

The 2011 Arkansas Legislature

By Jerry Cox

Compiled from
FamilyCouncil.org

2011 Legislative Session

Over the course of the 2011 Legislative Session, Family Council published nearly 3 dozen blog posts related to legislation and events at the Capitol in Little Rock. We have compiled some of these articles into this e-book. Articles generally appear in chronological order, starting with our January news release, and ending with the "Tim Tebow" bill in April. Below is a list of the articles contained in this e-book.

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Family Council Director Predicts Busy Legislative Session

Posted By [Jerry](#) On January 6, 2011 @ 9:30 am In [Legislation](#), [Legislature](#), [News](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, January 6, 2011

On Thursday, Family Council President Jerry Cox unveiled his group's legislative agenda for the upcoming session of the Arkansas Legislature.

Cox told reporters, "We've assembled what we're calling a '[bill bank](#)'^[1], and we've placed it on our website. It's a free resource that lawmakers and voters alike can browse to see what legislation they like and what they want passed in Little Rock over the next few weeks."

Cox said the legislation outlined in Family Council's [bill bank](#)^[1] represents some of the ideal bills they hope legislators will consider sponsoring when they convene next week.

Cox also said while it may not be realistic for every bill on their list to be passed over the next 90 days, his goal is to create a resource for lawmakers to use.

"Even if only half of these bills are filed, it could make for one of our busiest sessions ever. There's just a lot on this list. But when lawmakers are searching for positive legislation that will make Arkansas a better place to live and raise a family, we want them to turn to this as a tool they can use."

Family Council's website lists 11 different drafts of new lottery legislation; a dozen new pro-life bills; and a variety of other pieces of legislation ranging from taxes to religious freedoms. All in all, there are over 30 bills on the list.

"All of our new lottery regulations are fully-drafted and ready to go," Cox said. "All they need are sponsors who will file them next week. Representative Altes pre-filed a couple of tax-break bills similar to some on our list, so we look forward to supporting and lobbying for his legislation when it comes up."

"To give you a snapshot of our [bill bank](#)^[1], we have draft legislation that would require the Arkansas Lottery to allocate 35% of its revenue for college scholarships. We have a bill that would reallocate the Lottery's advertising budget for additional scholarships. And we have a bill that bans lottery vending machines."

"We also have bills that raise the medical standards to which abortion clinics must adhere, ban domestic partnership registries like the one in Eureka Springs, reduce the sales tax on used cars, and require a countywide vote on the issuance of any private club liquor license in a dry county."

When asked which bills were most important, Cox said, "The bills we really want to see sponsored and passed are the lottery and pro-life bills. Our Lottery Commission is absolutely out of control, and needs to be reined in—and that's something I believe many lawmakers are ready to do. Also, there's no reason for a state as pro-life as Arkansas to have such a high abortion rate. So we plan to focus a lot of our energy on those two areas."

"I think after the legislature convenes, we're going to see a strong emphasis on reducing taxes, so getting some good, family-oriented tax breaks passed will be doable, and we look forward to being part of that. When it's all said and done, though, every one of these bills is important to us, and that's why we're going to be working hard to find sponsors as soon as possible."

Cox said his group plans to continue updating the information in their [bill bank](#)^[1] on a regular basis.

###

Photos: Winter Weather & the Capitol

Posted By [Jerry](#) On January 11, 2011 @ 4:53 pm In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

Since most of my staff has been out of the office due to winter weather, today's update is going to be light. What I thought I'd show you are a few pictures I took with my phone over the past couple of days.

Here they are:



[1]

Our office parking lot was obviously covered in snow yesterday.



[2]

This is the hill I walk up every morning to lobby the Arkansas Legislature when it's in session.



[3]

At the front doors of the House: A few people braved the winter weather to visit the Capitol on swearing-in day.



[4]

Friends and family watch from the House gallery as new legislators take the oath of office.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

First Week at the Legislature Finished

Posted By [Jerry](#) On January 14, 2011 @ 5:52 pm In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

Well, our first week at the legislature is officially over. Even though it's just the start of the legislative session, I wanted to give you a quick rundown of what happened.

Lawmakers had to dig themselves out from under all the snow to get to the Capitol on Monday. The House and Senate convened briefly to kick things off, and legislators spent the rest of the week familiarizing themselves with their committees, filing bills, and setting rules for the rest of the session.

I had the opportunity to speak briefly with different lawmakers and lobbyists as my staff and I walked the halls of the Capitol Building. I even got to say hello to Rita Sklar, Executive Director of the ACLU of Arkansas. While we probably differ better than 99% of the time, every once in a while we find a bill that both Family Council and the ACLU can agree on.

Even though the legislature only met for a few days, a couple of bills are already generating some buzz around the state. One is HB1051, a bill that would allow Arkansans to openly carry handguns. All in all, though, we didn't see many bills filed this week. While that will certainly change in the days to come, we're also confident we're going to get some good pro-life legislation introduced, support tax breaks for Arkansas families, and see the legislature rein in the Arkansas Lottery.

Speaking of the lottery, one of the biggest events of the week didn't involve the legislature at all: It was the Lottery Commission's evaluation of Director Passailaigue.

Commissioners have moved twice to dismiss Passailaigue; the last time the motion was made, the Commission opted instead to do an employee evaluation of the Director.

So on December 9, 2010, Commissioners discussed dismissing Passailaigue, but decided to do an evaluation instead; on December 26, Passailaigue received a raise that bumped his salary from over \$324,000 per year to over \$330,000 per year; on January 6, legislators discussed reducing lottery scholarship amounts because the scholarships are insufficiently funded; and on January 12, Commissioners evaluated Passailaigue, determined he was doing a fine job, and decided to keep him—higher salary and all.

More and more, I think Arkansans smell a rat anytime the lottery makes the news. That's why I'm really hopeful that the legislature will pass some sensible laws to re-prioritize the Arkansas Lottery so that scholarships are its primary focus, and it becomes more accountable to the People of Arkansas.

As we go about our business every day at the Capitol, our staff is constantly taking pictures and writing updates about the Arkansas Legislature. If you would like to "follow us around the Capitol," just go to our Facebook or Twitter pages. You can get up-to-the-second information directly from us as we lobby the legislature.

Follow us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/FamilyCouncil> ^[1]
'Like' us on Facebook: <http://facebook.com/familycouncil> ^[2]

Look for more updates from us in the days to come!

To Stream or Not to Stream

Posted By Jerry On January 17, 2011 @ 10:19 am In Legislature | [Comments Disabled](#)

The Arkansas House of Representatives will be considering an important issue tomorrow and Wednesday: Whether or not to live stream their committee meetings over the Internet.

The House spent hundreds of thousand dollars installing cameras and computer equipment that would allow House committees to stream video of their discussions via the Arkansas House's website. Now committees are going to take a vote on whether or not to utilize that technology.

We think live streaming committee meetings is a great idea. The Arkansas House of Representatives spent the money; they have the technology; they should use it. That way it will be easier than ever for citizens to be a part of the political process by being able to watch committee discussions as they happen.

If you agree that every House committee with the option to live stream should do so, then call your Representative on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week, and ask him or her to support live streaming of committee meetings. The phone number for the Capitol switchboard is 501-682-6211.

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URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1850>

Some Photos from Around the Capitol Today

Posted By [Jerry](#) On January 19, 2011 @ 4:22 pm In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

Our day at the Capitol [got off to an early start today](#) ^[1]. We ate breakfast in the Capitol's cafeteria, and then went to a morning event sponsored by Senator Boozman, followed by committee meetings, and a whole slew of activities in between. [As we've said before](#) ^[2], you can [tag along with us at the Capitol](#) ^[2] by following Family Council on [Facebook](#) ^[3] and [Twitter](#) ^[4].

Below are some pictures of the day's activities.



Here you can see the crowd of lawmakers and guests at a breakfast event organized by Senator John Boozman.



Secretary of State Mark Martin converses with Reps. Tim Summers (right) and Mary Lou Slinkard (center).



