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MUST BE PRINTED ON 8 ½ in. x 14 in. (LEGAL SIZE) PAPER

THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT OF 2026

VOTERS REGISTERED IN _____ COUNTY

SOS
USE
ONLY

VALID OF _____

BY _____ DATE _____

To the Honorable Cole Jester, Secretary of State of the State of Arkansas: We, the undersigned registered voters of the State of Arkansas, respectfully propose the following amendment to the Constitution of the State, and by this, our petition, order that an amendment to Article 14 (Education) of the Arkansas Constitution of 1874, entitled "THE ARKANSAS EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT OF 2026," be submitted to the people of said state, to the end that the same may be approved or rejected by the vote of the registered voters of said state at the regular general election to be held on the 3rd day of November, 2026, and each of us for himself or herself says: I have personally signed this petition; I am a registered voter of the State of Arkansas, and my printed name, date of birth, residence, city or town of residence, and date of signing this petition are correctly written after my signature.

SIGNATURE	PRINTED NAME	BIRTH DATE	STREET ADDRESS	CITY / TOWN	DATE SIGNED
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
(FOR CANVASSER ONLY) State of Arkansas, County of _____ (county where notary signs) I, _____, (print name of canvasser), being duly sworn, state under oath that, after I verified each petitioner's identity by viewing his or her photo identification under Arkansas Code Ann. § 7-1-101(40), and after I informed each signer by either verbal or by separate written notification that petition fraud is a criminal offense, each of the foregoing persons signed his or her own name to this petition part in my presence. To the best of my knowledge and belief, each signature is genuine and each signer is a registered voter of the State of Arkansas. At all times during the circulation of this petition part, an exact copy of the popular name, ballot title, and text was attached to the petition part, and each signer read the ballot title of the petition or had the ballot title of the petition read to the signer in my presence. My current address is correctly stated below. Signature _____ Current Residence _____ Indicate one: () Paid Canvasser () Volunteer/Unpaid Canvasser					
(FOR NOTARY ONLY) State of Arkansas, County of _____ (county where notary signs) Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 20____. [Notary Seal Below] Signature of Notary _____ My Commission Expires _____ Residence County of Notary _____					

“THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT OF 2026”	(POPULAR NAME) (BALLOT TITLE) An amendment to Article 14 (Education) of the Arkansas Constitution of 1874, to be known as the “Arkansas Educational Rights Amendment of 2024,” to require identical academic standards and identical standards for accreditation, including assessments of students and schools based on such standards, for any school that receives State or local funds; to define “receives, or in receipt of, any State or local funds” to mean: (i) receipt by the school of any State or local funds, property, or tax credits to cover or defray, in whole or part, the costs of any student attending the school; or (ii) receipt by the student attending the school, or the student’s parents or guardians, of any State or local funds, property, or tax credits to cover or defray, in whole or in part, the costs of the student attending the school; or (iii) receipt by a school, a student attending the school, or the student’s parents or guardians, of financial assistance for the cost of the student attending the school that is funded, in whole or in part, by monetary contributions that qualify for a state tax credit under Arkansas law; to deny State or local funds to any non-public school that fails to meet the same academic standards and standards for accreditation or to meet the same assessment requirements based on such standards as public schools; to expand the State’s obligation to ever maintain a general, suitable, and efficient system of free public schools to include: (1) universal access to voluntary, early childhood education for students three (3) years old until they qualify for Kindergarten; (2) universal access to voluntary afterschool and summer programs necessary for the achievement of an adequate education; (3) assistance to children who are within 200% of the federal poverty line so that the qualifying children can achieve an adequate education and overcome the negative impact of poverty on education; and (4) services that fully meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities to allow them meaningful access to integrated education; to ensure that an adequate education means, without limitation, that every child educated in the school should develop sufficient: (1) oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization; (2) knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to students to make informed choices; (3) understanding of governmental processes to students to understand the issues that affect their community, state, and nation; (4) self-knowledge and knowledge of their mental and physical wellness; (5) grounding in the arts to enable students to appreciate their cultural and historical heritage; (6) training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable children to choose and pursue life work intelligently; and (7) academic or vocational skills to enable public school students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market; and to require the General Assembly to enact legislation to implement this amendment, including allocating funding necessary to fully implement this amendment.
(TEXT OF THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT OF 2026) (Stricken language would be deleted from, and underlined language would be added to, present law.) SECTION 1. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 5, to read as follows: § 5. Equal Standards. (a) The State must require every elementary or secondary school that receives any State or local funds to meet the identical Academic Standards and the identical Standards for Accreditation set forth by the General Assembly, or when authorized, by the Department of Education. All students attending any elementary or secondary schools that receive, or are in receipt of, any State or local funds must be assessed based on such standards.	(b) (1) Receives, or is in receipt of, any State or local funds means: (i) receipt by a school of any State or local funds, property, or tax credits to cover or defray, in whole or part, the costs of any student attending the school; or (ii) receipt by a student attending the school or the student’s parents or guardians of any State or local funds, property, or tax credits to cover or defray, in whole or in part, the costs of the student attending the school; or (iii) receipt by a school, a student attending the school, or the student’s parents or guardians of financial assistance that is funded, in whole or in part, by monetary contributions that qualify for a state tax credit under Arkansas law, to cover or defray, in whole or in part, the costs of the student attending the school. (2) Standards for Accreditation means any requirements enacted by, or promulgated under authority of the General Assembly, that specify what a school shall meet in order to be fully accredited by the Department of Education. (3) Academic Standards means any standard enacted by, or promulgated under authority of, the General Assembly that defines what students shall know and be able to demonstrate. (4) The General Assembly retains the authority to enact, or to delegate the promulgation of, Standards for Accreditation and Academic Standards. SECTION 2. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 6, to read as follows: § 6. Non-Public Schools – Noncompliance with Standards. The failure of any non-public school to meet the same Academic Standards and Standards for Accreditation, or to meet the same assessment requirements as all other public elementary and secondary schools, shall result in the loss of subsequent receipt of State or local funds until such time as those standards and requirements are met.

