

## **Tennessee Weekly Legislative Update, 1/08 – 1/12, 2024**

### **New Year, New Laws**

This week, the second session of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly convened on January 9, 2024 at noon. In this new year, we anticipate a plethora of new legislation to be filed and move through the committee system. Governor Bill Lee announced the Ensuring Likeness Voice and Image Security (ELVIS) Act on January 10, 2024. This is the first bill in the nation geared toward protecting artists against AI voice impersonation. He also announced a statewide proposal for the Tennessee Education Savings Account (ESA) Program and proposed changes to the state's franchise tax to offer tax relief to businesses operating in Tennessee and modernize the way that tax is calculated.

### **On a Tight Budget**

Commissioner Jim Bryson presented to the House and Senate Finance Committees and talked about the revenue deficit for the next fiscal year. From August to November 2023, tax revenue is down by \$88.4 million compared to last year which largely stems from tax cuts at the state level. Overall, the state is coming short of the state's funding board initial estimates. The missed revenues from early in the state's fiscal year prompted the state's funding board to revise its estimate with a prediction that revenue will come up about \$718.8 million short of initial projections during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

### **Member Updates**

Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally is expected to be out the first few weeks of session due to his second ankle surgery. He states, "I look forward to returning to work in person as soon as I am able." On the Senate floor this week, Senator Art Swann, a Republican from Maryville, joined a lengthy list of legislators and announced he will not seek re-election. Representative Aftyn Behn, a Democrat from Nashville, is a new face around Cordell Hull Building. Behn won the special election to fill Bill Beck's seat after his untimely passing. Behn was sworn in last October becoming the youngest woman (33) to ever serve in the state House. Another (old but) new face is Representative Timothy Hill, a Republican from Blountville. Hill was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Scotty Campbell. Hill went on to win the special election for the seat. Hill did serve in the special session held in 2023 and previously held the seat before an unsuccessful run for Congress.

### **Bill Filing Deadlines**

The House has announced a bill filing deadline is January 30, 2024. The Senate's deadline is shortly after on February 1, 2024.