Above: State Senator Bruce Holland of Greenwood (center), U.S. Senator John Boozman (right), and myself.



After the meeting with Senator Boozman, we split up to attend committee meetings. Above is a picture of the Arkansas House of Representatives City, County, and Local Affairs meeting room.



Above: City, County, and Local Affairs Committee member, Rep. Jane English (center), discusses local issues with two lobbyists.



The Bureau of Legislative Research is in charge of drafting legislation at the request of lawmakers. A few legislative committees also meet in their building.



Above: The House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development hearing testimony on a bill.



We also stopped by the Lt. Governor's office to visit with Mark Darr. Above: Skot and Amber, two of the Lt. Governor's employees.

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URLs in this post:

[1] got off to an early start today: <http://twitter.com/#!/FamilyCouncil/status/27721438202957826>

[2] As we've said before: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1840>

[3] Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/familycouncil>

[4] Twitter: <http://twitter.com/FamilyCouncil>

How Did Your Rep. Vote on HB1053?

Posted By [Jerry](#) On January 25, 2011 @ 3:25 pm In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

Below is the final vote on HB 1053, a bill by Rep. David Meeks that would prevent Arkansans from being penalized for failing to purchase government-approved healthcare under the new federal healthcare law.

If your representative is on the House Public Health Committee, you can see how he or she voted below.

Voted Against HB1053

Rep. Fred Allen (D-Little Rock)
Rep. Billy Gaskill (D-Paragould)
Rep. Buddy Lovell (D-Marked Tree)
Rep. Clark Hall (D-Marvell)
Rep. Barry Hyde (D-North Little Rock)
Rep. Tracy Pennartz (D-Fort Smith)
Rep. Charolette Wagner (D-Manila)
Rep. James L. Word (D-Pine Bluff)
Rep. Garry L. Smith (D-Camden)
Rep. Butch Wilkins (D-Bono)
Rep. Mark Perry (D-Jacksonville)
Rep. Greg Leding (D-Fayetteville)

Voted For HB1053

Rep. Jeff Wardlaw (D-Warren)
Rep. Sheilla E. Lampkin (D-Monticello)
Rep. Bryan King (R-Green Forrest)
Rep. Andrea Lea (R-Russellville)
Rep. Stephanie Malone (R-Fort Smith)
Rep. Andy Mayberry (R-East End)
Rep. (Vice Chair) Jon Woods (R-Springdale)

Not Voting

Rep. (Chair) Linda Tyler (D-Conway)

Our thanks to [Jason Tolbert](#) ^[1], whose coverage of this debate was immensely helpful in assembling the list above.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1906>

URLs in this post:

[1] Jason Tolbert: <http://tolbertreport.com/2011/01/25/health-care-mandate-bill-fails-in-committee-7-to-12/>

Hats Off to Reps. Lampkin and Wardlaw

Posted By [Jerry](#) On January 28, 2011 @ 11:48 am In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



This past Tuesday, Representative David Meeks presented a bill to the Arkansas House of Representatives' Public Health Committee in Little Rock. The bill, HB 1053, would have prevented Arkansans from being penalized for failing to purchase government-approved health insurance under the recently-passed federal healthcare law.

Sadly, the bill was voted down, 12 to 7. However, an interesting thing happened: Two Democrats voted for the bill, Sheilla Lampkin and Jeff Wardlaw.

Now, I don't usually put a lot of stock in party lines at the Capitol. In the last two decades, I've worked with some very good folks from both parties. When you get down to it, what a lawmaker believes and does is much more important to me than whether he or she has a D or an R by their name. But let's not kid ourselves either: Government-run healthcare is an issue that, for the most part, deeply divides party lines.

On Tuesday, 12 out of the 15 Democrats on the Health Committee voted against Rep. Meeks' bill. Twelve! Nationally, as much as 60% of America wants to see the federal healthcare law repealed or seriously revised. Do you think the numbers are all that different back in the home districts of these 12 lawmakers? I doubt it.

Meeks' bill would not have repealed or invalidated the federal healthcare law. It was just a sensible piece of legislation that said, *We're not going to hit you with a fine if you don't buy government-approved health insurance.* But it still got voted down because a dozen lawmakers decided to side with their party affiliates in Washington instead of their constituents back home.

However, as I said earlier, two Democrats voted with the People of Arkansas: Representative Sheilla Lampkin of Monticello and Representative Jeff Wardlaw of Warren.

Both of these representatives did the right thing by standing with the people who *sent* them to Little Rock instead of the power-brokers *in* Little Rock—and both will probably take heat from some members of their own party for it, if they haven't already.

When it comes to government-run healthcare, in my book Sheilla Lampkin and Jeff Wardlaw are right up there with Congressman Mike Ross on the short list of lawmakers with the backbone to stand up for the folks back home.

Call to leave a message expressing your gratitude to Reps. Lampkin and Wardlaw: (501) 682-6211

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1911>

A Connection Between Gov. Beebe and the Poison Pill Amendment?

Posted By [Jerry](#) On February 7, 2011 @ 9:56 am In [Abortion](#), [Legislation](#), [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

Last week we brought a lot of attention to SB113, sponsored by Senator Cecile Bledsoe. SB113 effectively says *Under the federal healthcare law, Arkansas will not subsidize abortions with taxpayer money, except to save the life of the mother*. This acts as “enabling legislation” for Amendment 68 to the Arkansas Constitution (which states that no public funds will be used for abortion—except to save the mother’s life) by applying it to the new federal healthcare law.

The bill does not prevent anyone from getting an abortion; it just says you can’t use public funds to pay for it. Basically, it keeps Arkansas’ current policy on publicly-funded abortion the same once the federal healthcare law goes into effect.

That, however, did not prevent some lawmakers from sponsoring and approving what pro-life Rep. Barry Hyde (D-North Little Rock) accurately called a “poison pill amendment” that effectively killed the bill last week. Rep. Jeff Wardlaw (D-Warren) proposed an amendment that struck the exemption for the “life of the mother” from SB113, and changed it to an exemption for rape, incest, and health of the mother.

This amendment made the bill unconstitutional, causing SB113 to be tabled.

I honestly have no idea why Rep. Wardlaw would cast [such an excellent vote on Rep. Meeks’ bill, HB1053](#) ^[1], one week, and then sponsor such a blatantly hostile amendment to Sen. Bledsoe’s bill the next. **Both bills prevent Arkansans from paying for things they don’t want to in the federal healthcare law.**

According to [Jason Tolbert at TolbertReport.com](#) ^[2], though, it appears that the Governor may be part of this mess. Evidently, Governor Beebe went on AETN, and suggested amending SB113 to include rape, incest, and health of the mother as reasons for publicly funding an abortion. The following Thursday, Rep. Wardlaw sponsored an amendment to the bill that did just that.

So regardless of whether the Governor leaned on Rep. Wardlaw (as I’ve heard some speculate) or Rep. Wardlaw ran the amendment of his own volition, it is apparent that the two of them, evidently, agree on introducing unconstitutional, poison pill amendments like the one we saw last week.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1932>

URLs in this post:

[1] such an excellent vote on Rep. Meeks’ bill, HB1053: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1911>

[2] Jason Tolbert at TolbertReport.com: <http://tolbertreport.com/2011/02/05/beebe-on-arkansans-ask-suggests-the-poison-pill-amendment/>

Taxpayers' Protection Amendment Filed

Posted By [Jerry](#) On February 9, 2011 @ 11:11 am In [Legislation](#), [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



Senator Rapert (R-Bigelow) has filed [a constitutional amendment](#) ^[1] that would require a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote from both houses of the legislature in order to raise any tax.

As it stands, the amendment would require a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote from the Arkansas Senate and a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote from the Arkansas House in order to raise any tax, but would only require a simple majority vote in order to lower taxes or make changes to tax breaks and exemptions.

If this amendment passes, Arkansans will get to vote on it at the next General Election, in November of 2012.

