



Arkansas House Newsletter

February 14, 2025

Week 5 of the 2025 Regular Session



As we move through the 2025 legislative session, the Arkansas House of Representatives has passed several important bills that will impact our communities, focusing on education, healthcare, and food security. Here's a summary of the key measures approved during the fifth week of the session:

SB59: An Act to Provide Each Public School Student with Breakfast at No Cost

This bill ensures that every student in Arkansas public schools will be entitled to one free breakfast per school day, regardless of their eligibility for federally funded meals. Funded through medical marijuana tax revenue, the bill was passed with the goal of addressing food insecurity among students. Arkansas ranked as the hungriest state in the nation in 2023 with 18.9% of households experiencing food insecurity.

SB142: Bell to Bell, No Cell Act

The House also passed SB142, which addresses the growing concern over cell phone use in schools. Known as the Bell to Bell, No Cell Act, this bill mandates that public and charter schools prohibit students from using

cell phones and personal electronic devices during the school day. There are exceptions, including emergency situations, and schools will be required to create policies in compliance with the guidelines set by the bill. These include allowing for the use of phones for special events, medical reasons, or for students accessing college coursework through two-factor authentication.

HB1427: Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Act

HB1427 represents a major step forward in supporting maternal health in Arkansas. The bill, which is a \$45.3 million investment, expands access to healthcare for pregnant women. It establishes presumptive Medicaid eligibility for expectant mothers, creates reimbursement pathways for doulas and community health workers, and broadens Medicaid coverage to include remote monitoring services like ultrasounds, blood pressure checks, and continuous glucose monitoring. The bill also improves access to prenatal and postnatal care by unbundling Medicaid payments, ensuring coverage for up to 14 visits.

These bills represent a commitment to improving the well-being of Arkansas' families, from ensuring children have access to a healthy breakfast to expanding access to critical healthcare services. As always, we encourage all Arkansans to stay informed about the legislative process. You can watch all committee meetings and House floor proceedings live at arkansashouse.org.