



Newsletter From Rep. Matthew J. Shepherd

District 97

September 26, 2025

Legislative Week in Review

Lawmakers in Little Rock tackled a wide range of issues this week, from public safety investments to energy policy and the economic strain facing Arkansas farmers.

The Arkansas Legislative Council approved the transfer of \$131.9 million from restricted reserve funds to help finance the construction of a new State Crime Laboratory in North Little Rock. The facility is a priority for the state's justice system, which relies heavily on timely forensic analysis.

In another action, the Council authorized a contract of up to \$55,000 with the Georgia Center for Opportunity. The nonprofit will partner with the Bureau of Legislative Research to review Arkansas' public assistance and workforce development programs, offering recommendations for potential reforms.

Lawmakers also granted requests from the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism to add several law enforcement positions aimed at strengthening security across state parks. Energy planning was also on the agenda. The Council approved a contract of up to \$305,000 with Excel Services Corporation to study the feasibility of nuclear power generation in Arkansas.

Meanwhile, the House Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development Committee met with farmers and economists in Stuttgart this week to discuss the difficult financial landscape for agriculture. Economists say the disparity between crop prices received and farm expenses is the largest it has been in the last 25 years. While the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," passed by Congress in July, allocated billions in relief for farmers, Arkansas producers cautioned that relief may be too limited or too delayed to address their immediate needs. President Trump said late this week that proceeds from tariff revenues would be directed to farmers. Members continue to remain engaged with Arkansas' delegation in Washington to advance a comprehensive solution.

We will continue to keep you updated on developments. You can find recordings of all legislative meetings held at the Capitol at arkansashouse.org.

