



Daily Legislative Update

91st General Assembly

Monday, January 30, 2017 – Day 22

CAPITOL SCHEDULE

The Senate will convene today at 1 p.m. and the House will convene at 1:30 p.m.

To view schedules for all of today's activities, committee agendas, bills and other information related to the Session visit: www.arkleg.state.ar.us.

RECEPTION FOR CHRIS PALMER

The State Chamber/AIA will host a reception from 4:30 until 5:30 p.m. this Thursday, February 2, to honor new Workers' Compensation Commission Management Commissioner Chris Palmer. The reception will be held in our Bob Lamb Conference Room. Please stop by and say hello to Chris.

TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

GOVERNOR'S RETIRED MILITARY TAX REDUCTIONS

HB1159 by Rep. Charlene Fite, R-Van Buren, Sen. Jane English, R-North Little Rock, 30 additional House members and 13 additional Senators, is on the Senate Calendar for consideration this afternoon by the full Senate.

SB 120 by Sen. Jane English, R-North Little Rock, Rep. Charlene Fite, R-Van Buren, 13 additional Senators and 30 additional House members, is set for a Special Order of business in the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee, which will meet following adjournment of the Senate this afternoon.

We support these identical bills, which will create an income tax exemption for military retirement.

LIMITATIONS ON PURCHASES WITH FOOD STAMPS

HB 1035 by Rep. Mary Bentley, R-Perryville, and Sen. Cecile Bledsoe, R-Rogers, is on this afternoon's House Calendar for a vote by the full House.

We join many of our member retail food sellers and food manufacturers in **opposing this bill** that seeks to limit which foods can be purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The intent of the bill is to encourage a healthier diet, but it creates a variety of problems.

Grocers would have to implement and maintain an approved food list, which would be subject to much change. The governmental decision about which foods are healthy or not healthy is very difficult and would involve more than 300,000 food and beverage products. It could inadvertently block the purchase of nutritionally dense foods. SNAP is part of a national program, so changes made in Arkansas would impact beneficiaries who need to make purchases out of state due to their location or because of some sort of an emergency.

EMPLOYER PROTECTIONS

HB1126 by Rep. *Charlie Collins, R-Fayetteville*, is on this afternoon's House calendar. We support this bill that would improve employers' standing in civil suits with employees by exempting civil actions arising from employer-employee relationships from general hate offense provisions and specifies damages that may be awarded from retaliation and interference claims by employees.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

HB1209 by Rep. *Mark Lowery, R-Maumelle*, and Sen. *Eddie Joe Williams, R-Cabot*, is on this afternoon's House calendar. This bill would require the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt a productivity-based funding model for institutions of higher education and repeal the funding model currently in place, which is based on student enrollment. We support this bill.

GOVERNOR'S INCOME TAX REDUCTION

HB1159 by Rep. *Mat Pitsch, R-Fort Smith*, and Sen. *Jim Hendren, R-Gravette*, is on this afternoon's Senate calendar and **SB 115** by Sen. *Jim Hendren, R-Gravette*, and Rep. *Mat Pitsch, R-Fort Smith*, is on this afternoon's House calendar. These identical bills will lower income tax rates for incomes under \$21,000 and create a Legislative Task Force to study potential reform of tax laws to attract business.

BILLS OF INTEREST

EQUALIZING SALES TAXES FOR REMOTE SELLERS WITH IN STATE SELLERS

SB 140 by Sen. *Jake Files, R-Fort Smith*, and Rep. *Dan Douglas, R-Bentonville*, would require certain high-volume merchants that sell products in Arkansas, but do not have a physical presence in Arkansas, to remit sales taxes to Arkansas. This bill is not expected to be considered in the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee this afternoon as we had indicated in Friday's Update.

The State Chamber/AIA has a long-standing policy to support efforts like this to equalize the sales tax playing field between in-state brick and mortar sellers and out-of-state sellers.

RETAIL TAX PREPAYMENT

HB 1253 by Rep. *Jeff Wardlaw, R-Warren*, seeks to repeal the requirement that retailers with average net monthly sales of more than \$200,000 prepay a portion of their sales tax twice monthly. This bill is likely to be considered in the House Revenue and Taxation Committee on Tuesday. We support this bill.

STATE CHAMBER/AIA BILL TRACKING TRACKED BILLS

The House has filed 381 bills.
The Senate has filed 243 bills.

We are tracking 136 bills.

Seven bills were filed Friday, only one of which we're adding to tracking. We will include it in tomorrow's new tracked bills with any bills we track from today's filings.

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

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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