

TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT UPDATE

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

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Education

Governor Haslam's teacher tenure reform bill moved forward in both houses of the Tennessee General Assembly. The Senate passed the bill on Thursday; the subcommittee of the House Education Committee recommended the bill to the full committee on Wednesday.

The vote on the Senate floor on final passage was 21-12 with all Democrats voting "no" except Nashville Senator Douglas Henry who voted with all the Republican senators in favor. The House Education subcommittee vote was along straight party lines. All nine Republican representatives voted in the affirmative, and the four Democratic representatives voted in the negative.

The bill is scheduled to be heard in the House Education Committee on Tuesday, March 15.

Memphis City Schools

After the Senate vote, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Senate Ron Ramsey, said that his view is that the state of Tennessee should operate Memphis City Schools before that system merges with the Shelby County Schools. His comments were quickly countered by Memphis City School Superintendent Kriner Cash. [Rick Locker with the *Commercial Appeal* has the story.](#)

City of Memphis voters approved a referendum Tuesday to transfer the administration of Memphis City Schools to Shelby County Schools. The referendum passed with 67 percent of the votes in the affirmative. [The *Commercial Appeal* carried that story, too.](#)

Political Discourse

In the past week, House Democratic Caucus Chair Mike Turner referred to Republican legislators as "terrorists," freshman Republican Senator Jim Summerfield threatened to "break [the public school system] all to pieces" and a Tea Partier compared the governor to Mr. Rogers of children's television fame. The governor suggested to the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce that the rhetorical temperature be tempered. "None of us want Nashville to become what Washington has become—a place that is so partisan that you can't solve problems," said Governor Haslam. Again, [Rick Locker in the *Commercial Appeal* has the story.](#)

In an [article](#) in this morning's *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, political writer Andy Sher suggests that Governor Haslam's comments may be for naught.

Tennessee Orangebacks Instead of Greenbacks?

As the education debate swirled on, Senate Republican Caucus Chair Bill Ketron introduced a Senate Joint Resolution that would create a committee "to study whether the state of Tennessee should adopt a currency to serve as an alternative to the currency distributed by the Federal Reserve System...." Further, the "special joint committee shall formulate recommendations for legislation, with respect to the need, means and schedule, for establishing such an alternative currency." [Senate Joint Resolution 98](#).

The Tennessean included a lengthy [article about the resolution](#) in its Wednesday morning edition.

The resolution was filed after the bill-filing deadline, and, therefore, was referred to the Senate Deferred Bills Committee, which must approve its introduction.

Governor's Budget Address

Governor Haslam will deliver his budget address at 6:00 p.m. CDT, Monday, March 14. Thereafter, Senate and House committees will begin budget hearings with the various departments of state government, and the General Assembly will begin discussing, at least informally, a schedule for adjournment—with a hopeful eye toward late May.



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