

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (ALC)

September 26, 2025

The Arkansas Legislative Council met at 9:00 a.m., Friday, August 15, 2025, in Committee Room A of the Big MAC Building, Little Rock, Arkansas. Senate Co-Chair Ben Gilmore called the meeting to order and recognized a quorum of members present. Representative Lane Jean was recognized for the morning prayer.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Co-Chair Gilmore referred members to the minutes of the last Legislative Council meeting held on June 20, 2025 (Exhibit C) and asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

Representative Mary Bentley moved that the minutes of the June 20, 2025, meeting of the Legislative Council be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Revenue Report

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Dr. Carlos Silva, Legislative Economist, Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR), to present the July 2025 General Revenue Report (Exhibit D). Dr. Silva reported that the collections of Gross General Revenues year-to-date are approximately \$636.82 million, an increase of \$21.0 million, or 3.4% above the \$615.79 million collected last fiscal year-to-date. The Net General Revenue available for distribution of \$557.5 million, increased \$29.8 million, or 5.6% from the \$527.69 million available for distribution in July 2024.

Dr. Silva further stated, the Cumulative Deviation is a \$29.2 million difference above forecast for July 2025. Assuming the forecast is correct, the state can expect a surplus of \$185 million, for a total of \$214.3 million. This concluded the July 2025 General Revenue report.

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized members for questions. Mr. Jim Hudson, Secretary, Department of Finance & Administration (DF&A) was recognized to make further comments and respond to questions.

Report of the Executive Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized House Co-Chair Representative Les D. Eaves to present the report of the Executive Subcommittee (Exhibit E). Co-Chair Eaves reported that the Executive Subcommittee met on Thursday, August 14, 2025, and approved emergency rules for the Arkansas Sentencing Commission and the Office of Property Risk. All ALC members and alternates were notified of this action by email. The review and approval of those rules are effective upon adjournment of today's (August 15, 2025) meeting. The Subcommittee also authorized BLR to move forward with renewal of its contract with LexisNexis for the publishing and editing of the Arkansas Code. Finally, the Subcommittee heard a presentation from Olsberg SPI, concerning the final report and recommendations on the Motion Picture Study. There is also a report included in the exhibits, showing

emergency action taken by the ALC Co-Chairs, on July 25, 2025, authorizing BLR to enter an amendment to its contract with Ikaso Consulting Services, LLC, for procurement consulting services and to extend the term of the contract to the end of the year. This concluded the report of the Executive Subcommittee.

Representative Les D. Eaves moved that the report of the Executive Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Co-Chair Eaves then made an announcement that ALC week will be moved back one week to the week of September 22 - 26, 2025.

Additionally, Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Ms. Jill Thayer, Chief Legal Counsel, Bureau of Legislative Research, to announce that in 2019, an Act for the Code of Arkansas Rules was created and assigned to BLR to create a website and program where all the state agency rules will be compiled, codified, and housed in one location. In collaboration with other agencies, the BLR Administrative Rules team has completed the Code of Arkansas Rules website, available for use as of January 1, 2025. At the Administrative Codes and Registers Section of the National Association of Secretaries of State Conference, the website was awarded the Robert J. Colburn, Jr. Innovation Award. Much appreciation was given to Senator Jonathan Dismang and Senator Jim Dotson (*formerly Representative Dotson at the time the Act was created*), and the BLR Administrative Rules team, for all their hard work in creating the Act and executing the Code of Arkansas Rules website.

Standing Subcommittee Presentations

Administrative Rules Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Senator Tyler Dees to present the report of the Administrative Rules Subcommittee (Exhibit F.1). Senator Dees reported that the Administrative Rules Subcommittee met on Thursday, August 14, 2025. The Subcommittee adopted the report on the Acts of the 2025 Regular Session, specifically requiring new rulemaking, and filed one (1) report of the Executive Subcommittee concerning its review and approval of an emergency rule. The Subcommittee received and filed quarterly reports from the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the DOC-Post-Prison Transfer Board. The Subcommittee also received agency updates on outstanding rulemaking from the 2023 Regular Session. All other rules were reviewed and approved as noted in the report. This concluded the report of the Administrative Rules Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Senator Tyler Dees moved that the report of the Administrative Rules Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Charitable, Penal & Correctional Institutions Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Representative Howard Beaty, Jr. to present the report of the Charitable, Penal & Correctional Institutions Subcommittee (Exhibit F.2). Representative Beaty reported the Charitable, Penal & Correctional Institutions Subcommittee met on Thursday, July 10, 2025. The Subcommittee reviewed and heard testimony regarding the following items: the Arkansas Public Defender's Commission June 2025 final monthly report; investigated the prisoner escape from the North Central Unit; and the Department of Corrections discussion on policies and protocols regarding prison security.

