



Capitol Update: Week of February 27, 2026

County Government Day Brings Hundreds of Officials to Nashville

With county officials in town for County Government Day and the House of Representatives opting to cancel all standing committees except for the Finance Committee, this week had a very different feel. Hundreds of elected and appointed county officials and staff members began arriving Sunday night for two days of meetings. They met in committee, board, and membership sessions and heard briefings on key pieces of legislation being considered by the General Assembly. At the Tuesday morning breakfast, officials first heard from Comptroller Jason Mumpower and Speaker of the House Cameron Sexton before Governor Bill Lee closed out the session with his final remarks to this group as the elected Governor of Tennessee. Lee reflected on his time in office and his initial election campaign when he visited all 95 counties. He talked about how that experience shaped his priorities for bringing resources to rural, economically distressed counties.

Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally had originally planned to address the breakfast as well, but earlier in the month, he expressed his regrets that he would be unable to attend. The reasons became more apparent on Thursday morning as he announced from the Senate floor that he would not be seeking reelection to the State Senate in November, citing his own and his wife's health and the desire for them to have more time together. After his brief remarks, members of the Senate rose to offer their tributes to Sen. McNally, who is currently the longest-serving member of the General Assembly. McNally was first elected Lieutenant Governor after Ron Ramsey retired in 2016. Lt. Gov. McNally, who recently turned 82, defied expectations by remaining in the role for a decade.

Next Week Critical on a Number of Key Issues

House Committees and Subcommittees are returning with a vengeance next week, with full calendars and a number of controversial bills scheduled for consideration. Key among them for county associations is [HB 1873](#), which proposes to cap local property tax increases each year at 2% plus inflation. If a county ever needs to raise revenues in excess of that amount, such an increase would have to be approved in advance by voters in a referendum held at a regular November election. In addition to this bill, the Cities and Counties Subcommittee is scheduled to hear 28 others. Many of them could have significant impacts on local governments. Some items that currently appear innocuous are broad enough that they could be amended to enact major changes to counties. In addition to the Property Tax Cap proposal, this key subcommittee, which meets this Wednesday at 3:00 p.m., will also be hearing the following items of interest to county associations:

- [HB2186](#) which allows metro counties to reduce the local option sales tax on food;
- [HB1827](#) which requires a local legislative body to approve the siting of rock quarries or digital asset mining facilities;
- [HB1969](#) which alters the property assessment process for movable structures;
- [HB1931](#) which prohibits county commissions in charter counties from cutting the sheriff's budget without the sheriff's approval;
- [HB608](#) which prohibits a county from requiring a developer to pay for infrastructure deemed "nonessential" to the development of the property;
- [HB92](#) which authorizes recall elections for county officials;
- [HB1451](#) which requires all counties to establish a county ethics commission;
- [HB1716](#) which freezes the value of residential property for tax purposes at the higher of the most recent sale price or mortgage valuation;
- [HB2419](#) which requires county commissions to approve municipal annexations

Updates on Bills of Interest to Counties

Due to House standing committees and subcommittees not meeting this week, there are fewer updates on proposals the associations are following, but a number of bills did progress. The next few weeks will be critical as committees begin announcing final calendars and deadlines to put bills on notice.

- [HB1488/SB1617](#) requiring county commissions to adopt rules of procedure was approved by the full House on a consent calendar last week. It was recommended by the State and Local Committee in the Senate on Tuesday, then passed on the consent calendar in that chamber on Thursday. The bill makes any existing county commission rules "temporary" for the first 90 days following an election. The newly constituted commission has that time to ratify those rules, amend them or adopt new rules by a majority vote. After that period, the rules would require a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote to change.
- [SB178/HB22](#), which passed the House last year but failed to get enough votes to get out of the Senate State and Local Committee, was back this week. The bill requires local governments to allow speakers during a public comment period to address any matter

“germane to the jurisdiction” of the local government, rather than simply items on the meeting agenda. After a citizen from Cumberland County testified about difficulties being able to address her school board on matters of concern that never appeared on an agenda, the Senate Committee voted to approve the legislation. It was scheduled for consideration on the Senate floor on Thursday, but was deferred for two weeks.

- [HB1846/SB1824](#), which would eliminate rollback taxes when greenbelt property is transferred to a new owner who does not intend to keep the property in a qualifying use, was approved by the Agriculture Committee in the House and referred to Finance. It has not yet been scheduled for a vote in that committee. It is scheduled to be heard by the State and Local Committee in the Senate next week.
- [HB1837/SB1908](#), which requires city and county governments to compensate landowners if any local land use regulation reduces the value of their land, is scheduled to be heard next week in the Civil Justice Subcommittee. It was deferred to March 10th in Senate Judiciary. Under the bill, the landowner or their heir would have up to three years to make a claim for compensation after the county enacted some resolution or regulation that they believe impacts the market value of their property.
- [SB1589/HB1502](#), which creates a certification process for correctional officers and spells out more detail on what needs to go into a plan of action to correct deficiencies in local jails, was approved by the Senate on Monday. It is scheduled for the House Judiciary Committee next week after being approved by the House State and Local Committee.
- [SB1778/HB1467](#), which expedites the process for FEMA to distribute funds to local governments following disasters, was approved by the Senate State and Local Committee on Tuesday, then on a consent calendar on the Senate floor on Thursday. The House State and Local Committee approved the bill last week. It is placed on a House consent calendar for Monday night next week.
- [SB1865/HB2531](#), which creates a new grant program for equipment for rescue squads, is progressing. It passed the Senate this week and is scheduled for the House State and Local Government Committee next week.
- [SB2257/HB1451](#), which mandates counties to create a county ethics commission, was approved by the Senate Government Operations Committee and referred to the State and Local Government Committee. It is scheduled for consideration in that committee on Tuesday next week and Wednesday in the Cities and Counties Subcommittee in the House on Wednesday.
- [HB1813/SB1480](#), which requires the state to pay for autopsies ordered by the District Attorney instead of counties, was recommended by the Public Service Subcommittee last week and sent to the full House State and Local Committee where it is scheduled to be heard next week. The bill is projected to save counties over \$1 million each year.
- [HB1061/SB1376](#), which establishes allowable billable costs for ambulance services that are out-of-network, is scheduled for consideration in the House Insurance Subcommittee and the Senate Commerce Committee next week. This legislation is expected to be amended to stabilize and protect ambulance service insurance reimbursement.
- [SB2276/HB2160](#), which prohibits a county commission from having an at-large district, has been taken off notice in both the House and the Senate.

- [SB624/HB618](#), which prohibits an individual holding an elected office in local government from holding another local office at the same time, was amended on the Senate floor, then passed 21-10. As amended, the bill allows individuals holding more than one office on January 1, 2027, to continue to hold those offices and be reelected to them as long as they remain continuously in office. The bill will return to the House, which passed it last year, for the amendment to be considered.