



THE *Senator* SOURCE

NEWSLETTER OF STATE SENATOR CHARLANE OLIVER
TENNESSEE'S 19TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

February 2023



I am excited to bring you *The Senator Source*, a new monthly newsletter created and produced by the office of Senator Charlane Oliver for residents of District 19. This summer, I listened to many of you on the campaign trail who desired communication about what's happening on the Hill. I'll be sharing legislative updates and resources, bills I'm working on, how you can make your voice heard, as well as community news in and around District 19. **To receive my newsletter, please [subscribe here](#).**

FROM THE DESK OF SENATOR OLIVER

As we progress through the 113th Legislative session, I am ecstatic to be serving the people of District 19 and around the state. Now that the Organizational Session has concluded, the real work begins of passing legislation. The bill filing deadline concluded February 2, and I sponsored and co-sponsored a total of 36 bills for my first year. [View Here](#). Things are moving faster than they ever have before. There's rumblings that we might even be done with Session by the week of April 17, which at this point, would be a good thing, as we are doing more harm than good by staying here longer.

GOVERNOR BILL LEE'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS



The legislature kicked off this month by convening for Governor Bill Lee's State of the State Address on Feb. 6, where he announced his proposed **\$55.6 billion** budget for 2023-2024. With the coronavirus pandemic behind us, Governor Lee's budget priorities will focus on making investments in infrastructure and roads, environmental cleanup and parks, education, workforce pay increases, and fixing the crisis at the Department of Children's Services.

Check out what Senator Oliver said during the SOTS on [Twitter](#):

"The Governor's State of the State is starting momentarily. You'll hear many statements about "leading the nation" but with this \$55.6 Billion budget, TNGOP are actually putting out fires they've created due to neglect of issues over the past 10 years they've been in power. Don't be fooled, the investments being made in children, families and workers should've been done years ago! We have surplus money to end

the DCS crisis and fully fund public schools but we won't! Instead we're leading in hatred, bullying and bigotry."

Here's the highlights of Gov. Lee's proposed budget:

The Good:

- **\$26 billion** for road improvements for addressing traffic congestion
- **\$3 billion** for Transportation Modernization Act to build "choice lanes"
- **\$750 million** each for TDOT's four (4) regions to build roads
- **\$300 million** to expand State Aid Programs to fund local road projects
- **\$288.3 million** for a one-time, 3-month sales tax holiday on food from August 1 to October 31, 2023
- **\$7.3M** to establish a state paid family leave tax credit
- **\$350 million** for K-12 Education to fund the new funding formula, the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA)
- **\$125 million** on new teacher raises—increasing minimum teacher pay to \$50,000
- **\$5.1 million** for Grow-Your-Own apprenticeships to address teacher shortage
- **\$952 million** total for state's colleges of applied technology (TCATs)
- **\$4.7 million** to permanently extend postpartum health coverage under TennCare to cover costs of diapers
- **\$143.4 million** on ending the DCS foster care crisis
- **\$70 million** to TN Clean Initiative, cleaning up state superfund sites, Oak Ridge and all 47 known dry cleaner sites
- **\$6.3 million** for the Rural Brownfields Investment Act to revitalize 175 known brownfield sites, creating a new state-administered grant and technical support program for remediation and economic development of existing brownfields

The Bad:

- **\$100 million** for grants to crisis pregnancy centers statewide that indoctrinates women
- **\$9 million** in state funds for HIV prevention to supplement \$8.8M refusal of CDC funds for HIV prevention

DAYS ON THE HILL



If you've walked the halls of the Capitol this past month, then you witnessed the hustle and bustle of various Days on the Hill. The Legislature had many visits by our constituents, local and state organizations, institutions, and friends/colleagues. Tennessee State University visited for their day on the hill Feb. 8th where I gave remarks on the exceptional achievements TSU continues to bring and to congratulate President Dr. Glenda Glover for her ambition and dedication on continuing to bring the university to extreme success.

