

By: Representative Boyd

HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING STATE AGENCIES IN ARKANSAS TO COOPERATE IN
IMPROVING LITTER CLEAN-UP STATEWIDE.

Subtitle

URGING STATE AGENCIES IN ARKANSAS TO
COOPERATE IN IMPROVING LITTER CLEAN-UP
STATEWIDE.

WHEREAS, according to America's largest study of littering, Keep America Beautiful, 2009, litter clean-up costs in the United States exceed eleven billion five hundred million dollars (\$11,500,000,000) each year; and

WHEREAS, businesses pay about nine billion one hundred million dollars (\$9,100,000,000), or eighty percent (80%), of the total cost of litter clean-up; and

WHEREAS, in most cases, the remaining cost of litter clean-up is passed on to consumers with states, counties, and cities annually spending about one billion three hundred million dollars (\$1,300,000,000) on litter clean-up; and

WHEREAS, litter costs to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department for the 2016 fiscal year were:

Litter Pickup Cost, two million eight hundred twenty-two thousand eight hundred forty-six dollars (\$2,822,846); Litter Pickup Cost, one million one hundred eighty-two thousand three hundred seven dollars (\$1,182,307); Pathfinder Pickup Cost, two hundred seventy-one thousand nine hundred eighty-seven dollars (\$271,987); EastArk Pickup Cost, thirty-six thousand one



hundred seventy-six dollars (\$36,176); Inmate Labor Pickup Cost, one hundred forty-three thousand ninety-six dollars (\$143,096); Parolee Labor Pickup Cost, ten thousand five hundred fifteen dollars (\$10,515); Litter Pickup Cost for the Adopt-a-Highway Program, seventy-five thousand five hundred forty-one dollars (\$75,541); and

WHEREAS, the total 2016 cost for litter clean-up by the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department was: four million five hundred forty-two thousand four hundred sixty-eight dollars (\$4,542,468); and

WHEREAS, litter poses numerous undesirable environmental, social, health, and aesthetic problems, cigarette butts and plastic bags being among the most frequently littered items; and

WHEREAS, about seventeen percent (17%) of all disposals of waste materials in public spaces constitute littering, and most littering is intentional; and

WHEREAS, indirect costs of littering include declining real estate values, discouraging potential customers from shopping, and deterring new employers from locating in affected communities. Debris may be carried by storm drains into local waterways, resulting in environmental hazards. Littering also contributes to personal injury and health costs, such as being cut by, stepping on, or handling broken glass or other sharp objects, or breathing hazardous chemicals; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 Impact on Litter Report of the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission indicates that fourteen thousand one hundred twelve (14,112) volunteers, involving seventy-seven thousand eight hundred forty-eight (77,848) hours at three hundred four (304) events, picked up five hundred three thousand nine hundred ninety-one pounds (503,991 lbs.) of litter, one million eight hundred thirty thousand pounds (1,830,000 lbs.) of bulky waste, and nine thousand five hundred eighty-one (9,581) tires. During 2016, one thousand one hundred thirty-six miles (1,136) miles of roadsides, one thousand three hundred eighty-one (1,381) miles of waterways, and seventeen thousand four hundred four (17,404) acres of parks and public areas

were cleaned; and

WHEREAS, researchers have found that community or state antilittering campaigns that focus on violations of shared norms and values are the most effective in curbing littering. The Keep America Beautiful and Keep Arkansas Beautiful campaigns have been particularly effective in reducing littering among people who generally are committed to societal norms and laws. Messages that directly link trash disposal to social responsibilities to the community and state are the most effective with residents; and

WHEREAS, because research indicates that people are more likely to litter in places where they do not reside, messages specially targeting vacationers and tourists are also needed. Use of logos and brief messages on vacation, tourism brochures, and other materials that prompt people to put trash in designated receptacles have been shown to reduce littering; and

WHEREAS, research also indicates that people who are less committed to societal norms and values are more responsive to littering campaigns that feature celebrities and sports heroes modeling the use of trash receptacles and supporting antilittering messages; and

WHEREAS, continuous communication between agencies such as the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission that sponsor antilittering campaigns and affiliated organizations is essential to sustaining interest and participation in community and statewide efforts to cleanup properties, highways, and waterways. Effective communication may include updating information on websites, use of social media, emails, professional development training and workshops, webinars, conferences, presentations in agencies and educational settings, and invitations to information-sharing and decision-making meetings; and

WHEREAS, statewide campaigns such as Keep Arkansas Beautiful are more effective when clear lines of communication and linkages operate between agencies involved in litter reduction, such as the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, and Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality. These agencies and others can

pool expertise and resources to enlarge the sphere of influence in statewide and community efforts to prevent and remove trash and other debris. Periodic meetings and conferences should be held to promote ongoing interactions and learning between these various agencies; and

WHEREAS, several state agencies are involved in working to prevent and control littering in Arkansas, including the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission, Arkansas-certified law enforcement officers, including the Department of Arkansas State Police, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, the Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department, the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission, and the Department of Parks and Tourism; and

WHEREAS, involving the community in litter clean-up and giving public recognition for their achievements will enhance community pride and commitment to keeping the community clean. Emphasizing the benefits to property values of removing trash and other unwanted materials also bolsters motivation to participate in litter clean-up; and

WHEREAS, wide availability and strategic location, spacing, and design of trash receptacles has a significant effect on the reduction of littering, especially in locations where trash receptacles are most needed. Studies have found that receptacles with unique designs and bright colors are more used than ordinary drab cans; and

WHEREAS, container deposit legislation has been passed in some states requiring businesses to charge a refundable deposit on drink containers, such as aluminum cans and glass or plastic bottles. States such as Michigan and Oregon have reported impressive reductions in excess of eighty percent (80%) in beverage container littering; and

WHEREAS, Washington State implemented a statewide program known as "Litter and It Will Hurt" that successfully reduced litter. Washington's Litter Task Force, formed in 1997, implemented a campaign across all media to raise awareness of littering problems, encourage prevention, and introduce renewed emphasis on enforcement of littering laws; and

WHEREAS, the strategies adopted in Washington included creating the Ecology Youth Corps pickup program, establishing a local government funding program for litter programs, creating an competitive source of capital and operating funds for local and state agencies, establishing a “rainy day account” as a contingency for litter tax expenditures and strengthening the enforcement of penalties for littering. More than five (5) years after the initiative’s implementation, the estimated amount of litter on roadways decreased twenty-four percent (24%). Other types of litter, including beverage containers, glass containers, construction debris, tires and other rubber car parts, fast food containers, and metal beverage containers, also decreased,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives urges all state agencies in Arkansas to review policies and procedures related to littering to determine the best methods to improve cooperation among state agencies to reduce litter statewide.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be delivered by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission, the Department of Arkansas State Police, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, the Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department, the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission, the Department of Parks and Tourism, and the Arkansas Municipal League and the Association of Arkansas Counties.