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# Clarion Ledger

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**Jackson Mayor John Horhn speaks to Sen. Joel R. Carter, R-Gulfport, at the Mississippi State Capitol in Jackson on March 3.**  
LAUREN WITTE/CLARION LEDGER

## How much money have U.S. House candidates raised?

**Bea Anhuci**

Mississippi Clarion Ledger  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Incumbents are handily out-fund-raising their challengers in the crowded U.S. House primary fields. A week out from the March 10 election, every incumbent representative has raised more than double what the next-most successful candidate in their race has pulled in.

### Congressional District 1

Rep. Trent Kelly, who has held the seat in Mississippi's first congressional district since 2015, has raised more than \$660,000 in his seventh bid for the office. He received roughly the same amount of money from individual contributors as he did from committees.

Like his Senate incumbent counterpart Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kelly has drawn in funds from committees based around the country. He received some smaller donations from committees affiliated with cities and politicians based in his district, such as the DeSoto Integrity in Government PAC.

Coming in behind Kelly is Democratic challenger Cliff Johnson, who has received just over \$300,000 in the fundraising period. The vast majority of his funds came from individual contributions, mostly from Mississippi residents.

Despite having significantly less cash on hand at the end of last year, Johnson raised more than double what Kelly did in the last quarter of 2025.

Kelvin Buck, Johnson's primary opponent, raised around a tenth of what Johnson did. Just under half of his funds came from individual donations, and the other part came from two loans.

A campaign finance report was not available for Libertarian challenger Johnny Baucom on the Federal Election Commission website.

**See FUNDRAISING, Page 4A**

## Water authority board changes may shift control

**Charlie Drape**

Mississippi Clarion Ledger  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A proposed Jackson water authority board Jackson leaders sold to residents in February is no longer the same board, changing what many city officials and residents had described as its most critical component: who controls the seats.

During a just over 10-minute Mississippi Senate Energy Committee meeting, lawmakers amended House Bill 1677 and rewrote the appointment structure of the proposed Metro Jackson Water Authority.

The bill still calls for a nine-member board to govern and operate Jackson's water and sewer system, but who appoints those members, and how, has shifted.

Under the revised structure, the

**“People have to understand that legislation is a process and not an event. This is not the end of this matter.”**

**Jackson Mayor John Horhn**

board would consist of:

- The mayor of Jackson
- Two members appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the Jackson City Council.
- Two members in Jackson appointed by the governor.
- One member appointed by the lieutenant governor.
- One member appointed by the governor upon advice of the mayor of Jackson and confirmed by the Mississippi

Senate.

- One member appointed by the mayor of Byram.
- One member appointed by the mayor of Ridgeland.

The amended bill advanced out of committee on a 6-1 vote, largely along party lines, with senators representing areas outside of Jackson voting in favor and the lone Jackson senator on the committee voting against.

Voting in favor were Sen. Bart Williams (R-Madison), Sen. Chuck Younger (R-Columbus), Sen. Lydia Graves Chassaniol (R-Winona), Sen. Chad McMahan (R-Guntown), Sen. J. Walter Michel (R-Ridgeland) and Joey Filligane (R-Sumrall).

The lone vote against came from Hillman Terome Frazier (D-Jackson).

The change of board seats differs

**See BOARD, Page 2A**

## Mississippi entrepreneur expands Newk's Eatery presence

**Ross Reily**

Mississippi Clarion Ledger  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Mississippi entrepreneur is expanding his footprint within the Newk's Eatery world. In fact, he is working on a commercial real estate development of his own as part of the process.

After doubling his Newk's Eatery footprint this past November, Flowood's Skip Russell has officially broken ground on an 8,000-square-foot shopping center in at the intersection of U.S. 51 and Brookway Boulevard, in Brookhaven, where a new Newk's is slated to open in late May. It will be his fifth Newk's.

While Skip initially planned to retire after selling 13 Popeye's stores, he chose to stay in the game to build a foundation

for his son, Kyle. The upcoming Brookhaven site is a key part of that, featuring a new layout and a pickup window model designed for the modern surge in mobile ordering.

### Newk's ownership has changed

Newk's is no longer owned by its founding family, but franchisees such as Russell are committed to the growing chain.

The company that owns Beef 'O' Brady's and The Brass Tap chains also owns Mississippi-founded Newk's.

Newk's Eatery was purchased by the Tampa, Florida-based FSC Franchise Company during the fourth quarter of 2023.

Newk's originated in 2004 in Oxford with Chris Newcomb at the helm and



**Skip Russell has officially broken ground on an 8,000-square-foot shopping center in Brookhaven, where a new Newk's Eatery is slated to open in late May.**  
PROVIDED BY SKIP RUSSELL

became of the largest fast-casual eateries in the Southeast.

### Expanding in Brookhaven

“I had been looking for more than a year in Brookhaven for a site for a Newk's, because I have felt like one

would do well there,” Skip Russell said. “It's the right economics, the right town. There's a lot of traffic and a good growing community.”

Russell said he is developing 1.7 acres of more than four he has purchase and

**See NEWK'S, Page 6A**

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