



STATE OF ARKANSAS

*House of Representatives*



# NEWSLETTER FROM REP. Tara Shephard DISTRICT 79

March 8, 2023

## LEGISLATION PASSED BY ARKANSAS HOUSE IN 2023 REGULAR SESSION

### EDUCATION

The LEARNS Act provides for reading coaches statewide, offers high schoolers a career ready diploma, creates the Education Freedom Account offering universal choice in 3 years, and raises the minimum teacher pay from \$36,000 to \$50,000.

### JUDICIARY

Act 61 creates the Arkansas Family Treatment Specialty Court Act. This bill addresses 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.

A comprehensive criminal justice bill is expected to be introduced.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

Act 59 creates the Rural Emergency Hospital Act. This bill would provide a way for rural hospitals in the state to qualify for a new federal designation and be reimbursed at a higher rate for outpatient services.

### ELECTIONS

HB1419 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.

## **TAXES**

Act 96 prohibits local governments from enacting an income tax.

There are more than 40 various tax cut proposals before the House Revenue and Taxation Committee.