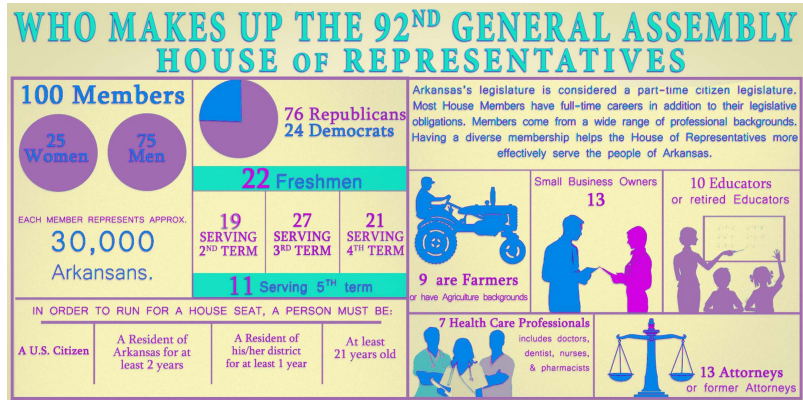




Newsletter From Rep. Stephen Meeks District 42

January 11, 2019

Diversity in House membership



There is a new rule taking effect this session which changes the way our many of our committees are formed.

The House consists of 10 standing committees, 7 select committees and 3 special committees. A vast majority of legislation introduced in the Regular Session is assigned to a standing committee.

In years past, we gathered with other members in our geographical district caucuses and selected which standing committees we wanted to serve. Members were given preference in the order of seniority.

However, last year the House voted to change the process. The new House rules give the Speaker the authority to appoint the membership of all committees.

The Speaker will announce committee selections on the first day of session, January 14. The Speaker also selects who will serve as chair and vice-chair of each committee and sub-committee.

Committees are where the lawmaking process begins. It is where bills are first considered and publicly debated before a bill makes its way the House Chamber. Committees provide an opportunity for the public to speak for or against a proposal.

The Speaker assigns each bill to a committee germane to the subject matter. In 2017, more than 3,000 bills were introduced. Less than 1,200 actually became law. Many of those bills did not get the needed votes from the committee to advance any further in the law making process.

Although we have changed the way the standing committees are formed, the rules still ensure that each region of Arkansas is represented. Each member serves on one "A" standing committee and one "B" standing committee. House Rules state the Speaker must select five members from each of the four House District Caucus. House District Caucuses are divided along the same geographical boundaries as our state's congressional caucuses.

Standing committees are as follows:

Class A

Education

Judiciary

Public Health, Welfare, and Labor

Public Transportation

Revenue and Taxation

Class B

Aging, Children & Youth, Legislative & Military Affairs

Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development

City, County, & Local Affairs

Insurance & Commerce

State Agencies & Governmental Affairs

Once the committee selections are announced, we will post the lists on our website. As a reminder, the House live streams all standing committee meetings and House floor proceedings during the Regular Session. Visit www.arkansashouse.org for more information.