STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Bruce Cozart

District 91

March 22, 2019

Week 10 of 2019 Regular Session

The House is now in the final weeks of the 2019 Regular Session. In recent days, the House has passed legislation increasing education funding, legislation increasing sales tax exemptions on used cars, and legislation creating a first of its kind response team to child abductions.

With a vote of 91-0, the House passed HB1685. This bill increases the foundation funding for K-12 education from the current $6,713 per student to $6,899 per student for the 2019-2020 school year. The bill increases funding to $7,018 per student in the following school year.

The House passed HB1342. This bill increases the amount below which sales tax is exempt on the purchase of used vehicles from $4,000 to $7,500.

In a vote of 87-0, the House passed HB1674. This bill creates a statewide child abduction response team (CART). It states that the following agencies shall collaborate in an effort to rescue abducted or endangered children:

- Arkansas Attorney General
- Department of Arkansas State Police
- Criminal Justice Institute
- Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission
- Arkansas Sheriffs' Association
- Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

- Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police
- Department of Community Correction
- Office of the Prosecutor Coordinator

If this legislation makes it to the Governor's desk, Arkansas would be the first state in the nation to do this on a state level.

Other legislation passing the House this week includes:

HB1754-This bill seeks to address the recent overdose-related deaths inside state prisons. In 2018, 22 inmates died in the Department of Correction as the result of illicit drugs. This bill states the delivery of a controlled substance from one inmate to another that results in the death of an inmate is a Class A felony and punishable by up to an additional 30 years in prison.

HB1433- This bill authorizes individuals with prior drug-related offenses to work with individuals receiving substance abuse treatment as peer support specialists or similar positions.

SB109- This bill ensures that battery in the first degree is a Class Y felony if the injured person is an employee of a correctional facility acting in the line of duty. The offense is currently a Class Y felony if the victim is a law enforcement officer.

SB486- This bill authorizes a $5 increase for special permits to trout fish and lifetime trout stamps. The money will be used to make necessary renovations for hatcheries damaged by floods. The trout industry in Arkansas generates an estimated $180 million in revenue every year.

HB1684-This bill ensures students receive in-state tuition at state-supported institutions of higher education if he or she has resided in the state for the previous three years.

SB445-This bill states that the date of the primary election will be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March for years in which the office of President of the United States will appear on the ballot at the general election. The primary would continue to be held in May in gubernatorial election years.

This bill would also move fiscal legislative sessions from February to April in presidential election years.

HB1792-This bill states that when an individual under sentence of death, whose execution date has been set by the Governor, believes that he or she is not competent to be executed, the individual may inform the Director of the Department of Correction in writing and shall provide any supporting evidence he or she wishes to be considered. This bill directs the Director of the Department of Correction to consider any evidence offered by the individual in making a determination.

HB1867-This bill amends the requirements for a driver's license or instruction permit by eliminating the requirement for school records for those under 18 years of age to take the written test.

SB381-This bill states that a school district authorizing the use of corporal punishment shall not use corporal punishment on a child who is intellectually disabled, non-ambulatory, non-verbal, or autistic.

To date, 550 bills have been signed into law during this session. We will continue to update you during the remainder of

the session. You can watch all the House proceedings on our website at www.arkansashouse.org.