



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SPECIAL SESSION

AUGUST 2023

The August 2023 Special Session adjourned Sine Die on Tuesday, August 29, 2023. Special Session gavelled in on Monday, August 21, 2023 to address Governor Lee's call on Public Safety. Including resolutions, the Senate introduced 106 bills and the House introduced 116 bills. The special session concluded after five legislative days and a whirlwind of media. Notable events included the standoff between House and Senate chambers, a legal challenge resulting in a judicial block of House Rules disallowing signs, and drama amongst the House chamber regarding the successful vote to silence Rep. Justin Jones. Ultimately, only four bills, including an appropriations bill, passed both chambers and are now heading to Governor Lee for action. Below are summarizations of these four bills.

HB7012/SB7085

Firearms and Ammunition:

This bill directs the Department of Safety to provide free firearm locks to Tennessee residents upon request. It also implements a public safety campaign dedicated to educating and raising awareness of safe storage of firearms. This public safety campaign has a \$1.1 million fiscal note that was included in the appropriations bill passed by both chambers. The bill defines firearm safes and firearm safety devices. It further exempts the retail sale of firearm safes and firearm safety devices from sales and use taxes beginning November 1, 2023.

HB7013/SB7086

Clerks & the Court:

This bill changes the time frame from 30 days to 72 hours for which a clerk of the circuit or general sessions court must notify the TBI of the final disposition of criminal proceedings against a person after final disposition. It requires the clerk to notify the TBI of the final disposition of such proceedings by electronic submission and requires the clerk of the municipal court, when exercising concurrent general sessions court jurisdiction, to notify the TBI by electronic submission of the final disposition of such proceedings against a person no later than 72 hours after final disposition of such.



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HB7041/SB7088

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation:

This bill was brought by the Tennessee Freedom & Faith Coalition, a self-proclaimed religious rights, pro-life, 2nd amendment organization currently working to defeat Marxism and protect children and human trafficking victims. The bill requires the bureau to submit a report on child and human trafficking crimes and trends in the state based upon data available to the bureau, as well as current programs and activities of the bureau's human trafficking unit to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Speaker of the Senate by December 1, 2023, and by each December 1 thereafter. A TBI representative testified in committee noting the requested data was already available for public access, however the bill was passed by both chambers and heralded as a positive step to protect children and victims.

HB7070/SB7089

Appropriations:

The appropriations bill for the special session funds the following:

- \$1.1 million nonrecurring to the Department of Safety for the sole purpose of creating and implementing a public safety campaign dedicated to safe firearm storage
- \$10 million nonrecurring for the Department of Education to be distributed as school safety grants in accordance with Section 3
- \$12 million nonrecurring to Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for the sole purpose of providing sign-on and retention bonuses to prospective or current behavioral health professionals who work for DMHSAS
- \$3 million nonrecurring to DMHSAS for the sole purpose of providing a public behavioral health scholarship program
- \$4 million nonrecurring to DMHSAS for the Behavioral Health Safety Net Program
- \$30 million nonrecurring for the sole purpose of providing school safety grants to public and private institutions of higher education in the state
- \$50 million nonrecurring for the sole purpose of providing grants to licensed community mental health agencies that contracted with DMHSAS in fiscal year 2022-2023