[You can read the amendment here](#) ^[1].

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1951>

URLs in this post:

[1] a constitutional amendment: <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Bills/SJR4.pdf>

New Amendment Could Increase Lottery Scholarships

Posted By [Jerry](#) On February 9, 2011 @ 11:14 am In [Arkansas Lottery](#), [Legislation](#), [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



Representative Ann Clemmer has filed [a constitutional amendment](#) ^[1] to require the Arkansas Lottery to allocate 35% of its revenue for college scholarships.

Right now Arkansas law does not require any kind of minimum percentage of lottery revenue be set aside for scholarships. As a result, the percentage allocated has been set incredibly low—approximately 22%, one of the lowest in the nation.

By our estimating, this amendment could increase the amount of scholarship money available to students by one-third, from \$100 million to approximately \$150 million or more.

According to Representative Clemmer, the current amendment sets the allocation at 35%, but she plans to amend the wording to make the 35% a minimum—meaning it could be increased even after the amendment goes into affect.

If this amendment passes, Arkansans will have opportunity to vote on it in the next General Election, in November of 2012.

[You can read the amendment here](#) ^[1].

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1957>

URLs in this post:

[1] a constitutional amendment: <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Bills/HJR1005.pdf>

A Snowy Week

Posted By [Jerry](#) On February 11, 2011 @ 2:40 pm In [Arkansas Lottery](#), [Legislature](#), [Taxes](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



It's been a cold, snowy week in Little Rock. Snow and ice seemed to slow things down at the Capitol Building, but expect the Legislature to be busier than ever when they reconvene on Monday. In the meantime, here's a recap of some of the week's highlights.

Wednesday was the deadline for lawmakers to file constitutional amendments.

The deadline for filing general legislation is March 7.

Among the amendments filed this week (and the lawmakers who filed them), a few really stand out.



[The first is an amendment we've been advocating for some time](#) ^[1]. SJR4, the Taxpayers' Protection Amendment by Senator Rapert, would require a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of both the Arkansas House and the Arkansas Senate in order to raise taxes. The amendment still only requires a simple majority vote to lower taxes or change tax breaks and exemptions.



The second amendment that caught our attention this week was HJR1010 by Rep. Ingram and Sen. Thompson. It would abolish the offices of Lt. Governor and State Land Commissioner.

Personally, I find it a little suspicious that there are Democratic lawmakers wanting to do away with Constitutional offices that just happen to be held by Republicans—especially given that just a year ago, when Democrat Bill Halter was Lt. Governor, all Rep. Ingram proposed doing was reducing the size of the Lt. Governor's staff to one employee to save money. Now he wants to abolish the office altogether, along with State Land Commissioner, which is currently held by a Republican for the first time in Arkansas' history.

If Republicans had proposed an amendment like this 2 years ago, we all probably would have assumed they were trying to cut some Democrats' political careers short. Stuff like this just doesn't quite pass the smell test.



The third noteworthy amendment of the week was [Rep. Clemmer's proposal to require the Arkansas lottery to allocate at least 35% of its revenue for college scholarships](#) ^[2].

This is something we've advocated since the Legislature created the Arkansas Lottery in 2009. At that time, lawmakers passed enabling legislation that got the lottery up and running, but they didn't require the lottery to set aside a minimum amount of money for scholarships. Theoretically, the lottery could allocate 1%, or even 0%, of its revenue for scholarships, and still be entirely within the letter of the law. That's just not right.

We've never made any bones about the fact that we've thought the Arkansas Lottery was a terrible idea from the start, but failing to require the Arkansas "Scholarship" Lottery to set aside a minimum amount for scholarships is just ridiculous. HJR1005 will help address that by raising the percentage the Lottery Commission currently sets aside—which is between 21% and 22%, one of the lowest in the nation—to a minimum of 35%. It won't be the highest percentage in the country, but it's pretty close to the top.

HJR1005 is exactly the kind of lottery reform we've wanted to see during this legislative session—the kind that sets the Lottery Commission's priorities straight, and puts Arkansans—and the scholarships they expect—at the top of the list.

Check back often for more updates from the Arkansas Legislature, and [follow us around the Capitol every day by 'Liking' Family Council on Facebook](#) ^[3].

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1965>

URLs in this post:

[1] The first is an amendment we've been advocating for some time: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1951>

[2] Rep. Clemmer's proposal to require the Arkansas lottery to allocate at least 35% of its revenue for college scholarships: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=1957>

[3] follow us around the Capitol every day by 'Liking' Family Council on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/familycouncil>

Back-to-School Tax Holiday Passes Committee! Call Your Rep!

Posted By [Jerry](#) On February 22, 2011 @ 3:12 pm In [Legislature](#), [Taxes](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

A bill creating a back-to-school tax-free holiday has passed the Arkansas House Revenue and Tax Committee.

HB1369 designates the first Saturday of every August as a tax-free holiday for back-to-school items. People purchasing clothes and school supplies would not pay sales tax on that day—except on single articles of clothing (such as a single shirt or pair of shoes) costing more than \$100, or single clothing accessories (such as a purse) costing more than \$50.

This bill will help alleviate some of the financial burdens families face when shopping for educational supplies each year.

Please call your State Representative, and ask him or her to vote FOR HB1369, the bill to create a back-to-school tax-free holiday. You can leave a message for your Representative at the Capitol Building by calling (501) 682-6211.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2005>

Kudos to Teague, House Conservatives

Posted By [Jerry](#) On February 23, 2011 @ 11:52 am In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

It's another busy week out at the Arkansas Legislature, and momentum is still picking up. Lawmakers are making all kinds of headlines right now, but there are a few whose actions I want to commend today.

Larry Teague for his Lottery Bill



Sen. Larry Teague (D-Nashville) filed a bill this week that brings the Arkansas Lottery under more direct legislative control. Over and over again last summer, lawmakers who sat on the Lottery Oversight Committee told the public that they didn't have any decision-making authority over the Lottery. If Sen. Teague's bill passes, I believe that will change. By bringing the Lottery under the more direct scrutiny of the Legislature, Sen. Teague is helping bring about lottery reform.

SB365 gives legislators greater authority when it comes to ordering audits of the Lottery, reviewing lottery contracts and rules, and providing accountability for the Arkansas Lottery. Way to go, Senator Teague!

House Conservatives for Stopping SB119



SB119 by Linda Pondexter-Chesterfield (D-Little Rock) would have created a nine-member Commission on the Status of Women. Now, if you're not familiar with the issue, you may be wondering what's wrong with a commission that promotes equality for women. Well, the problem is that we've seen pushes for commissions like this in the past, and their agenda rarely focuses solely on equal pay or equal treatment for women. Rather, they usually end up furthering radical causes, such as increasing abortion on demand or making it easier for married couples to divorce. What's more, new commissions almost always end up somehow costing the State more tax money, and that's something nobody wants right now.

Thankfully, lawmakers in the House saw the bill for what it was, and were able to defeat it. In particular, Reps. Andrea Lea, Charolette Wagner, Debra Hobbs, and Ann Clemmer all provided questions and testimony highlighting deficiencies in the bill and the new commission it created. Hats off to them and everyone else who voted against SB119!

Article printed from Family Council: [**http://familycouncil.org**](http://familycouncil.org)

URL to article: [**http://familycouncil.org/?p=2010**](http://familycouncil.org/?p=2010)

The Legislative Session So Far

Posted By [Jerry](#) On February 24, 2011 @ 4:35 pm In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)



The Legislature is still going strong in Little Rock. As sessions go, this one is unique: It's been one of our busiest and one of the slowest at the same time.

What do I mean? Well here's the deal: When I first started lobbying, there were lawmakers at the Capitol who had been in office for decades, and they knew how to roll out legislation as quickly as possible. That changed after term limits went into effect and new lawmakers started getting elected in larger numbers. This year we have one of the biggest batches of new lawmakers I've ever seen, and they're on a steep learning curve. As a result, new legislation has been slow in coming, and that means the last few weeks of the session could be a mad sprint to the finish as everyone files their bills at once.

