

# TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT

## Update

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

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January 22, 2007

### **Governor Bredesen Inauguration and Agenda**

Phil Bredesen was inaugurated Saturday for his second term as Tennessee's 48th governor. In his 12-minute speech, Governor Bredesen declared that he was "rolling up his sleeves" to improve Tennessee's public education system. He challenged Tennesseans to "rededicate ourselves to big dreams for our children."

The Governor's State of the State address is scheduled for February 5. In that forum, more details are likely to be described on matters including *highway funding*, use of *education lottery proceeds*, and a possible *tobacco tax* increase for education funding.

### **The State Senate**

On Friday, Speaker Ron Ramsey announced committee assignments. The list is at the end of this update. Republicans will chair most committees, as expected, but Democrats will chair three: Environment (Kilby), Government Operations (Harper), and Ethics (Haynes). Rosalind Kurita, who crossed party lines to vote for Ramsey, will be speaker *pro tem* of the Senate.

Earlier that day, the 16-member Senate Democratic Caucus met to decide whether, in light of the Republican control of the Senate, to change Democratic leadership. The run-up to the meeting had some of the elements of a minor *coup d'etat*—secret agreements, vote-counting that was suspect, and finger-pointing about who caused the loss of the speaker's chair. The motion to reorganize the caucus was made by Senator Tommy Kilby (Wartburg). On an 8-8 tie that vote failed, and Senators Kyle (Memphis) and Haynes (Nashville) remain the Democratic leaders.

### **Minimum Wage**

Despite federal action on the minimum wage – the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed an increase from \$5.15 to \$7.25 and sent it to the U.S. Senate – State Senator Doug Jackson (D-Dickson) insists that state action is needed. He favors an amendment to the state constitution that would mandate a Tennessee minimum wage at a level at least as high as the federal minimum wage. However, new Republican Speaker Ron Ramsey opposes the idea, and Democratic House Speaker Jimmy Naifeh suggests that the legislature wait to see what is passed at the federal level.

### **Broadband Task Force Releases Report**

After six months of studying the deployment of and access to high-speed Internet for Tennesseans, the Broadband Task Force released its legislatively-mandated report and recommendations to the General Assembly. It emphasized that access to broadband is crucial to:

- Tennessee's economic future;
- the health of its citizens; and
- the education of its children.

"Tennessee needs to make a purposeful effort to serve rural areas with broadband service. Until that occurs, Tennessee will lose ground – and jobs and educational opportunities – to states willing to make that commitment."

To view the report in its entirety, visit <http://www.state.tn.us/tra> and look under the "Hot Topics" section and click "Tennessee Broadband Task Force Report and Recommendations."

### **Schedule**

The House will convene in regular session Monday, January 29; the Senate will convene the following Monday, February 5. The Senate will restrict unlimited bill filing after Thursday, February 8, and the final deadline for both Houses is expected to be the following Thursday, February 15.

### **Senate Committee Assignments 105<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly**

**Lt. Governor – Ron Ramsey (R-Blountville)**  
**Speaker Pro Tempore – Rosalind Kurita (D-Clarksville)**  
**Deputy Speaker – Tim Burchett (R-Knoxville)**

#### **Commerce, Labor and Agriculture**

Steve Southerland (R-Morristown) - Chair  
Paul Stanley (R-Memphis) – Vice Chair  
Charlotte Burks (D-Monterey) - Secretary  
John S. Wilder (D-Mason)  
Mae Beavers (R-Mt. Juliet)  
Dewayne Bunch (R-Cleveland)  
Tim Burchett (R-Knoxville)  
Ward Crutchfield (D-Chattanooga)  
Reginald Tate (D-Memphis)

#### **Education**

Jamie Woodson (R-Knoxville) – Chair  
Reginald Tate (D-Memphis) – Vice Chair  
Micheal R. Williams (R-Maynardville) - Secretary  
Joe Haynes (D-Nashville)  
Jim Tracy (R-Shelbyville)  
Rusty Crowe (R-Johnson City)  
Charlotte Burks (D-Monterey)  
Ward Crutchfield (D-Chattanooga)  
Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro)

