



# NEWSLETTER FROM REP. David Whitaker DISTRICT 22

March 5, 2019

## DAILY SUMMARY FOR MARCH 4, 2019



On Monday, the House passed two pieces of legislation addressing highway funding.

In a vote of 71-26, the House passed SB336. This bill outlines \$95 million in additional funding in three ways.

First, it diverts all revenue from casino gaming that exceeds \$31.2 million to the State Highway and Transportation Department Fund.

Second, it includes a wholesale tax on fuel raising gas prices by 3 cents a gallon and diesel by 6 cents a gallon.

And third, it imposes a \$100 registration fee on hybrid vehicles and a \$200 registration fee on electric vehicles.

The second piece of legislation addressing highways before the House was HJR8.

This is a proposed constitutional amendment which would permanently extend a ½ cent sales tax for the purpose of funding state highways. The current ½ sales tax funding highway improvements are set to expire in 2023. If this resolution passes both chambers, it would be on the ballot for voter approval in November 2020. The resolution passed the House with a vote of 67-30.

The House also passed legislation designed to study infant deaths and pregnancy-associated deaths in Arkansas.

Arkansas ranks 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation in maternal mortality. HB1440 would establish the maternal mortality review committee which would identify factors contributing to maternal deaths and review medical records.

The House also passed HB1441 which directs the Department of Health to establish the Maternal and Perinatal Outcomes Quality Review Committee. The committee will review data on births and develop strategies for improving birth outcomes.

Arkansas ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation for infant mortality.

The House passed HB1522 which ensures that soldiers and airmen of the Arkansas National Guard are afforded the same benefits and protections as active duty soldiers when they are called on state active duty.

The House passed HB1407. This bill requires truth in labeling of agricultural products that are edible. The bill states the seller cannot sell the product under the name of another food.

The House passed HB1263. This bill allows pharmacists to prescribe certain types of tobacco cessation products.

The House also passed HB1278. This bill allows pharmacists to administer childhood vaccines to children age 7 and older under a written protocol by a physician.

The House will convene on Tuesday at 1:30 pm.