## Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law. Act 523 of the Regular Session

1	State of Arkansas	A D'11				
2	93rd General Assembly	A Bill				
3	Regular Session, 2021		SENATE BILL 525			
4						
5	By: Senators B. Sample, Cal	dwell, J. Dismang				
6						
7		For An Act To Be Entitled				
8	AN ACT TO	AMEND THE ARKANSAS CORPORATE FRANCHISE	TAX			
9	ACT OF 19	ACT OF 1979; TO REVERSE CHANGES MADE UNDER ACT 819 OF				
10	2019 AND	RETURN THE ADMINISTRATION AND COLLECTION	N OF			
11	THE FRANC	CHISE TAX TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE; TO				
12	DECLARE A	AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.				
13						
14						
15		Subtitle				
16	TO I	REVERSE CHANGES MADE UNDER ACT 819 OF				
17	2019	9 AND RETURN THE ADMINISTRATION AND				
18	COLI	LECTION OF THE FRANCHISE TAX TO THE				
19	SECI	RETARY OF STATE; AND TO DECLARE AN				
20	EMEI	RGENCY.				
21						
22						
23	BE IT ENACTED BY THE	GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANS.	AS:			
24						
25	SECTION 1. DO N	NOT CODIFY. <u>Legislative findings and int</u>	ent.			
26	(a) The Genera	al Assembly finds that:				
27	<u>(1) Acts</u>	s 2019, No. 819 will transfer responsibi	<u>lity for</u>			
28	franchise tax collect	cion and administration from the Secreta	ry of State to			
29	the Department of Fin	nance and Administration on May 1, 2021;				
30	<u>(2) In a</u>	an effort to achieve a more seamless tra	nsition, the			
31	department began coll	ecting and administering the franchise	tax on January 1,			
32	2021, under a Memoran	ndum of Understanding with the Secretary	of State;			
33	<u>(3) The</u>	transfer of franchise tax collection and	<u>d</u> administration			
34	has negatively impact	ted Arkansas taxpayers as they seek to c	omply with their			
35	franchise tax obligat	ions; and				
36	(4) Unle	ess franchise tax collection and adminis	tration			

- responsibilities are immediately transferred from department back to the 1 2 Secretary of State, Arkansas taxpayers will face significant difficulties as 3 they seek to comply with Arkansas franchise tax laws. 4 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly: 5 (1) To reverse the effects of certain provisions in Acts 2019, 6 No. 819 by transferring the administration and collection of the franchise 7 tax from the department back to the Secretary of State; 8 (2) That the Secretary of State should continue to administer 9 the collection of franchise tax; and 10 (3) To accomplish this transfer in a manner that results in 11 minimal impact to Arkansas taxpayers. 12 13 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code  $\{4-25-109(c)(1)(D), as amended by Acts 2019,$ 14 No. 819, § 3, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the filing 15 requirements for a corporation changing its state of incorporation, is 16 amended to read as follows: 17 (D)(i) A franchise tax contact sheet provided by the 18 Department of Finance and Administration Secretary of State-19 (ii) The Secretary of State shall send a copy of the 20 franchise tax contact sheet required to be filed under this subdivision 21 (c)(1)(D) to the department; and 22 23 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 4-27-120(i), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 24 819, § 4, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning certain filing 25 requirements under the Arkansas Business Corporation Act of 1987, is amended 26 to read as follows: 27 The document must be delivered to the office of the Secretary of 28 State for filing and must be accompanied by one (1) exact or conformed copy, 29 the correct filing fee, and proof of payment of any franchise tax, license 30 fee, or penalty required by this chapter or other law. 31 32 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 4-27-121(a), as amended by Acts 2019, No.
- prescribed and furnished under the Arkansas Business Corporation Act of 1987, is amended to read as follows:

819, § 5, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the forms

33

36 (a) The Secretary of State may prescribe and furnish on request forms

- 1 for: (1) an application for a certificate of existence, (2) a foreign
- 2 corporation's application for a certificate of authority to transact business
- 3 in this state,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  a foreign corporation's application for a certificate
- 4 of withdrawal, and (4) the annual franchise tax report. If the Secretary of
- 5 State so requires, use of these forms is mandatory.

