

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Tuesday, February 28, 2023 | Day 51

TODAY'S MEETINGS

The House Education Committee meets at 9:00 a.m. to consider the education reform bill. This hearing is expected to continue throughout the day. House committees on Health, Judiciary, and Transportation meet at 10:00 a.m. Senate State Agencies, Insurance and Commerce, City, County & Local and Agriculture 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.

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We are tracking [9 additional bills](#) today. They address school consolidation, a sales tax exemption, special elections, oil and gas pipelines, hospital and medical service corporations, egg sales, working animals and foreign ownership of agricultural land.

TODAY'S BILLS

Education – Arkansas LEARNS Act

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

Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders' comprehensive education reform measure is being heard in the House Education Committee today. The bill contains a number of sweeping reforms, including creation of a voucher program, increasing minimum starting teacher pay, a pay increase for all teachers and a repeal of the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act. The measure is estimated to cost \$297.5 million this year, with an increase to \$343.3 million next year, as more students become eligible for the accounts. 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 is on today's agenda in the Senate State Agencies Committee.

Net-Metering

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

These bills change the state's net-metering structure. The bills were amended last week following an agreement with the Arkansas Advanced Energy Association. They are on their originating chamber's floor calendars this afternoon.

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.

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 is on tomorrow’s agenda in the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee. This bill makes no changes to the existing state labor laws and federal laws are not affected.

BILL TRACKING

850 Bills Filed | Senate: 17 new – 340 filed | House: 7 new – 510 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 327 - 9 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