STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Kendon Underwood
District 16

June 20, 2025

Legislative Week in Review

This week, lawmakers continued work to strengthen Arkansas's public institutions, improve access to education, and support our state employees and communities.

The Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC) approved a new step pay plan for Arkansas State Police officers. At a projected cost of $3.5 million, the step system will provide a more predictable and transparent approach to compensation, while helping retain institutional knowledge and ensuring equity across similar roles.

The ALC also approved a $90 million request from the state's Restricted Reserve Fund to support the Education Freedom Account (EFA) program. More than 44,000 applications for the program have been submitted by parents and guardians for the 2025-2026 school year. In addition, $35 million from the Restricted Reserve Fund will be allocated to the Arkansas School for the Deaf. This funding will be utilized for costs associated with a new facility that will house classrooms for students who are hearing or visually impaired.

Earlier in the week, the House and Senate Education Committees met to discuss the first phase of the biennial Adequacy Study, which helps determine the state's future K-12 public school funding needs. Committee chairs also shared plans to visit schools across Arkansas in the coming months to gather firsthand insight. In addition, members reviewed a recent report highlighting the return on investment in higher education and its long-term benefits for students and the economy.

Finally, on Wednesday, the House and Senate City, County, and Local Affairs Committees convened at the Statehouse Convention Center during the Arkansas Municipal League's 91st Convention. Members received a detailed presentation on housing affordability, planning, and land use—critical issues affecting cities and towns across the state.

We have posted presentations reviewed by the committees on our website, arkansashouse.org.