

State of the State

The Governor will give his annual address on Monday evening around 6:00 p.m. He will provide his policy and spending priorities for his final year before running for reelection to a second term. The most anticipated announcements center around the exponential growth the state has seen. The Governor wants to rework how Tennessee funds its public-school formula known as the Basic Education Program. After Commissioning eighteen subcommittees to study the issue over four months, it is anticipated he will put a new funding amount to his proposal to rework the decades-old formula. Further, after comments around the state, the Governor will also look to use a surplus of federal funding and the more than three billion dollars of new recurring revenue to address transportation and infrastructure needs around the state.

Items of Interest

Bill Filing Deadline

Bill Filing Deadline in the House and Senate will occur this week. With only about four hundred bills filled to date, a large number is expected next week. The average number of bills filed in any given year of a general assembly is around twelve hundred.

Redistricting

The Redistricting bills have passed both chambers of the General Assembly and are expected to be signed by the governor in the coming weeks. The Tennessee Democratic Party is currently exploring a legal challenge.

Electronic Verification of Citizenship

[SB 902/ HB 801](#) (Stevens/ Griffey)

Requires employers to use the E-Verify program to verify the work eligibility of an employee. The bill defines the "E-Verify program" as the federal electronic employment verification service provided by the department of homeland security to verify the work eligibility of new employees. Establishes a presumption that an employer did not employ an illegal alien if it was confirmed through the E-Verify program that the employee was eligible to work. In addition, the bill removes immunity from charges of the employment of illegal aliens due to an employer's reliance on other forms of verification.

Items to Watch this Week

COVID-19 Policy

[SB 1823/ HB1867](#) (Johnson/ Zachery)

Employers with a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy must grant medical exemptions to anyone who provides a statement from a licensed healthcare practitioner acting within the practitioner's scope of practice. Grants religious exemptions to any person without requiring proof beyond the person's initial statement. Prohibits employers from taking longer than two business days to render a decision on the request or denying an exemption request without a written explanation. Prohibits employers from discharging or reducing compensation for persons granted an exemption. The bill could potentially jeopardize any CMS funding a business receives.

The bill is calendared for the House Civil Justice subcommittee on 2/1/2022 and can be seen [here](#)

Solid Waste

[HB 1842](#) (Terry)

The bill requires the operator of a Class I landfill to submit with an application for a significant modification to or expansion of the landfill a letter of support from the mayor or legislative body of the municipality or county that would be impacted by such change or expansion.

The bill is calendared for the House Agriculture and Natural Resources subcommittee on 2/1/2022 and can be seen [here](#)

Elections

[SB 1820/ HB 1868](#) (Kelsey/ Vaughn)

The bill, as introduced, prohibits a county election commission from utilizing instant runoff voting or ranked-choice voting to conduct an election in this state for a statewide or local government office.

The bill is calendared for the Senate State and Local committee on 2/1/2022 and can be seen [here](#)