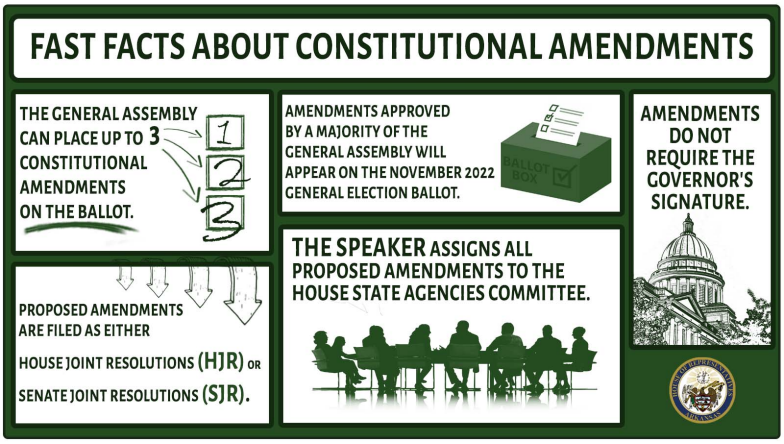
STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

February 12, 2021

Week 5 of the 2021 Regular Session



There are 25 proposed constitutional amendments filed in the House and 18 in the Senate. The deadline to file proposed amendments was February 10. Proposals range from creating a citizens commission on minimum wage to tort reform.

The House State Agencies and Governmental Affairs Committee will hear testimony and vote on proposals later this session. We will update you as those hearings approach.

During the 5th week of the Regular Session, the House passed several bills addressing healthcare, including the following:

SB99-This bill regulates step therapy protocols.

Health benefit plans are increasingly making use of step therapy, which often require patients to try one or more prescription drugs before coverage is provided for a drug selected by the healthcare provider. SB99 does not ban the use of step therapy but instead requires insurance providers to set reasonable timelines for requests and appeals.

If implemented, it will ensure that step therapy will be based on medical and clinical guidelines and not

require patients to fail on medicines they have already taken or are not in their best interest. This bill has been sent to the Governor for his signature.

HB1176-This bill would ensure that Arkansas Medicaid reimbursements for telemedicine of certain behavioral and mental health services continue after the health emergency ends.

HB1116- This is a bill to establish Simon's Law, named after a Missouri child whose death led to similar laws being passed in several states. It would require health care professionals to obtain at least one parent's consent before placing a "do not resuscitate order" for a child.

HB1067-This bill will allow UAMS to create a breast milk bank and establish an account to fund the program.

Other bills advanced by the House this week include:

HB1265-This bill amends the law concerning the unlawful passing of a school bus. It states drivers must come to a complete stop no less than 30 feet from the bus when it stops to load or unload passengers. This 30 feet perimeter would apply to public roads, private or public property open to the general public, and any driveway or parking lot belonging to a public school.

HB1017-This bill states that Arkansas would permanently adopt Daylight Saving Time when the federal government allows states to do so and when surrounding states declare their intent to do so.

SB32-This bill allows liquor stores, micro-brewery restaurants, and small breweries to deliver alcoholic beverages in wet counties. Deliveries are currently allowed under an executive order. This bill will allow the practice to continue once the health emergency order expires.

SB66-This bill allows the tuition-free benefit for soldiers and airmen of the Arkansas National Guard to apply for programs of study in which courses are taken exclusively online.

HB1355-This removes licensing requirements for a motor vehicle salesperson and a recreational vehicle salesperson. This bill also creates the Automotive Technologist Education Grant Program. The Division of Career and Technical Education may then award grants for training in the field of automotive repair and technology.

HB1159-This bill allows members of the General Assembly to defer jury duty to a later date if they are called to serve during a legislative session or the 30 days before and after the session begins.

This bill also allows a person who is 80 years of age or older to voluntarily exempt himself or herself from participating in jury service at any time.

The winter weather postponed some committee meetings this week. You can find updated agendas at **www.arkleg.state.ar.us.**