- 7 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 4-27-128(b)(4), as amended by Acts 2019,
- 8 No. 819, § 6, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the contents
- 9 of certificates of existence under the Arkansas Business Corporation Act of
- 10 1987, is amended to read as follows:
- 11 (4) that its most recent annual franchise tax report required by
- 12 § 4-27-1622 has been delivered to the <del>Department of Finance and</del>
- 13 Administration Secretary of State;

14

- SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 4-27-1420(2), as amended by Acts 2019, No.
- 16 819, § 7, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the grounds on
- 17 which the Department of Finance and Administration may administratively
- 18 dissolve a corporation, is amended to read as follows:
- 19 (2) the corporation does not deliver its annual franchise tax
- 20 report to the Department of Finance and Administration Secretary of State
- 21 within sixty (60) days after it is due;

22

- 23 SECTION 7. Arkansas Code § 4-27-1530(1), as amended by Acts 2019, No.
- 24 819, § 8, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the grounds on
- 25 which the Department of Finance and Administration may begin a proceeding to
- 26 revoke a foreign corporation's certificate of authority, is amended to read
- 27 as follows:
- 28 (1) the foreign corporation does not deliver its annual
- 29 franchise tax report to the Department of Finance and Administration
- 30 <u>Secretary of State</u> within sixty (60) days after it is due;

- 32 SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 4-27-1601(e)(7), as amended by Acts 2019,
- 33 No. 819, § 9, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the records
- 34 a corporation is required to maintain under the Arkansas Business Corporation
- 35 Act of 1987, is amended to read as follows:
- 36 (7) its most recent annual franchise tax report delivered to the

1 Department of Finance and Administration Secretary of State under § 4-27-2 1622. 3 4 SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 4-27-1622(a), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 5 819, § 10, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the annual 6 franchise tax report under the Arkansas Business Corporation Act of 1987, is 7 amended to read as follows: 8 (a) Each domestic corporation, and each foreign corporation authorized 9 to transact business in this state, shall deliver to the Department of 10 Finance and Administration Secretary of State for filing an annual franchise 11 tax report that sets forth: 12 (1) the name of the corporation; 13 the jurisdiction under which the corporation is 14 incorporated; the information required by § 4-20-105(a); 15 16 (4) the address of its principal office, wherever it is located; 17 the names of its principal officers; (5) 18 (6) the total number of authorized shares, itemized by class and 19 series, if any, within each class; 20 (7) the total number of issued and outstanding shares, itemized 21 by class and series, if any, within each class; and 22 (8) such other information as the Secretary of the Department of 23 Finance and Administration Secretary of State may specify in a form promulgated under the Arkansas Corporate Franchise Tax Act of 1979, § 26-54-24 25  $\frac{101 \text{ et seq}}{4-27-121(a)}$ . 26 SECTION 10. Arkansas Code § 4-33-120(i), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 27 819, § 11, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning certain filing 28 29 requirements under the Arkansas Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1993, is amended 30 to read as follows:

35 36

31

32

3334

filing fee, and proof of payment of any franchise tax, license fee, or

penalty required by this chapter or other law.

