



Daily Legislative Update

91st General Assembly

Tuesday, January 31, 2017 – Day 23

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 - THURSDAY

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

TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

GOVERNOR'S RETIRED MILITARY TAX REDUCTIONS

SB 120 by Sen. Jane English, R-North Little Rock, Rep. Charlene Fite, R-Van Buren, 13 additional Senators and 30 additional House members, received a Do Pass recommendation from the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee yesterday and is on today's Senate Calendar. This bill will create an income tax exemption for military retirement. **We support** this bill, which is identical to **HB 1162** mentioned below.

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 on this morning's agenda in the House Revenue and Taxation Committee. We **support** this bill.

EMPLOYER PROTECTIONS

HB1126 by Rep. Charlie Collins, R-Fayetteville, was not considered yesterday by the full House but is on this afternoon's House calendar. We **support** this bill, which would improve employers' standing in civil suits with employees by exempting civil actions arising from employer-employee relationships from general hate offense provisions and specifying damages that may be awarded from retaliation and interference claims by employees.

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 on tomorrow's agenda in the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee.

The State Chamber/AIA **supports** this bill to protect our in-state brick and mortar sellers from out-of-state sellers that do not charge sales tax.

YESTERDAY AT THE CAPITOL

GOVERNOR'S INCOME TAX REDUCTION

HB1159 by Rep. Mat Pitsch, R-Fort Smith, and Sen. Jim Hendren, R-Gravette, was approved by a vote of 33-0 by the Senate and **SB 115** by Sen. Jim Hendren, R-Gravette, and Rep. Mat Pitsch, R-Fort Smith, was approved by a vote of 92-0 by the House. These identical bills will lower income tax rates for incomes under \$21,000 and create a Legislative Task Force to study the potential reform of tax laws to attract business. They will now go to the Governor's desk for signing.

GOVERNOR'S RETIRED MILITARY TAX REDUCTIONS

HB1162 by Rep. Charlene Fite, R-Van Buren, Sen. Jane English, R-North Little Rock, 30 additional House members and 13 additional Senators was approved by the House on a vote of 75 to 14. This bill will create an income tax exemption for military retirement. **We support** this bill, which is identical to **SB 120** mentioned above.

LIMITATIONS ON PURCHASES WITH FOOD STAMPS

HB 1035 by Rep. Mary Bentley, R-Perryville, and Sen. Cecile Bledsoe, R-Rogers, was approved by the House by a vote of 55 to 39.

We join 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.

This bill is on tomorrow's agenda in the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

HB1209 by Rep. Mark Lowery, R-Maumelle, and Sen. Eddie Joe Williams, R-Cabot, was approved by the House on a vote of 80 to 10. 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.

CHANGING THE PRIMARY ELECTION DATE

SB 122, by Sen. Gary Stubblefield, R-Branch, failed in the Senate yesterday by a vote of 15 to 16. This bill would have left the Primary Election date in March as it was in 2016.

STATE CHAMBER/AIA BILL TRACKING TRACKED BILLS

The House has filed 401 bills.
The Senate has filed 257 bills.
We are tracking 159 bills.

To view of list of bills we've added most recently to our tracking, click [here](#).

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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