

TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT UPDATE

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

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Is the establishment a bar or a restaurant? The question need not be answered. A subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee approved a bill this week that will permit handgun-carry permit holders to carry their weapons into any establishment that serves alcohol unless the establishment posts a notice that guns are not permitted at every entrance to the facility. The recommendation of the bill re-ignited a fierce debate between the hospitality industry and gun-right proponents. [The Commercial Appeal has the story.](#)

[WPLN Radio reports](#) that Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey, a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor, blames the need for the bill on "a politically-motivated court" that found last year's "guns-in-bars" bill unconstitutional.

Legislators also waded into the hornet's nest of English-only driver license examinations and economic development. The matter is of special interest in Chattanooga where the Volkswagen assembly plant is under construction, and [the Chattanooga Times Free Press has the story.](#)

On the state budget front, for the 21st consecutive month, [Tennessee sales tax collections had "negative growth."](#) The general fund under-collected in February by almost \$44 million, measured against this year's budget estimate. The Funding Board will meet early next month to re-examine revenue budget estimates for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010.

On Thursday at his weekly news conference, Lieutenant Governor Ramsey expressed opposition to Governor Bredesen's proposal to equalize the sales tax treatment of cable and satellite television, calling the proposal "almost silly." Ramsey further noted that "I want to be able to go home...and be able to say we didn't raise your taxes." Cable television subscribers enjoy an exemption from sales tax on the first \$15 of their monthly bill. An estimated 800,000 satellite television subscribers do not have a similar exemption. [Jeff Woods at the The City Paper writes this story.](#)

On a political note, two-term Senator Mae Beavers unexpectedly changed her mind and [declared that she would run for re-election](#) to her Senate seat rather than continue her campaign for Wilson County mayor. The decision renews a long-running feud with State Representative Susan Lynn who has been campaigning actively for the seat since Senator Beavers announced her intention to run for the local office last year. *The Tennessean* discusses the race at some length.

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