The Subcommittee also met on Monday, August 11, 2025, and heard testimony regarding the following items: an update from the Arkansas State Police regarding the investigation of the escape from the North Central Unit; and an update from the Department of Corrections regarding the prisoner escape, and discussion on the current population counts and inmate deaths. This concluded the report of the Charitable, Penal & Correctional Institutions Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Representative Howard Beaty, Jr. moved that the report of the Charitable, Penal & Correctional Institutions Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Game & Fish/State Police Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Senator Missy Irvin to present the report of the Game & Fish/State Police Subcommittee (Exhibit F.4). Senator Irvin reported the Game & Fish/State Police Subcommittee met on Tuesday, July 8, 2025. The Subcommittee heard from the Arkansas State Police and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission regarding agency updates and their annual plans.

The Subcommittee met again on Thursday, August 14, 2025, and heard a brief overview of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission from Director Doug Schoenrock and Lt. Colonel Joe Williams. The Subcommittee also heard a brief overview of Arkansas State Police's involvement in community outreach and an update on the Devil's Den homicide case. This concluded the report of the Game & Fish/State Police Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Senator Missy Irvin moved that the report of the Game & Fish/State Police Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

After being recognized for an additional motion, Senator Missy Irvin, as the Senate Co-Chair of the Game & Fish/State Police Subcommittee, also moved to authorize the Game & Fish/State Police Subcommittee to undertake a study regarding the emergency warning system and response in Arkansas related to floods, and to report the subcommittee's findings to the full ALC and to allow the Subcommittee to meet outside of the regular ALC week. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Higher Education Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Senator Dan Sullivan, to present the report of the Higher Education Subcommittee (Exhibit F.5). Senator Sullivan reported the Higher Education Subcommittee met on Wednesday, August 13, 2025, and received the Annual Certification of Adequate Funds FY2024-2025 report, as required by A.C.A. § 6-62-109. Additionally, the Subcommittee heard testimony from the Arkansas Division of Higher Education concerning the following: Return on Investment Impacts on Productivity Formula; Student and Graduate Outcomes in Online Versus In-Person Education; and Higher Education Accreditation. The Subcommittee also heard public comments on these topics. This concluded the report of the Higher Education Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Senator Dan Sullivan moved that the report of the Higher Education Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Hospital, Medicaid, and Developmental Disabilities Study Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Representative Mary Bentley, to present the report of the Hospital, Medicaid, and Developmental Disabilities Study Subcommittee (Exhibit F.7). Representative Bentley reported that the Hospital, Medicaid, and Developmental Disabilities Study Subcommittee met on Monday, August 11, 2025, to adopt Interim Study Proposal 2025-050 by Representative Vaught. The Subcommittee also heard updates from the Department of Human Services (DHS) – Division of Children and Family Services, and from DHS on reimbursement rates under the Living Choices Assisted Living Waiver. Additionally, the Subcommittee approved a motion made by Senator English to authorize BLR to begin negotiating a contract with the Georgia Center for Opportunities to provide audit services related to the study assigned to the Subcommittee by Act 145 of 2025 concerning workforce and social services reform.

Representative Bentley further stated that Utah underwent a deep root analysis of their Workforce system, as well as Social Services. Since they have implemented these necessary changes, they now have one of the highest participation rates in the nation. They have been at the top of the list of *Rich States, Poor States* for over a decade now. Utah's labor participation rate is 68.3%. Arkansas has one of the lowest labor participation rates at 58.3%. Therefore, it needs a thorough audit of the outcomes of Social Services and Workforce to improve our state's rates as well. This concluded the report of the Hospital, Medicaid, and Developmental Disabilities Study Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Representative Mary Bentley moved that the report of the Hospital, Medicaid, and Developmental Disabilities Study Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Lottery Oversight Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Representative Justin Gonzales to present the report of the Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee (Exhibit F.8). Representative Gonzales reported the Lottery Oversight Subcommittee met on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, and reviewed the Learfield Sub, LLC contract, and heard testimony on the Arkansas Lottery Proposed FY26 Annual Budget and the Arkansas Lottery Director's Report. This concluded the report of the Lottery Oversight Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Representative Justin Gonzales moved that the report of the Lottery Oversight Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Senator Dave Wallace to present the report of the Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee (Exhibit F.10) Senator Wallace reported the Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee met on Monday, August 11, 2025, and Thursday, August 14, 2025, and received reports from various occupational authorization entities in Group 6. This concluded the report of the Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Senator Dave Wallace moved that the report of the Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Senator Jonathan Dismang to present the report of the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Subcommittee (Exhibit F.11). Senator Dismang reported that the PEER Subcommittee met on Tuesday, August 12, 2025. The Subcommittee received reports, reviewed requests, and approved the following: Various Temporary Appropriations; American Rescue Plan Act Appropriations; Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Appropriations; Restricted Reserve Fund Transfers. This concluded the report of the PEER Subcommittee.

Senator Jonathan Dismang moved to adopt the report of the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Subcommittee.

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Representative Andrew Collins, who requested to make a substitute motion.

Representative Andrew Collins moved to take out the Various Temporary Appropriation Request for the Unborn Children Monument for \$20,000, from Secretary of State (Item A.4 on the report), and vote on it separately, apart from the full report, and to adopt the report of the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Subcommittee. The motion was seconded.

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized members for discussion on the motion.

The substitute motion failed by voice vote.

