



Daily Legislative Update

91st General Assembly

Wednesday, January 11, 2017 – Day 3

TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

Committees will begin meeting today. They will most likely just be organizational meetings

To view today's schedules and other information related to the Session, visit www.arkleg.state.ar.us.

YESTERDAY AT THE CAPITOL

Governor Hutchinson spoke to a Joint Session of the Arkansas House and Senate and declared the state of the state as "exceptional." Hutchinson described a robust economy and business environment, and outlined many of his key priorities for the session, ranging from his \$50.5 million tax reform package and his goal of improving the state's education opportunities at all levels.

He highlighted some of the pressing issues on the minds of Arkansans: the rise of terrorism, the ever-changing global marketplace, and the lack of public confidence in government institutions. He said the Arkansas economy grew at a faster clip than three-fourths of the nation last year: roughly 55,000 more Arkansans have jobs today than two years ago, we are No. 1 in the nation in computer science education, and he expects Arkansas to cross the three million mark in population in 2017.

Hutchinson said he wants the state to be a global economic leader and asked legislators to support his plans to cut out unnecessary commissions, rethink higher education funding, and fully pay for a tax reduction on retired military personnel.

He then asked officials to support creating a Blue Ribbon Task Force to recommend further tax changes with the long-term goal of reducing income taxes for all Arkansans. "We need to have a plan to reduce the tax rate over time to a more competitive level," he said.

Other key points from Hutchinson's address:

- Improve performance and efficiency and service of state government

- One tool will be to eliminate unnecessary boards and commissions
- Improve the way that higher education is funded by basing the dollars on educational progress of students, not on the number of students
- Resolve to reform our tax code, lower our rate and be more competitive with surrounding states
- Pass an income tax cut for those making below \$21,000
 - Between this proposed cut and the 2015 cut, Arkansas will have lowered income tax rates for 90 percent of our population
- Eliminate the entire income tax paid by retired members of the Military by reducing three exemptions
- Students that pursue a high-need field of study will have their tuition and fees paid for at a two-year college or technical school
 - The program is called AR Future Grants and requires students to meet with a mentor and work in the state for three years after graduation
- Approve higher funding for foster children to help unburden the foster care system
 - Adequately provide for those in our care and help them find a way out
- Meet the needs of those on the disability waiting list and provide more service
 - Redirect a portion of tobacco settlement funds to reduce those in need
- Provide \$5 million for mental health stabilization stations and crisis intervention training
- Improve the criminal justice system by ensuring that incarceration policies are right
 - Ensure policy is balanced between public safety and giving those a second chance who have fulfilled their responsibilities to society

STATE CHAMBER/AIA TRACKED BILLS

As of yesterday, the House had filed 150 bills and the Senate 108 bills. We added no new bills from yesterday's filings and are tracking 50 bills.

Our entire list of tracked bills are posted on our website by category, which you can access by clicking [here](#).

STATE CHAMBER/AIA LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

Our Legislative Reception is next Tuesday, January 17, from 4:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., under the big tent in the State Chamber/AIA's north parking lot at 1200 W. Capitol Ave. in Little Rock. We hope you can join us for this event that will be attended by many state legislators, constitutional officers, state officials, State Chamber/AIA member representatives, Leadership Arkansas alumni and others. The State Chamber/AIA Legislative Reception is presented by **Arkansas Learns, Cox Communications, Southland Park Gaming and Racing, and Stephens Inc.**

LEGISLATIVE SESSION INFORMATION AND MESSAGE CENTER

To view schedules, calendars, bill information and legislator information, visit: www.arkleg.state.ar.us.

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