

DAILY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Business matters.

Daily Legislative Update

94th Arkansas General Assembly
Friday, March 3, 2023 | Day 54

TODAY'S MEETINGS

The House and Senate are in recess until Monday.

NEW TRACKED Bills

We began tracking [13 additional bills](#) today. They address tax credits, confidential legislative communications, boards and commissions, an insurance omnibus bill, adult diploma program, illegal exaction, nonprofit reporting and education-related issues regarding school board elections and meetings and school performance.

BILLS WE'RE WATCHING

Healthcare - Cost-Sharing Collection Act

HB 1259/SB 122 by Rep. Lee Johnson and Sen. Missy Irvin

This bill seeks to require a healthcare insurer to pay a healthcare provider all costs of care including deductibles, coinsurance and copays, which are currently the responsibility of the patient/health plan enrollee. The insurer must then collect the deductibles, coinsurance and copays from the patient/enrollee. The bill would prohibit the insurer from withholding any amount for cost-sharing and also prohibit any decrease in reimbursements or increase in premiums. Further, the insurer cannot cancel a policy for unpaid amounts. A health insurer estimates the financial impact of this bill to possibly be as much as \$730 million. These cost increases would primarily fall on fully insured plans like those offered by small and medium-sized businesses.

Healthcare - Prior Authorization

HB 1271/SB 143 by Rep. Lee Johnson and Sen. Missy Irvin

These bills seek to eliminate the current prior authorization processes for all fully insured individuals and small businesses. The bill applies to insurance companies, health maintenance organizations, hospital and medical service corporations, risk-based provider organizations and sponsors of nonfederal self-funded governmental health plans. The bill would suspend prior authorization for the first six months of 2024. It would then require health plans to conduct a utilization analysis of claims submitted for the first six months of 2024 with historical claims data, historical prior authorization approval and denial rates. The bill would then give medical providers who meet certain thresholds an ongoing exemption from prior authorization requirements – a “Gold Card” status. A health insurer estimates the financial impact of this bill to be \$16.2 to \$24.4 million. An amendment was filed on this bill yesterday.

Special Elections

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

This bill 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. After being amended, the bill awaits consideration in the House State Agencies Committee. By reducing the number of election date options, the opportunity for local governments to get the best bond rates is inhibited.

YESTERDAY'S BILLS

Unemployment Insurance – [State Chamber Priority Bill](#)

HB 1430 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum and Sen. Kim Hammer

This bill will lower the unemployment insurance (UI) tax rate in various ways and prevent the wage base from increasing as long as the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund has a balance in excess of \$600 million. This bill passed the Senate yesterday 29 to 3 and has been sent to the Governor.

[Our thanks to all who supported this bill.](#)

Education – [Arkansas LEARNS Act](#)

SB 294 by Sen. Breanne Davis and Rep. Keith Brooks

Governor Sanders' comprehensive education reform measure passed in the House yesterday 78 to 21. It has been sent back to the Senate for concurrence in a House amendment. It has been assigned to the Senate Education Committee and is on Monday's agenda in that committee.

You can view a comprehensive summary of the bill here: [RLC SB 294 Summary](#).

Repeal of Certificates to Hire Under 16 Years of Age

HB 1410 by Rep. Rebecca Burkes and Sen. Clint Penzo

This bill repeals the requirement that an employer of a child under 16 years of age procure an employment certificate. This bill makes no changes to the existing state labor laws, and federal laws are not affected. This bill passed the Senate yesterday 24 to 9 and has been sent to the Governor.

Net-Metering

HB 1370 by Rep. Lanny Fite and SB 295 by Sen. Jonathan Dismang

These House and Senate bills, which change the state's net-metering structure, were amended and advanced out of their respective committees this week.

BILL TRACKING

904 Bills Filed | Senate: 6 new – 357 filed | House: 19 new – 547 filed
State Chamber Tracking: 348 - 13 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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