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## 93rd General Assembly Fiscal Session | Day 2 February 15, 2022

### TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

The House and Senate will convene at 1:00 p.m. The Joint Budget Committee met at 9:00 a.m.

### YESTERDAY AT THE CAPITOL

#### STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Governor Asa Hutchinson, who is term-limited, delivered his final State of the State address to a joint session of House and Senate members shortly after they convened. He said being Governor of Arkansas has been the “highest privilege” of his public career and outlined some of the major achievements from his administration. He said the state has seen historic job creation, adding 81,000 jobs since 2015. He added that while a record number of jobs have been created, the state’s unemployment rate has also fallen to a historic low. He mentioned being proud of the reduction of the personal income tax rate from 7% to 5.5%. Meanwhile, the state has also passed the largest highway funding plan in state history and has put back \$1.2 billion in reserve funding.

Looking ahead, Governor Hutchinson announced a new initiative to drive “advanced mobility” in the state, including technologies like autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles and upward mobility. He has formed the “Arkansas Council on Future Mobility,” which will identify current state laws and policies that pose barriers to innovation, making recommendations for change ahead of the next legislative session. He praised legislators for passing a measure to allow operation of autonomous vehicles in the state in 2021, following a pilot program .

Hutchinson also announced support for legislation to make a one-time payment of \$5,000 to law enforcement officers in the state, using \$45 million in surplus finding. In addition, he reiterated his support for creating 498 new prison beds to help address the growing problem of overcrowding in state prisons. (During this portion of the speech, a small group in the audience/gallery disrupted with protests against new prisons, having to be escorted from the Capitol.)

A transcript of the Governor's remarks can be found [HERE](#).

Video of the Governor's address to the General Assembly can be found [HERE](#).

### BILLS

The House Rules Committee gave consideration to 13 Resolutions yesterday that sought approval to file non-appropriation bills. The committee gave Do Pass recommendations to eight resolutions by Rep. Jeff Wardlaw. These bills addressed various aspects of state and public school insurance plans including eligibility, coverage for morbid obesity, contribution, oversight, governance, funding and a requirement for a fiscal impact statement for any proposed legislation imposing a new or increased cost obligation for health benefits plans, including pharmacy benefit on an entity of the state.

Do pass motions on five other House resolutions failed in the House Rules Committee. Two of these resolutions, one each by Rep. John Payton and by Rep. Mary Bentley, sought authority to file bills that addressed abortion. Three resolutions by Rep. Gayla McKenzie also failed to receive a recommendation. They sought to file bills that would have changed how House Committee chairs and vice-chairs are selected and change the vote process for electing the Speaker of the House.

In the Senate, no action was taken. Identical versions of the insurance related resolutions were referred to the Senate calendar. There were five resolutions that addressed abortion referred to the Senate calendar, along with resolutions addressing reimbursements for state inmates, tax credits for hiring former offenders, amending laws concerning medical mandates and a special license plate for a dyslexia support group.

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### LEGISLATIVE SESSION INFORMATION

To view schedules, calendars, bill information, and legislator information, click [www.arkleg.state.ar.us](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us).

### Legislative Message Center

House of Representatives: 501-682-6211  
Senate: 501-682-2902

### Live Streaming from the Capitol

The House and Senate have links to live streaming of their committee meetings and floor session online.

- House: <https://www.arkansashouse.org/>
- Senate: <http://www.arkansas.gov/senate/>

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