

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.  
Act 722 of the Regular Session

1 State of Arkansas  
2 87th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2009

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 470

4  
5 By: Senator Elliott  
6 By: Representative Rainey

## For An Act To Be Entitled

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9  
10 AN ACT TO CREATE A LEGISLATIVE TASKFORCE ON  
11 REDUCING POVERTY AND PROMOTING ECONOMIC  
12 OPPORTUNITY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

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15 AN ACT TO CREATE A LEGISLATIVE TASKFORCE  
16 ON REDUCING POVERTY AND PROMOTING  
17 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

### SECTION 1. Findings.

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23 The General Assembly finds that:

24 (1) The State of Arkansas has one of the highest child and  
25 overall poverty rates in the United States;

26 (2) Children and families who live in poverty are subject to a  
27 number of harsh realities that include without limitation:

28 (A) Lacking the basic necessities of life;

29 (B) Poorer educational outcomes such as dropping out of  
30 school before obtaining a high school degree;

31 (C) Poorer health outcomes;

32 (D) Reduced likelihood of employment;

33 (E) Lower earnings; and

34 (F) A greater likelihood of dying earlier in life;

35 (3) The State of Arkansas recognizes the moral and economic



1 interest in reducing child and family poverty, and the potential impact of  
 2 reducing poverty on the well-being of its children, families, and local  
 3 communities; and

4 (4) The State of Arkansas needs to develop innovative strategies  
 5 and a roadmap for reducing poverty and promoting economic opportunity for its  
 6 most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families.

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 8 SECTION 2. Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and  
 9 Promoting Economic Opportunity -- Creation -- Membership.

10 (a) There is created the “Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing  
 11 Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunity” to consist of twenty-two (22)  
 12 members as follows:

13 (1) Seven (7) members appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
 14 Representatives as follows:

15 (A) Two (2) members of the House of Representatives;

16 (B) Two (2) members of the business community or economic  
 17 development organizations;

18 (C) One (1) member of a faith-based organization;

19 (D) One (1) member who is an individual living at or near  
 20 poverty; and

21 (E) One (1) member who is a city or county government  
 22 official;

23 (2) Seven (7) members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of  
 24 the Senate as follows:

25 (A) Two (2) members of the Senate;

26 (B) Two (2) members of the business community or economic  
 27 development organizations;

28 (C) One (1) member of a faith-based organization;

29 (D) One (1) member who is an individual living in or near  
 30 poverty; and

31 (E) One (1) member who is a city or county government  
 32 official;

33 (3) One (1) member to represent Arkansas Advocates for Children  
 34 & Families;

35 (4) One (1) member to represent the Southern Good Faith Fund;

36 (5) One (1) member to represent the Arkansas Public Policy

1 Panel;

2 (6) One (1) member to represent the labor community;

3 (7) One (1) member to represent the Arkansas Hunger Relief

4 Alliance;

5 (8) One (1) member to represent the Arkansas Association of

6 Community Action Agencies;

7 (9) One (1) member to represent Arkansas Association of

8 Community Organizations for Reform Now; and

9 (10) One (1) member to represent a local community development  
10 corporation.

11 (b) The taskforce shall hold its first meeting no later than sixty  
12 (60) days after the adjournment of the regular session of the General  
13 Assembly.

14 (c) The members of the task force shall elect a chair.

15 (d) A majority of a quorum is necessary for the transaction of  
16 business.

17 (e) If any vacancy occurs on the task force, the vacancy shall be  
18 filled by the same process as the original appointment.

19 (h) The Bureau of Legislative Research shall provide staff for the  
20 task force.

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22 SECTION 3. Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and  
23 Promoting Economic Opportunity -- Powers and duties.

24 The Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting  
25 Economic Opportunity shall:

26 (1) Identify the number of individuals living at or near the  
27 poverty level in the state, and among certain subpopulations, including  
28 without limitation:

29 (A) Children;

30 (B) Households headed by single parents;

31 (C) The elderly; and

32 (D) Racial and ethnic minorities;

33 (2) Identify the risk factors and underlying causes of poverty  
34 through consultation with experts, service providers, and individuals living  
35 at or near poverty;

36 (3) Examine the long-term effects of poverty on children,

1 adults, families, and communities;

2 (4) Analyze and identify the costs of poverty to families,  
3 municipalities, and the state;

4 (5) Identify existing statewide public and private programs that  
5 address poverty, especially child poverty, and any deficiencies in statewide  
6 public and private programs;

7 (6) Identify and assess best practices, model programs, and  
8 strategies that existing research has proven to reduce poverty, including  
9 without limitation:

10 (A) Low and middle income tax policies including a state  
11 earned income tax credit;

12 (B) Education and workforce development policies;

13 (C) Asset development policies;

14 (D) Community and economic development policies;

15 (E) Citizen engagement strategies; and

16 (F) Work supports such as child care and health care.

17 (7) Recommend public policy strategies and legislation that have  
18 the potential to reduce poverty on a statewide or regional basis;

19 (8) Engage all state agencies to help determine the innovative  
20 roles each state agency, both individually and in cooperation, can play in  
21 the elimination of poverty;

22 (9) Explore the possible use of a Common Client Data base; and

23 (10) Establish measurable benchmarks for the elimination of  
24 poverty in the state by setting percentage reductions in the number of people  
25 living at or near poverty in the next five (5), ten (10), and twenty (20)  
26 years.

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28 SECTION 4. Submission of Final Report and Recommendations

29 The Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting  
30 Economic Opportunity shall submit its final report on "Recommendations for  
31 Reducing Child and Family Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunity" to the  
32 Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President Pro  
33 Tempore of the Senate on or before November 1, 2010.

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35 SECTION 5. Expiration.

36 The Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting Economic

1 Opportunity shall expire on December 31, 2010 **APPROVED: 3/31/2009**