SECTION 3. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 7, to read as follows:

§ 7. Early Childhood Education, Afterschool And Summer Programs, Assistance For Children In Poverty, and Quality Special Education.

(a) The State's obligation to ever maintain a general, suitable, and efficient system of free public schools and to adopt all suitable means to secure to the people the advantages and opportunities of education includes, without limitation, the obligation to provide:

- (1) Universal access to voluntary, early childhood education for students three (3) years of age until such students qualify for Kindergarten;
 - (2) Universal access to voluntary afterschool and summer programs necessary for the achievement of an adequate education;
 - (3) Assistance to children who are within 200% of the federal poverty line so that such children can achieve an adequate education and overcome the negative impact of poverty on education; and
 - (4) Services that fully meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities to allow such students meaningful access to integrated education.
- (b) When interpreting or establishing the State's obligations, the courts may not use the obligations enumerated in subsection (a) to limit or restrict the State's broad obligations under this amendment or any other educational obligations prescribed in the Constitution.

SECTION 4. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 8, to read as follows:

§ 8. Adequate Education.

An adequate education means, without limitation, that all children educated in the school should develop sufficient:

- (1) Oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization;

(2) Knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to enable students to make informed choices;

(3) Understanding of governmental processes to enable students to understand the issues that affect their community, state, and nation;

(4) Self-knowledge and knowledge of their mental and physical wellness;

(5) Grounding in the arts to enable students to appreciate their cultural and historical heritage;

(6) Training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable children to choose and pursue life work intelligently; and

(7) Academic or vocational skills to enable public school students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market.

SECTION 5. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 9, to read as follows:

§ 9. Legislative Implementation.

This amendment and all its provisions are mandatory. The General Assembly may not enact any legislation, and no agency or department of this State may promulgate any rules, to restrict, hamper, or impair the intent of this amendment. The General Assembly must enact legislation to effectuate the terms of this amendment and allocate funding to the appropriate state governmental agency to implement this amendment.

SECTION 6. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 10, to read as follows:

§ 10. Amendment.

Absent a vote of the people, the General Assembly may not amend, alter, or repeal this amendment.

SECTION 7. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 11, to read as follows:

§ 11. Compliance with U.S. Constitution and Federal law.

Nothing in this amendment is intended to require any school to comply with any provision of this amendment that conflicts with the Constitution of the United States or federal law.

SECTION 8. The Arkansas Constitution is amended to add Article 14, Section 12, to read as follows:

§ 12. Severability.

If any provision of this amendment is determined to violate the Constitution of the United States and, thus, becomes void, voidable, or unenforceable, such determination shall not affect the other provisions of this amendment not severed, which must continue to be valid and in force, and to this end, the provisions of this amendment are declared to be severable.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANVASSERS AND SIGNERS

1. Under the Arkansas Constitution, citizens have the power to (a) initiate legislation by petition of 8% of the legal voters, (b) initiate constitutional amendments by petition of 10% of legal voters, or (c) order a referendum on any general act or any item of an appropriation bill or measure passed by the General Assembly by petition of 6% of legal voters. A proposed measure must be submitted at a regular election. Referendum petitions may be referred at special elections on petition of 15% of the registered voters. Any measure submitted to the people becomes law when approved by a majority of the votes cast upon such measure.

