STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

NEWSLETTER FROM REP. Keith Brooks
DISTRICT 78

January 29, 2021

WEEK 3 OF THE 2021 REGULAR SESSION

Several bills are now making their way to the Governor's desk including one that intends to expand broadband services across the state.

SB74 had unanimous support in both the House and the Senate.

This bill allows cities, counties, and improvement districts to partner with established providers to expand broadband services for those who currently do not have service or those who are underserved.

SB74 is now awaiting the Governor's signature. It has an emergency clause which means it will become effective after the Governor signs it.

Other bills passed by the House in recent days include:

HB1151-This bill suspends the public school rating system for the 2020-2021 school year due to the disruption to education caused by the pandemic.

HB1009- This bill allows a public school or an open-enrollment public charter school to distribute excess food to students for consumption on the school campus or at home.

HB1113-This bill amends the Commission of State Lands Urban Homestead Act.

Currently, the Commissioner of State Lands can donate land to community organizations to develop low-income housing. This bill states that if the donated land has not been used for that purpose after three years, the commissioner can allow the land to be used for the development of a public school or open-enrollment charter school in an area with a high poverty rate.

HB1032-This bill allows taxpayers with military retirement benefit under $6,000 to claim a total retirement exemption up to that amount if the taxpayer has additional retirement income. The Department of Finance and Administration estimates this bill affects 700 Arkansans.

HB1202-This bill requires counties to post sample ballots on the Secretary of State website at least 20 days before each preferential primary and general election and at least ten days before each general primary, general runoff, school, or special election.

HB1211-This bill states the Governor shall not prohibit or limit a religious organization from continuing to operate religious services during a declared emergency.

HB1003-This bill ensures respectful language is used in Arkansas code regarding individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and removes from the Arkansas code the term "hearing impaired".

SB76-This bill creates a permitting process for excursion trains to serve and sell alcoholic beverages.

HB1056-This bill amends the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act by allowing public meetings to be held via phone or video conference during a declared emergency.

HB1009- This bill authorizes the Veterinary Medical Examining Board to promulgate rules for the use of telemedicine.

HB1013-amends Arkansas Music Appreciation Day to add James "Jim Dandy" Mangrum, Buddy Jewell, and Mark Lavon "Levon" Helm. September 1 was established as Arkansas Music Appreciation Day by the 92nd General Assembly.

The House will reconvene on Monday at 1 pm. You can find all agendas and links to live-streams of meetings at www.arkansashouse.org.