That doesn't mean nothing has happened, though. I said this has been one of our busiest sessions, and I mean it. Yesterday, I counted 23 pieces of legislation that we are either working on or closely monitoring. To put that into perspective, the first time I ever lobbied the Legislature, we only tracked one issue the entire time the Legislature met. Even though it's been a slow start, we're looking at a record year for legislation we're working on.

Let me give you a few highlights from the session so far.

Accomplishments

- **The Taxpayers' Protection Amendment is doing well.** SJR4 by Senator Jason Rapert would require a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of both chambers of the Legislature in order to raise taxes, but it only requires a simple majority to lower taxes or change tax breaks and exemptions. This is a good piece of legislation that is enjoying a lot of support

out at the Capitol, but it is not without opposition. If you haven't already, be sure to call your lawmakers, and ask them to support SJR4 when it comes up for a vote.

- **The reduction in the used car tax is passing.** Currently, any used car sold for more than \$2,500 is taxed by the State of Arkansas. SB274 by Senator Gilbert Baker raises that amount from \$2,500 to \$5,000, meaning that if you're able to get a used car for under \$5,000, you won't owe the State a dime in sales tax. SB274 has passed the Senate, and we're confident it can pass the House.
- **A back-to-school tax-free holiday may be coming.** HB1369 by Rep. Matthew Shepherd creates a back-to-school tax-free holiday the first Saturday and Sunday of every August. If this bill passes, Arkansans will be able to buy all kinds of back-to-school supplies every year, without paying any money in sales tax. The bill has passed the House, and is on its way to the Senate.

Defeats We're Working to Overcome

- **HB1053 failed in committee.** Early in the session, the House Public Health Committee voted down a bill that would have prevented Arkansans from being penalized for refusing to purchase government-approved health insurance under the new federal healthcare law. Rep. Meeks' bill, HB1053, would have been a good step toward ensuring the healthcare law doesn't hurt Arkansans who choose not to buy insurance they don't want or don't need, but it failed to get the votes necessary to make it out of committee.
- **Rep. Wardlaw successfully placed an unconstitutional amendment on SB113.** The same House Public Health Committee that voted down HB1053 stopped another good bill, SB113. SB113 would have opted Arkansas out of paying for abortions with taxpayer dollars under the new federal healthcare law. Rep. Wardlaw successfully added a "poison pill" amendment to bill that rendered SB113 unconstitutional, effectively killing it in committee.
- **HB1369 could be in trouble.** The back-to-school tax-free holiday bill has successfully passed the House, but it may be headed for a roadblock in the Senate. There's a rumor that Senators on the Senate Revenue and Tax Committee may have already decided to vote against the bill simply because some of the power brokers at the Capitol have decided Arkansans don't need any more tax breaks. Well, we disagree. **That's why we're encouraging you to call your Senator, and ask him or her to vigorously support HB1369, the bill to create an annual back-to-school tax-free holiday.**

These are just some of the highlights from the Capitol. Every day we go to the Legislature to meet with lawmakers, observe discussions in committees, lobby for good legislation, and oppose bad legislation. Needless to say, our team is very hard at work.

If you want to follow us around the Capitol each day, check out Family Council on Facebook and Twitter. We routinely post photos and updates, and keep all our followers in the loop about the latest news out at the Capitol.

Thank you for your tireless support, your kind words, and your prayers. Please let me know if there is ever anything I can do for you.

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URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2030>

Tax-Holiday Bill Headed to Senate Revenue & Tax

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 1, 2011 @ 10:01 am In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

HB1369, by Rep. Shepherd, creates a back-to-school sales-tax holiday. Many states—including nearly all of Arkansas' bordering states—have an annual tax holiday of some kind for back-to-school supplies. This bill would add Arkansas to that list.

The bill is predicted to go to the Senate Revenue & Tax Committee this week. There are a lot of rumors going around that some of the senators on that committee may have already decided to vote against the bill.

This is a good bill that will help alleviate some of the financial burden Arkansas families face every August, when they're kids go back to school. If your senator is on the Revenue & Tax Committee, please call and leave a message asking him or her to **support** HB1369. **You can leave a message by calling 501-682-2902.**

The following senators are on the Revenue & Tax Committee:



Senator Larry Teague

Phone 870-845-5303

Email Larry.Teague@senate.ar.gov ^[1]



Senator Michael Lamoureux

Phone 479-968-7300

Email Michael.Lamoureux@senate.ar.gov ^[2]



Senator Jerry Taylor
Phone 870-879-3233
Email Jerry.Taylor@senate.ar.gov ^[3]



Senator Paul Bookout
Phone 870-932-6662



Senator Linda Chesterfield
Phone 501-888-1859
Email Linda.Chesterfield@senate.ar.gov ^[4]



Senator Jake Files

Phone 479-650-6899

Email Jake.Files@Senate.ar.gov ^[5]



Senator Bill Sample

Phone 501-321-0040

Email Bill.Sample@senate.ar.gov ^[6]



Senator Eddie Joe Williams

Phone 501-286-9366

Email EddieJoe.Williams@senate.ar.gov ^[7]

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2050>

URLs in this post:

[1] Larry.Teague@senate.ar.gov: <mailto:Larry.Teague@senate.ar.gov>

- [2] Michael.Lamoureux@senate.ar.gov: **mailto:Michael.Lamoureux@senate.ar.gov**
- [3] Jerry.Taylor@senate.ar.gov: **mailto:Jerry.Taylor@senate.ar.gov**
- [4] Linda.Chesterfield@senate.ar.gov: **mailto:Linda.Chesterfield@senate.ar.gov**
- [5] Jake.Files@Senate.ar.gov: **mailto:Jake.Files@Senate.ar.gov**
- [6] Bill.Sample@senate.ar.gov: **mailto:Bill.Sample@senate.ar.gov**
- [7] EddieJoe.Williams@senate.ar.gov: **mailto:EddieJoe.Williams@senate.ar.gov**

The Legislature: A Week in Review

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 4, 2011 @ 3:17 pm In [Legislature](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

Even though this legislative session hasn't seen as much legislation filed so far as others I've lobbied, there is still a lot going on at the Capitol. Here's a quick look at some of the highlights from this past week.



Rep. Hubbard Suffered a Mild Heart Attack. Representative John Hubbard suffered what doctors believe to be a mild heart attack over last weekend. Thankfully, he is alright, and all reports indicate doctors expect him to make a full recovery.

Back-to-School Tax Holiday Voted Down. One of the tax-relief bills we supported was an annual sales-tax holiday for back-to-school supplies. Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Mississippi all have annual back-to-school tax holidays, and we had hoped Arkansas would follow in their footsteps. The bill was voted down by the Senate Revenue & Tax Committee, however. It is unclear whether the bill's sponsor, Rep. Shepherd, will try to run it a second time.



Conservative Caucus Meeting. A meeting for conservative lawmakers and activists was held Thursday to provide updates and information about current events at the Capitol. Meetings like this are a great way for those of us who spend a lot of time at the Legislature to keep up with which legislative plates other folks are spinning.

Sales Tax Cut on Used Cars Tabled. A bill to eliminate the state sales tax on used cars sold for less than \$5,000—a bill we support—was tabled by the House Revenue and Tax Committee. It is unclear whether the bill's sponsor, Sen. Gilbert Baker, will try to run the bill a second time.

