

## TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT UPDATE

NEWS FOR THE CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF BASS, BERRY & SIMS PLC

**May 13, 2011**

The Senate passed Governor Haslam's tort reform bill Thursday. The debate was protracted (3 ½ hours) and at times emotional, but the final margin was 21-12 with two Democrats supporting the bill and one Republican opposing it. Because there is a slight difference between the House and Senate bills, the Senate bill must go back to the House which passed its version on Monday night. [Richard Locker with \*The Commercial Appeal\* has the story.](#)

The House Finance Committee again considered the bill to limit collective bargaining between local teachers' associations and school boards. Beth Harwell (R-Nashville), the speaker of the House, broke a 12-12 tie vote, in favor of passage. The bill was recommended for passage 13-12.

Neither Harwell nor Debra Maggart (R-Hendersonville), the bill's sponsor, would commit to refuse to allow the bill to be amended on the floor of the House. Thus, there will be an attempt to substitute the Senate version of the bill on the House floor. The Senate-passed bill completely bans collective bargaining by teachers. [Tom Humphrey of the \*Knoxville News Sentinel\* provides background and color.](#)

Amazon, Inc. was the subject of a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday. Amazon and former Governor Bredesen agreed to economic terms for Amazon to build distribution centers in Southeast Tennessee. Governor Haslam has endorsed the deal. The chairmen of both finance committees have proposed legislation that would require Amazon to collect sales tax on purchases made by Tennesseans. That measure is supported by and heavily lobbied on behalf of Wal-Mart, Best Buy and other so-called bricks-and-mortar businesses that compete with Amazon. [Tennessee Report has an in-depth story.](#) The Senate Finance Committee debate can be found at <http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>. Click on Videos, then Senate, then Finance Ways & Means, and finally video of May 11, 2011.

Both speakers have announced that the legislature will adjourn *sine die* next weekend. Skepticism that adjournment will actually occur then is rampant. Neither house has yet taken up the budget; each will on Tuesday of next week. Nevertheless, it now seems likely that the 107<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will adjourn its first session before Memorial Day weekend.



**J. Richard Lodge**  
(615) 742-6254  
[dlodge@bassberry.com](mailto:dlodge@bassberry.com)



**H. Lee Barfield II**  
(615) 742-6202  
[lbarfield@bassberry.com](mailto:lbarfield@bassberry.com)



**Erica Bell Vick**  
(615) 742-7901  
[evick@bassberry.com](mailto:evick@bassberry.com)

150 Third Avenue South, Suite 2800 • Nashville, TN 37201 • (615) 742-6200  
The Tower at Peabody Place • 100 Peabody Place, Suite 900 • Memphis, TN 38103 • (901) 543-5900  
1700 Riverview Tower • 900 South Gay Street • Knoxville, TN 37902 • (865) 521-6200