

State of Arkansas

86th General Assembly

Regular Session, 2007

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 2413

By: Representatives Dickinson, Abernathy, Allen, Berry, Cooper, Davenport, Dunn, L. Evans, Everett, George, Jeffrey, Kenney, Medley, Norton, Reep, Rosenbaum, Sample, L. Smith, Wills

By: Senator B. Johnson

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ARKANSAS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY TO SUPPORT AN ALLIANCE OF RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES, CHANCELLORS AND PRESIDENTS, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTOR FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING JOBS, INCREASING RESEARCH, AND ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ARKANSAS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY TO SUPPORT A RESEARCH ALLIANCE FOR THE PURPOSES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 15, Chapter 3 is amended to add an additional subchapter, as follows:

15-3-301. Title

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Arkansas Research Alliance Act".

15-3-302. Legislative intent.

The General Assembly finds:

(1) Economic growth and development in Arkansas in the twenty-



first century are indisputably tied to the success of research centers and institutions in incubating high-tech industry;

(2) The critical success factors of research institutions are available research infrastructure, talented senior researchers, suitable buildings, and effective equipment; and

(3) Private sector leadership understands the market potential of research in economic development and the job-creating power of public-private collaboration.

15-3-303. Definitions.

As used in this subchapter:

(1) "Job creating research" means basic and applied laboratory research that may reasonably be expected to lead to the creation of knowledge-based and high-technology jobs in Arkansas;

(2) "Knowledge-based and high-technology jobs" means employment opportunities in positions that pay more than one and seventy-five one hundredths (1.75) times the average annual wage in the state according to the most recent data available;

(3) "Research alliance" means the collaborative functions of research universities for the purpose of:

(A) Enhancing research infrastructure;

(B) Increasing the number of talented researchers at research universities; and

(C) Expanding knowledge-based and high-technology job-creating research activities;

(4) "Research infrastructure" means the equipment, buildings, information technology connectivity, and software of research universities within which talented researchers conduct their work; and

(5) "Research university" means any university campus in Arkansas that receives significant federal funding of job-creating research.

15-3-304. Collaboration of Arkansas Science and Technology Authority with research universities and private business sector representatives.

(a) The Arkansas Science and Technology Authority may work with the chancellors and presidents of research universities and the private business sector to support collaborations establishing an alliance for the purpose of

1 improving the economy of the state through:

2 (1) Improving research infrastructure;

3 (2) Increasing the focus on job-creating research activities
4 within or supported by the research universities; and

5 (3) Expanding job-creating research activities toward producing
6 more knowledge-based and high-technology jobs in this state.

7 (b) The authority shall designate no more than five (5) institutions
8 of higher education as research universities for the purposes of this
9 subchapter.

10
11 15-3-305. Areas of collaboration.

12 The Arkansas Science and Technology Authority may recommend that a
13 research alliance under this subchapter:

14 (1) Identify specific areas where scientific research and
15 technological investigation may contribute to the creation and growth of
16 knowledge-based and high-technology jobs in Arkansas;

17 (2) Determine specific areas in which financial investment in
18 scientific and technological research and development from federal agencies
19 or private businesses located in Arkansas could be enhanced or increased if
20 state resources were made available to assist in financing research
21 infrastructure;

22 (3) Advise universities of the research needs of Arkansas
23 businesses and improve the exchange of scientific and technological
24 information for the mutual benefit of universities and private businesses;

25 (4) Encourage collaborations among scholars and faculty of
26 research universities in the areas of research identified by the alliance;

27 (5)(A) Recommend state investments in research infrastructure.

28 (B) In determining the recommendations for state
29 investments in research infrastructure, the alliance shall invite from
30 research universities:

31 (i) Assessments of the capabilities of the research
32 universities to seize research opportunities in the areas of research
33 identified by the alliance; and

34 (ii) Investments that would accelerate the creation
35 of economic opportunities for the citizens of the state;

36 (6) Certify investments in research infrastructure from the

1 Arkansas Research Infrastructure Fund; and

2 (7) Monitor, in the specific areas identified by the alliance:

3 (A) The growth in university research funding;

4 (B) Intellectual property creation;

5 (C) Licensing of technology to entrepreneurial firms and
6 existing Arkansas companies;

7 (D) Growth in venture capital investments in Arkansas; and

8 (E) Employment in knowledge-based and high-technology
9 employees.

10
11 15-3-306. Contracting with research alliance.

12 (a) In order to assist a research alliance in achieving the objectives
13 identified in § 15-3-305, the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority may
14 contract with a research alliance or any non-profit organization recommended
15 by a research alliance for activities consistent with the research alliance's
16 purpose under § 15-3-305

17 (b) When contracting with the alliance or its designee under this
18 subchapter, the authority may directly enter into agreements with persons or
19 entities and shall not be bound by the provisions of Arkansas procurement law
20 requiring competitive bids.

21
22 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 19, Chapter 6, Subchapter 4 is amended
23 to add an additional section to read as follows:

24 19-6-500. Arkansas Research Infrastructure Fund.

25 (a) There is created on the books of the Treasurer of State, Auditor
26 of State, and Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a special revenue fund to be
27 known as the "Arkansas Research Infrastructure Fund".

28 (b) The fund shall consist of:

29 (1) All moneys appropriated to it by the General Assembly; and

30 (2) Any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests received from
31 federal, private, or other sources.

32 (c) The fund shall be used by the Arkansas Science and Technology
33 Authority for the purposes delineated under the Arkansas Research Alliance
34 Act, § 15-3-301 et seq.