



Newsletter From Rep. Danny Watson District 88

January 15, 2021

Week 1 of the 2021 Regular Session



House members are now ready to begin the second week of the 2021 Regular Session.

Nearly 200 bills have been filed so far in the House and more than 135 have been filed in the Senate.

House members elected to serve in the 93rd General Assembly took the oath of office in the House Chamber on Monday. Upon swearing-in, members then voted to name Rep. Matthew J. Shepherd of El Dorado as the Speaker of the Arkansas House. This will be his second full term to serve as Speaker.

Speaker Shepherd announced the chairs for all House committees. You can find a complete list of committee assignments at www.arkansashouse.org.

On the second day of the Regular Session, Governor Asa Hutchinson addressed the General Assembly and outlined his legislative goals for this session.

He said he will be asking the General Assembly to affirm the current health emergency order and direct federal COVID-19 relief funds for vaccine distribution.

The Governor's legislative agenda also includes the following:

- Increase teacher pay by \$2,000 over the next 2 years
- Reduce the used car sales tax

- Reduce income tax for new Arkansas residents
- Appropriate \$30 million for increased broadband in rural areas
- Implement a computer science requirement for high school graduation
- Increase sentencing for hate crimes

On Thursday, the House passed resolutions outlining new rules and changes to procedure due to COVID-19. These include mask requirements, changes to committee agendas, and remote voting options for members.

The House will not meet on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday or on Wednesday during the Presidential Inauguration. We will meet on Tuesday and Thursday next week. Schedules and agendas will be available on our website.

As a reminder, the House live streams all of our meetings on the website. We also posted the guidelines for members of the public who wish to participate in the process at the Capitol.

We will continue to update you in the weeks ahead.