

Visit our Website



93rd General Assembly Thursday, April 1, 2021 – Session Day 81

TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

The House and Senate will convene at 1 p.m.

Committee Meetings

7:30 a.m. – Joint Budget Committee-Special Language

8:30 a.m. – Joint Budget

9:30 a.m. – Senate Agriculture and City/County/Local | House Education and Health

10:30 a.m. – Senate Transportation

11:00 a.m. – Joint Energy

12:00 p.m. – Senate Rules

2:00 p.m. – Senate Insurance/Commerce and State Agencies | House Tax, Health and Judiciary

**** CALL TO ACTION – PLEASE ASK YOUR SENATOR TO VOTE YES ON SB 530 ****

WORKERS' COMPENSATION – State Chamber Priority Agenda Bill

SB 530 by Sen. Dave Wallace and Rep. Jack Ladyman addresses the issue of subrogation in workers' compensation cases. The purpose of this bill is to reduce employers' workers comp costs by allowing a recovery of payments made to an employee who was injured while on the job and the injury is caused by someone else.

Workers' comp is obligated to pay its benefits regardless of the employee's ability to seek recovery of those benefits and more from the person that caused the injury. Workers' comp must pay all of the injured workers' medical bills and temporary total disability to cover a portion of the employee's lost wages and then the injured employee can make a claim against the person who caused the injury. That claim includes the medical bills already paid by workers' comp and all of the lost wages, of which approximately two-thirds was paid by workers' comp.

Ask your Senator to **Vote Yes on SB 530 - It's important to business.**

TODAY'S BILLS

INDEPENDENT TAX APPEALS COMMISSION-State Chamber/AIA Priority Agenda bill

HB 1468 by Rep. Joe Jett and Sen. Jonathan Dismang is our bill that seeks to create an Independent Tax Appeals Commission and a technical companion bill, **HB 1705**.

HB 1468 received a Do Pass recommendation Tuesday from the Senate Insurance and Commerce Committee and a Do Pass from the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee yesterday. It is on today's Senate Calendar. **HB 1705** is also on the Senate Calendar today.

The State Chamber/AIA supports **HB 1468 & HB 1705**.

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

HB 1667 by Rep. Tony Furman would require all occupational licensing entities to recognize licenses from other states. The bill defines “applicant” as an individual seeking an occupational or professional license.

This bill is on today’s agenda in the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee. The State Chamber/AIA opposes this very broad bill.

PHARMACY BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

HB 1804 by Rep. Brian Evans and Sen. Ron Caldwell seeks to make changes to the Arkansas Pharmacy Benefits Manager Licensure Act.

This bill is an intrusive bill that would severely limit the ability of **self-funded health plans**, usually offered by the state’s large employers, to make prescription drugs more affordable for their members. The bill places self-insured groups and governmental plans under the provisions of the state PBM (pharmacy benefits manager) Licensure Act, which established a single-rate system of reimbursement for each drug dispensed by every pharmacy in the state, regardless of the quality of services provided.

Our member companies that sponsor self-funded health plans believe this bill will negatively impact those plans and the hundreds of thousands of hard-working Arkansans who depend on them. This bill could accelerate the escalation of healthcare costs in Arkansas.

Tools including protocols around prescribing and composition of pharmacy networks are used by most self-funded health plans and have been shown to be effective at helping health plans contain pharmaceutical costs. **HB1804** attempts to circumvent these widely accepted and clinically sound cost-containment approaches and injects inappropriate state intervention into private-sector business strategies and free-market dynamics.

HB1804 would drive up the “out-of-pocket” costs of health plan members and ultimately could make the health plans on which they rely much less affordable. Additionally, **HB1804** seeks to place an added reporting requirement on self-funded health plans that is burdensome and intrusive. Self-funded health plans would be required to share negotiated contract information including rebate and payment details that, until now, have been considered proprietary and confidential.

This bill received a Do Pass recommendation yesterday from the House Insurance and Commerce Committee and is on today’s House Calendar.

We oppose this bill.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION – State Chamber/AIA Priority Agenda Bill

HB 1321 by Rep. Jimmy Gazaway and Sen. Alan Clark seeks to do three things: a) define critical infrastructure, b) add critical infrastructure to the existing criminal code, and c) set associated criminal mischief penalties.

The need for this bill has been especially highlighted in recent days, from the domestic terrorism incident in Nashville that wiped out a telecommunications grid to COVID-19, which has highlighted how important it is to protect our supply chain from those who wish to interrupt it. Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Tennessee are among several states that have adopted similar legislation.

This bill received a Do Pass recommendation from the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday and is on this afternoon’s Senate Calendar.

The State Chamber/AIA supports this bill.

EXTENDED TAX RETURN DEADLINE – State Chamber/AIA Priority Agenda Bill

SB 420 by Sen. Jonathan Dismang and Rep. Joe Jett would set the deadline for state income tax returns following application for a federal extension to one month after the federal deadline for tax returns that have been granted a federal extension.

This bill received a Do Pass recommendation from the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee and is on this afternoon’s Senate Calendar.

The State Chamber/AIA supports this bill.

PUBLIC ROADS IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDIT– State Chamber/AIA Priority Agenda Bill

SB 481 by Sen. Jonathan Dismang allows 100 percent of the public roads improvements tax credit to be taken in a single year, instead of limiting it to 50 percent. It also extends the carry-forward period for the credit from three to 10 years.

This bill is on this morning's agenda in the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee
The State Chamber/AIA supports this bill.

