STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

NEWSLETTER FROM REP. Keith Brooks
DISTRICT 78

March 10, 2023

WEEK 9 OF THE 2023 REGULAR SESSION

In the 9th week of the 2023 Regular Session, the House passed several bills addressing education, elections, healthcare, and a bill to increase the property tax credit for Arkansas families.

With a vote of 99-0, the House voted in favor of increasing the homestead property tax credit from $375 a year to $425 a year. HB1032now heads to the Senate.

Education bills passing the House this week include the Seizure Safe Schools Act. HB1315 requires all schools to have at least 2 employees trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of seizures and know how to respond.

The House also voted in favor of HB1535 and HB1462.

HB1535 states that at each regular monthly meeting of a school board, a report of student academic performance should be provided to the board.

HB1462 clarifies the definition of “unaccompanied homeless youth” to mean an individual between the ages of 16 and 22 who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. The definition will allow a school’s liaison for homeless children and youth to provide additional support. HB1462 also waives fees for identification, driver’s license, and birth certificates for unaccompanied homeless youth.

The House passed several bills regarding elections, including HB1487 and HB1510.

HB1487 creates the Ballot Security Act of 2023. The bill allows for the tracking of ballots and proper

delivery and creates a process to preserve spoiled ballots.

HB1510 would require special elections to be held on the same dates as primary and general elections. It states special elections shall be held on the second Tuesday of March or November in a year when a presidential election is held or the second Tuesday of May and November of all other years. The bill outlines specific criteria for exceptions to hold an emergency special election.

The House also passed HB1035. This bill requires a healthcare insurer to provide coverage for screening for depression of the birth mother by a healthcare professional within the first 6 weeks of the birth mother's having given birth on or after January 1, 2024.

The House voted in favor of SB199. This bill states that a healthcare professional who performs a gender transition procedure on a minor is liable if the minor is injured in any way. It also states that a civil action can be filed for up to 15 years after the minor turns 18 years of age.

And the House passed SB295. This bill seeks to create the Cost-Shifting Prevention Act of 2023 by addressing the rates paid for customer-owned net-metering facilities. It would require utilities to compensate solar users at wholesale rates as they do other power providers.

The House will reconvene on Monday at 1:30 p.m. You can watch all committee meetings and House floor proceedings at arkansashouse.org.