

1 State of Arkansas As Engrossed: S3/18/15 S3/27/15

2 90th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2015

SENATE BILL 1037

4

5 By: Senators G. Stubblefield, Bledsoe, Caldwell, E. Cheatham, Collins-Smith, J. Cooper, Flippo, J.

6 Hendren, Hester, B. Johnson, Rice, D. Sanders

7 By: Representatives C. Armstrong, Baltz, Bentley, C. Douglas, Pitsch, Ratliff, Richmond, B. Smith,

8 Sorvillo, Speaks, Tosh

9

For An Act To Be Entitled

10

11

AN ACT TO CREATE A PILOT PROGRAM FOR KINDERGARTEN

12

THROUGH GRADE TWELVE (K-12) AGRICULTURE SCHOOLS; TO

13

PROMOTE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS FOR A WIDE

14

VARIETY OF CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE; TO GROW AND EXPAND

15

AGRIBUSINESS IN THE STATE; TO STRENGTHEN ARKANSAS'S

16

RURAL COMMUNITIES; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY AND FOR

17

OTHER PURPOSES.

18

19

Subtitle

20

21

TO CREATE A PILOT PROGRAM FOR

22

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE TWELVE (K-12)

23

AGRICULTURE SCHOOLS; AND TO DECLARE AN

24

EMERGENCY.

25

26

27

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

28

29

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY

30

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

31

(1) Agriculture is the backbone of the state's economy;

32

(2) Twenty-seven (27) out of every one hundred (100) jobs in

33

Arkansas are agriculture related;

34

(3) Arkansas is the number one (1) rice producing state in the

35

nation, growing fifty percent (50%) of the nation's rice and adding more than

36

six billion dollars (\$6,000,000,000) to the state's economy each year;



1 (4) Arkansas is the number two (2) soybean producing state in
2 the United States, adding more than two billion dollars (\$2,000,000,000) to
3 the state's economy each year;

4 (5) Arkansas ranks in the top ten (10) poultry-producing and
5 egg-producing states in the nation;

6 (6) Forest products added over three billion dollars
7 (\$3,000,000,000) to the state's economy in 2012, supporting nearly twenty-
8 five thousand (25,000) jobs;

9 (7) Just under half of our state's population live in rural
10 communities;

11 (8) Although agriculture is the largest business in our state,
12 Arkansas has not been at the forefront of integrating agriculture-based
13 education initiatives in our education system;

14 (9) Innovations in technology and equipment have transformed the
15 agriculture industry, leaving businesses struggling to find qualified
16 individuals to fill open positions; and

17 (10) Creating kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12)
18 agriculture schools across the state will provide deliberate, focused
19 instruction that will address the needs of the state's agriculture-based
20 economy.

21 (b)(1) The Department of Career Education, in collaboration with the
22 Department of Education, shall develop, administer, and oversee the
23 Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (K-12) Agriculture School Pilot Program.

24 (2) An agriculture school that is part of the pilot program
25 shall be governed by a single seven (7) member board of directors of
26 agriculture schools appointed by the Governor.

27 (3) An agriculture school in the pilot program shall have a
28 seven (7) member advisory board comprised of representatives from the:

29 (A) Local agriculture business community;

30 (B) Institutions of higher education;

31 (C) Department of Agriculture;

32 (D) Department of Career Education; and

33 (E) Department of Education.

34 (c)(1) To encourage small rural communities to participate in the
35 pilot program, § 6-13-1501(a)(2) and § 6-13-1502 shall not apply to an
36 agriculture school that is part of the pilot program.

1 (2) All other laws and rules applicable to a public school are
2 applicable to an agriculture school unless specifically exempted under this
3 chapter.

4 (d) The pilot program shall provide for:

5 (1) A mayor of a municipality, a county judge, or board of
6 directors of a school district to apply for an agriculture school;

7 (2) A partnership with an institution of higher education to
8 expand program offerings and provide opportunities for dual enrollment and
9 concurrent credit, including industry-based certifications upon graduation
10 from an agriculture high school;

11 (3) Students to transfer from other school districts to an
12 agriculture school;

13 (4) At least one (1) agriculture school for grades seven through
14 twelve (7-12) for the 2015-2016 school year;

15 (5) At least one (1) agriculture school for grades kindergarten
16 through grade six (K-6) during the 2016-2017 school year; and

17 (6) An agriculture school to focus on the type of agricultural
18 industry in the local region.

19 (e) An agriculture school opened as a part of the Kindergarten through
20 Grade Twelve (K-12) Agriculture School Pilot Program may receive funding from
21 the public school fund and other sources as allowed by law.

22 (f) The Department of Career Education, in collaboration with the
23 Department of Education, shall adopt rules to administer the Kindergarten
24 through Grade Twelve Agriculture Pilot Program, including without limitation,
25 rules that address:

26 (1) Applications;

27 (2) Administration; and

28 (3) Reporting requirements.

29
30 SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
31 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that agriculture play a key role in
32 the state's economy; that there are a limited number of skilled individuals
33 to fulfill the wide variety of agricultural industry jobs in the state; and
34 that this act is immediately necessary to ensure that educational
35 opportunities in the field of agriculture are available to students.
36 Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately

1 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall
2 become effective on:

3 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

4 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,
5 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the
6 bill; or

7 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is
8 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

9

10

/s/G. Stubblefield

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36