INDEXING WEEKS OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

HB1676 by Rep. Austin McCollum seeks to scale back the duration of unemployment compensation benefits in increments as indexed to the current unemployment rate.

This bill was defeated in the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee Tuesday, but is back on today's agenda.

We support a study of this concept and to allow time for DWS to put in place a modern computer system, which could take years.

PROHIBIT MANDATORY COVID IMMUNIZATIONS OR VACCINES

HB 1547 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum and Sen. Breanne Davis proposes an Act to Prohibit Mandatory 2019 (COVID-19) Immunizations or Vaccines for students and employees. A third amendment has been made to the bill.

This bill is on this morning's agenda in the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

We oppose this bill.

LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY ACT

SB 601 by Senator Jonathan Dismang would create the Uniform Limited Liability Company Act and repeal the Small Business Entity Tax Pass Through Act.

This bill is on today's agenda in the Senate Insurance and Commerce committee.

The backers of this bill are interested in feedback about this bill. If you have any comments, please let us know.

BILLS WE SUPPORT

FUNDING FOR ARHOME

SB 55 by the Joint Budget Committee is the appropriation for the state Division of Medical Services. This appropriation includes funding for ARHOME, **SB 410**, which is the replacement for Arkansas Works. The ARHOME bill, **SB 410**, has been sent to the Governor. This bill requires a 75 percent majority to pass.

This bill passed the Senate 28 to 5 on March 29 and awaits consideration on the House floor.

The State Chamber/AIA supports **SB 55**.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SYSTEM UPDATE

HB 1765 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum would allow a portion of the existing Stabilization Tax revenue to be used to finance a much-needed modernization of the unemployment insurance system. These funds could be used from April 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023 but cannot exceed \$35 million.

This bill passed the House yesterday 94 to 0.

We support updating the DWS UI system and this bill.

YESTERDAY'S BILLS

RELEASE OF TAXPAYER INFORMATION

SB 528 by Sen. Bill Sample seeks to require the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration to provide reports to counties and cities containing data on sales tax rebates and credits awarded for local sales and use tax rebates, and for purchased property used in construction contracts. It would require the reports to be delivered electronically on a monthly basis and to include the name of the taxpayer and the amount of the credit or rebate awarded.

This bill was amended yesterday to add co-sponsors and given a Do Pass recommendation by the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee.

We oppose the release of the taxpayer information.

COVID CIVIL IMMUNITY

HB 1487 by Rep. Justin Gonzales and Sen. Ben Gilmore would create civil immunity for damages or injuries caused by or resulting from exposure to Covid-19 on business premises.

This bill passed the Senate yesterday 34 to 1.

The State Chamber/AIA supports this bill.

NEW TAX ON ELECTRONIC MONEY TRANSFERS

SB 545 by Sen. Trent Garner sought to levy a tax on electronic money transfers of \$5 per transfer plus one percent of amounts transferred that are over \$500. The tax would apply to transfers that are not conducted by an FDIC insured institution. The proceeds would go to a new Immigration Enforcement Training Grant Program. This is a tax increase to businesses that rely on these payment methods to conduct their business.

This bill failed to receive a motion yesterday from the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee.

We oppose this bill.

SCIENCE OF READING

SB 349 by Sen. Alan Clark and Rep. Keith Brooks would prohibit schools from using reading programs of instruction that are not aligned with the science of reading.

This passed the House yesterday 72 to 15.

We support the science of reading.

NET METERING

HB 1787 by Rep. Lanny Fite and Sen. Blake Johnson would require the Arkansas Public Service Commission to adopt new or revised net-metering rules that require an electric utility to make adjustments to metering practices, customer fees and charges, kilowatt hour measurements, etc.

This bill seeks to correct the situation where the PSC requires utilities to purchase electricity they do not need at two to three times the market price.

An amendment to this bill was filed yesterday.

We support this bill.

CIVIL EVICTION

HB 1563 by Rep. Jimmy Gazaway would establish a civil eviction process, including provisions on notice, complaint requirements, jurisdiction, civil pleadings, etc., prohibits certain terms and conditions in rental agreements, and also creates a duty that the landlord maintain habitable premises.

This bill was first placed on the House Calendar on March 22; it continues to be passed over.

The State Chamber/AIA is concerned about this bill.

STATE CHAMBER/AIA BILL TRACKING

Total Bills Filed: 1474 | New Bills Filed: Senate 6 | House 9

Bills and resolutions added to State Chamber/AIA Tracking: 8 | Total Tracked: 551

To see a list of the new bills added to our tracking, click [here](#)

To see all tracked bills saved by category, click [here](#).

LEGISLATIVE SESSION INFORMATION

To view schedules, calendars, bill information and legislator information, click [here](#).

To view the statement regarding Capitol access and committee attendance, click [here](#).

Legislative Session Message Center

House of Representatives: 501-682-6211

Senate: 501-682-2902

STATE CHAMBER/AIA INFORMATION

2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

To view the State Chamber/AIA's legislative agenda, click [here](#).

BILL SCORING

Floor votes on bills that address issues in our Legislative Agenda and/or are discussed in a Daily Legislative Update are subject to being scored.

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

State Chamber/AIA phone: (501) 372-2222

State Chamber/AIA web site: www.arkansasstatechamber.com

To unsubscribe to *Daily Legislative Updates*, please e-mail Deb Mathis at dmathis@arkansasstatechamber.com and write “Unsubscribe Daily Legislative Update” in the subject box.

The Daily Legislative Update is written by Kenny Hall, reviewed by Randy Zook, then edited and distributed by Jeff Thatcher.



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