

Week Nine ...

CALL TO ACTION!!!

SB 500

We have been told by the Sponsor that this bill will be in committee this next week.

Senate Committee on Insurance and Commerce

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

10:00 AM

ROOM 171, State Capitol

Little Rock, Arkansas

*Sponsors: Senator Jon Woods - Springdale
Representative Micah Neal - Springdale*

Revises provisions governing collection and remittance of an E911 emergency services charge on prepaid wireless telephone devices.

*This bill is levying a charge for prepaid wireless telecommunications service to support the 911 commission that is in effect now, being collected at the wholesale level. **This bill requires a retailer to collect this charge from their consumers.** It will also provide additional rules governing the requirements and liabilities of sellers. This bill has gone cross country and the proponents to this bill are using that to try to pass it. The national chains are already forced in some states to do this. **AGRMA has recommended that the fee be treated like the soft drink tax by licensing the wholesaler and requiring the retailer to only buy from licensed wholesaler.** In rural areas of Arkansas where an independent may not be capable of collecting this fee, the consumer loses! It might be their only means of communication and they will have to drive miles to purchase the minutes needed! AGRMA is **not** against the 911 fee but we are against the collection point being at the retail level!*

Please contact your legislator or anyone you know and ask them to VOTE NO!

To find you legislator's please go to this web site:

Click on [Find your legislator](#)

"RETAIL" DAY ON THE HILL

Join the Arkansas Grocers and Retail Merchants

DATE: April 9, 2013
STARTING TIME: 9:30
Lunch: 11:30AM - 1:30PM
LOCATION: Arkansas State Capitol
and Capitol Hill Apartments Lobby

Please click below to RSVP!
We need your reservations.
[For more information click here.](#)

Bills of Interest Filed last Week ...

There have been 1,300 House bills and 1,192 Senate bills filed for a total of 2,492 bills this session. An additional 139 resolutions were filed between the House and the Senate.

29.38% of all House bills were filed Monday - the last day for bill filing - while 23.24% of all Senate bills were filed on the final day.

Excluding appropriation bills, 37% of all House bills were filed Monday and 36% of all Senate bills were filed Monday.

On the final day of filing, Republicans filed 418 bills, while Democrats filed 246 pieces of legislation.

As of March 11, the top keywords for those myriad bills filed were:

1. Tax/Taxes
2. Regulation/Regulate
3. Public School
4. Technology
5. Manufacture/Manufacturing
6. Medicaid

It is now time to engage with your legislators on any bill you are concerned about because they are in the down hill slide. Here are some bills that were filed last week that are of interest to the Retail business.

HB1845	Nickels	TO CREATE THE SMALL BUSINESS TAX FAIRNESS ACT; TO REQUIRE COMBINED REPORTING FOR INCOME TAX PURPOSES; AND TO LEVY A FLAT INCOME TAX ON CORPORATIONS.
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This bill is a combined reporting of corporate income tax. AGRMA is opposed to it!

SB875	Hester	TO ADJUST WEEKLY UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT AMOUNTS TO THE
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		EXPIRATION OF THE FEDERAL NONREDUCTION RULE ON BENEFITS
SB850	J.Hendren	TO REQUIRE THAT THE UNEMPLOYMENT STABILIZATION TAX SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE SEPARATE ACCOUNT OF EACH EMPLOYER; AND TO AMEND THE STABILIZATION TAX RATES FOR THE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION FUND.
SB1116	Caldwell	TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING COMPUTATION OF FUTURE CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR EMPLOYERS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES LAW.
SB857	A. Clark	TO CLARIFY THE DUTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES REGARDING UNEMPLOYMENT INELIGIBILITY FOR FAILURE TO ACCEPT OR SEEK SUITABLE WORK; AND TO REQUIRE QUARTERLY REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.
SB780	Bledsoe	TO CLARIFY THE PROCESS FOR DISQUALIFICATION FROM UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AFTER DISCHARGE FOR MISCONDUCT.

The above 5 bills are all dealing with workman's compensation laws. AGRMA is for all of these bills. Please help by reaching out to your legislators and letting them know to VOTE "YES"!

SB1135	J.Hutchinson	TO REGULATE THE BUSINESS PRACTICES OF A CREDIT CARD COMPANY AND TO PROHIBIT UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES BY A CREDIT CARD COMPANY IN THIS STATE.
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SB1185	D.Sanders	TO ALLOW TAXPAYERS TO DEDUCT CREDIT CARD INTERCHANGE FEES CHARGED ON CERTAIN SALES AND USE TAXES COLLECTED AND REMITTED TO THE STATE.
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The 2 above bills are dealing with the interchange fee that the retailer pays on sales taxes. The first one prohibits the credit card companies / banks from collecting the fee on any tax and the second one lets a retailer deduct the fee charged to them when remitting to the state.

To look up any bill, to get the full text, go to:

<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2013/2013R/Pages/Home.aspx>

****Pharmacy News****

There was only two new pharmacy bill filed this week.

SB1171	Caldwell	TO CLARIFY THAT ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES IS PERMITTED.
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HB1957	Wardlaw	TO RESTRICT THE PRESCRIBING OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES BY EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PHYSICIANS.
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What else is going on ...

The legislature and the governor appear to have come closer to a compromise on how to enroll an additional 250,000 low-income Arkansans into the state Medicaid program. At the beginning of the session the governor proposed expanding Medicaid by adding about 250,000 working class Arkansans. They are adults making up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

A strong faction of the legislature opposed the expansion for a variety of reasons, but among the most important concerns has been the potential long-term cost of increasing a government program. Opponents of Medicaid expansion held a strong hand because expansion would require approval from a 75 percent majority of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The governor met with the federal secretary of Health and Human Services, whose approval is needed for major changes to the state Medicaid program because about 71 percent of the cost of Medicaid is paid for with federal funds. The governor went to Washington and presented the federal officials with some ideas that had been tossed around the Capitol in Little Rock. The federal officials accepted those ideas, which are now the basis for the Medicaid compromise.

The proposal to simply expand Medicaid has been replaced with a plan that brings in private insurance companies. Using federal dollars, Medicaid would help the 250,000 working poor to buy health coverage in the private market. They will be required to buy health insurance in 2014 anyway under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act.

Hospitals and physicians benefit because they will not have to provide as much unreimbursed care to low-income patients, whom they treat even though they have no insurance and cannot pay. Under the Medicaid compromise 250,000 more Arkansans will have health insurance coverage.

There are still numerous issues of fiscal policy left to resolve. The Committees on Revenue and Taxation have on their agendas a series of tax cut bills that amount to an estimated \$ 2 billion.

The Senate has approved SB 463 to exempt members of the armed services from the state income tax. It would reduce their taxes by \$7.2 million a year.

Other tax cuts include HB 1039 to create a sales and use tax exemption for utilities used in agriculture, aquaculture and horticulture. It would reduce taxes by more than \$11 million when it takes full effect in Fiscal Year 2017.

Another measure, HB 1218, would reduce the sales and use tax on natural gas and electricity used by manufacturers, from 2.75 percent to 1.625 percent the first year it takes effect, and in the second year it would exempt state and local taxes except for the conservation sales tax and the new highway sales tax. In the first year the tax savings for manufacturers would be \$13.1 million, and in the second year \$25.4 million.

Another tax cut is in SB 334, which would reduce the sales and use tax on replacement parts and equipment used in manufacturing. The first year tax savings would be \$6.54 million. The Senate approved and sent to the House SB332, which would require school districts to contribute at least \$150 for each teacher who gets health insurance. About 100 districts already contribute \$150 a month for each participating teacher.