

TISL TIMES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE 48TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Important Times

12:30 Joint Session – House

1:30 6th Legislative Session

2:45 – 3:15 Voting

4:30 – 5:00 Voting – Runoff

6:00 Adjourn



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Gender assignments and school sports launch 48th General Assembly spirit of debate

The 48th General Assembly launched with the overwhelming defeat of TISL Bill 29.

The purpose of TISL Bill 29's policy proposed preventing transgender males and females from competing on sports teams, opposite their birth-assigned sex.

The bill's opposition argues the intent to be discriminatory, only adding potential harassment transgender individuals face every day. The bill failed with an overwhelming majority.

During the course of floor debate, representatives brought the topic of hormone treatment therapy, with several representatives reminding the room that hormone therapy changes the body in a way that makes transgender individuals similar in biological structure to individuals identifying with their birth sex.

Those opposing the bill reminded the floor that transgender individuals already experience harassment and bullying every day; that this bill would only enflame that by further separating the transgender community from their peers.



Bill sponsor, Ben Leach, TISL House Representative, maintains TISL 29 is not discriminatory, but rather, written as a safety measure.

Leach argues the different biological makeup offered an unfair advantage or disadvantage to the opposing team.

When questioned for comment, Representative Leach stated that he wishes he could have spoken more towards the issues represented by the bill, and that he feels like the author's intention was lost during the debate on the floor.

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He is hopeful for the senate debate, but feels that the chances of failing and passing are equal. Although the legislative journey of this bill failed early into this session, the discourse and chamber of applause is representative of the building momentum of the 48th General Assembly.

- Kalie Shaw,
TISL Times Reporter

Bill to Cut Wait Time Before Abortions Passes House

In 1973, with the Supreme Court's decision regarding Roe v. Wade, abortion in the United States was legalized, giving women the choice to terminate their pregnancy. Currently, there are 3 states that have a mandatory waiting period of 48 hours before having an abortion procedure: Tennessee, Arkansas, and Alabama. There are 18 states that require a 24-hour waiting period, and 20 states that do not require a waiting period at all. *

As TISL Bill 9 sponsors, Senator Bradley Summerville and Representatives Paige Murin and Hannah Mentgen, pointed out, 63% of women in Tennessee do not have access to an abortion clinic in their county and must endure transportation costs and the possibility of missing work in order to travel elsewhere if they wish to have an abortion. This bill specifically seeks to assist women with low-income jobs, lack of reliable and inexpensive transportation, without easy access to an abortion clinic in their area, and without adequate funds to properly raise a child by doing away with the 48-hour waiting period before an abortion procedure. In many cases, with lack of money or transportation to return to the clinic after the waiting period, women must choose to either continue with the pregnancy or perform an abortion procedure themselves, which may likely cause their own death.

Critics of the bill think requiring women to wait two days in order to reflect on their decision is imperative since this is something so personal, life-altering, and potentially psychologically harmful.

This time also gives women the opportunity to potentially find options other than abortion.

However, many representatives are in favor of the bill. "I implore you to look in your heart. Why do you have the right to take someone's life?" a representative pleaded after sharing a personal story involving abortion.

After much debate on the floor, TISL Bill 9 passed in the House, 50 to 36.

*Kaiser Family Foundation, 2017

- Kristen Morris,
TISL Times Reporter

What's Going on in the Judiciary Committee?

In the Judiciary Committee, there has been debate regarding issues with law enforcement, crime punishment, and other judicial issues. Included in the bills discussed is TISL Bill 182, An Act to Amend Tennessee Code Annotated 70-4-125, sponsored by Mitchell Parrott, Matt Miyares, Don Griffin, and Tyler Counts of King University, questions the promotion of increased punishment of those who purposely poison lawns.

TISL Bill 182 proposes the change of intentionally leaving any material that is poisonous from a class C misdemeanor to a class A misdemeanor. In the bill, intentional is defined as "knowingly or recklessly depositing a substance to someone's property that is rendered poisonous." The bill targets any harm against animals and humans via the poisoning of a yard.

Lobbyist for Law Enforcement, Tori Page from the University of Tennessee at Martin, states "If they are knowingly committing a crime that could potentially kill someone, they should be charged with a class A misdemeanor." Page also brought up the idea that "When a yard is poisoned due to the disliking of a dog, nothing is done about it." This is an important point considering citizens of Memphis are paranoid due to a recent string of dog attacks via poisonous treats and blatant poisoning of yards.

There are many aspects of this bill to consider, but at the end of the day, lawmakers will have to recognize the applications of this bill considering how it would affect the public and its safety either in a positive or a negative way.

- Joseph Paschall,
TISL Times Reporter

AMC3 Simi-Final Round Postponed

With Saturday of the General Assembly comes the AMC3 semi-final rounds. This year, one semi-finalist team came from Southern Adventist University. As the Sabbath is observed on Saturday from Seventh-day Adventists, the AMC3 team was unable to compete during the daylight hours.

After deliberation in the issue at hand, the court, both teams involved, and the Governor come to the agreement to alter the AMC3 schedule to allow the team to compete after sundown at 5:15 PM. Thus, the competition is able to continue for all parties, protecting and preserving the right to religious freedom.

Gubernatorial Candidate Karl Dean Addresses TISL Delegates

Karl Dean announced his candidacy for Governor of Tennessee in early 2017. Despite originally being from South Dakota, Dean has a degree from Vanderbilt University and served as the mayor of Nashville for two terms from 2007-2015. He is a member of the Democratic party and will run for governor under this platform.

Dean walked into the chamber to a welcoming standing ovation. He spoke on his goals, short and long term, for the state of Tennessee. He stated, "we still have work to do in this state". It is a bold but powerful statement by someone with a background in holding office and has first-hand experience with what still needs to be improved in the state of Tennessee.

Dean has a background working with youth in his time as a lawyer and mayor of Nashville. His speech included assertions that he was interested in encouraging and working on public education and safety in Tennessee. He has even spent the last two

years around young people as a visiting professor at both Belmont University and Boston University.

Like all candidates running for an office, Karl Dean exhibits a great passion for his ideas. Dean said, "I want to see government work for every Tennessean" truly tying together with the mission of this delegation which allows collegiate students to interact with and hopefully improve government. Head Delegate Ben Rosenberg of Rhodes College said of Dean and his speech, "I was impressed by his openness and willing to fight for healthcare and LGBT issues. I think he would make a strong democrat candidate but I am dually worried how well any democratic candidate can do in Tennessee."

Following a short question and answer where delegates had an opportunity to inquire on specific issues important to them, Karl Dean concluded his second appearance at TISL.

TN GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES SO FAR:

REPUBLICAN

PRIMARY

MAE BEAVERS
DIANE BLACK
RANDY BOYD
BETH HARWELL
BILL LEE
KAY WHITE

DEMOCRATIC

PRIMARY

KARL DEAN
CRAIG FITZUGH

- Sara Taylor,
TISL Times Reporter

