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The Key Three: Call to Action: Support Franchise Tax Cut, Legislature Announces Committee Closures, and Bill Hearings

Chamber Call to Action: Urge Lawmakers to Support Franchise Tax Cut:

Last week, the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce released a [statement](#) announcing support for efforts to reform Tennessee's franchise tax by removing the alternative minimum measure, which will provide tax relief to the business community and make the state more competitive. Governor Bill Lee proposed the franchise tax changes in his state of the state address noting constitutional concerns and the need to fix the issue to avoid substantial legal risk for Tennessee. The proposal would result in hundreds of millions of dollars in annual tax savings for businesses across the state.

In addition to removing the alternative minimum measure moving forward, the proposal would also provide refunds to businesses that have paid franchise taxes based on the alternative measure during any of the past three years. The Chamber broadly supports the proposed refunds and has been working with the governor, the Department of Revenue, and bill sponsors to ensure that the refund process is orderly and easily accessible to the entire business community.

The Chamber encourages members to begin contacting their lawmakers to urge them to pass the proposed tax cut and refund package. We have heard from legislators that they want to hear from the business community as they continue to consider the governor's proposal.

Legislative Committees Announce Final Calendars, Significant Legislation Next Week:

The Tennessee General Assembly is ahead of pace with many suggesting a mid to late April adjournment date. This is earlier than prior years and lawmakers have signaled the race to the finish line as committees have begun to close and others have announced final calendars and meetings. Chairman Steve Southerland (R-Morristown), in typical fashion, was the first to close a committee with Senate Energy, Agriculture, and Natural Resources wrapping up on Wednesday this week. Although committees are making these announcements, the workload has not lightened. Significant legislation the Chamber is tracking will be heard in committees next week with hundreds of bills up for consideration. See bills below in the Chamber Quick Hits section.

[View Committee Important Dates Here](#)

Mid-Point of Legislative Session produces a flurry of bills – With House and Senate calendars growing each week, a number of pieces of legislation important to the Chamber are

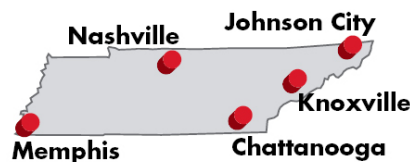
scheduled to be heard in committees. A comprehensive slate of legislation the Chamber is tracking and working to stop or pass can be found in the *Quick Hits* section below. In other legislative updates,

- [SB2909\(Bailey\)/HB2306\(Vaughan\)](#) – As amended would establish a Tennessee Workers Compensation Self-Insured Guarantee Fund for employers that self-insure their WC liability. Employers currently are required to annually post collateral with the Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance which are used in the rare case of a bankruptcy ensuring employees receive WC benefits. This proposal is similar to WC guarantee funds established in a number of other states and Chamber members have expressed this approach can help free up capital and save costs while maintaining protections for employees. The legislation is scheduled to be heard on the Senate and House floor next week.
- [SB2017\(Reeves\)/HB2113 \(Powers\)](#) – Shortens the statute of limitations for claims for unpaid wages, for hours worked, overtime, minimum wage, salary, bonuses, commissions, or other compensation owed to an employee or independent contractor, including causes of action for breach of contract, unjust enrichment, or quantum meruit to be brought within three years of accruing. SB2017/HB2113 is anti class action bill and will make Tennessee consistent with federal law. The legislation is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday and is scheduled to be heard on the House floor on Monday.

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Chamber Quick Hits/Bills of Interest:

SB2180(Hensley)/HB1904(Fritts)--Criminal Offenses-- [SB2180/HB1904](#) removes the offense of possessing a weapon in a building that prohibits or restricts weapons. Allows a person with an enhanced handgun carry permit to carry a handgun into a business that prohibits or restricts weapons. Removes penalties for violations of certain firearms provisions.

Senate: Placed on the Senate Judiciary Committee for 3/12/2024

House: Action Def. in s/c Civil Justice Subcommittee to 3/19/2024

Position: Opposed

SB2027(Reeves)/HB2110(Boyd)--Labor-- [SB2027/HB2110](#) clarifies that under Title 50, Chapter 2, the term "work" has the same meaning as interpreted by the United States Supreme Court for purposes of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Portal-to-Portal Act of 1947.

Senate: Passed the Senate Floor on 3/7/24

House: Passed the House Floor on 3/4/24

Position: Support

SB2017(Reeves)/HB2113(Powers)--Statutes of Limitations and Repose--

- [SB2017/HB2113](#) shortens the statute of limitations for claims for unpaid wages, for hours worked, overtime, minimum wage, salary, bonuses, commissions, or other compensation owed to an employee or independent contractor, including causes of action for breach of contract, unjust enrichment, or quantum meruit to be brought within three years of accruing.

Senate: Action deferred in Senate Judiciary Committee to 3/12/2024

House: Passed House Civil Justice Committee and is headed for the House Floor on 3/11/24

Position: Support

SB2909(Bailey)/HB2306(Vaughan)--Commerce & Insurance-- [SB2909/HB2306](#) as

amended would establish a Tennessee Workers Compensation Self-Insured Guarantee Fund for employers that self-insure their WC liability. Employers currently are required to annually post collateral with the Tennessee Department of Commerce & Insurance which are used in the rare case of a bankruptcy ensuring employees receive WC benefits. This proposal is similar to WC guarantee funds established in a number of other states and Chamber members have expressed this approach can help free up capital and save costs while maintaining protections for employees. .