#### **Environment, Conservation and Tourism**

Tommy Kilby (D-Wartburg) - Chair  
Dewayne Bunch (R-Cleveland) – Vice Chair  
Doug Jackson (D-Dickson) - Secretary  
Lowe Finney (D-Jackson)  
Micheal Williams (R-Maynardville)  
Raymond Finney (R-Maryville)  
Steve Southerland (R-Morristown)  
Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro)  
Roy Herron (D-Dresden)

#### **Ethics**

Joe Haynes (D-Nashville)  
Charlotte Burks (D-Monterey)  
Steve Southerland (R-Morristown)  
Diane Black (R-Gallatin)  
Mark Norris (R-Collierville)

#### **Finance, Ways and Means**

Randy McNally (R – Oak Ridge); Chairman  
Doug Henry (D – Nashville); Chairman Emeritus and Vice-Chair  
Tim Burchett (R – Knoxville); Secretary  
Raymond Finney (R – Maryville)  
Mark Norris (R – Collierville)  
Diane Black (R – Gallatin)  
Bo Watson (R – Hixson)  
Jim Kyle (D – Memphis)  
Rosalind Kurita (D – Clarksville)  
Joe Haynes (D – Nashville)  
John Wilder (D – Mason)

#### **General Welfare, Health and Human Resources**

Rusty Crowe (R- Johnson City) – Chair  
Rosalind Kurita (D-Clarksville) – Vice-Chair  
R. Finney (R-Maryville)– Secretary  
Douglas Henry (D-Nashville)  
Randy McNally (R-Oak Ridge)  
Diane Black (R-Gallatin)  
Roy Herron (D-Dresden)  
Jack Johnson (R-Brentwood)  
Ophelia Ford (D-Memphis)

**Government Operations**

Thelma Harper (D-Nashville) – Chair  
Shea Flinn (D-Memphis) – Vice Chair  
Ophelia Ford (D-Memphis) – Secretary  
Bo Watson (R-Hixon)  
Rusty Crowe (R-Johnson City)  
Jack Johnson (R-Brentwood)  
Paul Stanley (R-Memphis)  
Dewayne Bunch (R-Cleveland)  
Lowe Finney (D-Jackson)  
Mae Beavers (R-Mt. Juliet)  
Reginald Tate(D-Memphis)

**Judiciary**

Mae Beavers (R-Mt. Juliet) – Chair  
Doug Jackson (D-Dickson) – Vice Chair  
Jamie Woodson (R-Knoxville) – Secretary  
Jim Kyle(D-Memphis)  
Paul Stanley (R-Memphis)  
Mark Norris (R-Collierville)  
Shea Flinn (D-Memphis)  
John Wilder (D-Mason)  
Diane Black (R-Gallatin)

**Rules**

Mark Norris (R-Collierville) – Chair  
Randy McNally (R-Oak Ridge) – Vice Chair  
Dewayne Bunch (R-Cleveland) – Secretary  
Rosalind Kurita (D-Clarksville)  
Jim Kyle (D-Memphis)

**State and Local Government**

Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro) – Chair  
Lowe Finney (D-Jackson) – Vice-Chair  
Bo Watson (R-Hixon) – Secretary  
Jim Tracy (R-Shelbyville)  
Tim Burchett ( R-Knoxville)  
Mark Norris (R-Collierville)  
Jerry Cooper (D-Morrison)  
Thelma Harper (D-Nashville)  
Joe Haynes (D-Nashville)

**Transportation**

Jim Tracy (R-Shelbyville) – Chair  
Tommy Kilby (D-Wartburg) – Vice Chair  
Jack Johnson (R-Brentwood) – Secretary  
Rosalind Kurita (D-Clarksville)  
Micheal Williams (R-Maynardville)  
Steve Southerland (R-Morristown)  
Jamie Woodson (R-Knoxville)  
Doug Jackson (D-Dickson)  
Jerry Cooper (D-Morrison)

**Calendar**

Raymond Finney (R-Maryville) – Chair  
Mark Norris (R-Collierville) – Vice-Chair  
Jim Kyle (D-Memphis) – Secretary

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