

State of Arkansas
94th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2023

A Bill

SENATE BILL 230

By: Senator B. King

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO EXPAND THE TIME FOR EARLY VOTING; TO REQUIRE THAT EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID TIME OFF TO VOTE; TO AMEND ELECTION LAWS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO EXPAND THE TIME FOR EARLY VOTING; TO REQUIRE THAT EMPLOYERS PROVIDE PAID TIME OFF TO VOTE; AND TO AMEND ELECTION LAWS.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 7-1-102 is amended to read as follows:

7-1-102. Work time to be scheduled for voting – Penalty.

(a) Each employer in the state shall schedule the work hours of employees ~~on election days~~ so that each employee will have an opportunity to exercise the right of franchise on election day or during early voting for all elections.

(b) Each employer shall provide eight (8) hours of paid leave to each employee who is a registered voter to exercise the right of franchise during early voting prior to each of the following, a:

- (1) Primary election;
- (2) Primary runoff election; and
- (3) General election.

(c) No employer shall subject an employee to discharge, loss of sick leave, loss of vacation time, or any other form of penalty on account of his or her absence from employment by reason of exercising the right of franchise.



(d) Any employer who fails or refuses to comply with the provisions of this section shall upon conviction be subject to a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) nor more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250).

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 7-5-418(a)(1), concerning early voting, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)(A) Except as provided in subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section, early voting shall be available to any qualified elector who applies to the county clerk's designated early voting location, beginning ~~fifteen (15)~~ thirty (30) days, excluding Sundays, before a preferential primary or general election between the hours of:

(i) 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for the first fifteen (15) days of early voting;

(ii) 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for the remaining weekdays of early voting;

(iii) ~~and~~ 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. ~~on Saturday~~ Saturdays; and ~~ending at 5:00 p.m.~~

(iv) 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on the Monday before the election.

(B) Early voting shall not be available on state or county holidays.