

1 State of Arkansas
2 84th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2003

SCR 8

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5 By: Senator Argue
6 By: Representative Ledbetter

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9 **SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

10 TO SALUTE THE ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN &
11 FAMILIES ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY; AND TO THANK IT
12 FOR ATTENDING TO THE NEEDS OF ARKANSAS' CHILDREN
13 AND FOR GIVING CHILDREN A VOICE IN THE DEN OF
14 VOICES THAT CONFRONT THIS BODY.

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16 **Subtitle**

17 TO SALUTE THE ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR
18 CHILDREN & FAMILIES ON ITS 25TH
19 ANNIVERSARY; AND TO THANK ARKANSAS
20 ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FOR
21 GIVING CHILDREN A VOICE IN THE DEN OF
22 VOICES THAT CONFRONT THIS BODY.

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25 WHEREAS, in 1977, some of Arkansas' leading citizens, including Dr.
26 Betty Lowe, Dr. Betty Caldwell, and former first lady, Hillary Clinton,
27 gathered to start a new agency to represent those who couldn't speak for
28 themselves, our children. Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families, one of
29 the oldest state child advocacy organizations in the country, was created;
30 and

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32 WHEREAS, the mission of Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families is
33 to protect and promote through research, education, and advocacy the rights
34 and well-being of Arkansas children and their families so that they have the
35 opportunity to lead healthy and productive lives; and Arkansas Advocates for
36 Children & Families believe this can be achieved when families, communities,



1 and the government work together; and

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3 WHEREAS, over the years, members of the General Assembly have called on
4 Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families to assist in making changes for
5 children. Such was the case when the General Assembly faced the task of
6 creating a new system of juvenile justice in 1987 when the Supreme Court,
7 responding to litigation influenced by Arkansas Advocates for Children &
8 Families, found the old system unconstitutional. Again, the General Assembly
9 turned to Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families when a special session
10 was called in 1992 to address the failure of the state's foster care system
11 in keeping children from harm. The General Assembly heeded their advice
12 about hunger among poor children and passed legislation in 1993 that mandated
13 schools to participate in the federal school breakfast program that resulted
14 in thousands of hungry children starting their day ready to learn. More
15 recently, Governor Huckabee and the General Assembly responded to Arkansas
16 Advocates for Children & Families' argument that children needed access to
17 health care as their parents could no longer afford private insurance and the
18 ARKids First Program was created. Today, over 280,000 children can now
19 access health care. In the last few months, Arkansas Advocates for Children
20 & Families' series on tax and revenue issues relating to education have kept
21 our members and the public informed about the financial realities the state
22 must face. The General Assembly eagerly awaits the re-issuing of Arkansas
23 Advocates for Children & Families' revised Family Income Standard that sets a
24 market rate for how much money it takes a family to get by. Repeatedly,
25 Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families' research, data, and analyses
26 raise critical issues, guide the General Assembly in identifying needs, and
27 help the General Assembly keep the state accountable for how it serves the
28 state's children; and

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30 WHEREAS, the General Assembly recognizes that the efforts of Arkansas
31 Advocates for Children & Families have resulted in changes that have affected
32 almost every child in the state, but the General Assembly is particularly
33 grateful for the attention they have given to those with the least, our
34 state's poorest children; and

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36 WHEREAS, the General Assembly looks forward to continuing its

1 longstanding relationship with Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families and
2 stands ready to work together to make Arkansas a better place for our
3 children,

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5 NOW THEREFORE,

6 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
7 STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

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9 That this resolution is adopted to salute Arkansas Advocates for
10 Children & Families on its 25th anniversary, and to thank it for attending to
11 the needs of Arkansas' children and for giving children a voice in the den of
12 voices that confront this body.