



Daily Legislative Update

Thursday, April 2, 2015

81st Day of 90th General Assembly

TODAY AT THE CAPITOL

Senate convenes at 10:00 a.m.

House convenes at 1:00 p.m.

The Senate worked till about 8:30 last night. They completed their calendar and passed the two House bills related to the budget. The House passed the Senate budget bills yesterday, too.

The Senate adopted identical amendments to **SB 229** and **SB 975** and then passed them 26-1 and 26-0. These bills are the adoption of federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act laws that Governor Hutchinson asked for yesterday in his press conference regarding **HB 1228**, which has drawn national attention.

The House Judiciary Committee will meet at 10 a.m. this morning to consider SB 229 and SB 975. If one or both are approved, the full House will consider them this afternoon.

The Senate is likely to adjourn by noon and not return until sine die adjournment is considered in a few weeks. If this occurs, then the House votes on remaining bills will be final.

BILLS TO BE CONSIDERED TODAY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SJR 16 by Sen. Jon Woods and Rep. Lance Eads passed the Senate yesterday by a vote of 20-5 and is expected to be considered by the House today.

SJR 16 is an effort to improve economic development in Arkansas. The State Chamber/AIA joined our local chamber and local economic development brethren and Governor Hutchinson in supporting SJR 16 along with SJR 3.

SJR 3 by Sen. Eddie Joe Williams passed the Senate by a vote of 30-1 last night and is expected to be debated by the House today. It would remove the historic provision that strips the Governor of his powers and duties while absent from the state.

If you are unsure of your State Representative's position on SJR16 or SJR 3, contact them this morning and ask for their support. Be sure to thank your Senators for their support and your House member too after the vote.

SJR16 gives a common definition of Economic Development, Economic Development Infrastructure, and Economic Development Services across all three of these areas addressed in Article 12 Section 5, Amendment 82, and Amendment 62 of the Arkansas Constitution. Having this common definition takes away the different uses of these amendments and allows for any of the three to be used, together or independently.

This amendment will allow for cities and municipalities to "participate" in Economic Development Infrastructure. Article 12 Section 5 has prohibited this type of activity.

This amendment will also remove the 5% cap (to the state budget) on Super Project General Obligation Bonds issued under Amendment 82. This will basically remove the total cap of about \$250+ million dollars on these projects and allow the legislature to determine whether the incentive should be offered based on the impact of the project. There is currently only about \$30-\$40 million left available with the 5% limit (if projects in the pipeline come to fruition). Some recent tweaking of enabling legislation has provided for another \$60-\$65 million, giving the State about \$100 million for super projects over the next 18 months (until this amendment is passed in the November 2016 General Election).

This amendment will allow cities and municipalities to use the bonding capacity of Amendment 62 for economic development projects, as defined by the amendment. In other words, with voter approval cities can sell bonds to offer infrastructure and incentives to companies.

Finally, and most importantly, this will give a clear, legal way for 20 cities and 5 counties across Arkansas to spend funds already collected by existing economic development sales taxes. Currently, most of the expenditures from these funds for projects or services are constitutionally suspect.

HJR 1027 by Rep. Jack Ladyman proposes an amendment to the Constitution to increase terms of circuit clerks and county judges from two to four years and prohibits ten specific county officials from serving in any civil office during a term. It also adds a provision allowing uncontested candidates to be declared elected without holding the election and defining 'infamous crime' for purposes of office eligibility. It passed the House by a vote of 87-2 and is on today's Senate calendar.

ETHICS

SB 967 by Sen. Jon Woods and Rep. Warwick Sabin is legislation related to Issue 3 that was adopted by Arkansas voters at the 2014 General Election. It increases the maximum campaign contribution from \$2000 to \$2700 per election and sets up an automatic increase process that will occur every two years. It adds members of the judiciary to the list of elected officials that cannot receive gifts. It provides details about “planned activities” in which legislators and others can receive food and drink. Such activities must include notice to the entire group and lobbyists can only host one activity for the same group within seven days. It defines available defenses to claims of receipt of illegal gifts and limits campaign signs on candidate vehicles to 12x12 inches. It addresses carryover use of certain campaign materials. It passed the Senate yesterday by a vote of 25-2 and was immediately referred to the House Rules Committee where it received a Do Pass recommendation. The bill is on today’s House calendar for final consideration.

YESTERDAY AT THE CAPITOL

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

SB 2 by Sen. Jonathan Dismang is legislation related to Issue 1 that was adopted by Arkansas voters at the 2014 General Election. It provides for review of new administrative rules by the Rules and Regulations Subcommittee of the legislative Council to determine their legality and conformity with legislative intent. It requires allowing public comment before the committee. The Senate voted yesterday to concur in a House amendment to SB 2. The bill will now be sent to the Governor for his signature.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

HB 1851 by Rep. Micah Neal amends the membership composition of various state boards, commissions and other administrative bodies. It also requires the Governor to consult with the representatives of the relevant industries before making appointments to those entities. The bill has been amended to delete proposed changes to Research and Promotion boards and make various other revisions including specifying that the Governor's many appointments are subject to confirmation by the Senate. As reported, the amendment deleted all the agriculture boards from the bill. If your organization was listed in the original draft please review the amendment. The bill passed the Senate yesterday by a vote of 23-6 and will now be sent to the Governor for his signature.

PENDING BILLS

PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGEMENT (PBM)

We have not seen any information indicating whether this bill was signed by the Governor, become law without his signature or was vetoed.

STATE CHAMBER/AIA BILL TRACKING

This session, the House filed 1007 bills and the Senate filed 1055.

The State Chamber/AIA tracked 535 bills and resolutions.

For the complete, searchable list of bills being tracked, please visit our [tracking site](#). The full text of each bill is available at the site.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION CONTACT INFORMATION

State Senators: 501-682-2902

State Representatives: 501-682-6211

To view schedules, calendars, bill information and legislator information, visit:
www.arkleg.state.ar.us.

To view live stream video and audio from the Arkansas House of Representatives,
visit www.arkansashouse.org.

State Chamber/AIA Staff:

Randy Zook, President/CEO: rzook@arkansasstatechamber.com

Kenny Hall, Executive Vice President: khall@arkansasstatechamber.com

Angela DeLille, Director of Governmental Affairs: adelille@arkansasstatechamber.com

Andrew Parker, Director of Governmental Affairs: aparker@arkansasstatechamber.com

State Chamber/AIA phone: (501) 372-2222

State Chamber/AIA web site: www.arkansasstatechamber.com