Senate: Recommended for passage with amendment/s, refer to Senate Calendar Committee Ayes 7, Nays 0 PNV 0

House: Placed on the House Floor on 3/14/2024

Position: Support

SB2615(Niceley)/HB2798(Hulsey)--Consumer Protection-- **SB2615/HB2798** prohibits a person selling or offering for sale goods or services at retail, and who employs at least six employees, from requiring a buyer to pay using credit for in-person transactions. Requires a person selling or offering for sale goods or services at retail to accept legal tender when offered by the buyer as payment. Details those violations treated as a prohibited practice under the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act of 1977.

Senate: Placed on Senate Commerce and Labor Committee for 3/12/2024

House: Failed in s/c Banking & Consumer Affairs Subcommittee

Position: Opposed

SB1946(Walley)/HB2057(Carr)--Property Assessors-- **SB1946/HB2057** replaces the six-year reappraisal cycle with the requirement for counties to choose between a reappraisal program that requires reappraisal to occur once per year, once every two years, once every three years, or once every four years.

Senate: Placed on Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee calendar for 3/12/2024

House: H. Placed on Regular Calendar for 3/11/2024

Position: Monitoring

SB2859(Roberts)/HB1841(Ragan)--Public Contracts-- **SB2859/HB1841** prohibits certain foreign entities from submitting bids for contracts with the state or a political subdivision of the state. Requires entities bidding on contracts to make certain disclosures and certifications related to the entities' business relationship with certain foreign entities. Provides for civil penalties if the disclosures or certifications are false.

Senate: Referred to Senate State and Local Government Committee

House: Failed in s/c Public Service Subcommittee of State Government Committee

Position: Monitoring

SB1717(Hensley)/HB1730(Capley)--English Only Driver License Examinations-- **SB1717/HB1730** requires all written driver license examinations to be administered in English only. Prohibits use of a translation dictionary, electronic device, or interpreter to assist with the examination.

Senate: Action deferred in Senate Transportation and Safety Committee to 3/13/2024

House: referred to House Transportation Committee

Position: Opposed

SB2431(Powers)/HB2707(Garrett)--Consumer Protection/AI-- **SB2431/HB2707** requires a person to include a disclosure on certain content generated by artificial intelligence that the content was generated using artificial intelligence. Makes it an unfair or deceptive act or practice under the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act of 1977 to distribute certain content generated using artificial intelligence without the required disclosure.

Senate: Placed on Senate Commerce and Labor Committee for 3/12/2024

House: Assigned to s/c Banking & Consumer Affairs Subcommittee

Position: Monitoring

SB2678(White)/HB2747(Vaughan)--Tennessee Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council Act-- **SB2678/HB2747** Creates the Tennessee Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council and specifies membership of the council. Requires the council to submit an action plan to the governor to address how to position this state competitively to ensure its citizens capture the full economic benefit from artificial intelligence opportunities and to address how to responsibly leverage artificial intelligence to improve the efficiency of state and local government services.

Senate: Action deferred in Senate Government Operations Committee to 3/13/2024

Position: Support

SB2858(Roberts)/HB2615(Ragan)--Motor Vehicle Consumer Privacy Act of 2024-

-SB2858/HB2615 Creates the "Motor Vehicle Consumer Privacy Act of 2024" which requires the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (TPUC) to establish and provide for the operation of a database to compile a list of the names and contact information of purchasers of new motor vehicles in this state who object to the use of their personal data and information by a motor vehicle manufacturer. Requires TPUC to have the database in operation no later than January 1, 2025.

Senate: Placed on Senate Commerce and Labor Committee for 3/12/2024

House: Taken off notice in Banking & Consumer Affairs Subcommittee of Commerce Committee

Position: Opposed

SB2096(Johnson)/HB2091(Lamberth)--Trade Regulation/AI-- SB2096/HB2091 Enacts the "Ensuring Likeness, Voice, and Image Security Act of 2024" (ELVIS Act). Specifies that any person who knowingly uses or infringes upon the use of an individual's voice, in any manner directed to any person other than such individual, for purposes of advertising products, merchandise, goods, or services, or for purposes of fundraising, solicitation of donations, purchases of products, merchandise, goods, or services, without such individual's prior consent, or, in the case of a minor, the prior consent of such minor's parent or legal guardian, or in the case of a deceased individual, the consent of the executor or administrator, heirs, or devisees of such deceased individual, is liable to a civil action. Part of Administration Package.

Senate: Passed on the Senate Floor

House: Passed on the House Floor

Position: Neutral

SB2100(Johnson)/HB1892(Lamberth)--Safety-- SB2100/HB1892 As introduced, authorizes the use of certain third-party examiners, inspectors, engineers, and professionals in lieu of a local or state examiner, inspector, engineer, or professional for certain permitted processes and requirements; establishes procedures and requirements for the use of a third-party examiner, inspector, engineer, or professional.

Senate: Passed on the Senate Floor

House: Action def. in Commerce Committee to 3/12/2024

Position: Monitoring



Social From the Capitol

Senate Committee Passes Solid Waste Task Force Legislation - On Wednesday, the Senate Energy, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee passed an amended version of [SB2705](#) sponsored by Chairman Steve Southerland (R-Morristown) that would create a 15 person task force to look for solutions to the state's solid waste issues. The task force would be comprised of six

appointees by Chairman Southerland, six by Chairman Chris Todd (R-Madison County) of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and three from the Governor.

[View the Full Article Here](#)

Mark Cochran
@repmarkcochran

Enjoyed speaking with business leaders in our state, and I'll always advocate for policies that keep government out of their way!

Tennessee Chamber of Commmerc... · 2/27/24

Insightful discussion with @SenJohnStevens, @repmarkcochran & @CalebHemmer on tax policy, AI, and other matters before the General Assembly that will shape Tennessee's business landscape.



6:17 PM · 2/29/24 From Earth · 629 Views

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News and Notes....

--**Governor Lee**, Commissioner McWhorter **Announce 11 Million in Infrastructure Planning Grants.** [\[MORE\]](#)

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