New Lottery Amendment Gaining Momentum. HJR1005 by Rep. Ann Clemmer would require the Arkansas Lottery to allocate at least 35 percent of its gross revenue for college scholarships. Right now, the law doesn't require the Lottery to set aside *any* money, and as a result, the Lottery only allocates 21.5 percent—the lowest in the nation, according to a recent story by [KARK 4 News](#)^[1]. By contrast, Louisiana's lottery allocates 35 percent for education; took in \$100 million *less* than Arkansas' lottery last year; but still paid out nearly \$30 million more in education funding than Arkansas' lottery did for scholarships. Rep. Clemmer's amendment would change that. It would set the Lottery's priorities straight, and would help ensure that if Arkansas is going to be stuck with a lottery for the time being, it is at least a lottery that makes good on its promise to send as many kids to college as it can.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2072>

URLs in this post:

[1] KARK 4 News: http://arkansasmatters.com/fulltext/?nxd_id=400026

From the Legislature: Over 500 Filings in One Day

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 8, 2011 @ 10:57 am In [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Well, I've said for a few weeks now that [this legislative session has gotten off to a slower start than most](#) ^[1]. As of yesterday, however, it looks like things have officially kicked into high gear.

Yesterday was the deadline to file new bills and resolutions. According to blogger Jason Tolbert, [20% of the total legislation](#) ^[2] that's been filed this session was filed yesterday, with [over 500 new bills and resolutions](#) ^[3].

Now it's time for the "[sprint to the finish](#)" ^[1]" we've talked about before. There are bills at the Capitol related to pro-life issues, the healthcare debate, reining in the lottery, and more, and we plan to work on it all from now until the end of the session.

Check back for more updates on legislation as lawmakers begin tackling these new bills.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2090>

URLs in this post:

[1] this legislative session has gotten off to a slower start than most: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2030>

[2] 20% of the total legislation: <http://twitter.com/#!/TolbertReport/status/44924582548873216>

[3] over 500 new bills and resolutions: <http://tolbertreport.com/2011/03/07/post-files-bill-regard-criminal-background-checks-for-candidates/>

House Rules Stifling the Voice of the People

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 16, 2011 @ 11:26 am In [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)



If you call the Capitol Building to leave a message for representatives serving in the Arkansas House, you may be in for a surprise. There's a new rule at the Capitol: You can only leave a message for the representative from your district.

Now, that may not come as a surprise to some, but two years ago you could leave messages for multiple representatives at a time—or for any representative you wanted. That's changed now. And some may wonder why that's a big deal—after all, a representative from Pine Bluff wasn't elected by voters in Fayetteville. Well, there are five good reasons why it's important for Arkansans to be able to communicate with **any** representative in the Arkansas House of Representatives.

1. **Representatives govern more than just their home district.** This policy assumes that a legislator is really only responsible for his or her home district. But when a legislator votes on a bill, that bill doesn't just go on the books as a law for one particular district. It's codified into the State Code. It becomes law for the entire state. It affects every Arkansan. And as such, a representative has the responsibility to take into account how the bill will affect parts of the state other than his or her home district. That means he or she needs to be able to hear from people in other districts in other parts of the state. Otherwise, how can legislators know for sure how a bill they're about to vote on affects other Arkansans?
2. **Using legislative committees assumes that a representative is interested in more than just his or her home district.** If legislators are only responsible for their home districts, why do we divide them up into committees? We put twenty representatives on each House committee, and before a bill can be voted on by the entire House of Representatives, it must first get an affirmative vote from one of these committees. What if eighty percent of the voters in Arkansas support a bill? If they live in the eighty districts that are not represented on the committee that will hear that bill, those voters will not be allowed to call the committee members about the bill at the Capitol.

3. **Voters in a neighboring district probably share values similar to the voters of a legislator's home district.** Prudent legislators are interested in trends and opinions in districts that neighbor their own. Why? Because there's a good chance voters in Russellville have opinions similar to the voters in Clarksville. Public opinion doesn't stop at district borders. And if the voters in a representative's neighboring district are upset about a bill, there's a good chance that voters in the representative's home district will be equally upset. Why is that important? It tells representatives they aren't just hearing from a vocal minority back home. It tells them that opposition or support of a bill is widespread. It tells them that a lot of Arkansans have concerns, and that those concerns are worth heeding.
4. **This rule is inconsistent with the rules governing other forms of lobbying.** Currently, any Arkansan can address a legislative committee, regardless of whether or not their representative is on the committee. By this logic, Arkansans would only be allowed to address committees on which their representatives sit. That would be ridiculous! Any Arkansan can address any representative on any committee. It should be the same way for a phone call.
5. **This rule prevents citizens from lobbying effectively.** Paid lobbyists can lobby any representative they want. They don't have to jump through hoops with a switchboard operator at the Capitol Building. If they're in the Capitol Building, they can talk to any representative they want, send a memo in to any representative they want, and (if they have money) invite any representative they want to sit down with them for dinner. Arkansans who work regular day jobs don't have that luxury. They may not even be able to afford to take vacation time to drive down to Little Rock for the day to speak to a legislative committee. For some, the telephone is the only means they have of lobbying the elected officials who govern them, and the Arkansas House has decided to limit citizens' ability to do just that. Legislators don't just represent lobbyists. They represent voters. Every voter. And every voter should have the ability to call any representative in the Arkansas Capitol Building.

The bottom line is that the people making the rules for the House of Representatives have decided that they are not interested in hearing from the majority of Arkansans. They probably just don't want to deal with phone messages from hundreds of angry voters when they cast a bad vote. They'd rather stifle the voice of the people. The Speaker of the House of Representatives traditionally has a hand in making these rules. It's time he and the other representatives involved quit playing games with the People of Arkansas, and started letting the voters of our state communicate openly with the legislators who govern them. After all, what's next? Will they stop publishing contact info for the legislators altogether?

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2168>

House Public Health Votes Against Good Pro-Life Legislation

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 18, 2011 @ 11:16 am In [Abortion](#), [Legislation](#), [Legislature](#) | [3 Comments](#)

Yesterday, the Arkansas House Public Health Committee voted down a bill that would have prohibited abortion after the 20th week of pregnancy.

HB1887, also known as the “fetal pain” bill strongly supported by Arkansas Right to Life, by Rep. Mayberry would have prevented unborn children from being aborted after the 20th week of pregnancy, except to save the life of the mother or prevent irreparable physical harm.

By the 20th week, an unborn child can feel pain—and abortion is believed by many experts to be an excruciatingly painful process for the child. This bill would have prevented the unnecessary and cruel killing of these unborn children, but it was stopped by the House Public Health Committee.

The bill received 9 votes. If it had received just 2 more, it would have passed. Below is a breakdown of the vote. Please call those committee members who did not vote or voted against the bill, and ask them to support the remaining pro-life bills pending before their committee. **And don't forget you can talk to these committee members in person if you join us at the Capitol on Tuesday morning for an emergency Pro-Life Day at the Capitol.**

Present, But Did Not Vote



Tyler, Linda S. (D-45) Phone: 501-329-8644
Smith, Garry L. (D-7) Phone: 870-574-1792
Wagner, Charolette (D-77) Phone: 870-561-4600
Word, James L. (D-16) Phone: 870-543-6391

Voted Against the Bill



Leding, Greg (D-92) Phone: 479-422-8099
Perry, Mark (D-44) Phone: 501-982-4561
Lovell, Buddy (D-56) Phone: 870-358-4104

Voted For the Bill



Gaskill, Billy W. (D-78) Phone: 870-239-4383
Wardlaw, Jeff (D-8) Phone: 870-226-9501
Lampkin, Sheilla E. (D-10) Phone: 870-723-6449
Hyde, Barry (D-40) Phone: 501-371-0255
King, Bryan B. (R-91) Phone: 870-438-4565
Lea, Andrea (R-68) Phone: 479-967-4922
Malone, Stephanie (R-64) Phone: 479-452-4554
Mayberry, Andy (R-27) Phone: 501-888-3522
Woods, Jon (R-93) Phone: 479-200-3100

Not Present for the Vote



Allen, Fred (D-33) Phone: 501-225-4979
Hall, Clark (D-13) Phone: 870-829-3382
Pennartz, Tracy (D-65) Phone: 479-285-4800
Wilkins, Butch (D-74) Phone: 870-972-5503

This is why citizens need to come to the Capitol on Tuesday. Some representatives on the House Public Health Committee are willing to take a stand on pro-life issues, but if two or three more don't join them, the Arkansas Legislature won't pass a single pro-life bill this session.

