

Campaign Season

With the fall of the gavel at 3:16 p.m. on Thursday, April 28, the 112th General Assembly is officially done with its business and headed home. This means that campaign season has formally started in the Midstate. It is easy to expect that many legislators will take some downtime with family and work. However, many already have opponents fundraising on bills both passed and not passed this session. Middle Tennessee currently has ten open seats in the House of Representatives and one relaxed State Senate Seat. A vigorous campaign season is on the Horizon with less than ten seats unopposed.

Items that Passed

Education

[HB 2193/ SB 2396](#) (Lamberth/ Johnson)

This bill is the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act. The Governor's funding proposal to replace the Basic Education Program. The bill passed, adding more than one billion dollars to the school funding formula and making it student-based. The final version included a Cost Differential Factor that benefits counties with a higher cost of living levels.

[HB 2666/ SB 2247](#) (C. Sexton/ Lundberg)

The bill changes the name of the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission to the State Textbook and Educational Materials Quality Commission (Commission). Increases, from 10 to 12, the number of members serving on the Commission beginning July 1, 2022. Requires the Commission to issue a list of approved educational materials and books that may be purchased by libraries operated by a public school or public charter school. Requires the Commission to establish guidelines for libraries used by a local education agency (LEA) or a public charter school to identify and remove all materials located in school libraries that are not on the approved list. Requires the Tennessee State Library Coordinator to create the list of approved library books and serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Commission. Increases, from 10 to 12, the number of members serving on the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission (Commission) beginning July 1, 2022. Requires the Commission to issue a list of approved educational materials and books that may be made available to students in a library operated by a local education agency (LEA) by December 1, 2022, and to update the list by April 1 each year after that. Requires the Commission to ensure that all books and educational materials made available to students in a library operated by an LEA are on the approved list and meet specific criteria beginning January 1, 2023. Requires the Tennessee State Library Coordinator to create a list of approved library books and serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Commission.

Campaign Finance

[HB 1201/ SB 1005](#) (C. Sexton/ McNally)

The bill deletes political action committee donations restrictions ten days before an election. Widens campaign finance reporting regulations by removing maximum and minimum dollar amounts from the requirements. Removes automatic campaign finance audit for un-itemized contributions over \$5,000 that are at least 30 percent of the campaign's contributions after January 16, 2022. The bill prohibits the mixing of the campaign and other funds. The bill establishes that tax-exempt organizations under the United States Internal Revenue Service Code § 501(c)(4) are deemed political campaign committees if they spend at least \$5,000 on political campaigns within 60 days of a primary or general election. The bill adds to the appointment process to the registry of election finance. The speaker of each chamber appoints two members, one in consultation with the majority caucus and one in consultation with the minority caucus. Further, the bill adds regulations for members of the general assembly contracting to do campaign services and adds required language to disclosure statements.

Items that did not Pass.

Criminal Offenses

[HB 1927/ SB 1904](#) (Lamberth / Johnson)

The bill redefines "marijuana" as applicable to criminal offenses, thereby establishing that marijuana includes hemp, which has a tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentration of more than 0.3 percent on a dry weight basis. It also would Define a "hemp-derived cannabinoid" as a cannabinoid other than delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, or an isomer derived from such cannabinoid, that is derived from hemp in a concentration of more than 0.1 percent. Further, it prohibits any person from knowingly selling or distributing a product containing hemp-derived cannabinoid to a person under 21 years of age and further prohibits a person under 21 years of age from possessing, purchasing, or accepting a product containing a hemp-derived cannabinoid or presenting or offering any person any false, fraudulent proof of age to purchase or receive a product containing a hemp-derived cannabinoid. In addition, any retail location offering products containing hemp-derived cannabinoids is required to maintain such products behind the counter in an area inaccessible to a customer. Finally, the bill would also tax the defined products.