



Newsletter From Rep. Kenneth B. Ferguson District 64

February 10, 2023

Week 5 of the 2023 Regular Session



On the 5th week of the Regular Session, the House passed legislation addressing substance abuse, teen pregnancy, public assistance, and transportation.

The House passed HB1144. This bill creates the Arkansas Family Treatment Specialty Court Act.

The bill states that there is a critical need for judicial intervention and support for effective treatment programs to reduce the number of family separations due to substance use disorders and mental health disorders. HB1144 address that by creating a specialized court within the court system, similar to our current drug courts.

The House also passed the Support for Pregnant and Parenting Students Act. HB1161 allows pregnant and parenting students to have an additional 10 days of excused absence for a parenting mother and father after the birth of their child. This bill also ensures adequate nursing facilities are provided by schools to parenting students.

The House passed two bills this week regarding qualifications for public assistance.

HB1197 would disqualify a person from collecting unemployment compensation for any week he or she fails to respond to a job offer or fails to appear for a job interview.

HB1196 would require an able-bodied person to work, train, or volunteer in order to qualify for and receive public housing. Several exceptions are outlined in the bill.

In addition, the House passed HB1182. This bill aims to address the state's shortage of large animal veterinarians by providing clarity regarding the certification of a veterinary technician specialist and defines a collaborative agreement between a veterinarian and a specialist.

The House passed SB43 which defines an adult-oriented performance and adds certain restrictions.

And the House passed a couple of transportation bills.

HB1324 would allow law enforcement officers to pull over a driver who does not have their headlights on when it is raining, snowing, or any time the windshield wipers are being used.

SB47 repeals a law that prohibits leaving a running vehicle unattended.

The deadline to file proposed constitutional amendments was Wednesday of this week.

In all, 33 proposals were filed. Constitutional amendments are typically one of the last items to be addressed in the session. You can review the proposals at arkansashouse.org.