Please come to the Capitol on Tuesday from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, and talk to the representatives on the committee about how important this legislation is to you. Ask them to support every pro-life bill left pending before their committee.

Update: Video of the Vote

Below is video taken by [Jason Tolbert](#) ^[1] of the vote on HB1887 and the discussion that followed.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2183>

URLs in this post:

[1] Jason Tolbert: <http://tolbertreport.com/2011/03/17/video-house-public-house-kills-yet-another-pro-life-bill/>

Reps. Gaskill, Wardlaw, Lampkin, and Hyde Shining Through

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 18, 2011 @ 4:16 pm In [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)



[We told you earlier about an important pro-life bill](#) ^[1], HB1887, that failed yesterday before the Arkansas House Public Health Committee, and [we've been encouraging you to come to the Capitol on Tuesday](#) ^[2] morning for Pro-Life Day at the Capitol in Little Rock. However, I want to pause to highlight four representatives on the House Public Health Committee who showed strong, pro-life resolve on yesterday's vote.

These four representatives are all Democrats. I point that out, because it is becoming increasingly difficult for an elected official to be both pro-life *and* a Democrat.

When I first began lobbying, it was not uncommon to find Democrats who were staunchly pro-life. These days, though, there's so much pressure from the Democratic Party at the national level that a lot of pro-life legislators are being forced to choose between their party and their morals. That's just wrong.

Yesterday, however, four representatives made the choice to support good pro-life legislation in spite of whatever objections party leaders might have had to their votes, and I'm very proud to highlight them here.

Representative Billy Gaskill

Rep. Gaskill might be one of the most vocally pro-life members of the House Public Health Committee. He's plainly said publicly and to members of my staff many times over the past couple of years, "Abortion is murder." Yesterday he kept that same sense of resolve, and voted in favor of HB1887.

Representative Jeff Wardlaw

Rep. Wardlaw gave a good vote on HB1887 yesterday. We've had some disagreements with Rep. Wardlaw in the past over pro-life issues, but yesterday he took a stand for unborn children and for every Arkansan who believes in upholding the sanctity of human life. Hats off to Rep. Wardlaw for doing that.

Representative Sheilla Lampkin

Rep. Lampkin has been upfront about the fact that she is pro-life. Yesterday she was moved to tears by the stirring testimony presented on HB1887. She gave the bill a good, affirmative vote when her name was called, and should be recognized for doing so.

Representative Barry Hyde

Rep. Hyde also took a solid stand yesterday. When some of his colleagues at the table voted against HB1887—or just didn't vote at all—he chose to cast a vote in favor of the bill. We're very proud of Rep. Hyde's willingness to support pro-life legislation.

I'm very grateful for every representative who supported HB1887 yesterday, but I wanted to highlight these four in particular, because when a lawmaker comes to Little Rock, he or she faces tremendous pressure from all kinds of interests and power brokers. No matter which party you're in, there's going to be someone at the Capitol telling you that you shouldn't support a pro-life bill for one reason or another. Yesterday, these four representatives shone through as examples that Democratic lawmakers don't have to choose between their party and their conscience.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2207>

URLs in this post:

[1] We told you earlier about an important pro-life bill: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2183>

[2] we've been encouraging you to come to the Capitol on Tuesday: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2154>

Health Committee Votes Down Bill to Let Woman Defend Unborn Child

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 25, 2011 @ 7:57 am In [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Tuesday afternoon, the Arkansas House Committee on Public Health voted down the Pregnant Woman's Protection Act, HB2159 by Rep. Stubblefield. The bill would have clarified that a woman has the right to defend her unborn child from a criminal assault. Similar legislation passed by an overwhelming majority in Oklahoma and Missouri not too long ago.

The bill failed by two votes—just as [Rep. Mayberry's fetal pain bill did last Thursday](#) ^[1]. Below is a breakdown of the vote.

Voted Against the Bill



[Pennartz, Tracy \(D-65\)](#) ^[2] Telephone: 479-285-4800

[Leding, Greg \(D-92\)](#) ^[3] Telephone: 479-422-8099

[Perry, Mark \(D-44\)](#) ^[4] Telephone: 501-982-4561

[Lovell, Buddy \(D-56\)](#) ^[5] Telephone: 870-358-4104

[Word, James L. \(D-16\)](#) ^[6] Telephone: 870-543-6391

Voted For the Bill



[Gaskill, Billy W. \(D-78\)](#) ^[7] Telephone: 870-239-4383

[Wardlaw, Jeff \(D-8\)](#) ^[8] Telephone: 870-226-9501

[Lampkin, Sheilla E. \(D-10\)](#) ^[9] Telephone: 870-723-6449

[Wagner, Charolette \(D-77\)](#) ^[10] Telephone: 870-561-4600

[King, Bryan B. \(R-91\)](#) ^[11] Telephone: 870-438-4565

[Lea, Andrea \(R-68\)](#) ^[12] Telephone: 479-967-4922

[Malone, Stephanie \(R-64\)](#) ^[13] Telephone: 479-452-4554

[Mayberry, Andy \(R-27\)](#) ^[14] Telephone: 501-888-3522

[Woods, Jon \(R-93\)](#) ^[15] Telephone: 479-200-3100

Did Not Vote



[Smith, Garry L. \(D-7\)](#) ^[16] Telephone: 870-574-1792

[Wilkins, Butch \(D-74\)](#) ^[17] Telephone: 870-972-5503

[Hall, Clark \(D-13\)](#) ^[18] Telephone: 870-829-3382

[Hyde, Barry \(D-40\)](#) ^[19] Telephone: 501-371-0255

[Allen, Fred \(D-33\)](#) ^[20] Telephone: 501-225-4979

[Tyler, Linda S. \(D-45\)](#) ^[21] Telephone: 501-329-8644

Opponents on the Committee

Reps. Leding, Perry, and Lovell voted against [Rep. Mayberry's bill](#) ^[1] last Thursday. They seem to be shaping up as some of the staunchest opponents of pro-life legislation on the Health Committee.

What Will They Pass?

I'm afraid this does not bode well for any pro-life legislation. HB2159 really had nothing to do with abortion. It was "pro-life" in the sense that it protected the life and welfare of a pregnant woman and her child. It just said that a pregnant woman can defend her unborn child from a criminal assault the same way she can a child that has already been born.

The absence of a law like this led to the imprisonment of a Michigan woman after she used lethal force against her boyfriend who punched her in the stomach, causing her to miscarry. The woman was sentenced to prison for manslaughter, and had to wait 2 years before her sentence was overturned on appeal. This bill would have ensured no Arkansas woman would ever face similar consequences for defending her unborn child.

The committee did finally pass one pro-life bill yesterday, but they soon voted down another. **One has to ask: If the representatives on the House Public Health Committee won't pass legislation as sensible as HB2159, what *will* they pass?**

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2222>

URLs in this post:

- [1] Rep. Mayberry's fetal pain bill did last Thursday: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2183>
- [2] Pennartz, Tracy (D-65): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/203/tracy-pennartz>
- [3] Leding, Greg (D-92): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/275/greg-leding>
- [4] Perry, Mark (D-44): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/242/mark-perry>
- [5] Lovell, Buddy (D-56): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/199/buddy-lovell>
- [6] Word, James L. (D-16): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/251/james-l-word>
- [7] Gaskill, Billy W. (D-78): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/191/billy-w-gaskill>
- [8] Wardlaw, Jeff (D-8): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/295/jeff-wardlaw>
- [9] Lampkin, Sheilla E. (D-10): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/274/sheilla-e-lampkin>
- [10] Wagner, Charolette (D-77): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/211/charolette-wagner>
- [11] King, Bryan B. (R-91): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/198/bryan-b-king>
- [12] Lea, Andrea (R-68): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/235/andrea-lea>
- [13] Malone, Stephanie (R-64): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/237/stephanie-malone>
- [14] Mayberry, Andy (R-27): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/280/andy-mayberry>
- [15] Woods, Jon (R-93): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/213/jon-woods>
- [16] Smith, Garry L. (D-7): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/246/garry-l-smith>
- [17] Wilkins, Butch (D-74): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/249/butch-wilkins>
- [18] Hall, Clark (D-13): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/193/clark-hall>
- [19] Hyde, Barry (D-40): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/197/barry-hyde>
- [20] Allen, Fred (D-33): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/179/fred-allen>
- [21] Tyler, Linda S. (D-45): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/248/linda-s-tyler>

House Public Health Finally Passes One Pro-Life Bill, Blocks Another

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 25, 2011 @ 8:00 am In [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

The House Public Health Committee yesterday voted to pass HB1855, a bill that requires abortion clinics to be licensed and regulated by the Arkansas Department of Health.

