STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Howard M. Beaty, Jr.
District 95

January 16, 2026

Arkansas Legislative Council Update

Lawmakers convened this week at the Arkansas Legislative Council to review the state's financial standing and address key policy priorities affecting Arkansans statewide.

State budget officials reported encouraging revenue numbers. Collections of Gross General Revenues year-to-date totaled approximately $4.02 billion, an increase of $49.5 million—or 1.2 percent—over the same point last fiscal year. Net General Revenue available for distribution reached $3.44 billion, up $73.4 million, or 2.2 percent, from December 2024. One of the most significant actions taken by the Council was the approval of an additional $32 million for Educational Freedom Accounts. State education officials explained that the funding increase is necessary to keep pace with the program, which now serves more than 44,000 students after eligibility opened to all Arkansas students for the 2025–2026 academic year. Of those participating, roughly two-thirds are enrolled in private schools, while the remaining third are homeschooled.

Beyond education funding, lawmakers approved several temporary appropriation requests aimed at meeting immediate operational needs. These included $476,000 for supplies at the State Crime Laboratory under the Department of Public Safety and $90,000 to address cost increases at the Department of Finance and Administration's Assessment Coordination Division. Members also approved allocating $2.5 million from Restricted Reserve Funds to the Department of Energy and Environment's Used Tire Program. Policy discussions extended beyond budget matters earlier in the week when the Hospital, Medicaid, and Developmental Disabilities Study Subcommittee received updates from the Department of Human Services on reimbursement rates under the Living Choices Assisted Living Waiver and reviewed findings from the Georgia Center for Opportunity, continuing a broader examination of workforce participation and long-term care.

Meanwhile, the House and Senate City, County, and Local Affairs Committees met at the Statehouse Convention Center during the Arkansas Municipal League Winter Conference, joining local leaders from across the state to discuss issues impacting communities statewide. As a reminder, all legislative meetings held at the Capitol can be watched at **arkansashouse.org.**