

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Monday, March 6, 2023 | Day 57

TODAY'S MEETINGS

The Senate Transportation Committee meets at 9:30 a.m., and Senate Health and Judiciary committees meet at 10:00 a.m. The Senate convenes at 1:00 p.m., and the House convenes at 1:30 p.m. Senate Education Committee will meet 15 minutes after the Senate adjourns this afternoon.

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We added no new bills to our tracking today.

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 has been assigned to the House Education committee.

TODAYS BILLS

Education Reform

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

Governor Sarah Sanders' education reform measure returns to the Senate this week for concurrence in an amendment that was added in the House last week. It will be considered in a meeting of the Senate Education Committee this afternoon and is expected to be on the Senate floor for a final vote tomorrow afternoon. You can view a comprehensive summary of the bill here: [RLC SB 294 Summary](#).

Ballot Initiatives

House Bill 1419 by Rep. Kendon Underwood

This measure seeks to statutorily increase the signature threshold to put a proposed measure on the general election ballot. It cleared the Senate State Agencies Committee last Thursday. It would require those working to put a measure on the ballot to collect signatures from voters in 50 counties instead of the current 15-county requirement. Supporters say the bill is needed to get more rural and statewide support in putting proposals on the ballot. Opponents argue the changes in the bill can't be made through legislation. This bill is on this afternoon's Senate calendar.

HB 1320 by Rep. David Ray

This bill was approved by the Senate last week. It transfers the duty of reviewing and certifying proposed ballot titles back to the attorney general. Legislation passed in 2019 transferred the responsibility to the State Board of Election Commissioners. It has been sent to the governor.

BILLS WE OPPOSE

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. After being amended, the bill awaits consideration in the House State Agencies Committee. 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 this afternoon's House calendar.

BILLS WE'RE WATCHING

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. These cost increases would primarily fall on fully insured plans like those offered by small and medium-sized businesses.

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. An amendment, which was added today, limits the exemption for prior authorization to providers that received approval for 90 percent or more of their prior authorization requests. It authorizes providers to extend that exemption to owned entities, and it adds that insurers may rescind exemption only if the 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 appeals overturned, the Commissioner may refuse certificate of authority of the insurer. New sections for applicability and for prescription drug exemptions have also been added. 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.

BILL TRACKING

905 Bills Filed | Senate: 1 new – 358 filed | House: 0 new – 547 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 348 - 0 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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