Currently, there are at least two clinics in Arkansas that perform abortions, but are not regulated as abortion clinics. For years, a northwest Arkansas doctor performed abortions, but to our knowledge his clinic was never inspected or regulated as an abortion clinic by the Department of Health. HB1855 closes that loophole in the law by requiring any clinic that does 10 or more abortions in a month to be licensed and regulated as an abortion clinic.

Please call your representative at (501) 682-6211, and leave a message asking him or her to vote for HB1855 when it comes before the Arkansas House of Representatives.

Also, the House Public Health Committee voted down a good pro-life bill that would have prohibited abortion at state-run hospitals and medical facilities, except to save the life of the mother. The Attorney General's office spoke against the bill, and the committee voted it down. **Every pro-life bill at the Arkansas Legislature is important and needs to be passed.** Please call the members of the House Public Health Committee today and this weekend, and ask them to vote for EVERY pro-life bill that comes before their committee. Their phone numbers are below.

[Tyler, Linda S. \(D-45\)](#) ^[1] Telephone: 501-329-8644

[Woods, Jon \(R-93\)](#) ^[2] Telephone: 479-200-3100

[Allen, Fred \(D-33\)](#) ^[3] Telephone: 501-225-4979

[Gaskill, Billy W. \(D-78\)](#) ^[4] Telephone: 870-239-4383

[Hall, Clark \(D-13\)](#) ^[5] Telephone: 870-829-3382

[Hyde, Barry \(D-40\)](#) ^[6] Telephone: 501-371-0255

[King, Bryan B. \(R-91\)](#) ^[7] Telephone: 870-438-4565

[Lampkin, Sheilla E. \(D-10\)](#) ^[8] Telephone: 870-723-6449

[Lea, Andrea \(R-68\)](#) ^[9] Telephone: 479-967-4922

[Leding, Greg \(D-92\)](#) ^[10] Telephone: 479-422-8099

[Lovell, Buddy \(D-56\)](#) ^[11] Telephone: 870-358-4104

[Malone, Stephanie \(R-64\)](#) ^[12] Telephone: 479-452-4554

[Mayberry, Andy \(R-27\)](#) ^[13] Telephone: 501-888-3522

[Pennartz, Tracy \(D-65\)](#) ^[14] Telephone: 479-285-4800

[Perry, Mark \(D-44\)](#) ^[15] Telephone: 501-982-4561

[Smith, Garry L. \(D-7\)](#) ^[16] Telephone: 870-574-1792

[Wagner, Charolette \(D-77\)](#) ^[17] Telephone: 870-561-4600

[Wardlaw, Jeff \(D-8\)](#) ^[18] Telephone: 870-226-9501

[Wilkins, Butch \(D-74\)](#) ^[19] Telephone: 870-972-5503

[Word, James L. \(D-16\)](#) ^[20] Telephone: 870-543-6391

There are now eight pro-life bills pending before the House Public Health Committee. Every one of them needs to be passed and signed into law before the session ends. Please call the House Public Health Committee, and ask them to pass every pro-life bill before their committee.

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URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2253>

URLs in this post:

- [1] Tyler, Linda S. (D-45): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/248/linda-s-tyler>
- [2] Woods, Jon (R-93): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/213/jon-woods>
- [3] Allen, Fred (D-33): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/179/fred-allen>
- [4] Gaskill, Billy W. (D-78): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/191/billy-w-gaskill>
- [5] Hall, Clark (D-13): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/193/clark-hall>
- [6] Hyde, Barry (D-40): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/197/barry-hyde>
- [7] King, Bryan B. (R-91): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/198/bryan-b-king>
- [8] Lampkin, Sheilla E. (D-10): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/274/sheilla-e-lampkin>
- [9] Lea, Andrea (R-68): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/235/andrea-lea>
- [10] Leding, Greg (D-92): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/275/greg-leding>
- [11] Lovell, Buddy (D-56): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/199/buddy-lovell>
- [12] Malone, Stephanie (R-64): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/237/stephanie-malone>
- [13] Mayberry, Andy (R-27): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/280/andy-mayberry>
- [14] Pennartz, Tracy (D-65): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/203/tracy-pennartz>
- [15] Perry, Mark (D-44): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/242/mark-perry>
- [16] Smith, Garry L. (D-7): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/246/garry-l-smith>
- [17] Wagner, Charolette (D-77): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/211/charolette-wagner>
- [18] Wardlaw, Jeff (D-8): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/295/jeff-wardlaw>
- [19] Wilkins, Butch (D-74): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/249/butch-wilkins>
- [20] Word, James L. (D-16): <http://www.arkansashouse.org/member/251/james-l-word>

Abortion Opt-Out Legislation Filed

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 28, 2011 @ 12:42 pm In [Abortion](#), [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Rep. Collins-Smith has filed a bill to opt Arkansas out of funding abortion under the recently-passed federal healthcare law.

HB1872 accomplishes what SB113—which was filed earlier this session—would have: It ensures Arkansas won't be using any tax money to pay for abortion.

We've been saying for some time now that the House Public Health Committee needs to hear from you about pro-life legislation. This bill is so important, however, that we're simply asking everyone to go ahead and call their representatives.

Call your state representative at (501) 682-6211, and ask him or her to support HB1872.

It's important that every member of the Arkansas House know there's tremendous support for pro-life legislation. Please call your representative at the Capitol in Little Rock today.

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Rights of Conscience Bill Voted Down By Public Health Committee

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 29, 2011 @ 12:32 pm In [Abortion](#), [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

The House Public Health Committee today refused to pass yet another pro-life bill. HB1983 by Rep. David Meeks would have provided stronger, more modern protections for doctors and healthcare workers who refuse to perform abortions, embryonic stem cell research, and a variety of other medical procedures that may violate their conscience.

The bill failed to get the eleven votes it needed to get out of committee. Below is a breakdown of the vote.

Voted Against HB1983



1. Rep. Lovell
2. Rep. Pennartz
3. Rep. Wilkins
4. Rep. Leding

Voted For HB1983



1. Rep. Gaskill
2. Rep. King
3. Rep. Lea
4. Rep. Smith
5. Rep. Malone
6. Rep. Wardlaw
7. Rep. Mayberry
8. Rep. Woods

Did Not Vote



1. Rep. Tyler
2. Rep. Lampkin
3. Rep. Perry
4. Rep. Allen
5. Rep. Word
6. Rep. Wagner
7. Rep. Hall
8. Rep. Hyde

Please [email](#) ^[1] or call the members of the committee at (501) 682-6211, and ask them not to vote down another pro-life bill. Ask them to pass every pro-life bill that comes before their committee from now until the end of the session.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2281>

URLs in this post:

[1] email: <http://tinyurl.com/4p79c7c>

Bill Prohibiting Lottery Ticket Vending Machines Needs Your Support

Posted By Jerry On March 29, 2011 @ 3:52 pm In Arkansas Lottery, Legislature | [No Comments](#)

SB867 by Senator Madison would prohibit lottery ticket vending machines in Arkansas. It has already passed the Arkansas Senate, and is on its way to the House Rules Committee. The committee could vote on it as early as tomorrow. If it passes, it will go to the entire House of Representatives for a vote.

