

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Thursday, March 2, 2023 | Day 53

TODAY'S MEETINGS

Joint Budget Committee met at 9:00 a.m. House committees on health, judiciary, tax and education, and Senate committees on state agencies, and insurance and commerce met at 10:00 a.m. The House and Senate convened at 11:00 a.m.

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We began tracking [7 additional bills](#) today. They address a petroleum storage tank fund, sales tax exemption, public improvement contracts, insurance token gifts, health insurance and insurance claims.

TODAY'S BILLS

Unemployment Insurance –State Chamber Priority Bill

HB 1430 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum and Sen. Kim Hammer

This bill will lower the unemployment insurance (UI) tax rate in various ways and prevent the wage base from increasing as long as the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund has a balance in excess of \$600 million.

Education – Arkansas LEARNS Act

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

Governor Sanders' comprehensive education reform measure received a Do Pass recommendation from the House Education Committee yesterday afternoon and is on today's House calendar. You can find a comprehensive summary of the bill here: [RLC SB 294 Summary](#)

Net-Metering

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

These bills change the state's net-metering structure. **HB 1370** received a Do Pass from the House Insurance and Commerce Committee yesterday and is on today's House calendar. **SB 295** is on today's agenda in the Senate Insurance and Commerce 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 received a Do Pass recommendation by the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee, and it is on today's Senate calendar.

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. It 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 then 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 is being amended and awaits consideration in the House State Agencies Committee.

YESTERDAY'S BILLS

Petitions – Ballot Titles

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

This bill will 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 passed the Senate yesterday 35 to 0 and is on its way to the governor's desk.

BILL TRACKING

879 Bills Filed | Senate: 7 new – 351 filed | House: 9 new – 528 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 338 - 7 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