

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
90th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2015

As Engrossed: S3/18/15 S3/27/15

A Bill

SENATE BILL 1037

By: Senators G. Stubblefield, *Bledsoe, Caldwell, E. Cheatham, Collins-Smith, J. Cooper, Flippo, J. Hendren, Hester, B. Johnson, Rice, D. Sanders*

By: Representatives *C. Armstrong, Baltz, Bentley, C. Douglas, Pitsch, Ratliff, Richmond, B. Smith, Sorvillo, Speaks, Tosh*

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE A PILOT PROGRAM FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE TWELVE (K-12) AGRICULTURE SCHOOLS; TO PROMOTE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE; TO GROW AND EXPAND AGRIBUSINESS IN THE STATE; TO STRENGTHEN ARKANSAS'S RURAL *COMMUNITIES*; *TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY* AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

*TO CREATE A PILOT PROGRAM FOR
KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE TWELVE (K-12)
AGRICULTURE SCHOOLS; AND TO DECLARE AN
EMERGENCY.*

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

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

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

(2) Twenty-seven (27) out of every one hundred (100) jobs in Arkansas are agriculture related;

(3) Arkansas is the number one (1) rice producing state in the nation, growing fifty percent (50%) of the nation's rice and adding more than six billion dollars (\$6,000,000,000) to the state's economy each year;



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A) Local agriculture business community;

(B) Institutions of higher education;

(C) Department of Agriculture;

(D) Department of Career Education; and

(E) Department of Education.

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

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

(d) The pilot program shall provide for:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1) Applications;

(2) Administration; and

(3) Reporting requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

/s/G. Stubblefield