



Work continued on Capitol Hill this week as lawmakers advanced multiple pieces of legislation through committees and on the House and Senate floors. In the coming weeks, the General Assembly will continue to conduct budget hearings with departments to evaluate the Governor's budget proposal. With the release of Governor Lee's FY24-25 budget, budget-related legislation has been filed and highlight below:

**Budget implementation:** [House Bill 2971](#) will make the statutory revisions that are necessary for the implementation of the state's budget for the upcoming 2024-25 fiscal year. Gov. Bill Lee earlier this month unveiled his \$52.6 billion budget proposal to members of the General Assembly. The plan also includes an additional \$20 million investment in the state's Rainy-Day Fund, bringing the account to \$2.07 billion to be used in the event of an economic downturn.

**Appropriations:** [House Bill 2973](#) authorizes funding for various legislative initiatives including a proposed \$261 million in new funding for K-12 public schools, \$144.2 million to establish the Education Freedom Scholarship Act to begin expanding school choice statewide, a \$410 million annual franchise tax cut and other significant investments to support public safety and rural health care.

**Bonds:** [House Bill 2972](#) is the annual bond bill that authorizes the state to issue and sell bonds. Legislation carried by State Rep. Greg Vital, R-Harrison, attempts to ensure the integrity of the state contract bidding process. [House Bill 1786](#) will clarify that all proposals for solicitation of goods and services are confidential to the public while being evaluated by the state, ensuring bidders don't receive unfair advantages and protecting the integrity of the process. This bill will be debated in the coming weeks.

Secretary of State Tre Hargett recently released the latest Tennessee Blue Book. The 2023-24 edition is dedicated to Tennessee's courageous first responders. The Volunteer State is home to more than 50,000 law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency medical services professionals who selflessly aid citizens in dire circumstances every day.

The Tennessee Blue Book, published every two years, is the definitive manual on Tennessee state government, with detailed information about all three branches of government, including biographies of all members of the Tennessee General Assembly. The Blue Book contains information on the federal government, Tennessee history, election statistics, and more.

Gov. Bill Lee has announced the appointment of Mary L. Wagner to the Tennessee Supreme Court. Wagner is currently a circuit court judge for the 30th Judicial District, which covers Shelby County. She previously served as an associate at Rice, Amundsen & Caperton, PLLC and taught as an adjunct professor at The University of Memphis School of Law. Wagner holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder and J.D. from the University of Memphis School of Law. She will fill a vacancy created by the retirement of Justice Roger A. Page, effective Aug. 31. Wagner's appointment is subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.

State offices will be closed on Monday, Feb. 19 in observance of President's Day.