



# CAPITOL comments

*The Voice of Agriculture®*

January 29, 2012

Week 4

## This Week at the Capitol

House and Senate committees began meeting this week, with most committees meeting to organize and adopt rules. The Senate Education Committee did hold a hearing on Charter Schools this week, which is expected to be a big issue this session. Bills will be introduced and assigned to House committees as these committees are forming and getting organized. Right now, no House bills have been made public.

Governor Bryant gave his State of the State outside the Capitol under lights, it was a nice change for the formal speech. Some of the highlights from his speech are below:

- Create the Mississippi Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Act
- Create the Biomass Center for Excellence
- Raise teacher training standards
- Introduce Education Administration Consolidation Bill
- Expand the Charter Schools Act
- Review all 194 state boards and commissions and do away with the unnecessary ones
- Create the Child Protection Act to help prevent teen pregnancy
- Introduce legislation to stop illegal immigration
- Overhaul the state website: [www.ms.gov](http://www.ms.gov).

## Bills of Interest

**S.B. 2090** Creates Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act of 2012, which is based on Arizona-style immigration reform.

**STATUS:** S.B. 2090 has been referred to the Senate Judiciary A Committee.

**S.B. 2231** State agencies administering public benefits must verify lawful presence in the United States before administering the benefits. **STATUS:**

S.B. 2231 has been referred to the Senate Judiciary A Committee.

**S.B. 2232** Prohibits cities from offering sanctuary to illegal immigrants.

**STATUS:** S.B. 2232 has been referred to the Senate Judiciary A Committee.

**S.B. 2032** Reduces the size of the Senate and reduce the compensation to lawmakers. **STATUS:** S.B. 2032 has been referred to the Senate Accountability, Efficiency, and Transparency and Appropriation committees.

## 2012 MFBF *Legislative Priorities*

*Production Agriculture—Much of Mississippi's economy is derived from farming or farm-related activities. Agriculture is Mississippi's largest industry worth \$7 billion dollars a year. In addition, agriculture makes up 29% of the workforce in Mississippi.*

*Taxation—The taxes farmers pay should be used to aid the citizens of Mississippi, but taxation must not be allowed to increase to a point that economic development is hindered.*

*Environment—In order to further conservation efforts in agriculture, attention should be focused toward economic approaches to land management.*

*Energy—The depletion of fossil fuels and the increasing energy prices have caused an emphasis to be placed on renewable fuels. Farmers have the resources through general farm practices to generate energy.*

### Bills of Interest (Continued)

**S.B. 2121** Prohibits the use of texting while operating a motor vehicle and limits other uses of the cell phone while driving. **STATUS:** S.B. 2121 has been referred to the Senate Highways and Transportation and Judiciary B committees.

**S.B. 2127** Allows sheriffs to use radar in the county. **STATUS:** S.B. 2127 has been referred to Senate Highways and Transportation and Judiciary B committees.

**S.B. 2171** Establishes open primaries for the state. **STATUS:** S.B. 2171 has been referred to Senate Election Committee.

**S.B. 2164** Limits the increase of rent on farm-residential 16th section land. **STATUS:** S.B. 2164 has been referred to the Senate Education Committee.

### CORRECTION to Farm Environment Newsletter

In the January 2012 issue of Farm Environment Newsletter, under the heading, “National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Pesticide General Permit,” please note that decision-makers will need to fill out, but DO NOT need to submit, the Pesticide Notice of Intent (PNOI).

For more information, please contact Kenneth Lafleur at MDEQ at (601) 961-5192 or visit [http://www.deq.state.ms.us/MDEQ.nsf/page/epd\\_AgriculturalBranchEPD?OpenDocument](http://www.deq.state.ms.us/MDEQ.nsf/page/epd_AgriculturalBranchEPD?OpenDocument)

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## 2012 Legislative Calendar

**February 10-12** — Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference in Tunica

**February 12– 16** — National Food Checkout Week

**March 1** — Ag Day at the Capitol

**March 6** — Women’s Day at the Capitol

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