STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

November 15, 2018

New Laws for 2016

Typically when a bill is passed in the state legislature, if it doesn't have an emergency clause, it will take effect 90 days after we adjourn. But there are occasions when a specific date is written into the bill. This year, we passed several bills that will take effect January 1, 2016. These impact everything from restaurant menus to tax brackets.

Here are a few of the bills that will be taking effect at the beginning of the year.

We passed legislation ensuring that all healthcare plans provided under the Affordable Care Act in Arkansas must provide the minimum benefits for pediatric oral health. These benefits go into effect at the beginning of the year.

Another change we made you may notice at your grocery store or restaurant menu. Act 1191 requires that catfish that is not from the United States be labeled "imported". The catfish industry in Arkansas is the third largest in the nation. The legislation also requires that a distinction be made in packaging if it includes catfish or catfish-like products.

We made a few changes impacting driver's licenses. For starters, driver's licenses issued after January 1, 2016 will not expire for 8 years. Until now drivers have had to renew every 4 years.

And for those who have had their driver's license suspended as a result of outstanding reinstatement fees, we passed legislation that created a program to lighten the financial burden of getting back behind the wheel. Act 1193 states that if an individual has paid all court costs and fees associated with the suspension and completed a specialty court program such as drug court, then the driver's license can be reinstated for a one-time fee of $100.

Act 934 requires that beginning next year, physicians cannot perform an abortion on a minor unless she obtains notarized consent from one of her parents or legal guardian.

Come tax time, you may also see the impact of our recent tax cuts. The income tax will be reduced for those making between $21,000 and $75,000. The reduction became effective at the beginning of 2015 so you will notice the change in this year's tax filings. Those making above $75,000 will see the reduction next year.

And farmers and ranchers will receive an income tax exemption for payment from an agricultural disaster program.