

State of Arkansas  
89th General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2013

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1739

By: Representative Harris

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO STUDY THE BEST WAY TO MEET THE  
CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE FOR THE SUPPORT  
OF INSTITUTIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE  
DEAF AND STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND; AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

ACT TO STUDY THE BEST WAY TO MEET THE  
CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE FOR  
THE SUPPORT OF INSTITUTIONS FOR THE  
EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF AND  
STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND.

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

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Article 19, § 19 of the Arkansas Constitution states in part, "It shall be the duty of the General Assembly to provide by law for the support of institutions for the education of the deaf and dumb, and of the blind";

(2) Since the 1850s, the General Assembly has satisfied this constitutional obligation by supporting the Arkansas School for the Blind and the Arkansas School for the Deaf; and

(3) With the advances in education for children with special educational needs, it is time to study and reassess the best method for the General Assembly to meet its constitutional duty to provide for the education



of these students.

(b) The House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education shall jointly study during the interim issues relevant to the education of students who are blind and students who are deaf currently provided by the Arkansas School for the Blind and the Arkansas School for the Deaf and report the committees' findings to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate not later than October 1, 2014.

(c) The study of the education of students who are blind and students who are deaf shall consider without limitation:

(1) The educational needs of students who are blind and students who are deaf;

(2) The available options for educating blind and deaf students;

(3) The meaning of the constitutional requirement to "provide by law for the support of institutions for the education of the deaf and dumb, and of the blind";

(4) The costs to the state for supporting the Arkansas School for the Blind and the Arkansas School for the Deaf;

(5) The effectiveness of the educational services provided by the Arkansas School for the Blind and the Arkansas School for the Deaf; and

(6) Possible actions the General Assembly could take to improve the educational options for students who are blind and students who are deaf while satisfying its constitutional duty.