State for filing and must be accompanied by one (1) exact or conformed copy (except as provided in §§ 4-33-503 [repealed] and 4-33-1509), the correct

The document must be delivered to the office of the Secretary of

1 SECTION 11. Arkansas Code § 17-19-202(c)(2), as amended by Acts 2019, 2 No. 819, § 12, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the proof 3 required to accompany licensing applications for bail bond companies, is 4 amended to read as follows: 5 (2) A corporation shall file proof that its most recent annual 6 franchise tax has been paid to the Department of Finance and Administration 7 Secretary of State. 8 SECTION 12. Arkansas Code § 23-48-1009(1), as amended by Acts 2019, 9 10 No. 819, § 13, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the Bank 11 Commissioner's grounds for revoking the certificate of authority of a 12 registered out-of-state bank, is amended to read as follows: (1) The out-of-state bank does not deliver its annual franchise 13 14 tax report to the Department of Finance and Administration Secretary of State 15 within sixty (60) days after it is due; 16 17 SECTION 13. Arkansas Code § 25-16-708(a), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 18 819, § 14, effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the appointment of 19 a special counsel by the Attorney General to collect moneys due to the state, 20 is amended to read as follows: 21 (a) When there is past due and unpaid any special license fee, 22 franchise tax, privilege tax, or other moneys due the state by individuals, 23 officers, companies, firms, or corporations, and when in his or her judgment 24 it would be in the best interest of the state to do so, the Attorney General 25 may appoint special counsel to take any steps necessary for the collection of 26 all those sums that are due and unpaid. 27 SECTION 14. Arkansas Code § 26-18-303(b)(14), as amended by Acts 2019, 28 29 No. 819, § 15, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning exemptions from the prohibition on disclosing certain confidential records under the 30 31 Arkansas Tax Procedure Act, is amended to read as follows: 32 (14)(A) Disclosure of the following information concerning 33 corporate franchise tax: 34 (i) The name and address of a corporation; 35 (ii) The name of a corporation's president, vice

president, secretary, treasurer, and controller;

T	(iii) The total authorized capital stock with par
2	value;
3	(iv) The total issued and outstanding capital stock
4	with par value;
5	(v) The state of incorporation; and
6	(vi) Information necessary to report to the
7	Secretary of State, the Bank Commissioner, the Professional Bail Bond Company
8	and Professional Bail Bondsman Licensing Board, the Insurance Commissioner,
9	or any other state agency or official authorized to take action against a
10	corporation for failure to take any action required under the Arkansas
11	Corporate Franchise Tax Act of 1979, § 26-54-101 et seq., including without
12	limitation information concerning whether a corporation has filed a franchise
13	tax report, whether a corporation has paid franchise tax due, and the name
14	and address of the registered agent or principal office of the corporation
15	Information necessary to identify corporations that paid franchise tax to the
16	Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration in lieu of payment
17	to the Secretary of State for franchise tax reporting year 2021 under Acts
18	2019, No. 819.
19	(B) In the case of a franchise tax report filed by an
20	organization formed under the Small Business Entity Tax Pass Through Act, §
21	4-32-101 et seq., the confidentiality provision of subsection (a) of this
22	section shall apply to the names of members of the organization, except those
23	designated in the organization's franchise tax report as a manager,
24	president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, or controller of the
25	organization, unless the organization has+
26	$\frac{\text{(i)}}{\text{No}}$ no registered agent for service of process, in
27	which case the confidentiality provisions of subsection (a) of this section
28	shall not apply; <del>or</del>
29	(ii) Failed to take an action required under the Arkansas
30	Corporate Franchise Tax Act of 1979, § 26-54-101 et seq., in which case the
31	disclosures identified in subdivision (b)(14)(A) of this section are allowed;
32	
33	SECTION 15. Arkansas Code § 26-54-105(a)-(c), as amended by Acts 2019,
34	No. 819, § 20, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning franchise
35	tax reports under the Arkansas Corporate Franchise Tax Act of 1979, are
36	amended to read as follows:

- 1 (a)(1) The Department of Finance and Administration Secretary of State
  2 shall furnish report forms to each corporation subject to this chapter by
  3 mailing them to the corporation's current agent for service or other person
  4 identified by the corporation.
- 5 (2) When filing the franchise tax report, a corporation may 6 state who is to receive a franchise tax form the following year if that 7 person is different from the agent for service on file for the corporation at 8 that time.
- 9 (b) A corporation that fails to receive the report forms by March 20 of the reporting year shall make written request for them to the department 11 Secretary of State on or before March 31.
- 12 (c)(1) Each corporation subject to the requirements of this chapter
  13 shall file a franchise tax report with the department Secretary of State that
  14 shows the condition and status of the corporation as of the close of business
  15 on the last day of the corporation's preceding fiscal year and other
  16 information required by the department Secretary of State.
- 17 (2)(A) The franchise tax as computed on the report shall be
  18 remitted with the franchise tax report <del>and submitted to the department with</del>
  19 the corporation's income tax return.
  - (B) For a corporation that is not required to submit an income tax return, the <u>The</u> franchise tax as computed on the report shall be remitted with the franchise tax report on or before May 1 of the reporting year for franchise tax due.

SECTION 16. Arkansas Code § 26-54-107, as amended by Acts 2019, No. 819, § 21, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, is amended to read as follows:

26-54-107. Computation of tax - Penalty - Relief.

20

21

22

23

24

28

29

30

31

32

- (a) The Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration

  Using from the information reported on the franchise tax report under § 26
  54-105 and from any other information received by him or her bearing upon the subject, the Secretary of State shall compute the amount of tax of each corporation at the rate or rates provided by this chapter.
- 34 (b)(1)(A) If the taxpayer fails to comply with the filing and
  35 remittance requirements under § 26-54-105(c), the secretary Secretary of
  36 State shall assess the corporation a penalty of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)

- plus interest on the tax and penalty from the date due until paid at the rate of ten percent (10%) per year.
- 3 (B) However, the franchise tax, penalty, and interest for 4 any tax year shall not exceed two (2) times the corporation's tax owed.
- 5 (2)(A) Except as provided in subdivision (b)(2)(B) of this
  6 section, on On or before November 1 of each year, the secretary Secretary of
  7 State shall mail notice to the corporation at its last known address stating
  8 that the corporation is subject to forfeiture of its corporate charter under
  9 § 26-54-111 for the failure to pay corporate franchise tax.
- (B) For a corporation that has a franchise tax due date
  after May 1, six (6) months after the franchise tax return due date for the
  corporation, taking into account any extensions of the due date, the
  secretary shall mail notice to the corporation at its last known address
  stating that the corporation is subject to forfeiture of its corporate
  charter under § 26-54-111 for the failure to pay corporate franchise tax.
- 16 (c) The <u>secretary Secretary of State</u> or his or her designee may agree 17 to settle or compromise a dispute concerning interest or penalties associated 18 with corporate franchise taxes if the taxpayer:
  - (1) Disputes the proposed amount; or
- 20 (2) Is insolvent or bankrupt.

- 21 (d)(1) The <u>secretary Secretary of State</u> may waive any accrued interest 22 or assessed penalties imposed on a taxpayer due to a failure to remit 23 corporate franchise taxes under § 26-54-105(c), if:
- 24 (A) The taxpayer is reasonably mistaken about the 25 application of this chapter or the computation of the franchise tax to the 26 corporation; or
- 27 (B) A taxpayer cannot pay the accrued interest or assessed 28 penalties because of the taxpayer's insolvency or bankruptcy.
- 29 (2) The <u>secretary Secretary of State</u> may waive any fees that a 30 taxpayer owes if the taxpayer desires to dissolve the corporation.
- 31 (3) If a taxpayer demonstrates that a corporation was not doing 32 business in the state for the period for which penalties and interest are 33 owed under this section, the <u>secretary Secretary of State</u> shall waive the 34 amount due under this section if the taxpayer demonstrates that the taxpayer 35 intends to dissolve the corporation.
- 36 (e) The Arkansas Tax Procedure Act, § 26-18-101 et seq., so far as is

- 1 practicable, is applicable to the franchise tax levied under this chapter and
- 2 to the reporting, remitting, and enforcement of the franchise tax If the
- 3 parties cannot resolve the dispute, the parties may pursue any other remedy
- 4 available to them, including without limitation remedies available under the
- 5 Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.
- 6 (f) The <u>secretary Secretary of State</u> shall develop guidelines to 7 assist a taxpayer in resolving a corporate franchise tax dispute.

