

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Tuesday, March 14, 2023 | Day 65

TODAY'S MEETINGS

8:00 a.m. – Joint Budget Special Language

9:00 a.m. – Joint Budget Committee

10:00 a.m.

– Senate State Agencies, Insurance & Commerce, City/County/Local and Agriculture, Forestry & Economic Development committees

– House Public Transportation, Public Health Welfare & Labor, Judiciary and Revenue & Taxation committees

1:00 p.m. – Senate Convenes

1:30 p.m. – House Convenes

After adjournment – House Management

NEW TRACKED BILLS

We began tracking [17 additional bills](#) today. These bills address workers' compensation, education, the Freedom of Information Act, newspaper publications, bio energy, boiler inspections, regional airport authority, prescribed burnings, hemp-derived products, night sky and pharmacy ownership.

***** CALL TO ACTION *****

Workers' Compensation

HB 1611 and 1612 by Rep. Josh Miller and Sen. John Payton

These bills filed yesterday have the potential to cause significant cost increases for employers. We have requested an actuarial analysis.

HB 1611 would allow attorney's fees on medical expenses.

HB 1612 would remove the caps on total disability payments to injured employees and to surviving dependents.

PLEASE ASK YOUR LEGISLATORS TO VOTE NO ON HB 1611 AND HB 1612

TODAY'S BILLS

Possessory Liens

HB 1563 by Rep. Brian Evans and Sen. Ricky Hill

We support this bill, which aims to change towing practices in Arkansas by creating a cargo exception within towing policy to prevent "hostage cargo." The bill would allow cargo being transported for hire to no longer be held hostage by tow operators while the truck owner and their insurance provider negotiate and pay for the tow service. Transport companies would be able to transload the cargo to another trailer and make delivery to their customer.

This bill is on today's agenda in the House Transportation Committee.

Limits on Pharmacy Permit Applications

HB 1578 by Rep. Jim Wooten and three others and Sen. Reggie Murdock and one other

We are very concerned about this bill, which appears to limit multi-state pharmacies from being able to expand or place new pharmacies in Arkansas. The bill would require pharmacy permit applicants to be licensed pharmacists, a partnership of licensed pharmacists, or certain corporations, associations and limited liability companies. The bill would also require pharmacy permit applicants to be licensed pharmacists, a partnership of licensed pharmacists, a corporation/association with licensed pharmacists as majority-owners or a limited liability company in which the majority membership interests are owned by licensed pharmacists that are actively and regularly employed in and responsible for the management/operation of the pharmacy.

The bill exempts pharmacies with a pharmacy permit on or before the effective date of this act, a pharmacy chain that is headquartered in this state or a pharmacy within an institution such as a hospital.

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

Freedom of Information Act

SB 382 by Sen. Alan Clark

We oppose this bill, which seeks to amend certain open public meetings requirements under the Freedom of Information Act. It would prohibit two or more members of a governing body of a public entity from discussing, deliberating or deciding public business in circumvention of the Freedom of Information Act during any chance interaction, informal assemblage or electronic communication. This bill is on this morning's agenda in the Senate State Agencies Committee.

TOMORROW'S BILLS

Gas Royalties - Calculation/Distribution

HB 1549 by Rep. Rick Beck and Sen. Breanne Davis

We oppose this bill, which seeks to amend the calculation and distribution of royalties on gas sold from a drilling unit following an integration order. The bill defines proceeds and seeks to clarify that a royalty owner is not prohibited from being paid in excess of the one-eighth minimum gas royalty. President and CEO Randy Zook testified against the bill with others, and the bill failed on an oral vote in committee last Wednesday.

This bill is on tomorrow's agenda in the House Agriculture, Forestry & Economic Development Committee.

Truth in Sentencing and Parole Reform Act

SB 2 by Sen. Ben Gilmore and Rep. Jimmy Gazaway

This bill was prefiled as a shell bill and has not yet been amended. This bill may be amended as part of the anticipated public safety/criminal law reform. This bill is on tomorrow's agenda in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Child Labor Violations - Enhanced Penalties

SB 390 by Sen. Clint Penzo and Rep. Rebecca Burkes

This bill increases fines and the length of time for the assessment of civil penalties related to child labor violations. It provides criminal penalties related to child labor violations for first and subsequent offenses. It also:

- Increases the maximum fine for child labor violations from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and extends the time a civil penalty may be assessed for a child labor violation from two years to three years from the date of occurrence.
- Provides criminal penalties for child labor violations; first violation is a Class C misdemeanor, subsequent violations are Class B misdemeanors. If the violation results in injury or death to a child, it is a Class A misdemeanor; subsequent offenses are Class C felonies.

This bill is on tomorrow's agenda in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

YESTERDAY'S BILLS

Career and Technical Education - Weighted Credit

SB 369 by Sen. Jim Dotson and Rep. Grant Hodges

We support this bill, but it needs an amendment regarding computer science courses. The bill would require the Division of Career and Technical Education to review new and existing career and technical pathways to determine which courses meet criteria for weighted credit and to publish a list of approved pathways annually. It would also allow a career readiness assessment to include the ACT WorkKeys (NCRC). The bill also requires a platinum, gold, silver or bronze credential through the ACT WorkKeys to be equal to participation and completion in an advanced placement course, an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program course, and an honor class, and to be eligible for weighted credit equal to the numeric grade awarded in an advanced placement course, an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program course, and an honors class.

This bill was sent back to committee yesterday to adopt an amendment.

BILLS WE OPPOSE

Special Election Dates

HB 1510 by Rep. David Ray and 42 Representatives and Sen. John Payton

We oppose this bill, which seeks to reduce the allowable dates for special elections on measures or questions referred to the voters by governmental entities. It also amends the conditions under which an emergency special election can be held.

This bill awaits consideration on the Senate floor.

Pharmaceutical Executives – Felony for Drug Misinformation

SB 7 and SB 8 by Sen. Bryan King

We oppose these bills because of the precedent they would set in creating a felony for actions by corporate executives. We also have concerns about the bill's attempt to apply Arkansas criminal law to individuals who are not in Arkansas. **SB 7** applies to prescription drugs, and **SB 8** applies to vaccines.

These bills await consideration in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

BILL TRACKING

1032 Bills Filed | Senate: 10 new – 416 filed | House: 15 new – 616 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 408 - 17 added today

To view all tracked bills by category, click [State Chamber AIA Bill Tracking Categories](#)

2023 STATE CHAMBER AIA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

LEGISLATIVE SESSION INFORMATION

To view schedules, calendars, bill information, and legislator information, click 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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