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93rd General Assembly Monday, April 12, 2021 – Session Day 92

TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

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

Committee Meetings

9:30 a.m. – Senate Tax | House State Agencies and Insurance/Commerce

11:00 a.m. – Joint Energy | Senate Education

2:00 p.m. – Senate Education and Health | House Agriculture, Aging and City/County/Local

* 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 is on this afternoon’s House Calendar.

Please ask your Representative 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.

TODAY’S BILLS

RELEASE OF TAXPAYER INFORMATION

HB 1873 by Rep. Howard Beaty would require the Department of Finance and Administration to include the taxpayer identification number and the total amount of sales tax collected for the year by each vendor in a vendor list requested by a county or city and allow requests to be made at any time, and removes the authorized fee.

This bill is on this afternoon's House Calendar.

We will propose an amendment to this bill today.

EMPLOYER MANDATES – NEW HIRES, PAYROLL, WAGE PAYMENTS

SB 600 by Sen. Greg Leding would require employers to provide new hires with written notification regarding normal hours, agreed upon wages and pay schedules. It would also add requirements for payroll process and unconditional payment of wages due in case of a dispute.

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

We oppose this bill.

VACCINE PASSPORTS

SB 615 by Sen. Trent Garner would prohibit state and local authorities from using a vaccine passport as a condition of entry, travel, employment, etc.

This bill is on today's agenda in the Senate Health Committee.

We are working to propose an amendment to 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 is on tomorrow's agenda in the House Revenue & Taxation Committee.

The State Chamber/AIA supports HB 1596.

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 over 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 is on today's House Calendar to adopt an amendment.

We support this bill.

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.

BILLS WE OPPOSE

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.

ADVERTISING TAX ON SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

SB 558 by Sen. Trent Garner would levy a tax on social media platform advertising revenue equal to seven percent of gross revenue for any platform with at least \$500,000 in Arkansas-based revenue, plus \$1 for each Arkansas account holder each year.

This bill has been referred to the Joint Energy Committee.
We oppose this bill.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

SB 635 by Sen. Bart Hester and Rep. David Ray seeks to set the date for most special elections as the presidential preferential primary date or the general election date in a year in which those elections are held, otherwise on the third Tuesday in May or the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. It requires the calling to set a special election be filed at least 75 days before the date of the election. It exempts special elections to fill vacancies in office, special runoff elections, local option elections, special elections provided for by the Arkansas Constitution, or emergency elections, including if a delay of the election would cause an undue hardship to the governing entity. This bill is identical to **HB 1368**, which was defeated twice on the House floor earlier in the session.

This bill has been referred to the Senate State Agencies Committee.

We oppose this bill, and we view **SB 496** as an acceptable approach to changing the local Special Election laws.

RESTRICTIONS ON CORPORATE POLITICAL ACTIVITY

SB 651 by Sen. Greg Leding would restrict a corporation's political activity to those actions approved by 75 percent of the shareholders and directors of the corporation.

This bill has been assigned to the Senate Insurance and Commerce Committee.
We oppose this bill.

REQUIRE TWO-FIFTHS OF A CORPORATE BOARD TO BE ELECTED BY EMPLOYEES

SB 653 by Sen. Greg Leding would require two-fifths of the directors of any corporation with over \$50 million gross revenue to be elected by the employees of the corporation using an election process.

This bill has been assigned to the Senate Insurance and Commerce Committee.
We oppose this bill.

STATE CHAMBER/AIA BILL TRACKING

Total Bills Filed: 1568 | New Bills Filed: Senate 4 | House 3

Bills and resolutions added to State Chamber/AIA Tracking: 3 | Total Tracked: 582

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

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.

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