



## THE INFORMANT NEWSLETTER

A biweekly newsletter for the Tennessee constituent

# TN Bills February 2020

### TN HJR0933 — Moving Tennessee To The First Presidential Primary State

**Latest Action:** Ref. to Delayed Bills Comm. 2/24/20

**Bill Text:** <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/111/Bill/HJR0933.pdf>

**Bill Summary:** This bill aims to clarify the intention of the Tennessee State Legislature to move the state's presidential primary to an earlier date, so as to become the first state caucus, the position now held by Iowa.

**Bill Impact:** Those in favor of this bill argue based upon the heavy consequence of the momentum that the early states such as Iowa give to Presidential candidates, perhaps helping decide the vote before all states have had a chance to vote. They argue that such power should not remain in the hands of the same states year after year, and that Tennesseans should have that opportunity rather than being lost in the many states that vote on Super Tuesday. Conversely, opponents of this proposal argue that it is better for voters to have a chance to see every debate and news piece they can before the election. They also cite the anger of voters who participated in early voting only to see those candidates dropout before their state's primary, an occurrence they believe would be multiplied with the passage of this bill. Regardless of which argument is stronger, this is an extraordinarily impactful bill on both the state and the national level.

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### TN SB1724 — Exempting Feminine Hygiene Products From Taxes On Tax Day

**Latest Action:** Refer to Senate Finance, Ways & Means Committee w/ negative recommendation. 2/18/20

**Bill Text:** <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/111/Bill/SB1724.pdf>

**Bill Summary:** The purpose of this bill is to provide tax-exempt status to feminine hygiene products on the annual holiday marked for sales tax.

**Bill Impact:** The current state general sales tax rate in Tennessee is seven percent. In eliminating that tax on one particular day, this bill would make these products relatively more affordable. It is not evident that there would be an immense loss in tax money for the state from this exemption, as it is just the seven percent tax on one day.

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### **TN SB2003 — Prohibiting The Governor From Making A Decision Regarding Refugees**

**Latest Action:** Passed on Second Consideration, refer to Senate State and Local Government Committee, 2/3/20

**Bill Text:** <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/111/Bill/SB2003.pdf>

**Bill Summary:** This bill aims to remove executive powers from the Governor, currently Governor Bill Lee, pertaining to allowing refugees to resettle in Tennessee. These powers may be granted to the Governor, this bill states, only after approval by a joint resolution of the state legislature.

**Bill Impact:** This bill comes in the midst of a heated battle amongst Tennessee Republicans, wherein the executive and legislative branches are on opposing lines. The General Assembly, or the legislature, which is currently a Republican supermajority, previously proposed shutting off the state to refugee resettlement. Governor Lee vetoed this bill, using his executive powers to keep Tennessee open for refugee resettlement. This bill appears to be the response of the legislature to his use of executive power in opposition to their proposal. This bill will prove consequential, as it could help determine the state Republican party's stance on this issue.

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### **TN HB2118 — Eliminating The Professional Privilege Tax In Tennessee**

**Latest Action:** Placed behind the budget, 2/26/20

**Bill Text:** <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/111/Bill/HB2676.pdf>

**Bill Summary:** This bill aims to remove the tax on the professional privilege of

working in particular occupations in the state of Tennessee.

**Bill Impact:** This bill follows the legislation of Senator Brian Kelsey (district 31) from last year, eliminating this tax in a number of select occupations. It completes that initiative by ultimately getting rid of it in all professions. It adds a registration fee for the professional privilege of certain occupations to be paid annually, but only for nonresidents of the state, as opposed to the previous tax on residents. With seventy sponsors in the Tennessee House of Representatives, including several representatives from both parties, this appears to be a bipartisan effort.

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### **TN HB2821 — Allocating Funds For The Fiscal Year (Budget)**

**Latest Action:** Assigned to s/c Finance, Ways, and Means Subcommittee.  
2/11/20

**Bill Text:** <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/111/Bill/HB2821.pdf>

**Bill Summary:** This bill contains a detailed list of all proposed spending by the state for the fiscal year, July 2019 through July 2020.

**Bill Impact:** This bill lists funds to be allocated by the state, with a Grand Total of \$16,809,239,300.00 (16.8 billion dollars). As context, the state's 2016 budget was roughly 32 billion dollars. This would be a significantly lower allocation of funds by an administration that has emphasized the importance of fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets.

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### **TN HB2801 — Prohibiting The Sale Of Firearms To Suspected Terrorists**

**Latest Action:** Passed on Second Consideration, Refer to Senate Judiciary Committee. 2/10/20

**Bill Text:** <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/111/Bill/SB2801.pdf>

**Bill Summary:** This bill, if enacted, will strictly prohibit the selling of firearms to individuals who are listed on the federal terrorist watch list.

**Bill Impact:** This bill touches on an extremely hot button—the fairly divisive issue of gun control. The debate on this issue has been occurring intensely at the national level for the past several years, and many candidates in this Presidential

election made it a major part of their platforms. However, as divisive as these debates have been, statistics show that the general notion of background checks is not as divisive. Multiple polls show that the majority of Americans believe in some form of federal background checks. This bill appears to line up with that sentiment categorically, exploring the background of prospective gun owners.

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***“The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure, when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them.”***

— Patrick Henry  
Founding Father of The United States of America



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