

Visit our Website



93rd General Assembly Friday, April 9, 2021 – Session Day 89

TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

The House and Senate are in recess until 1 p.m. Monday, April 12.

*** CALL TO ACTION ***

PLEASE ASK YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE TO VOTE YES ON SB622! CLASS PROTECTION BILL – State Chamber/AIA Priority Agenda Bill

SB 622 by Senate President Pro Tem Jimmy Hickey, House Speaker Matthew Shepherd and the chairs of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, Sen. Alan Clark and Rep. Carol Dalby, is a compromise bill developed by the leadership of the Arkansas House and Senate.

Arkansas is one of only three states in the country without a law on the books to ensure justice for crime victims who are targeted because they belong to a certain group or class of individuals. We could easily find ourselves the **ONLY** state in the nation without a similar law on the books. **We CANNOT let that happen.**

This “**Class Protection Bill**” will send a message that crimes targeting individuals simply because of who they are will **NOT** be tolerated in our state.

Please reach out to your Representative and let them know SB 622 is critically important – not just for creating jobs but retaining the ones we have. Please let them know this measure is important to you and your community. Our employees deserve to know their state values equity and inclusion, and that diverse groups throughout Arkansas are both valued and protected under the law.

This bill received a Do Pass recommendation from the House Judiciary Committee yesterday and is expected to be voted on by the full House Monday afternoon.

Please ask your Representative today and/or this weekend to Vote Yes on SB 622.

Click [here](#) for the telephone number and email address of your state representative.

Passing SB 622 is important to business and our state.

YESTERDAY'S BILLS

SOFT DRINK SYRUP EXCISE TAX PHASE OUT – State Chamber/AIA Priority Agenda Bill

HB 1546 by Rep. Lanny Fite and Sen. David Wallace seeks to sunset the syrup excise tax that was enacted to fill a \$42 million budget shortfall over 28 months. That was more than 28 years and \$1.2 billion dollars ago. Removing the tax will provide relief to both consumers and the Arkansas hospitality industry, specifically restaurants and retailers—

two of the hardest hit sectors of our economy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This bill specifies replacement revenue for the Medicaid Trust Fund and contains triggers tied to growth in revenue from the sales and use tax to provide assurance that revenue for the Trust Fund will be available. The triggers mean that if a set amount of sales tax revenue growth is not achieved, the reduction in the tax will be paused. There is no fiscal impact in the next two fiscal years. By eliminating the excise tax and keeping the current sales tax on soft drinks—the state is replacing a declining revenue stream with one that continues to grow.

This bill received a Do Pass recommendation from the House Revenue and Taxation Committee yesterday and may be on Monday's House Calendar.

We support this bill.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

SB 627 by Sen. Trent Garner would place limitations on the content of state agency employee training based on a given definition of divisive concepts. It applies a provision to all contracts that requires a statement by the contractor that they will abstain from certain training concepts. It would also require the heads of all state entities to review their respective grant programs and may require the recipient to certify that it will not use state funds to promote a divisive concept and require training materials to be reviewed by the Department of Transformation and Shared Services for compliance. **The provisions of this bill will apply to private businesses.**

This bill was passed over on the Senate Calendar the past two days.

We have concerns about this bill.

BILLS WE SUPPORT

EXTEND MANUFACTURING SALES TAX EXEMPTION TO PRINTING – State Chamber/AIA Priority Agenda Bill

HB 1596 by Rep. Joe Jett and Sen. Jonathan Dismang seeks to extend the existing sales and use tax exemptions for items sold for resale to include property sold for use in printing. It sets the effective date on the first day of the calendar quarter following the effective date of the act.

This bill awaits consideration in the House Revenue & Taxation Committee after being amended.

The State Chamber/AIA supports HB 1596.

HIGHWAY REVENUE INTEREST INCOME

HB 1782 by Rep. Rick Beck and Sen. Mark Johnson would add workforce development grants in the transportation field to the list of eligible projects for use of highway revenue interest income.

This awaits consideration by the Senate Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee.

The State Chamber/AIA supports this bill.

STATE CHAMBER/AIA BILL TRACKING

Total Bills Filed: 1561 | New Bills Filed: Senate 6 | House 9

Bills and resolutions added to State Chamber/AIA Tracking: 3 | Total Tracked: 579

To view a list of the new bills added to our tracking today, 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

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