Co-Chair Gilmore acknowledged the original motion. The motion made by Senator Jonathan Dismang to adopt the report of the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Subcommittee, was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Review Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Senator Blake Johnson to present the report of the Review Subcommittee (Exhibit F.12). Senator Johnson reported that the Review Subcommittee met on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, and reviewed the methods of finance, discretionary grants, two (2) agency ratifications, RFQ approval requests, and services contracts. The Co-Chairs also provided the July 2025 Emergency Action report to the Subcommittee. Staff from the Department of Education and Arkansas State University (ASU) requested that contract #1 under In-State contracts (*pg. 47*) between ASU and the Communications Group Inc. be pulled from consideration.

All items were reviewed with the exception of the construction-related contract #1 - Department of Corrections with McClelland Consulting Engineers Inc. (*pg. 23*), which was held until the meeting of Arkansas Legislative Council for further discussion. This concluded the report of the Review Subcommittee.

Senator Blake Johnson requested representatives of the Department of Corrections to come forward for discussion and to respond to questions. Upon approval of Co-Chair Gilmore, Mr. Chad Brown, CFO, Mr. Wade Hodge, Chief of Staff, and Mr. Eddie Powell, Assistant Director of Maintenance and Construction, Department of Corrections came forward to respond.

Senator Terry Rice was recognized to summarize the issue(s) with the contract in which he'd like to discuss or receive answers to. Senator Rice stated he has since then received additional information and is content with releasing the hold on this request.

Co-Chair Gilmore further recognized members for questions. Representative Howard Beaty, Jr. was recognized for a point of personal privilege to request that members speak only to the issue at hand.

After discussion and questions from members, Senator Blake Johnson moved to adopt the report of the Review Subcommittee, including the Department of Corrections - McClelland Consulting Engineers contract that was previously held, and excluding the ASU contract with The Communications Group Inc. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

State Insurance Programs Oversight Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Senator Jimmy Hickey, Jr., Senate Vice Co-Chair of the Subcommittee, to present the report of the State Insurance Programs Oversight Subcommittee (Exhibit F.13). Senator Hickey reported the State Insurance Programs Oversight Subcommittee met on Wednesday, August 13, 2025. The Subcommittee approved the Pharmacy Formulary Recommendations for June, July, and August 2025; Medical Drug Recommendations for August 2025; and the 2026 Rate Schedules for Public School and State Employees Health Insurance. The Subcommittee reviewed EBD contracts for ConnectYourCare Incorporated; HMO Partners Incorporated; and United Healthcare.

The Subcommittee encouraged EBD to prepare to put the MAPD contract out for bid this year, so legislators would have time to look at it. The Subcommittee approved the State Captive Insurance Program (SCIP) items for University of Arkansas Athletics Premium and Deductibles, and Lead Insurance Policy. The Subcommittee also discussed the Optum and Navitus lawsuits. This concluded the report of the State Insurance Programs Oversight Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Senator Jimmy Hickey, Jr moved that the report of the State Insurance Programs Oversight Subcommittee be adopted. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Representative Les Warren to present the report of the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee (Exhibit F.14). Representative Warren reported the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee met on Wednesday, August 13, 2025, and reviewed the reports and requests listed in the report as Items 1 -15. No items were held. This concluded the report of the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee, and there were no questions.

Representative Les Warren moved that the report of the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee be adopted.

Review of Communications

Co-Chair Gilmore referred members to the communications listed on the agenda as Items H.01 - H.12 and noted that action by Legislative Council was needed for Item H.04 and H.08(b), and a presentation will be given by Arkansas Insurance Department - H.05.

H.04 - Arkansas Teacher Retirement System, Request for the Legislative Council's retrospective review of the imminent need partial equity ownership investments, submitted pursuant to A.C.A. § 19-11-1303.

Senator Justin Boyd moved to file the request from the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System, as reviewed. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

H.05 - Arkansas Insurance Department (AID), Monthly Status Report on Implementation of Rule 128 and PBM Enforcement.

Co-Chair Gilmore recognized Mr. Daniel Holland, General Counsel, PBM Division, AID, to present the report. After the presentation Co-Chair Gilmore recognized members for questions.

Senator Kim Hammer requested information on how many dollars have been assessed and collected against PBM's that are paid under NADAC.

Senator Missy Irvin requested to be included in the report the number of submissions that were resolved through direct contact and direct resolution with PBM's.

Senator Blake Johnson requested information on whether the volume of complaints increased or decreased and the percentages of each, from January 2024 - August 2024 and January 2025 - August 2025.

Mr. Holland stated he would gather and submit this information to BLR staff.

H.08(b) - Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism, Division of State Parks, Request to review the division's plan for the upcoming year regarding the amounts to be disbursed for each state park or other entity from the funds appropriated to the division for state operations, submitted pursuant to A.C.A. § 25-43-1304(d)(1).

Representative Les D. Eaves moved to file the request from the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism, Division of State Parks, as reviewed. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Adjournment

At 10:23 a.m., the meeting was adjourned as there was no further business to come before the Legislative Council.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Senator Ben Gilmore
Co-Chair, Senate

Marty Garrity
Executive Secretary