



THE

Senator SOURCE

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

January / February 2024



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FROM THE DESK OF SENATOR OLIVER



Photos from opening day of legislative session - Tuesday, January 9

The 2024 Legislative Session is well underway! This year marks Year 2 of my four-year term, and I must say, I am feeling much more in my element as I no longer have the “freshman jitters” and have a better grasp of the fast-moving cyclone I find myself in between the months of January through April.

We began on January 9th and unlike last year, members pick up right where we left off with our bills to conclude the 113th General Assembly. I’m starting to hit my stride by championing bold ideas and legislative solutions that reflect my values as **#ThePeoplesSenator**. *Why should we as Democrats always be expected to play respectability politics and be in battle mode to defend the bad policies our colleagues pass?* I believe we should ‘stand on business’ - as the young folks say - and propose bold legislative packages that envision a better Tennessee under our leadership.

Imagine a Tennessee where women can make their own healthcare decisions, access contraception, and use paid family leave to nurture their newborn without the threat of government intrusion or the risk of losing their jobs; jobs that pay a living wage, pay women equally, and value diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging without fear of retribution from its lawmakers. Imagine a thriving democracy where our state ranks first in the nation for ballot access and voting reforms that make it easier for everyone to participate and have a voice. Imagine a justice-centered legal system that values police reforms, accountability and transparency to ensure our Black and brown communities aren't over-policed or receive a death sentence for a traffic stop. Imagine not having to worry if your child will receive a quality, healthy start in life because we invest in childcare affordability, guarantee a seat for every preschooler with Universal Pre-K, and fully invest in public education at the highest levels in the country.

Imagine! 🍷

That’s why you’ll see that my legislative agenda this year champions working families and vulnerable citizens with common-sense, impactful solutions such as investing in childcare and universal pre-k programs, repealing the grocery tax, automatically restoring voting rights, protecting birth control access, and holding DCS accountable.

Another goal I have is investing in our youth this year. I'm extremely proud to welcome my inaugural Spring 2024 Oliver Fellows to my team. Check out my inaugural fellows below!

ANNOUNCING THE INAUGURAL OLIVER FELLOWS



Gabrielle Marshall
Community Engagement Fellow
Spring 2024
Tennessee State University

Hailing from the loveliest village on the plains, Auburn, Alabama, Gabrielle is a sophomore at Tennessee State University, majoring in Political Science. She hopes to gain invaluable experience in event planning, community outreach, legislative research, and policy development while also honing her skills in effective communication and relationship-building. Gabrielle looks forward to being a trusted member of Senator Oliver's team and contributing to the success of her campaign initiatives, ultimately deepening her understanding of public service.



Cathalene Barlow
Media & Communications Fellow
Spring 2024
Nashville State Community College

A Nashville native, Cathalene Barlow is a high school senior and dual enrolment student at Early College High School and Nashville State Community College where she will graduate with her A.S. degree in General Studies before receiving her high school diploma in May. Her favorite subjects are English and Science. She hopes to gain law-related experience to be an advocate for underserved communities. She is excited to enhance her communication skills and create relationships with lawmakers who genuinely fight for their communities.

OLIVER FELLOWS PROGRAM

These young civic leaders are already so much fun to work with and I look forward to investing in their leadership growth and legislative experience! I'm excited to continue the [Oliver Fellows Program](#) this year to shape the next generation of leaders and changemakers. I'm seeking 2-3 college students or high school seniors who will serve the 19th Senate District during a 4-month paid fellowship. These fellows will gain an up-close-and-personal inside knowledge and experience about serving in public elected office. Fellows must attend a college, university, or high school located within Senate District 19. If you know a student who would be great for this learning opportunity, [applications are open for the Summer and Fall 2024 cohorts](#).

Deadline to apply: Friday, April 12 at 11:59 PM CST

[APPLY NOW](#)

MEET MY LEGISLATIVE INTERN



Jaya Eskridge
Legislative Intern
2024 Legislative Session
Tennessee State University

Jaya Eskridge is a graduating senior at Tennessee State University studying Political Science. She works in my legislative office at the Cordell Hull Building and has been an excellent addition to my team, helping with bill research, committee prep, writing policy briefs and handouts, creating graphics, and

maintaining my social media. Have you enjoyed reading my weekly recaps on [Instagram](#)? That's her work!

