

Arkansas Family Coalition

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Ps. 108:13 Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemy.
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Dear AFC Friend,

We have some interesting news regarding what took place during the just concluded session of the Arkansas Legislature. We hope you will find this information worthwhile. Note the comparison between Arkansas and the other states where there was some good news. You will find this difference at the end of the main article.

Arkansas Conservative Legislation in 2011 Blocked Again and Again in Committees By Democrats

To conservatives' surprise, since they elected an unbelievable number of conservative legislators in Arkansas, their legislation received worse treatment in the Legislature this year than before. The most important bills put forth by conservatives were blocked in committee and not even allowed to get to the floor for a vote time after time.

Almost all committees have more Democrats than Republicans so the Democrats could block almost any bill if they stuck together, and they did time after time. Following are some examples. (There are 8 Senators on each Senate committee and 20 Representatives on each House Committee so it takes 5 votes to pass a bill out of the Senate Committee and 11 votes to pass a bill out of a House Committee. There are about 45% Republicans in the Arkansas legislature now.)

List of some important bills and action taken in the legislature

HB1053 – Introduced by Republican Representative David Meeks from Conway to ban any law requiring Arkansans to buy health insurance was designed as a vote against Obama Health Care. It was voted down in The House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee Committee and never allowed to go to the House floor. Thirteen Democrats on the Committee voted against it and all 5 Republicans and two Democrats voted for it. Attorney General McDaniel's office testified against the bill as well. This vote was an early vote about January 10, a foreshadowing of many more votes to come in these Committees.

HB1292 – The Bill To Prohibit Illegal Aliens From Receiving Any State Benefit Except in Instances of Emergency by Rep. Jon Hubbard. **This bill had 35 Co-Sponsors. Blocked in Committee by Democrats. All Republicans voted for the bill.**

SB709 – A bill by Rep Missy Irwin (R) that would require the state to report the cost of implementing The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (**aka ObamaCare**) and the costs to sustain the provisions. **Blocked in Committee by Democrats** - 4 Republicans supported and 4 Democrats opposed.

HB1008 – This bill to **DENY** illegal aliens in-state tuition rates by Rep. Justin Harris was **Blocked in Committee by Democrats**. Five Republicans supported it; nine Democrats opposed so it failed to pass out of the committee. In three other sessions a bill had been introduced (and almost passed one session) to let illegal aliens attend college in Arkansas without paying out-of-state tuition.

HB1002 – To exempt from state income tax certain capital gains that would have been the biggest cut presented in the legislature, \$44 million by Representative Ed Garner (R), finally passed the House Committee and full House. **Blocked by Senate Committee**. The 4 Republicans on the Committee voted for it; none of the four Democrats (Paul Bookout, Linda Chesterfield, Jerry Taylor and Larry Teague) voted for it. Governor Beebe opposed the bill.

SB981 and SB942 – Two redistricting plans (required because of 2010 Census data) by Senator Johnny Key (R) and Bill Pritchard (R). **Blocked by Democrats in Senate Committee.**

HB1885 – A redistricting plan by Representative Andrea Lea (R) **Blocked by Democrats in House Committee.**

SB972 and HB1836 - Two identical redistricting plans by a Democratic Senator Sue Madison (SB972) and Democratic Representative Clark Hall (HB1836) that could very aptly be called gerrymandering, after much

fighting and amending, made it through Committees and through the House and the Senate. Even a Democrat senator, Senator Jerry Taylor, is quoted as describing these bills this way, "We are trying to draw a map to help one party beat another party. Why in the world would you justify splitting [Jefferson and Sebastian counties] unless you are looking for partisan advantage? I hope that you all see the fallacy [of the bill]. I just wonder, has common sense left the building. Has common sense just walked out?"

HB1887 – by Rep Andy Mayberry to ban abortion beyond the time fetuses are thought to feel pain – 20 weeks of gestation except if the mother's life is in danger. **Blocked by Democrats in Committee.**

HB1983 – **Strengthens** Arkansas' current rights of conscience laws for doctors and health care providers who do not want to perform abortions or provide contraceptive services. This bill expands that provision to include other medical procedures that may violate a doctor's, hospital's, or insurer's conscience, such as abortion, artificial insemination, euthanasia, and similar procedures. Blocked in House Committee by Democrats.

SB845 - A bill by Sen. Jason Rapert, R-Bigelow, would classify clinics that perform surgical abortions as “ambulatory surgical centers,” which means they would have to meet stricter requirements. Passed Senate Committee & Senate but **Blocked by Democrats in House Committee.**

SB840 – A bill by Sen. Missy Irvin-R Mountain View that puts additional restrictions on doctors prescribing medication that induces abortion. Passed the Senate Committee and the Senate but **Blocked by Democrats in House Committee.**

SB843 - A bill by Senator Jason Rapert to require someone performing an abortion to check whether the fetus has a heartbeat. This would give a woman more information to consider when making her choice. Passed Senate Committee and the Senate but **Blocked by Democrats in House Committee.**

HB2159 – A bill by Representative Stubblefield (R) which **allows** a pregnant woman to use force to defend her unborn child from a criminal assault. Currently, Arkansas law does not specify that a woman can defend her unborn child the same way she could any other child. In 1999, a Michigan woman was found guilty of manslaughter after she used lethal force against a man who punched her in the stomach, causing her to lose her quadruplets she was carrying. **Blocked in House Committee by Democrats**

An abortion bill by a Democrat did pass, however. This bill, HB1855, would require any abortion provider who performs more than 10 abortions a month to be licensed by the state. It is not a far stretch to see partisanship when the only abortion bill passed this session was by a Democrat. 88 to 0 in the House and Senate 21 to 3.

SB774 - To allow home schoolers to try out for extracurricular activities at their local public school. Passed through the Senate with 30 – 5 vote. **Blocked in House Committee by Democrats.** However, one Republican voted against this bill, Representative Robert Dale. If just one of the Democrats had voted for it, it would have passed through the House Committee.

SB867 – This bill by Senator Sue Madison (D) bans lottery vending machines like the ones recently rolled out by the Arkansas Lottery Commission. Passed the Senate but **Blocked in House Committee by Democrats** (Sent to Interim Study).

The Good News: According to the Washington Post; "As state legislatures adjourn over the coming weeks, new Republican majorities backed by GOP governors are leaving their mark in a wave of legislation that reaches far beyond the economic issues that dominated the midterm elections last fall. . . Legislators have proposed 374 anti-abortion bills this year, up from 174 last year. More than 750 bills on collective bargaining have been introduced this year, with more than 500 aimed at public-sector unions, a significant increase over past years, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

“South Dakota passed the most-restrictive abortion bill in the country; Wisconsin and Ohio moved to limit collective-bargaining rights of public workers; and Kansas, Texas, South Carolina and Montana are on the brink of passing measures to impose strict photo-ID requirements at the polls.

“These measures are among the thousands of bills proposed as newly empowered GOP statehouses take advantage of their first opportunity in decades to have such a broad impact on policy.”