

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Monday, March 13, 2023 | Day 64

TODAY'S MEETINGS

10:00 a.m. – Senate Judiciary Committee

Noon – House Communications Committee

1:00 p.m. – Senate convenes

1:30 p.m. – House convenes

After adjournment –

House State Agencies and City/County/Local committees

Senate Judiciary and Transportation committees

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We began tracking [6 additional bills](#) today. They address a sales tax exemption for Disabled Veterans Organizations, licensing of paid canvassers, PAC registration and donations, excess campaign funds and candidate to candidate contributions.

SESSION OUTLOOK

After nine weeks and the education reform measure now through the process, legislators are beginning to look more closely at the budget, including possible tax cut measures. Discussion around those will likely increase in coming weeks.

Another major measure yet to be debated is a long-anticipated criminal justice reform/public safety omnibus bill, which is expected to be filed this week. It will likely include significant reforms, along with funding for construction of a new state prison. See **SB 2** mentioned below.

It seems that legislators are on track to wrap up the session in early April. They will recess for **Spring Break the week of March 20-March 24**, and then things will likely move quickly.

TODAY'S BILLS

Career and Technical Education - Weighted Credit

SB 369 by Sen. Jim Dotson and Rep. Grant Hodges

We support this bill, but it needs an amendment regarding computer science courses. The bill 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 is on this afternoon's Senate calendar.

Pharmaceutical Executives – Felony for Drug Misinformation

SB 7 and SB 8 by Sen. Bryan King

We oppose these bills because of the precedent these bills would set in creating a felony for actions by corporate executives. We also have concerns about the bills' 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.

These bills are on this morning's agenda in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Truth in Sentencing and Parole Reform Act

SB 2 by Sen. Ben Gilmore and Rep. Jimmy Gazaway

This bill was prefiled as a shell bill and has not yet been amended. This bill may be amended as part of the anticipated public safety/criminal law reform.

It is on today's agenda in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Child Labor Violations - Enhanced Penalties

SB 390 by Sen. Clint Penzo and Rep. Rebecca Burkes

Increases fines and the length of time for the assessment of civil penalties related to child labor violations. It provides criminal penalties related to child labor violations for first and subsequent offenses. It also,

- Increases the maximum fine for child labor violations from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and extends the time a civil penalty may be assessed for a child labor violation from 2 years to 3 years from the date of occurrence.
- Provides criminal penalties for child labor violations; first violation is a Class C misdemeanor, subsequent violations are Class B misdemeanors. If the violation results in injury or death to a child, it is a Class A misdemeanor, subsequent offenses are Class C felonies.

This bill is on this morning's agenda in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

TOMORROW'S BILLS

Possessory Liens

HB 1563 by Rep. Brian Evans and Sen. Ricky Hill

We support this bill, which aims to change towing practices in Arkansas by creating a cargo exception within towing policy to prevent "hostage cargo." The bill would allow cargo being transported for hire to no longer be held hostage by tow operators while the truck owner and their insurance provider negotiate and pay for the tow service. Transport

companies would be able to transload the cargo to another trailer and make delivery to their customer.

This bill awaits consideration in the House Transportation Committee.

Freedom of Information Act

SB 382 by Sen. Alan Clark

We oppose this bill, which seeks to amend certain open public meetings requirements under the Freedom of Information Act. It would prohibit two or more members of a governing body of a public entity from discussing, deliberating, or deciding public business in circumvention of the Freedom of Information Act during any chance interaction, informal assemblage, or electronic communication. This bill is on Tuesday's agenda in the Senate State Agencies Committee.

Arkansas Adult Diploma Program

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

We support this bill, which 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 tomorrow's agenda in the House Education Committee.

Construction Contracts – Limits on Job Order Contracting Bid Awards

HB 1582 Rep. Les Warren and Sen. Scott Flippo

We support this bill, which amends the limit for job order contracting bid awards for state agencies/institutions of higher learning. It provides that bid awards shall not exceed \$1,200,000 per construction job for the first year of the contract for institutions of higher education.

This bill has been assigned to the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

Agricultural Land - Prohibition Foreign Ownership

SB 383 by Sen. Blake Johnson and Rep. DeAnn Vaught

We are neutral on this bill, which would prohibit certain foreign parties from acquiring any interest in Arkansas agricultural land. It also provides penalties for violations and creates the Office of Agricultural Intelligence within the Department of Agriculture to collect and analyze information concerning the unlawful sale or possession of agricultural land by prohibited foreign parties.

This bill is on tomorrow's agenda in the Senate Agriculture, Forestry & Economic Development Committee.

Occupational Licensing

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

We are neutral on this bill, which would allow recognition of out-of-state occupational license holders when they become residents of Arkansas.

This bill is on tomorrow's agenda in the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

BILLS WE OPPOSE

Special Election Dates

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.

This bill awaits consideration on the Senate floor.

BILL TRACKING

1007 Bills Filed | Senate: 2 new – 406 filed | House: 8 new – 601 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 391 - 6 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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