Born and raised in Nashville, Jaya received her high school diploma from Stratford STEM Magnet High School. Her current campus involvement at TSU includes Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, International, The Student Democracy Network, and Pi Sigma Alpha Honors Society. She enjoys doing political research- with a focus on social justice, voting, and political literacy- and plans to continue her pre-existing projects post-graduation. She also plans to attend law school and has a dream of becoming a sports attorney.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

STANDING ON BUSINESS

Check out my 2024 legislative agenda:

Making Childcare More Affordable and Accessible

- **SB1907 M.A.T.C.H. Fund** - Municipalities' Access To Childcare (M.A.T.C.H.) Fund to incentivize local investments in child care
- **SB2064 Smart Steps Subsidies** - increases eligibility for child care assistance for families earning 100% of state media income
- **SB1805 Cost Estimation Model** - modernizes child care reimbursement formula for 'true costs' of care **PASSED Senate Health Committee**
- **SB2207 Child Care Co-Pay** - sets reasonable child care co-pay limits for families receiving a childcare certificate
- **SB945 Child Meal Program** - implements an after-school child meal program in food deserts
- **SB1891 Eliminating the Benefits Cliff for Childcare Workers** - directs TACIR to do a compensation study and assess the feasibility of making childcare assistance free for childcare workers

Putting Working Families First / Taxing Big Tech & Corporations

- **SB1897 Universal Pre-K Funding Act** - ensures every family who wants to enroll their 4-year-old in a preschool has a spot to do so by implementing the Digital Data Transaction Tax, which taxes big tech companies who obtain our personal online data
- **SB1934 Eliminate Grocery Tax** - eliminates the sales tax on groceries, while implementing a corporate minimum tax to ensure large corporations pay their fair share of taxes **ADVANCES to Senate Finance Committee**

Securing Voting Rights

- **SB388 Automatic Voting Rights Restoration** - Repeals our current restoration process by automatically restoring suffrage rights for individuals convicted of crimes after incarceration, parole, or probation

Reproductive Justice

- **SB1804 Tennessee Contraceptive Freedom Act** -guarantees unrestricted access to contraceptives regardless of income, gender, or insurance status, ensuring affordability and preventing obstacles to obtaining FDA-approved contraceptives

Consumer Protection

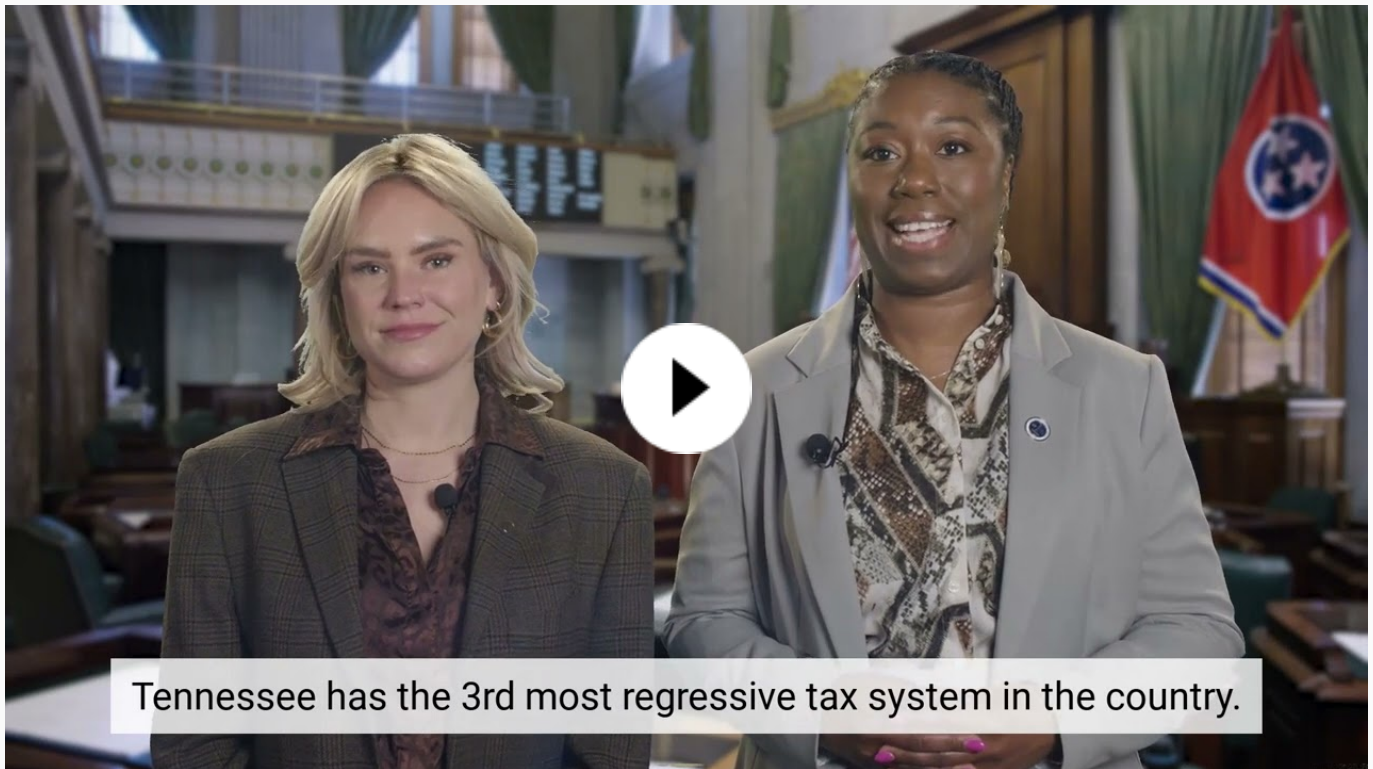
- **SB234 Homebuyer Harassment** - restricts real estate developers to one annual unsolicited contact with property owners, mandating disclosure of contact information
- **SB1894 Automatic Subscription Renewals** - If a business charges the consumer's credit or debit card, or the consumer's account with a third party, for an automatic subscription renewal offer more than 60 days out, they must obtain clear conspicuous consent from the consumer. **PASSED Senate Commerce Committee**