This is a good bill, and it needs a lot of support from Arkansans. Please call your representative, and ask him or her to support SB867 if and when it comes up for a vote. You can leave a message for your representative at the Capitol by calling (501) 682-6211.

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URL to article: **<http://familycouncil.org/?p=2295>**

Two of Our Bills Are Now Law!

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 30, 2011 @ 9:48 am In [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Two bills backed by Family Council have now become law.

HB1369 by Rep. Shepherd, creating a back-to-school tax-free holiday, was signed into law yesterday by Governor Beebe.

SB274 by Senator Gilbert Baker, exempting any used car sold for less than \$4,000 from state sales tax, was also signed by the Governor.

We've pushed for both of these bills for some time now. Alleviating the used car tax was one, in particular, that we have lobbied for unsuccessfully in the past. We were very glad to see it finally pass.

Both of these bills encountered opposition out at the Capitol, but we believe that both of them will help reduce some of the tax burden Arkansans face each year. Hats off to the Arkansas Legislature for passing these two great bills!

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URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2297>

Good Home School Bill Needs Support

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 30, 2011 @ 5:08 pm In [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Please contact your State Representative, and ask him or her to vote for [SB578](#) ^[1]. This good bill ensures that home schooled students will be able to compete for the Governor's Distinguished Scholar scholarship. Current law makes it almost impossible for home schooled students to receive this prestigious scholarship.

This bill is scheduled for a vote in the Arkansas House on Thursday afternoon. Please call and leave a message for your representative at (501) 682-6211.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2300>

URLs in this post:

[1] SB578: <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Bills/SB578.pdf>

Arkansas House Kills Good Home School Bill

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 31, 2011 @ 11:02 am In [Home School](#), [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Last night at 7:30 pm, the Arkansas House of Representatives killed a bill that would have allowed home school students to compete fairly for the Governor's Distinguished Scholar scholarships.

SB578 was a bill that both the Education Alliance and the Department of Higher Education agreed upon. It was a non-controversial solution to a major problem: Overwhelmingly-qualified home schoolers being denied their scholarships.

Last year we had two National Merit Scholars, with a score of 34 and 35 on the ACT, who were denied the scholarships. The reason? By law, the State only awards 300 scholarships, and if more than 300 students apply, the State looks at the student's class rank and school leadership qualifications. Home schoolers don't have a traditional "class rank". Home schoolers can be upstanding leaders, but not in the traditional sense at school (i.e. Class President, Student Council, etc.).

We didn't even believe the bill would be tremendously controversial. It fixes a very real flaw in the law, and the Department of Higher Education supported it. Representative Johnnie Roebuck (D-Arkadelphia) was the one who lead the effort to kill SB578 along with Rep. Randy Stewart (D-Kirby).

Rep. Roebuck indicated her opposition to other supporters of the bill. We offered to amend the bill to address some of her concerns. We were subsequently told by other representatives she still wanted to defeat the bill.

Last night, Rep. Roebuck fought SB578 on the floor of the House of Representatives. The bill was voted on, and it failed. Rep. Roebuck then moved "clincher" on the bill—a parliamentary dagger through the heart that prevents the bill from being brought back up for consideration.

I don't know why Rep. Roebuck doesn't want home schoolers to receive the Governor's Distinguished Scholar scholarship. No home schoolers received it last year. National Merit Scholars were denied. The Department of Higher Education estimates that with the growing number of students applying for the scholarship, home schoolers will likely never receive the Governor's Distinguished Scholar scholarship unless the law is changed.

There are still a couple of days left in the session, if you want to come down to the Capitol to meet with Rep. Roebuck and ask her why she took the position that she did on the bill. You can also contact her using the information below.



Rep. Johnnie Roebuck
870-246-8500
Johnnie.Roebuck@arkansashouse.org
johnnie-r@sbcglobal.net ^[1]

You can watch video of the debate on SB578 here: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2303> ^[2]

A list of lawmakers voting for and against the bill is available here: <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Pages/Votes.aspx?rcsnum=1627&votechamber=House> ^[3]

Every home schooled applicant was denied a scholarship last year. Every one will be denied this year. And unless the law changes, no home schooler is likely to receive a Governor's Distinguished Scholar scholarship ever again.

You can call your representative about this issue at (501) 682-6211.

We are still fighting for your home school rights. Below is a letter I sent to the representatives who did not vote for SB578.

Dear Representative,

Last night, your failure to support SB 578 was a serious vote against the home schoolers of Arkansas. This was an agreed-upon bill with the Department of Higher Education. The Department of Higher Education had worked with Sen. Baker for most of the session to fix problems with the Governor's Distinguished Scholar Scholarships. Your failure to support the bill last night has upended that process.

As you know, only 300 of the best and brightest students from public, private, and home schools can be Governor's Distinguished Scholars. That's all the current law allows. The law also specifies that ACT scores, class rank, GPA, and leadership are to be considered. Students receiving this scholarship pretty much get their entire college education paid for as long as they go to college in Arkansas.

Students must have a minimum of 32 on their ACT in order to compete for the scholarship. Last year, because of problems with existing law, the Department of Higher Education was unable to award any of these scholarships to the 16 home schooled students who would have otherwise qualified. All of these students made higher than 32 on their ACT, but were disqualified. Most had considerably higher scores than the students from public and private schools who received the scholarships. Two of the home schoolers had scores of 34 and 35 on the ACT and were National Merit Scholars, yet our current law prevented the Department of Higher Education from awarding the scholarship to even these students.

They were disqualified because the Department of Higher Education had to follow a law that is outmoded. The way our current law is written, it appears that no home schooler will ever receive the Governor's Distinguished Scholar Scholarship. SB 578 had the blessing of the Department of Higher Education because it fixed this problem. This is why it had no opposition from anyone in the education community. Your failure to support this bill has left us with serious problems that need to be fixed before the session ends.

Article printed from Family Council: <http://familycouncil.org>

URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2313>

URLs in this post:

[1] johnnie-r@sbcglobal.net: <mailto:johnnie-r@sbcglobal.net>

[2] <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2303>: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2303>

[3] <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Pages/Votes.aspx?rcsnum=1627&votechamber=House>: <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Pages/Votes.aspx?rcsnum=1627&votechamber=House>

Tim Tebow Bill Passes Senate Education Committee

Posted By [Jerry](#) On March 29, 2011 @ 8:46 am In [Home School](#), [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Yesterday there was some movement on the Tim Tebow bill that allows home school students to try out for extracurricular activities at their local public school.

The bill passed the Senate Education Committee yesterday, and is on its way to the entire Arkansas Senate for this week.

If you would like to contact your senator about this bill, you can leave a message for him or her at (501) 682-2902.

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URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2279>

Roll Call from Tim Tebow Vote

Posted By [Jerry](#) On April 1, 2011 @ 3:27 pm In [Home School](#), [Legislature](#) | [No Comments](#)

Below is the outcome of the vote on SB774, the "Tim Tebow" bill, from this morning. The bill failed yesterday, but was re-run this morning at 9:00 AM. It failed by one vote.

If passed, it would have allowed home schoolers to try out for extracurricular activities at their local public school.

Not Present



Rep. Toni Bradford

Rep. Kathy Webb

Rep. Bobby Pierce

Rep. Randy Stewart

Rep. Jerry Brown

Rep. Jody Dickinson

Rep. Tracy Steele

Rep. Tommy Wren

Rep. Johnnie Roebuck

Voted for the Bill



Rep. Donna Hutchinson

Rep. Duncan Baird

Rep. Tim Summers

Rep. Debra Hobbs

Rep. Les Carnine

Rep. Karen Hopper

Rep. Ann Clemmer

Rep. James McLean

Rep. Jane English

Rep. Eddie Cheatham

Voted Against the Bill



Rep. Robert Dale

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URL to article: <http://familycouncil.org/?p=2320>