



March 31, 2016

As adjournment draws near in the Legislature, especially in an election year, there are a number of announcements about who's leaving office; who's running for office; and what cabinet positions will become open. This week was no exception. As Governor Haslam announced the departure of one key cabinet member, he introduced us to Jai Templeton, his new Commissioner of Agriculture.

In our photo of the week, you'll see Rep. Jon Lundberg (R-Bristol), a captain in the Navy Reserve, who has been called up for duty at the Pentagon and therefore will miss the remainder of session. He had already announced plans to run for the Senate in the district being vacated by Lt. Gov Ron Ramsey (R-Blountville), so Wednesday was his last day in the House. It's a busy time of year!

Darin Gordon

Governor Bill Haslam announced this week that after two decades in state government, TennCare Director and Deputy Commissioner of Health Care Finance and Administration Darin Gordon will be leaving his post to join the private sector. Gordon has served in the role since 2006, making him not only the longest serving TennCare director in state history, but in the country. Gordon's last day will be June 30. The Governor's office has made no mention of a potential successor. This opens up a key cabinet position in a role that oversees a \$10.5 billion budget, the biggest of any state department.

Appropriations Process Begins

Commissioner Larry Martin of Finance and Administration presented the Governor's amendment to the appropriations bill to both the Senate and House Finance Committees on Tuesday. Adjustments to the FY17 budget include \$30M in non-recurring funds for Economic Community Development for an unnamed new industry. It also restores the 1% TennCare provider rate reduction, \$8M for the television series *Nashville*, and \$7.5M for local jails. You can link to the administration amendment overview and presentation [here](#).

End of Session

House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick (R-Chattanooga) announced that Flo Mo, a speed-up move signaling the end of session, could be brought on Monday, with the goal of adjourning the week of April 18. The earliest Flow Motion in recent history was on April 2, 2014, adjournment on April 17, 2014.

Guns on Campus

A second guns on campus bill passed out of Senate Judiciary Committee this week and is headed to the Senate floor. The bill, [SB 2376](#), is sponsored by Sen. Mike Bell (R-Riceville) and permits full-time employees of state public colleges or universities to carry a handgun while on property owned, operated, or used by the employing college or university if the employee has a valid Tennessee handgun carry permit. The companion bill is scheduled for House Education Administration and Planning Committee on April 5.

Wine in Grocery Stores

This week the House approved the Wine in Grocery Stores fix to allow Tennessee grocery stores to stock early before the July 1 effective date. The version that passed has the one-license limit on liquor store ownership intact. It is now headed to the Governor's desk.

Bible Bill

A bill to make the Bible the official book of Tennessee is headed for a full Senate vote. This week, Senate Judiciary Committee approved the “[Bible bill](#)” and sent it to Calendar Committee, where it will be scheduled for a vote on the Senate Floor as early as next week.

Photo of the Week:

Here we have Estie Harris, Rep. Jon Lundberg (R-Bristol) and Meagan Frazier.

