STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. RJ Hawk
District 81

April 14, 2025

Daily Summary for Monday, April 14

On Monday, the Arkansas legislature passed a range of bills affecting areas from social media regulation to tax exemptions and criminal justice reform.

SB611 amends the Social Media Safety Act of 2023. It clarifies the definition of “social media” to expand protections to additional platforms, lowers the age of minor users to 16, prohibits social media algorithms from targeting minors, and adds a penalty for companies that do not comply. These new regulations will only apply to new account holders.The House repealed the Shielded Outdoor Lighting Act through HB1955 and introduced HB1956, which replaces it with the Arkansas Nighttime Environment Protection Act, updating outdoor lighting guidelines while granting municipalities and co-ops the authority to set their own standards.

Tax policy was also addressed with SB535 and HB1828, which provide sales and use tax exemptions for the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, its foundation, and the Inspiration Point Center for the Arts, Inc.

SB313 aimed to reduce delays in forensic mental health evaluations for inmates, while SB578 allows a county board of election commissioners to close voting locations during severe weather.

SB584 amends the law concerning local initiative and referendum petitions.

SB527 amends the ARHOME Act by seeking to increase the medical-loss ratio, secure pharmacy rebates, and set employment-related eligibility criteria.

The House also passed SB520 to prohibit diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) offices, policies, or practices in local government. SB533 targets intoxicating hemp products by banning their manufacture, distribution, sale, and use within the state. Finally, SB548 ensures courts consider mitigating factors such as trauma or involvement with the child welfare system during transfer or sentencing hearings for crimes committed by minors.