STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Sonia Eubanks Barker

District 96

October 3, 2025

Legislative Update

Arkansas lawmakers held a series of committee meetings this week, covering issues ranging from childcare to criminal justice, energy development, and transportation infrastructure.

On Tuesday, the House Early Childhood Permanent Subcommittee on Education examined forthcoming changes to the state's childcare reimbursement system. Officials from the Department of Education, the Arkansas Early Childhood Association, and several providers shared how the adjustments could impact families and daycare centers statewide. Education Secretary Jacob Oliva told members that reductions in federal support leave the state with limited options to keep its School Readiness Assistance program viable. While parents using vouchers will now be required to pay a co-payment, Oliva announced that provider rate cuts—originally set to take effect immediately—will be delayed until November 1, giving centers 30 more days to prepare.

Also on Tuesday, the Senate and House Judiciary Committees convened for a joint session focused on issues affecting Arkansas youth and public safety. Members received updates from the Arkansas Commission on Children, Youth & Families, heard reports from the Juvenile Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts, and reviewed progress on the Group Violence Intervention Initiative currently underway in Jefferson County.

Earlier in the week, on Monday, the Joint Energy Committee visited Wynne to tour the Crossover Wind project. The site visit gave members an opportunity to learn more about wind energy's role in Arkansas's evolving energy portfolio.

On Thursday, the House Committee on Public Transportation and the Senate Committee on Transportation, Technology, and Legislative Affairs met in Jacksonville for a joint update from the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Members toured projects along Highway 67/167—soon to be part of Interstate 57—and saw the construction progress firsthand.

You can find agendas for upcoming meetings and links to live-stream and recorded meetings at arkansashouse.org.