

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

State of Arkansas
93rd General Assembly
Regular Session, 2021

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1621

By: Representative Gonzales

By: Senators B. Ballinger, T. Garner, Beckham, M. Johnson

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO FIND COMMON GROUND IN ARKANSAS AND PROMOTE COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE AISLE BY PROHIBITING BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION; TO PROHIBIT THE INSTALLATION OF BARRIERS IN THE CHAMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE AISLE BY PROHIBITING THE INSTALLATION OF BARRIERS IN THE CHAMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 10, Chapter 2, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

10-2-133. Installation of barriers in chambers prohibited - Findings.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) It is vitally important that legislators find common ground to achieve an effective and efficient legislative process;

(2) A key aspect of achieving this common ground is promoting communication among all members, regardless of their party affiliation; and

(3) The installation of barriers in the chambers of the House of Representatives and the Senate inhibits communication between legislators and



complicates the legislative process.

(b) The House of Representatives and the Senate shall not install barriers between their members in their respective chambers, including without limitation transparent barriers.

SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. If barriers between the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate are present in the chambers of the House of Representatives and the Senate on the effective date of this act, the barriers shall be removed within five (5) business days of the effective date of this act.

SECTION 3. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the General Assembly performs actions critical to the public peace, health, and safety; that it is essential that the General Assembly operate in an effective and efficient manner to enact laws necessary to ensure the state's operation and the health and safety of its residents; that the installation of barriers in the chambers of the House of Representatives and the Senate inhibits the effective and efficient operation of the General Assembly; and that this act is immediately necessary to provide for the removal of any barriers installed in the chambers of the House of Representatives and the Senate to create an effective and efficient legislative process that benefits all residents of the state and ensures the public peace, health, and safety. 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.