

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Tuesday, March 7, 2023 | Day 58

TODAY'S MEETINGS

The House Judiciary Committee meets at 9:00 a.m. House committees on Health, Education, Tax and Transportation meet at 10:00 a.m. The Senate State Agencies and City/County/Local committees also meet at 10:00 a.m. The Senate convenes at 1:00 p.m., and the House convenes at 1:30 p.m. Senate Insurance and Commerce Committee and House Health Committee will meet after adjournment this afternoon.

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We have begun tracking [8 additional bills](#) today. They address medical record use for insurance, sales tax exemption, insurance deductibles, education credits, oil and gas royalties, community college boards, delivery company payments and medical prior authorization for alcohol addiction treatment.

Gas Royalties - Calculation/Distribution

HB 1549 by Rep. Rick Beck and Sen. Breanne Davis

This bill seeks to amend the calculation and distribution of royalty gas sold from a drilling unit following an integration order. The bill defines proceeds and seeks to clarify that a royalty owner is not prohibited from being paid in excess of the one-eighth minimum gas royalty. This bill has been assigned to the House Agriculture, Forestry & Economic Development Committee.

Career and Technical Education - Weighted Credit

SB 369 by Sen. Jim Dotson

This 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). Other requirements include a Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze credential through the ACT WorkKeys to be equal to the participation and completion in an advanced placement course, an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program course, an honor class, and eligible for

weighted credit equal to the numeric grade awarded in advanced placement courses, International Baccalaureate Diploma Program courses, and honors classes. This good bill has been assigned to the Senate Education Committee.

TODAYS BILLS

Education Reform

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

Governor Sanders' education reform measure received a Do Pass as amended recommendation yesterday afternoon from the Senate Education Committee. It is on this afternoon's Senate calendar. You can view a comprehensive summary of the bill here:

[RLC SB 294 Summary.](#)

Net-metering

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

These bills are on their respective chamber's floor calendars this afternoon.

Occupational Licensing

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

After five amendments to address various concerns by licensing and licensed groups, this bill received a Do Pass recommendation from the Senate State Agencies Committee last Thursday and is on this afternoon's Senate calendar.

BILLS WE SUPPORT

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. The bill 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.

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 passed the House 74 to 16 yesterday afternoon and has been assigned to the Senate State Agencies Committee.

BILLS WE'RE WATCHING

Healthcare - Prior Authorization

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

As originally filed, these bills seek to eliminate the current prior authorization processes for all fully insured individuals and small businesses. A recent amendment to the bill limits the exemption for prior authorization to providers that received approval for 90 percent or more of their prior authorization requests. Insurers may rescind the exemption only if a 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 a certificate of authority. 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.

Healthcare - Cost-Sharing Collection Act

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

These bills seek 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.

YESTERDAY'S BILLS

Ballot Initiatives

House Bill 1419 by Rep. Kendon Underwood

We supported a ballot issue in 2020 that sought to do what this bill will do. It seeks to statutorily increase the signature threshold to put a proposed measure on the general election ballot. 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 that the changes in the bill cannot be made through legislation. The bill passed the Senate yesterday afternoon 21 to 8 and has been sent to the governor.

BILL TRACKING

932 Bills Filed | Senate: 11 new – 369 filed | House: 16 new – 563 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 356 - 8 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