STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

NEWSLETTER FROM REP. Brandon C. Achor

DISTRICT 71

February 24, 2023

WEEK 7 OF THE 2023 REGULAR SESSION

In the 7th week of the 2023 Regular Session, House members voted on a number of bills impacting employment, education, and elections.

This week, the House passed HB1430. This bill reduces the maximum potential unemployment compensation benefits from 4 months to 3 months. This bill also reduces unemployment insurance tax rates for employers.

The House also passed HB1401. This bill reduces the time an able-bodied adult may receive cash assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The bill limits the assistance from 24 months to 12 months.

In addition, the House passed HB1410. This bill eliminates the state's requirement that children under 16 years of age have to obtain permission from the Division of Labor in order to be employed.

Regarding elections, the House passed the following pieces of legislation:

HB1419-This bill amends the procedure for the filing of a ballot initiative and referendum petition by requiring that signatures are gathered from at least 50 counties. Currently, signatures are required from 15 counties.

HB1320-This bill would require the Attorney General to review the ballot title for an initiative petition or referendum petition before circulation.

SB247-This bill allows an absentee ballot to be issued to any person who is prevented from voting due to observance of a religious discipline or religious holiday during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open on election day.

1404-This bill outlines security procedures for county election commissioners in the event that equipment and materials from one polling site need to be transferred to another polling site during the early voting period.

HB1407-This bill states that the Secretary of State shall ensure the security and accuracy of the statewide voter registration list. It directs the Secretary of State's office to cooperate with other states and jurisdictions to compare registered voters, identify voters whose addresses have changed, and prevent registration in more than one state.

HB1423-This bill establishes procedures for the recount of ballots.

The following education bills also passed the House this week:

HB1336. This bill creates an agricultural education pilot program in public elementary schools.

HB1337. This bill classifies a building or space used for public early childhood education as an academic facility under the Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities Funding Act. It also classifies a safe room for students as an academic facility.

HB1329. This bill creates a means by which public school students may substitute comparable elective coursework in career and technical education for required core academic classes.

The legislation outlining the Governor's education initiative, SB294, passed the Senate this week and is now making its way to the House. We will post updates on that legislation including schedules for when the bill will be heard in the House Education Committee on our website www.arkansashouse.org