Throughout the month of February, I met with constituents and groups for their Days on the Hill:

- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Dr. Joseph Webb, CEO of Nashville General Hospital
- Black Folks Day on the Hill hosted by SisterReach
- Healthy and Free Tennessee
- Housing for All
- Williamson County Chamber
- Tennessee Realtors Association
- Nashville Propel
- HBCU Day on the Hill
- TN Equality Project

TENNESSEE BLACK CAUCUS





The Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators (TBCSL) meets weekly on Wednesdays to discuss and advocate for issues important to Black Tennesseans. On Feb. 22, Black Caucus members met with Gov. Lee, where I presented my budget request to allocate \$750,000 for Juneteenth festivals across the state. Next year, I'll be proposing **SB714** to create a special tourism fund for communities to host Juneteenth Celebrations in order to bring cultural diversity and awareness within our state.



At the conclusion of Black History Month, Chairwoman Sen. Lamar and members of the Senate Democratic Caucus co-sponsored a resolution honoring Tent City and the Fayette County Freedom Movement during the 1960s.

Tent City, also called Freedom Village, was an encampment outside of Memphis in Fayette County, Tennessee for African Americans who were evicted from their homes and blacklisted from buying amenities as retaliation for registering to vote during the Civil Rights Movement. Tent City and the Fayette County freedom movement comprised one of the first rural, grassroots movements that was initiated, organized, and maintained by Black farmers and sharecroppers in a local community and served as a catalyst to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

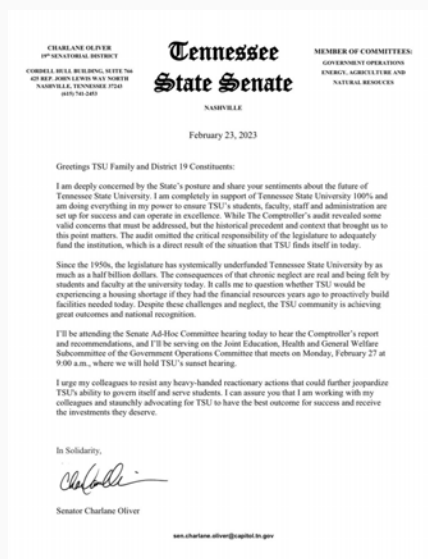


A major cause for legislative debate this month was the future of Tennessee State University's leadership and governance structure, amid the fallout from the school's housing shortage last year. TN Comptroller Jason Mumpower released a damning [audit report](#) detailing how TSU arrived at a housing shortage as a result of increased enrollment and scholarships awarded. The Comptroller outlined 12 recommendations - of which the most egregious being to move the board's governance under the control of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR); vacating the entire Board of Trustees; and firing the president. TSU's Board and Management went before the Senate Ad-Hoc Committee where these findings were presented.

In response, I released a statement where I stated:

"While The Comptroller's audit revealed some valid concerns that must be addressed, the historical precedent and context that brought us to this point matters. The audit omitted the critical responsibility of the legislature to adequately fund the institution, which is a direct result of the situation that TSU finds itself in today."

Read my full statement [here](#).





On Feb. 27, the Joint Education, Health and General Welfare Subcommittee of the Government Operations, on which I serve, met to vote on the fate of TSU's future. Tennessee State University's board, leadership, students, and alumni packed the hearing room and sent a resounding show of support that they did not want the institution to be moved under the TBR. Ultimately, their voices were heard, and the Committee voted, with a positive recommendation, to extend TSU's board for one year.

My thoughts? This is a positive step in the right direction. TSU's board and management have demonstrated strong good faith efforts to correct previous audits and current housing shortages. Context matters a great deal in this delicate situation. Based on TSU's response to the Comptroller's audit, it's clear that his recommendations don't justify this level of scrutiny nor takes into account the current steps already taken by TSU to hold themselves accountable. I appreciate my colleagues taking TSU's corrective actions into consideration by voting to extend the board. Next, this recommendation goes to the full Government Operations Committee in both chambers. I'm hopeful that, if we continue on this path, TSU can maintain its autonomy.

NASHVILLE HOSTILE TAKEOVER BILLS

A slew of bills are passing through House and Senate committees that will reduce the size of Metro Council from 40 to 20 members; shift majority control of the airport and sports authorities to the Republican governor and speakers of the House & Senate; and defund the Music City Center. Nashville Democrats have stood united in our opposition against the slate of Nashville takeover bills. Because the sponsors of the legislation do not represent Davidson County, these bills are retaliatory and colonizing in nature, designed to usurp control and power from the Nashville electorate. The decision to change Nashville's governing structure should be decided by Nashville voters.

