

Alabama Legislative Report
February 4, 2022

ARPA Tax Relief

The Senate passed SB 152 Thursday, which would ensure that Alabamians are not required to pay state income taxes on expanded benefits under the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”). Such pandemic relief benefits include an increased child tax credit, increased dependent care credit, and increased/modified earned income credit. SB 152 is now pending in the House Ways and Means Education Committee.

Guns

On Wednesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed SB 1 by Senator Gerald Allen by a vote of 6-4. The legislation, which is opposed by law enforcement, would end the requirement to obtain a permit to carry a concealed handgun. The bill now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

Representative Shane Stringer and Senator Tim Melson have both filed similar legislation. The bills are expected to be modified to ensure private property owners maintain their right to limit or prohibit guns on their property.

Teacher Retirement

The House unanimously passed HB 134 Thursday, which would allow Alabama teachers in the Tier II retirement plan to collect benefits after 30 years of service instead of waiting until age 62. The bill would also increase the Tier II teacher contribution rate from 6.2% to 6.5% per pay period and the Tier II correctional officer, firefighter, and law enforcement contribution rate from 7.2% to 7.5% per pay period. HB 134 is now pending in the Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee.

Alabama Literacy Act

HB 220 was introduced Wednesday, which would delay for one year the Alabama Literacy Act provision requiring third-grade students to demonstrate reading proficiency before being promoted to fourth grade. Rep. Terri Collins, who was also the sponsor of the original 2019 legislation, introduced HB 220 due to inadequate testing data resultant from the pandemic. The bill appears to have strong support and is now pending in the House Education Policy Committee, which Collins also chairs.

Agriculture Land Ownership

Sen. Tim Melson indicated he is temporarily pausing his effort to pass legislation to prohibit foreign ownership of agriculture and forest land in Alabama. SB 14 would have restricted ownership to U.S. citizens and resident aliens, with limited exceptions. Melson has not abandoned the issue, but indicated his desire for more time to craft the bill in a way that does not hurt foreign companies investing in Alabama.

Mental Health

The House Judiciary Committee approved a bill Wednesday that would modify the process by which someone with a mental health issue could be involuntarily committed. HB 70 would establish a statutory definition for the phrase "real and present threat of substantial harm to self or

others" and would provide that the threat of substantial harm should be assessed in light of all relevant evidence and not just the individual's behavior. Further, the bill would authorize emergency custody of an individual based on a perceived real and present threat and establish processes for commitment order modifications and assessments. HB 70 can now be considered by the full House.

School Choice

The Senate Education Policy Committee approved a bill Wednesday that would allow state funding to follow students to the public or private schools of their choice. SB 140 would direct Education Trust Fund dollars to education savings accounts that parents could use to send their children to another school. The bill was amended to require that non-public school students take the same annual assessments that public schools students take. The bill will likely be substantially modified before it is brought to the full senate for consideration.

Math Education

Sen. Arthur Orr introduced a bill Wednesday designed to improve math education in public schools. SB 171 would create an Elementary Mathematics Task Force, a Postsecondary Mathematics Task Force and an Office of Mathematics Improvement within the State Department of Education, establish an Alabama Summer Mathematics Achievement Program, and require state intervention for low-performing schools. Currently, the legislation does not include a holdback component like the 2019 Alabama Literacy Act. SB 171 would also prohibit implementation of Common Core State Standards. The bill is pending in the Senate Education Policy Committee.

Artificial Intelligence in Law Enforcement

The Senate unanimously passed a bill Tuesday that would limit how state or local law enforcement can use artificial intelligence and facial recognition. SB 56 would prohibit the use of such technology as the sole basis for making an arrest or for establishing probable cause in a criminal investigation. It would also prevent law enforcement from using AI or facial recognition to engage in ongoing surveillance except for in certain circumstances. The bill is now pending in the House Judiciary Committee.

HB 0241 | Terri Collins

[Workforce Development, Alabama Credential Quality and Transparency Act and the Alabama Workforce Council Committee on Credential Quality and Transparency, would establish the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics \(ATLAS\) on Career Pathways Act, and would establish the Alabama College and Career Readiness Act estab, public database on educational and occupational credentials and competencies created, workforce database for students, job seekers, and employers re credentials and competencies created](#)

Feb 02, 2022 - Read for the first time and referred to the House of Representatives committee on Education Policy

House Committee: Education Policy

Senate Committee:

HB 0207 | Kyle South

[Airports, Alabama Airport Economic and Infrastructure Program, established](#)

Feb 02, 2022 - Read for the first time and referred to the House of Representatives committee on Ways and Means General Fund

House Committee: Ways and Means General Fund

Senate Committee:

SB 0083 | Tim Melson

[Airports, Alabama Airport Economic and Infrastructure Program, established](#)

Feb 02, 2022 - Pending third reading on day 6 Favorable from Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development

House Committee:

Senate Committee: Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development

HB 0082 | Danny Garrett

[Small Business Relief and Revitalization Act of 2022, cancellation of indebtedness income exempt from income tax, financial institution excise tax and corporate income tax due date extension, certain business tangible personal property ad valorem tax exemption, deposit of certified funds with Revenue in lieu of one-time surety bond for licensure, average monthly sales tax liability for estimated payments increased, Secs. 40-16-3.1, 40-18-39.1 added; Secs. 40-9-1, 40-23-6, 40-23-6.1, 40-23-7 am'd.](#)

Feb 03, 2022 - Read for the first time and referred to the Senate committee on Finance and Taxation Education

House Committee:

Senate Committee: Finance and Taxation Education

SB 0057 | Arthur Orr

[Taxation, tax credit, authorized for the cost of acquisition and construction of a qualified storm shelter](#)

Jan 11, 2022 - Read for the first time and referred to the Senate committee on Finance and Taxation Education

House Committee:

Senate Committee: Finance and Taxation Education