STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Bruce Cozart

District 91

March 17, 2023

Week 10 of the 2023 Regular Session

House members will now be taking an extended recess. When the House reconvenes on March 27, members will be addressing public safety legislation, constitutional amendments, and the budget.

In the days leading up to the recess, the House passed a number of bills addressing human trafficking, elections, and employment.
Bills passed this week that amend human laws include SB282, HB1459, and HB1470.

SB282 allows a victim of human trafficking to bring a civil action against a person or entity who knew or should have known that the individual was being trafficked.

HB1459 increases the fines for a human trafficking conviction and trafficking-related charges to a range between $5,000 and $15,000. The bill directs that the fines be divided between specified funds that support exploited children and trafficking victims.

HB1470 ensures victims are eligible for crime victim reparations even if they do not cooperate with law enforcement.

Election bills passing the House this week included SB 250, SB 254, and SB 258.

SB 250 requires counties to pay for the costs if using paper ballots. SB 254eliminates the write-in candidate portion on a ballot, and SB 258 prohibits absentee ballot drop boxes.

The House also passed HB1207 which requires local governments to act on permit applications in the first 60 days.

And the House passed HB1575which requires Arkansans to make at least 5 work searches a week when claiming unemployment benefits. That search could include applying for a job or participating in job training.

In addition, the House passed SB 81and SB 66.

SB81 amends the law concerning libraries and obscene materials and creates the offense of furnishing a harmful item to a minor. It states furnishing a harmful item to a minor is a Class A misdemeanor.

SB66requires a commercial entity to use a reasonable age verification method before allowing access to a website that contains a substantial portion of material that is harmful to minors.

We will continue to update you in the remaining weeks of the session. You can watch all House committee meetings and floor proceedings at arkansashouse.org.