Holding DCS Accountable

- **SB1890 DCS Pepper Spray Ban** - bans the use of chemical sprays on children under Department of Children Services supervision or in juvenile detention facilities

- **531806 DCS Internal Policies** - mandates the Department of Children's Services to provide monthly policy summaries to Senate and House Government Operations Committees **PASSED the full Senate; heads to House**

REPEAL THE GROCERY TAX



24 HOURS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



On the last day of Black History Month, I hand delivered to the DOJ a [letter](#) asking to investigate the unconstitutional felony disenfranchisement of **470,000** Tennesseans. My colleagues and I met with the Assistant Attorney General Kristin Clarke and her team of Civil Rights Division attorneys to sound the alarm on Tennessee's felony disenfranchisement scheme. I believe our election officials are illegally using broad discretion to block 1 in 6 Black returning citizens from the ballot. I won't sit idly by while our Republican-led officials are now requiring gun rights to be restored before voting rights can be restored,

which has made it virtually impossible to participate in democracy. Justice can't wait!

Shout out to Rep. Caleb Hemmer and Sen. Jeff Yarbro for their work on this effort and the 21 other Democrat legislators who signed-on to the letter. [Read the full press release.](#)



While in DC, I was among legislators invited to the White House to attend the "Communities in Action" meeting to discuss how the Biden-Harris Administration's "Investing In America" agenda is being implemented in communities across Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky, particularly around the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, the American Rescue Plan Act, Healthcare enrollment, and student loan forgiveness. We heard updates from various White House officials:

- Stephen Benjamin**, Director of the Office of Public Engagement
- Pete Buttigieg**, Secretary of the Department of Transportation
- Neera Tanden**, Domestic Policy Advisor to the Domestic Policy Council
- Brenda Mallory**, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality
- Greg Jackson and Rob Wilcox**, Deputy Directors, Office of Gun Violence Prevention
- Gene Sperling**, Implementation Coordinator of the American Rescue Plan
- Molly Ritner**, Director for External Affairs for the Department of Commerce

[Watch the full video here.](#)

DAYS ON THE HILL



If you've been strolling through the Capitol lately, you would have seen all the hustle and bustle of the Days on the Hill by advocacy groups. So many different visitors stopped by to highlight the importance of their legislative priorities. The Legislature had many visits by our constituents, local and state organizations, institutions, and friends/colleagues. I started the session by meeting with the following constituents and groups for their Days on the Hill:

- Tennessee Hospital Association
- Ascension Saint Thomas
- Moms Over Murder / Nashville Peacekeepers
- TN Hospitality & Tourism Association
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- The Equity Alliance
- Nashville Electrical Service



My colleagues wasted no time continuing their radical agenda to strip TSU of its autonomy to govern themselves. On February 7, the Senate Government Operations Committee took the unprecedented step to vacate the entire Board of Trustees at Tennessee State University, including the Faculty and Student trustees, where I emphatically voted NO on the bill and voiced opposition to this extreme measure to lose institutional knowledge and stability. In the midst of a presidential search and spring semester, vacating the board NOW is irresponsible. Considering that the same legislature has chronically underfunded TSU for decades—a key reason for the challenges the university faces today, I having been doing everything in my power to prevent the board from being totally vacated as I've had meetings with my Senate colleagues and the governor to come up with a compromise that keeps TSU's best interest at the forefront. This process is not over.