So far, **the bill to shrink the Metro Council (SB87) has passed and signed into law by Gov. Lee.** Metro's attorney has filed a lawsuit in Chancery Court to delay the implementation of the law. The law requires Metro to redistrict the council lines by May 1st, or the current 40-member council will have to serve an extra year until the August 2024 election can take place. [Check out this helpful TikTok video by Councilmember At-Large Bob Mendes.](#)

SB1326 and **SB1335** - the airport and sports authority bills, respectively - have passed through various Senate and House committees and are moving with warp speed to the floor of both chambers within the next two weeks. Democrats are doing all we can to delay and amend these bills. I proposed an amendment in Senate Government Operations committee to have the airport authority legislation apply to all airport authorities in the state to make it fair and consistent. The amendment failed.

Thankfully, the bill to rename Rep. John Lewis Way (**SB1407**) was withdrawn, after widespread community outcry. I attended a youth rally at City Hall to show my support for not renaming the street. [Watch my interview with The TN Holler here.](#)



LGBTQ+ & TRANS HATE BILLS

Republicans wasted no time passing bills that discriminate against and criminalize the LGBTQ+ community. Both SB1 and SB3 have passed the legislature and were signed into law, effective April 1.

SB 1 bans gender-conforming medical procedures and treatments for minors, among other prohibitions.

SB 3 makes some drag shows a criminal felony offense.

I recently attended a rally to speak out against these hateful, cruel pieces of legislation to show my solidarity for human rights for all people.





HOMEBUYER HARASSMENT BILL PASSES SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE



PASSED!! I'm excited to share that my homebuyer harassment bill passed unanimously 9-0 out of Senate Commerce Committee! We're one step closer to putting guardrails around these unwelcome solicitations and providing homeowners with a path to remove themselves from receiving these unsolicited offers, calls and texts.

The bill limits the amount of times someone can contact you to purchase your property. **The legislation heads to the Senate floor on Monday, March 20. It still needs to pass in the House, and I need your help to contact the [House Commerce Committee](#) and tell them to vote YES for SB234.**

No one should suffer incessant harassment just because they own a home. These deceptive, high-pressure tactics hurt our most vulnerable and elderly Tennesseans. No one should be tricked or pressured into selling their family's most valuable asset.



**SB234
HOMEBUYER HARASSMENT**

PASSED

**SB234 passed unanimously out of Senate
Commerce and Labor Committee**

SB 234 limits the amount of time a property owner can be contacted within a calendar year by a person making an unsolicited offer to purchase their property. The bill allows the property owner a remedy by allowing the property owner to file a complaint to the consumer affairs division in attorney general's office. Assesses a \$1,500 penalty for violations.


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**SB234
HOMEBUYER HARASSMENT**

STEPS FOR PASSING LEGISLATION

- Draft and File Bill for introduction**
- Senate Commerce & Labor Committee**
- Senate Floor
- House Banking & Consumer Affairs Subcommittee
- House Commerce Committee
- House Floor
- Governor's Desk


**CHARLANE
OLIVER**
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SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS



On Tuesday February 28th, in the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee, I presented [SB 946](#). This legislation would only require the last four (4) digits of a voter's social security number a registration form or absentee ballot rather than the full nine (9) digit social security number. After much debate, the bill was sent to **Summer Study** to provide further research.

The Senate Democrats focus on bringing back healthcare to over 100,000 Tennesseans and expand TennCare for all ensuring all individuals are receiving beneficial, affordable, and accessible healthcare.

In other news, the Democrats stood in unity to address the concerns for women's health and reproductive choices and vouched to restore health related rights. Sens. Lamar and Kyle did an extraordinary job fighting for the rights of women, when Sen. Lamar brought the Caucus' **Fundamental Right to Reproductive Health Care Act** before the Judiciary Committee. While the bill did not pass, I could not have been prouder of our two judiciary members who continue to fight to restore our rights. We will continue to bring back necessary female healthcare for women and aim to bring adequate, safe, and secure alternatives for women. Additionally, we collectively voiced our concerns for what the **HIV/AIDS funding** cut down on prevention, treatment, and testing would do to Tennesseans and how this could be a deterrent.

