists Association Day on the Hill included almost 200 pharmacy students from across our state. Hearing from a pharmacist who also happens to be Lt. Governor was a special treat.



The HB Strategies Tennessee team recently organized and attended a tour of Nashville Airport with members of the House Transportation Committee. The visit provided an inside look at how approved funding will drive key improvements across Tennessee's airports, enhancing infrastructure and travel efficiency across the state.



Proposed Campaign Finance Overhaul Sparks Legal Concerns

Tennessee lawmakers are considering a bill that would allow political parties and legislative caucuses to donate unlimited funds to candidates while maintaining contribution limits for independent PACs. Critics warn this could trigger another lawsuit, as a similar attempt in 2018 led to a court ruling that overturned key campaign finance restrictions. The bill, introduced by Sen. Richard Briggs (R-Knoxville) and Rep. Tim Hicks (R-Gray), also proposes updates to ethics laws, including mandatory training for top officials, increased spending limits for campaign events, and a new PAC registration fee. With political spending under scrutiny, this legislation could reshape the state's campaign finance landscape.

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SB0027 PASSES COMMITTEE, RESTRICTING EMERGENCY POWERS

Bill Limiting Tennessee Governor's Emergency Powers Passes Senate Committee.

The Senate State and Local Government Committee has passed SB0027, a bill aimed at restricting the emergency powers of Tennessee's governor. Sponsored by Senator Mark Pody, the bill seeks to ensure that the governor cannot use emergency powers to suspend or override any part of the Tennessee Constitution. The primary goal of the legislation is to protect citizens' constitutional rights during states of emergency, particularly in response to the sweeping and controversial actions taken by governors during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The bill was approved with an 8-1 vote, with Senator Jeff Yarbrow being the only dissenting voice. It has now been referred to the Senate Calendar Committee for further consideration. Meanwhile, the companion bill, HB0324, is still under review in the House, having been assigned to the Public Service Subcommittee earlier in

February but not yet scheduled for discussion.

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Tennessee drag show law stands after US Supreme Court declines to hear appeal

The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear a challenge to Tennessee's 2023 law regulating adult-oriented performances, effectively allowing the law to remain in place. The law prohibits performances deemed harmful to minors from taking place in public spaces or within view of minors, though it does not explicitly mention drag shows. Critics argue that the vague language could be used to unfairly target drag performers and LGBTQ+ events, while supporters claim it is a necessary measure to protect children from inappropriate content.

A Memphis-based LGBTQ+ theater group, Friends of George's, filed a lawsuit, arguing that the law suppresses free expression and violates the First Amendment. A lower

federal court initially struck down the law as unconstitutional, but the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals later reversed that ruling, stating that the plaintiffs lacked standing to challenge the law. With the Supreme Court refusing to take up the case, the law remains enforceable in Tennessee, though legal experts anticipate further challenges in lower courts.

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Republican bill to prohibit people from holding 2 elected offices at once in TN passes House

A Republican-backed bill, HB 0618, aimed at banning individuals from holding more than one elected office at the same time in Tennessee, passed the state House of Representatives on Thursday. Sponsored by Rep. Dave Wright, the bill prohibits people holding local government offices from serving in other elected positions across the state, though it allows current dual-office holders to keep their roles.

The bill does not apply to positions on political party state executive committees. Rep. Chris Hurt argued that in rural areas, where there are fewer candidates, it's common for people to serve in multiple roles. The bill has been referred to the Senate State and Local Government Committee for further review. Dubbed the "Gloria Johnson Memorial Bill" by Democrats, it follows controversy over Rep. Johnson running for U.S. Senate while still serving in the state legislature.

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U.S. Urged to Modernize Travel Infrastructure to Boost Tourism Revenue

A new report from the Commission on Seamless and Secure Travel warns that the U.S. risks losing billions in tourism revenue unless it modernizes aviation security, visa processing, and customs procedures. The commission, run by the U.S. Travel Association, is calling for a White House-led task force to oversee a sweeping overhaul. Key recommendations include faster visa processing, fully automated

identity verification at customs, and a senior White House position to coordinate travel policy. With major events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Olympics approaching, these changes could unlock \$95 billion in additional visitor spending. However, funding challenges remain, with extended visa wait times cited as a major deterrent to international travel

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IN THE NEWS

- ***Tennessee Bill Allowing Juvenile Records To Be Considered When Setting Bail Passes House Subcommittee***

A Tennessee bill allowing judges to consider juvenile records when setting bail has passed the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee. The bill, sponsored by Rep. John Gillespie and Sen. Brent Taylor, includes amendments like a five-year look-back period and provisions for public access to juvenile records in homicide cases. It now moves to the full House Judiciary Committee for further consideration.

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- ***Tennessee lawmakers push for amendment that allows judges to deny bail for more offenses***

The Tennessee Senate is advancing a constitutional amendment allowing judges to deny bail for violent crimes like terrorism, rape, and torture. While Republicans support the change to prevent reoffending, Democrats argue it

violates civil liberties and raises jail funding concerns.

[NEWSCHANNEL9.COM](https://www.newschannel9.com) - Feb. 27, 2025

- ***Bill To Increase Penalty For Child Abuse, Infliction Of Injury In Tennessee Passes Unanimously In House Subcommittee***

A bill raising penalties for child abuse against children ages 9-17 from a misdemeanor to a felony has passed the Tennessee House Criminal Justice Subcommittee and is heading to the House Judiciary Committee.

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- ***Housing and Zoning Bills to Watch in the Tennessee Legislature***

Over 100 advocates gather at the state Capitol to support housing reforms, including rent control and a rental property registry, while opposing measures targeting homelessness and public space penalties.

[NASHVILLEBANNER.COM](https://www.nashvillebanner.com) - Feb. 27, 2025

- ***Lawmakers push bill aiming to solve Tennessee's recycling problems to 2026***

A new proposal to shift recycling costs to producers is gaining attention in Tennessee, with bipartisan support for addressing the state's growing landfill problem. The "Extended Producer Responsibility" model, already in use abroad, would require companies to fund recycling efforts, though the bill faces opposition and concerns over its financial impact. The legislation is set for further debate, with a decision expected in 2026.

[TENNESSEELOOKOUT.COM](https://www.tennesseelookout.com) - Feb. 27, 2025

- ***Tennessee bill to let schools ban, collect cell phones gains bipartisan support***

A Tennessee bill allowing school districts to implement policies banning cell phone usage during class time received broad bipartisan backing and was approved unanimously in its first House subcommittee hearing this week.

[MSN.COM](https://www.msn.com) - Feb. 26, 2025

- **Republican TN lawmakers propose restrictions on hemp products, raising alarm for East Tennessee businesses**

Two bills currently moving through subcommittees in the Tennessee legislature are causing concern among hemp business owners statewide.

[WBIR.COM](https://wbir.com) - Feb. 25, 2025

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Tennessee

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