- 9 SECTION 17. Arkansas Code § 26-54-109(a) and (b), as amended by Acts
- 10 2019, No. 819, § 22, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the
- ll lists of corporations required to be produced under the Arkansas Corporate
- 12 Franchise Tax Act of 1979, are amended to read as follows:
- 13 (a)(1) The Secretary of State, Bank Commissioner, Insurance
- 14 Commissioner, and any other officer or agency of the state authorized to
- 15 issue corporate permits or authorities to do business in this state shall
- 16 prepare and maintain a correct list of all corporations organizing or
- 17 qualifying through their respective offices or agencies.
- 18 (2) Each official or agency shall file with the <del>Department of</del>
- 19 Finance and Administration Secretary of State a monthly report showing:
- 20 (A) The name and address of each new corporation organized
- 21 or qualified;
- 22 (B) The authorized and outstanding capital stock;
- 23 (C) The name changes, mergers, charter forfeitures, or
- 24 withdrawals;
- 25 (D) The name and address of each corporation that has
- 26 provided official notification regarding the dissolution of the corporation;
- 27 and
- 28 (E) All other information concerning the corporation
- 29 required by the department Secretary of State.
- 30 (b) Upon request of the Secretary of the Department of Finance and
- 31 Administration Secretary of State, each official or agency shall prepare and
- 32 certify to the Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration
- 33 Secretary of State a complete list of the names and addresses of all
- 34 corporations that have organized or qualified through their respective office
- 35 or agency and that are subject to the provisions of this chapter.

1 SECTION 18. Arkansas Code § 26-54-109(e)(1), as amended by Acts 2019, 2 No. 819, § 22, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the lists 3 of certain corporations required to be produced under the Arkansas Corporate 4 Franchise Tax Act of 1979, is repealed. 5 The Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration 6 shall provide the Secretary of State a list of corporations doing business in 7 this state and filing franchise tax reports with the department. 8 9 SECTION 19. Arkansas Code § 26-54-110, as amended by Acts 2019, No. 819, § 22, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, is amended to read as 10 11 follows: 12 26-54-110. Dissolution or withdrawal by corporations. Applications for dissolution or withdrawal by a corporation, 13 14 association, or organization cannot be accepted by the authority that 15 initially authorized or granted an authority to the corporation to do 16 business in Arkansas until receipt of a statement verified by the Secretary 17 of the Department of Finance and Administration Secretary of State that the 18 franchise tax due has been paid. 19 20 SECTION 20. Arkansas Code § 26-54-111(a), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 819,  $\S$  22, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the forfeiture 21 22 of a charter for failure to pay taxes under the Arkansas Corporate Franchise 23 Tax Act of 1979, is amended to read as follows: 24 (a)(1) Except as provided in subdivision (a)(2) of this section, on On 25 or before January 31 of each year, the Secretary of State shall proclaim as 26 forfeited the corporate charters or authorities of all corporations, both 27 domestic and foreign, that according to the Department of Finance and Administration's Secretary of State's records are delinquent in the payment 28 29 of the annual franchise tax for a prior year. 30 (2) For a corporation that has a franchise tax due date after May 1, eight (8) months after the franchise tax return due date for the 31 32 corporation, taking into account any extensions of the due date, the 33 Secretary of State shall proclaim as forfeited the corporate charters or 34 authorities of the corporations, both domestic and foreign, that according to 35 the department's records are delinquent in the payment of the annual

36

franchise tax for a prior year.