2. Only registered voters may sign. All signatures must be in the signer's own handwriting and in the presence of the person circulating the petition. Each petition part should contain only the signatures of voters residing in a single county. The signature is not valid if it is obtained after the next general election following the ballot title certification under A.C.A. § 7-9-107.

3. A signer must provide his or her photo identification as defined in A.C.A. § 7-1-101(40), printed name, date of birth, residence, city or town of residence, and date of signing. If, due to a disability, a petition signer needs help providing this information, another person may print the signer's information, and that person must sign and print her or her name in the petition's margin.

4. A canvasser must be both a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of Arkansas. Paid canvassers must also hold domicile in the State of Arkansas. Each canvasser must file a true affidavit, described in A.C.A. § 7-9-111, with the Secretary of State.

5. Under A.C.A. § 7-9-103, a person commits a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$2,500 and confinement of up to one year in jail, if the person:

- Knowingly:
 - Signs a name other than his or her name to a petition;
 - Signs his or her name more than once on a petition;
 - Signs a petition when he or she is not legally entitled to do so;
 - Prints a name, address, or birth date other than his or her own to a petition; or
 - Prints the date of signing for another person, unless the signer requires assistance due to disability and the person complies with A.C.A. § 7-9-103.
- While acting as a canvasser, notary, sponsor as defined under A.C.A. § 7-9-101, or as a sponsor's agent:
 - Knowingly misrepresents the purpose and effect of the petition or the measure for the purpose of causing a person to sign a petition;
 - Solicits or obtains a petition signature knowing that the person signing is not qualified to sign the petition;
 - Knowingly pays a person any form of compensation for signing a petition as a petitioner; or
 - Accepts or pays money or anything of value for obtaining petition signatures when the person acting as a canvasser, sponsor, or agent of a sponsor knows that the person acting as a canvasser's name or address is not included on the sponsor's list filed with the Secretary of State under A.C.A. § 7-9-601.
- While acting as a canvasser, knowingly accepts a petition signature, and prior to the signing:
 - Fails to either (a) witness the signer read the petition's ballot title, or (b) read aloud the petition's ballot title to the signer; or

- Fails to either (a) verbally disclose or (b) provide written notice separate from the petition to the potential signer that petition fraud is a criminal offense;
- While acting as a sponsor or as sponsor's agent:
 - Knowingly hires a paid canvasser who is not both a resident of this state and domiciled in this state; or
 - Files a petition part with the official verifying signatures knowing that the petition part contains one or more false or fraudulent signatures, unless the sponsor clearly strikes each false or fraudulent signature before filing.

6. Under A.C.A. §§ 5-55-601 and 7-9-109, a person commits a Class D FELONY, punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 and up to six years imprisonment, if the person:

- While acting as a canvasser,
 - Knowingly makes a false statement on a petition verification form; or
 - Witnesses signatures on a petition part but knowingly allows another canvasser who did not witness all signatures on a petition part to execute a false verification affidavit with respect to that petition part.
- While acting as a sponsor, sponsor's agent, or representative:
 - Knowingly pays a canvasser for petitioner signatures on a petition part not personally witnessed by that paid canvasser; or
 - Knowingly submits to the Secretary of State a petition part where the verifying canvasser has not witnessed each signature on that petition part.

7. Under A.C.A. § 7-9-127, a person commits a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$2,500 and confinement of up to one year in jail, if the person:

- Knowingly:
 - Changes, erases, intentionally destroys, or discards a petition signature other than his or her own petition signature;
 - Pays a person any form of compensation for not signing a petition as a petitioner or for destroying a petition signature;
 - Accepts or pays money or anything of value for not obtaining signatures on a petition when the person is included on the sponsor's list filed with the Secretary of State under A.C.A. § 7-9-601;
- When acting as a canvasser,
 - Misrepresents the purpose and effect of the petition or measure affected to cause a person not to sign the petition.

8. Under A.C.A. § 7-9-601, a person commits a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$2,500 and up to one year in jail, if the person pays or offers to pay a person, or receives payment or agrees to receive payment, on a basis related to the number of signatures obtained on a statewide petition.


Tim Griffin
Attorney General of Arkansas
Revised 05/29/25