

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Wednesday, March 8, 2023 | Day 59

TODAY'S MEETINGS

Senate committees on Tax, Judiciary, Education and Health and House committees on State Agencies, City/County/Local, Insurance and Commerce and Agriculture met at 10:00 a.m. House Rules Committee met at noon. The Senate convened at 1:00 p.m., and the House convened at 1:30 p.m.

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We began tracking [5 additional bills](#) today. They address creating a criminal offense for interfering with ballot measures, eliminating daylight savings time, underground tanks, creating a license for property managers and expansion of the Freedom of Information Act.

TODAY'S BILLS - WE OPPOSE

[Gas Royalties - Calculation/Distribution](#)

HB 1549 by Rep. Rick Beck and Sen. Breanne Davis

We oppose this bill, which was filed yesterday and was considered in the House Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development Committee this morning. The bill seeks to amend the calculation and distribution of royalties on gas sold from a drilling unit following an integration order. The bill defines proceeds and seeks to clarify that a royalty owner is not prohibited from being paid in excess of the one-eighth minimum gas royalty. President and CEO Randy Zook testified against the bill with others and the bill failed on an oral vote.

[Pharmaceutical Executives – Felony for Drug Misinformation](#)

SB 7 and SB 8 by Sen. Bryan King

We oppose these bills. **SB 7** was pre-filed, amended twice in January and has been on the Deferred List in the Senate Judiciary Committee for some time. It and **SB 8** have been moved to the committee's active agenda, and the committee met this morning. We have concerns about the precedent these bills would set in creating a felony for actions by corporate executives. We also have concerns about the bill's attempt to apply Arkansas

criminal law to individuals who are not in Arkansas. **SB 7** applies to prescription drugs and **SB 8** applies to vaccines.

BILLS WE SUPPORT

Arkansas Adult Diploma Program

HB 1529 by Rep. David Ray and Sen. Breanne Davis

We support this bill, which was filed last Thursday. It seeks to establish the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program. It would require the Department of Education to annually issue a request for public, nonprofit or other entities to apply to become approved program providers in the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program. It also would require the Department of Education to announce the approved program providers no later than October 15 annually. An approved program provider may begin enrolling students starting no later than November 15 of each year. The bill is on Thursday's agenda in the House Education Committee.

Career and Technical Education - Weighted Credit

SB 369 by Sen. Jim Dotson

We support this bill, which would require the Division of Career and Technical Education to review new and existing career and technical pathways to determine which courses meet criteria for weighted credit and to publish a list of approved pathways annually. It would also allow a career readiness assessment to include the ACT WorkKeys (NCRC). The bill also requires a platinum, gold, silver or bronze credential through the ACT WorkKeys to be equal to participation and completion in an advanced placement course, an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program course, and an honor class, and to be eligible for weighted credit equal to the numeric grade awarded in an advanced placement course, an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program course, and an honors class. This bill was on this morning's agenda in the Senate Education Committee.

BILLS WE'RE WATCHING

Special Elections

HB 1510 by Rep. David Ray and 42 Representatives and Sen. John Payton

We oppose this bill, which seeks to reduce the allowable dates for special elections on measures or questions referred to the voters by governmental entities. It also amends the conditions under which an emergency special election can be held. By reducing the number of election date options, the opportunity for local governments to get the best bond rates is inhibited. This bill is on tomorrow's agenda in the Senate State Agencies Committee.

Healthcare - Prior Authorization

HB 1271 by Rep. Lee Johnson and SB 143 Sen. Missy Irvin

As originally filed, these bills seek to eliminate the current prior authorization processes for all fully insured individuals and small businesses. A recent amendment to the bill limits the exemption for prior authorization to providers that received approval for 90 percent or more of their prior authorization requests. Insurers may rescind the exemption only if a provider performs five or fewer of a particular healthcare service in the most recent six-month period. The amendment also adds that if a provider has 50 percent of appeals overturned, the Commissioner may refuse a certificate of authority. Prior to the amendment, a health insurer estimated the financial impact of this bill to be \$16.2 to \$24.4 million. The bill applies to insurance companies, health maintenance organizations,

hospital and medical service corporations, risk-based provider organizations and sponsors of nonfederal self-funded governmental health plans. It was on this morning's agenda in the House Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

Healthcare - Cost-Sharing Collection Act

HB 1259 by Rep. Lee Johnson and SB 122 Sen. Missy Irvin

These bills seek to require a healthcare insurer to pay a healthcare provider all costs of care including deductibles, coinsurance and copays, which are currently the responsibility of the patient/health plan enrollee. The insurer must then collect the deductibles, coinsurance and copays from the patient/enrollee. The bill would prohibit the insurer from withholding any amount for cost-sharing and also prohibit any decrease in reimbursements or increase in premiums. Further, the insurer cannot cancel a policy for unpaid amounts. These bills await consideration in their respective Health Committees.

YESTERDAY'S BILLS

Education Reform

SB 294 by Sen. Breanne Davis and Rep. Keith Brooks

The Senate concurred in a House amendment to Governor Sanders' education reform measure by a vote of 26 to 8. The bill was signed by the governor this afternoon. You can view a comprehensive summary of the bill here: [RLC SB 294 Summary](#).

Net-metering

SB 295 by Sen. Jonathan Dismang and HB 1370 by Rep. Lanny Fite

The Senate passed **SB 295** yesterday by a vote of 24 to 9, and it has been assigned to the House Insurance and Commerce Committee. The House did not consider **HB 1370** yesterday, and it was on this afternoon's House calendar.

Occupational Licensing

SB 90 by Sen. Ricky Hill and Rep. Kendon Underwood

This bill allows recognition of out-of-state occupational license holders when they become residents of Arkansas. It was passed by the Senate 26 to 1 yesterday and has been assigned to the House Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

BILL TRACKING

932 Bills Filed | Senate: 12 new – 381 filed | House: 10 new – 573 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 362 - 5 added today

To view all tracked bills by category, click [State Chamber AIA Bill Tracking Categories](#)

2023 STATE CHAMBER AIA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

LEGISLATIVE SESSION INFORMATION

To view schedules, calendars, bill information, and legislator information, click www.arkleg.state.ar.us.

LEGISLATIVE MESSAGE CENTER

House of Representatives: 501-682-6211

Senate: 501-682-2902

LIVE STREAMING FROM THE CAPITOL

The House and Senate have links to live streaming of their committee meetings and floor session online.

- House: <https://www.arkansashouse.org/>
- Senate: <http://www.arkansas.gov/senate/>

STATE CHAMBER/AIA GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS TEAM

- Randy Zook, President/CEO
rzook@arkansasstatechamber.com
- Kenny Hall, Executive Vice President
khall@arkansasstatechamber.com
- Andrew Parker, Director of Governmental Affairs
aparker@arkansasstatechamber.com
- Toni Lindsey, Director of Governmental Affairs
tlindsey@arkansasstatechamber.com

Visit our website



1200 W. Capitol Ave., P.O. Box 3645
Little Rock, AR 72203-3645

501-372-2222
FAX 372-2722

STAY CONNECTED



Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce/Associated Industries of Arkansas
1200 W. Capitol Ave., Little Rock, AR 72201
P.O. Box 3645, Little Rock, AR 72203
501-372-2222 | arkansasstatechamber.com