OUT & ABOUT

Check out where Senator Oliver has been out and about in District 19 and beyond.

Governor Bill Lee's State of the State Address





Honoring TSU Aristocrat of Bands

On February 17, Senator Oliver presented a Senate Joint Resolution honoring TSU's Aristocrat of Bands for winning two GRAMMY Awards for their album *Urban Hymnal*





TSU Day on the Hill

TSU DAY REMARKS





Senator Oliver Receives 'Trailblazer Award' from Metro Council Minority Caucus





HBCU Day on the Hill



League of Women Voters Luncheon



Meets Freedom Rider & Civil Rights Activist Bernard Lafayette and Films Belmont Student Documentary





Black History Month Kicks Off with Rev. Cherisna Jean-Marie as Sen. Oliver's Guest Chaplain of the Day



Sen. Oliver & Family Attends Schrader Lane Church of Christ Sunday Service



Reading to Ms. Kaine's Class at Robert Churchwell Elementary for Read Across America Week



Senator Oliver Speaks to AKA Sorority, Inc. Pi Chapter at Fisk University



Delta Day on the Hill



Black History Month Panel Discussion at Islamic Center of Nashville



MEDIA ROUNDUP

['Hey, want to sell your home to me?' Legislation would create fine for harassing property owners](#) (NewsChannel 5)

[Legality of move to cut Metro Nashville Council called into question](#) (Tennessee Lookout)

[Gov. Lee's Leadership Claims Worry Dems, Dad in DCS Limbo](#) (Tennessee Tribune)

[Lawmakers, local officials say GOP bill will reduce minority representation](#) (Nashville Pride Publishing)

[New bill aims to stop pesky real estate developers from contacting homeowners repeatedly.](#) (NewsChannel 5)

[Legislative subcommittee recommends giving TSU board a year to fix housing, scholarship problems](#) (Tennessee Lookout)

[Bill Would Limit Calls, Texts Asking "Do You Want to Sell Your House?"](#) (Memphis Flyer)

[Sen. Charlane Oliver Conversation with Vice Mayor Jim Shulman](#) (YouTube)

[This Is Nashville: Sitting Down with Tennessee's Freshman Lawmakers "What It Takes to be a Tennessee Lawmaker?"](#) (WPLN)

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **HCA/Tri-Star Skyline** is looking to build a [freestanding emergency department](#) valued at \$21 million in East Nashville. They are hosting two community meetings to seek input on the project. Please attend:
 - Tuesday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m. at McFerrin Park Community Center
 - Thursday, March 23 at 6:30 p.m. at East Park Community Center
- **19th Annual Southeast Egg Hunt** - Saturday, March 25th, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Southeast Community Center
- Save The Date: **Sen. Thelma Harper's 38th Annual "Kids Are Special Too" Easter Egg Hunt** on Saturday, April 8th at 1:00 p.m. at Metro Police Academy
- **Fund Tennessee** is now available to small businesses, which will use **\$120M** in American Rescue Plan federal dollars to provide small business owners and entrepreneurs equitable access to the capital they need. [Learn more!](#)
- **Tennessee State University becomes the first HBCU** to be a 2x Grammy winner for "Best Roots Gospel Album" and "Best Spoken Word Album" marking a [historical moment](#) for both the university and the State. I will be presenting my Senate resolution to the A.O.B on April 10th in the Senate Chambers.
- **Department of Children Services launches [Relative Caregiver Assistance](#) pilot program.** The Relative Caregiver Program supports children who are not able to be raised by their parents, and are being cared for by grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other extended family members. Eligible caregivers can receive up to **50%** of the foster care board rate in financial assistance. [Learn more.](#)

CONTACT MY OFFICE

Contact my office if you have constituent needs, to schedule a meeting, or invite me to your next community event.

Office of Senator Charlane Oliver
19th Senatorial District
Cordell Hull Building
425 Rep. John Lewis Way North
Suite 766

Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Phone: (615) 741-2453

Email: sen.charlane.oliver@capitol.tn.gov

Scheduling: keo.sparks@capitol.tn.gov

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