

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Wednesday, March 1, 2023 | Day 52

TODAY'S MEETINGS

House committees on State Agencies, Insurance and Commerce, City, County and Local, Agriculture, and Aging meet at 10:00 a.m. House Rules meets at noon. Senate Health, Judiciary, Tax, and Education committees meet at 10:00 a.m. The Senate will convene at 1:00 p.m., and the House will convene at 1:30 p.m. The House Education Committee will meet 15 minutes after the House adjourns to continue its hearing on the education reform bill.

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We began tracking [4 additional bills](#) today. They address elections, retail water providers, subject-matter experts providing business instruction in schools, and commercial drivers licenses.

TODAY'S BILLS

Education – Arkansas LEARNS Act

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

The House Education Committee heard testimony on Governor Sanders' comprehensive education reform measure until 9:30 p.m. last night. The committee will reconvene this afternoon after the House adjourns to continue hearing public testimony for and against the measure. You can find a comprehensive summary of the bill here: [RLC SB 294 Summary](#).

Petitions – Ballot Titles

HB 1320 by Rep. David Ray and Sen. John Payton

This bill seeks to require sponsors of initiative petitions or referendum petitions to file with the attorney general before being circulated for signatures. It allows the attorney general to ratify or change the ballot title and popular name for each amendment/act. This bill received a Do Pass recommendation yesterday by the Senate State Agencies Committee and is on this afternoon's Senate calendar.

Net-Metering

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

These bills change the state's net-metering structure. Both are being amended again today.

BILLS TO WATCH

Healthcare - Prior Authorization

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

These bills seek to eliminate the current prior authorization processes for all fully insured individuals and small businesses. 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.

The bill would suspend prior authorization for the first six months of 2024. The bill would then require health plans to conduct a utilization analysis of claims submitted for the first six months of 2024 with historical claims data, historical prior authorization approval and denial rates. The bill would also give medical providers who meet certain thresholds an ongoing exemption from prior authorization requirements – a “Gold Card” status. A health insurer estimates the financial impact of this bill to be \$16.2 to \$24.4 million.

Healthcare - Cost-Sharing Collection Act

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

This bill seeks 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. A health insurer estimates the financial impact of this bill to possibly be as much as \$730 million.

Special Elections

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

This bill 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. The bill awaits consideration in the House State Agencies Committee.

Repeal of Certificates to Hire Under 16 Years of Age

HB 1410 by Rep. Rebecca Burkes and Sen. Clint Penzo

This bill seeks to repeal the requirement that an employer of a child under 16 years of age procure an employment certificate. This bill makes no changes to the existing state labor laws, and federal laws are not affected. This bill awaits consideration by the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

BILL TRACKING

863 Bills Filed | Senate: 4 new – 344 filed | House: 9 new – 519 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 331 - 4 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/>

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