[Link to my full remarks on Instagram](#)

GOVERNOR'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

On February 5, Governor Bill Lee gave his State of the State Address to the entire General Assembly. His budget proposal wasn't that promising. In fact, it was disappointing. I won't bore you with the entire thing but here's the main two alarming things that should give you heart palpitations. He proposed:

- **\$1.6 BILLION** in tax cuts for greedy corporations which would restructure our franchise tax and refund out-of-state corporations who have property in Tennessee
- **\$145 MILLION** handout for the rich to pay for their private school voucher scam. This recurring free gift to wealth families will skyrocket to over \$400 Million year-over-year and defund our public schools.

No grocery tax cuts for working families. No childcare subsidies for parents. No investments in our public schools. Just a giant get-rich-quick scheme off the backs of Tennessee taxpayers. Tennesseans deserve better!

 **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**



Black History Month is always a time to reflect on our journey within the Black community. It is important because it recognizes and celebrates the contributions, achievements, and struggles of Black individuals throughout history. It provides an opportunity to educate ourselves about the rich and diverse history, promoting understanding, empathy, and equality. By highlighting the accomplishments of Black leaders, artists, activists, and everyday heroes, we can challenge stereotypes, confront systemic racism, and work towards a more inclusive, equitable and just society.

For BHM, I had the honor of joining the Senate Democratic Caucus in recognizing The Equity Alliance, an organization I helped start back in 2016, for their direct involvement in increasing the Black community's civic engagement. TEA made history by leading the largest voter registration drive in 2018, registering 91,000 Black and brown Tennesseans to vote in the midterms. They've also been instrumental in supporting various individuals, including myself, to get elected and ensuring economic resources reach those who need them most. It's amazing to see how far we've come together! I'm so proud of the hard work and selflessness we have put in, and I can't wait to see TEA reach even greater heights!

Being one of only three Black legislators in the Senate is as powerful as it is disheartening the lack of diversity presented in the Tennessee government today. May we continue to acknowledge the Black excellence during BHM and beyond!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

SENATOR OLIVER'S MOVIE NIGHT OUT



Senator Oliver's Movie Night Out was an exciting night! Nine schools and community groups sent students (and their chaperones) to watch the musical-film *The Color Purple*: I.T. Creswell Middle Prep School of the Arts, Moves and Grooves, W.O. Smith Music School, Creative Girls Rock, Gideon's Army, SistaStyle Productions, On the Set Summer Film Camp, West End Middle, and Preston Taylor Ministries.

From Fantasia's and Halle's angelic voices and Taraji P. Henson's soulful moves, every character brought the story to life. I am grateful these talented performing arts students were able to attend and the smiles created that night were memorable. Exposure and representation is so important during our most formative years of life, so I'm hoping that, by seeing this musical film led by a star-studded African-American cast, they were inspired to continue to advance their love for the performing arts.

A huge thank you to the Tennessee Titans Foundation, everyone who sponsored the families to attend, and made this event possible!

HEROES IN OUR SCHOOLS

I'd like to spotlight the District 19 community for their achievements throughout the year. Part of serving the people means recognizing them for their hard work and dedication to those in need just like I have committed to do as a senator every day. Congrats to the following District 19 members for their awards and perseverance for the people:

1st Time Reward School:

Paragon Mills Elementary School

Teacher of the Year Finalist:

Bobbilyn Negron, Paragon Mills Elementary
Andrea Hawkins, Nashville School of the Arts

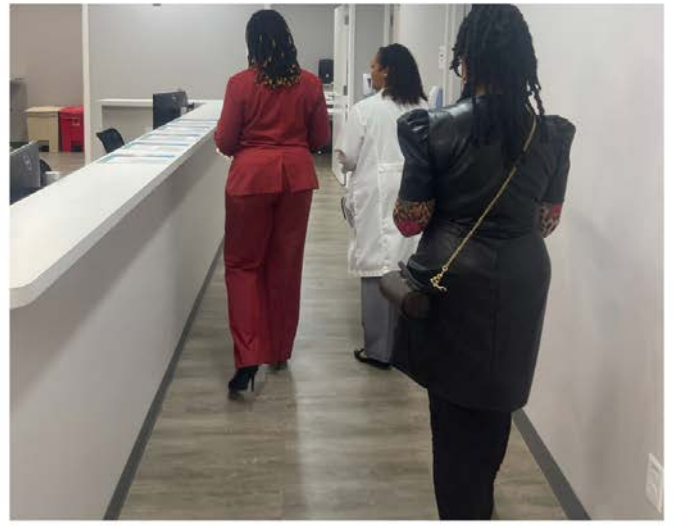
Support Employee of the Year:

Thomas Cornelius, Classroom Associate

OUT & ABOUT

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

Nashville General Hospital Healthcare Clinic Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in Bordeaux



North Nashville Collaborative School Supply Re-Up



Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Retirement Celebration



Black History Honors at NMAAM





Meet and Greet with Fisk President Dr. Agenia Clark



Governor's State of the State Address & Democratic Rebuttal



Trustee Erica Gilmore's Property Tax Relief Event



East End Prep Unity Day



DCYD Social Hour



African American Heritage Society Gala





Church Visits: Temple Baptist and Schrader Lane Church of Christ





EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

HONORING DIANE NASH

Dedicating DIANE NASH PLAZA

A CELEBRATION OF COURAGE AND CONVICTION

SAVE THE DATE!

APRIL 20, 2024

9AM PARADE

10AM DEDICATION

6PM GALA



We, the Diane Nash Committee, request your company's participation in and support of the "Dedicating Diane Nash Plaza: A Celebration of Courage and Conviction" event on **Saturday, April 20, 2024**. This event will honor Diane Nash, who played a pivotal role as an activist, leader, and strategist in the student wing of the Civil Rights Movement. Following the bombing of attorney and civil rights leader Alexander Looby's house, Nash, then a student at Fisk University, led a group of students on a march to the courthouse to meet with Mayor Ben West in Nashville. On the courthouse steps, she posed a question that led to the desegregation of lunch counters and changed history.

[Learn more and Become a Sponsor](#)

NEED TO REPORT A POTHOLE?

Did you know you can file a claim to TDOT? To report a pothole for repair, you can either fill out an online Maintenance Request form, or call the TDOT Road Repair Hotline at 833-TDOTFIX (836-8349). Be sure to note the exact location including the route, mile marker, and any nearby cross streets or interchange.

Maintenance Request Form:

<https://www.tn.gov/tdot/maintenance/maintenance-request.html>

To File a Claim with the State as a result of damage to a Vehicle:

<https://treasury.tn.gov/Services/Claims-and-Risk-Management/TORT-Liability#:~:text=If%20you%20receive,to%20do%20so>

Please note, if you receive damage to your automobile as a result of a condition on a Tennessee state road or highway you may be able to file a claim against the State to recover your damages. As the claimant, you will be required to prove:

1. That the condition was created by the State or allowed to exist due to the State's negligence in its inspection, maintenance or construction of State-maintained highways or bridges and provide proof that your damages were directly caused by the State's negligence; OR
2. The foreseeability of the risk created by the condition and that the proper state officials had notice of the condition with enough time before your injury to have taken appropriate measures in response. You must be able to show that the State was aware of the condition prior to your incident and could have repaired the condition prior to your incident and neglected to do so.

MEDIA ROUNDUP

[Female representation remains low in US statehouses, particularly Democrats in the South](#) (Washington Post)

[Sen. Oliver, Rep. Behn announce bill to make preschool free for every 4-year-old](#) (Pride Publishing)

[TN lawmakers to discuss childcare crisis solutions](#) (WKRN)

[Proposed law would fully fund preschool education in Tennessee](#) (News Channel 9 - Chattanooga)

[Democratic lawmakers ask DOJ to probe Tennessee's voting rights restoration changes](#) (Fox17)

[Tennessee House advances grocery tax elimination bill, eyes corporate tax reform to offset](#) (Fox17)

[Sen. Charlane Oliver introduces childcare affordability reform](#) (Pride Publishing)

[Bills Moving to Curb Child Care 'Hidden Crisis'](#) (Nashville Scene)

[Republican lawmakers are poised to get rid of TSU's current board. The school is asking for more time to address their concerns.](#) (WPLN)

[How Many of Your State's Lawmakers Are Women? If You Live in the Southeast, It Could Be Just 1 in 5.](#) (ProPublica)

[How Many of Your State's Lawmakers Are Women?](#) (Tennessee Lookout)

[Lawmakers Move to Reconstitute an HBCU's Board](#) (Inside Higher Ed)

CONTACT MY OFFICE

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

To receive my newsletter, please [subscribe here](#).

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Paid for by People's Choice to Elect Charlane Oliver. Christiane Buggs, Treasurer.

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