



Work continues on Capitol Hill as lawmakers advance legislation through committees and on the Senate and House floors. Several Senate Committees and House Subcommittees announced that last calendars will be heard in the upcoming two weeks. This will be the peak for legislation being considered in the committee process. Budget hearings continue for the executive departments in anticipation of the Governor's budget amendment being released. The General Assembly is still on a timeline to adjourn in mid-April.

The House chamber approved House Bill 2716, filed by State Rep. Johnny Garrett, R-Goodlettsville, which would prevent a member of the General Assembly from being reappointed to their seat if they were expelled. It would not prevent the expelled member from being reelected. Two separate proposed amendments to the state constitution have also been filed regarding expulsions. House Joint Resolution 706 by State Rep. Bryan Richey, R-Maryville, would prevent a member from returning to the General Assembly for four years if they were expelled. It is scheduled to be heard in the Finance, Ways and Means Subcommittee on March 6. House Joint Resolution 797 by State Rep. Dennis Powers, R-Jacksboro, would prevent an expelled member from ever being reelected, reappointed or employed by the General Assembly. It is scheduled to be heard in the State Government Committee on March 6. Last year, two members of the General Assembly were expelled after protesting in the House chamber. Governor Lee's main legislative priority advanced this week in the House K-12 Subcommittee. House Bill 1183, would establish the Education Freedom Scholarships Act (EFSA). This legislation would provide scholarships for students to attend private schools. A total of 20,000 scholarships would be available to families for the 2024-25 school year. Priority would be given to students who are currently eligible for an Education Savings Account followed by those from households at or below 400 percent and 500 percent of the federal poverty level respectively. The legislation will continue to be on the forefront of this legislative session.

This week, members of the Tennessee General Assembly joined Secretary of State Tre Hargett and community advocates for the launch of a new initiative to combat human trafficking statewide. Created through the passage of legislation in 2023, Tennessee Businesses Against Trafficking engages corporations and private entities in voluntary efforts to identify, prevent, and combat human trafficking in communities across the state. Participants will be able to identify the warning signs of trafficking and assist in the reporting of suspected criminal activity to the authorities.