



Arkansas House Newsletter

February 18, 2022

Week 1 of the 2022 Fiscal Session



The 93rd General Assembly is now entering the second week of the 2022 Fiscal Session.

The session began with an address by Governor Asa Hutchinson in which he outlined his budget priorities for the next fiscal year.

In addition to increases in funding for education and healthcare, the Governor is requesting funding for the Crime Victims Reparations Program, child abduction response teams, and two new drug courts.

The Governor voiced his support for an increase in pay for state troopers. He is also requesting \$45 million in surplus funds to be used as a \$5,000 one-time payment for every county and city-certified law enforcement officer.

He is requesting surplus funds be used for safety equipment for law enforcement and for investment in a new prison facility.

Members will be reviewing these requests in the days ahead.

Meanwhile, the House passed several appropriation bills this week for various boards and commissions.

The House also passed the following legislation addressing health benefit plans for public school and state employees:

HB1098-This bill requires a fiscal impact statement be submitted before the legislature can consider any bill that will impose a new or increased cost obligation for health benefit plans.

HB1099-This bill establishes the Employee Benefits Division Oversight Subcommittee of the Legislative Council. The subcommittee will have oversight of all decisions of the State Board of Finance related to the State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Program.

HB1100-This bill creates a State Employee Health Benefit Advisory Commission and a Public School Employee Health Benefit Advisory Commission.

The commissions will review financial information and potential viability of funding as well as provide recommendations to the State Board of Finance.

HB1097-This bill states it will be the responsibility of the House and Senate Committees on Education, through the biennial adequacy review, to determine the health insurance contribution rate to be paid by each public school district.

The House will reconvene on Tuesday, February 22, at 1 pm.

You can watch all committee meetings and House proceedings at www.arkansashouse.org.