- SECTION 21. Arkansas Code § 26-54-112(a)(1)(B), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 819, § 22, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the reinstatement of a corporate charter or permit under the Arkansas Corporate Franchise Tax Act of 1979, is amended to read as follows:
- 6 (B) The reinstatement shall be made after the filing of
  7 all delinquent franchise tax reports satisfactory to the Department of
  8 Finance and Administration Secretary of State and the payment of all taxes
  9 and penalties due for each year of delinquency.

- SECTION 22. Arkansas Code § 26-54-112(c)(1), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 819, § 22, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning the reinstatement of a corporate charter or permit under the Arkansas Corporate Franchise Tax Act of 1979, is amended to read as follows:
  - (c)(1) If the original corporate charter, permit, or authority was issued by an official other than the Secretary of State, the official shall reinstate the corporation upon the corporation's filing with the official the receipt of the department Secretary of State showing payment of all amounts due, as provided in subsection (a) of this section.

- SECTION 23. Arkansas Code § 26-54-114(a) and (b), as amended by Acts 2019, No. 819, § 23, and effective on and after May 1, 2021, concerning certain consequences arising from a failure to pay franchise taxes under the Arkansas Corporate Franchise Tax Act of 1979, are amended to read as follows:
- (a) A corporation or limited liability company is not allowed to file any forms or documentation related to that corporation or limited liability company if the corporation or limited liability company owes past-due franchise taxes to the Department of Finance and Administration Secretary of State.
- 30 (b) A person is not allowed to file any initial forms or documentation
  31 with the Secretary of State to create any legal entity in the State of
  32 Arkansas or to obtain authority to do business in the State of Arkansas if
  33 that person is substantially connected to any corporation or limited
  34 liability company that owes past-due franchise taxes to the department
  35 Secretary of State.

```
1
          SECTION 24. Arkansas Code § 26-54-115, as created by Acts 2019, No.
 2
    819, § 24, effective on and after May 1, 2021, is repealed.
 3
          26-54-115. Rules.
 4
          The Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration may adopt
 5
    rules to implement and administer this chapter.
6
 7
           SECTION 25. The uncodified language of Acts 2019, No. 819, § 25, is
8
    repealed.
9
          (a) When adopting the initial rules required under Section 3-17 and 20-
10
    24, of this act, the final rules shall be filed with the Secretary of State
11
    for adoption under § 25-15-204(f):
12
          (1) On or before May 1, 2021; or
13
          (2) If approval under § 10-3-309 has not occurred by May 1, 2021, as
14
    soon as practicable after approval under § 10-3-309.
15
          (b) The director of the relevant state agency shall file the proposed
16
    rules with the Legislative Council under § 10-3-309(e) sufficiently in
17
    advance of May 1, 2021, so that the Legislative Council may consider the
18
    rules for approval before May 1, 2021.
19
20
           SECTION 26. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General
    Assembly that Acts 2019, No. 819 transferred collection and administration of
21
22
     corporate franchise tax from the Secretary of State to the Department of
23
    Finance and Administration; that this transfer has created hardships and
24
    compliance issues for Arkansas taxpayers; that these issues necessitate the
25
     immediate return of the collection and administration of the franchise tax
26
    back to the Secretary of State; that Acts 2019, No. 819 will take effect on
27
    May 1, 2021; and that the immediate return of the franchise tax collection
28
     responsibilities to the Secretary of State will prevent further tax
    compliance issues for Arkansas taxpayers. Therefore, an emergency is declared
29
30
    to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of
    the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:
31
32
                (1) The date of its approval by the Governor.
33
                 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,
34
    the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the
35
    bill; or
36
                 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is
```

1	overridden, the date the last ho	use ove	errides the	veto.
2				
3				
4	A	PPROVEI	o: 4/1/21	
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16 17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
26				
27				
28				
29				
30				
31				
32				
33				
34				
35				
36				