

TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT UPDATE

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

March 25, 2011

This week, Governor Haslam achieved one of his legislative priorities, and one of his other major legislative initiatives began its journey toward passage.

The House passed the governor's tenure reform bill yesterday. The Senate had previously passed the bill. Because of minor differences in the House version, the Senate will pass the House version before the bill goes to the governor's desk. [*The Tennessean has a good report on the subject.*](#)

Wednesday afternoon, the debate on the governor's tort reform proposal began. Herbert Slatery, the governor's legal counsel, led the presentation in support of the proposal. He was supported by an array of business leaders and medical professionals including Bass, Berry & Sims' partner Lee Barfield. Barfield has been a leader in the effort to organize the coalition in support of the initiative and to create a support organization called Tennesseans for Economic Growth (TEG). [*Nashville Business Journal has a story about TEG.*](#)

The main attraction in opposition was former U.S. Senator and current lobbyist for the state's trial lawyers, Fred Thompson. [*Brandon Gee with The Tennessean described the setting.*](#)

As previously announced by Subcommittee Chairman Coley (R-Bartlett), no vote was taken in the House Judiciary Subcommittee. The vote is scheduled for Wednesday, March 30. It is then anticipated that the bill will be heard in both the full House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, April 5, and the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, April 6.

To put a fine point on the politics of the week, in a press release signed only as "Tennessee Tea Party," the author castigated Governor Haslam of "his embrace of ... socialistic principles..." Legislative leadership leapt to the governor's defense, and Governor Haslam himself declined to participate in what he called "the name-exchanging business..." [*The Associated Press story was in the Knoxville News Sentinel.*](#)



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