

1 **Associated Student Government**
2 *University of Arkansas*



4 *ASG Senate Resolution No. 5*

5 Author(s): Parliamentarian Kevin Durden

6 Sponsor(s): Programming Committee Chair Abigael Villeneuve, Senate
7 Ambassador Bethany Mueller, and Campus Life Committee Chair
8 Sydney Stewart
9

10 **A Resolution Expressing Student Concern Regarding ACCESS**

11
12 Whereas, [HB1512](#) and [SB246](#) of the Regular Session of the 95th General
13 Assembly of the State of Arkansas establish the Acceleration,
14 Common sense, Cost, Eligibility, Scholarships, and
15 Standardization Initiative, commonly known as the ACCESS
16 Act; and
17

18 Whereas, HB1512 and SB246 are 123-page, omnibus educational
19 reform bills, which include changes to a multitude of aspects
20 of the Arkansas elementary, secondary, and postsecondary
21 education system; and
22

23 Whereas, Section 47 of HB1512 and SB246 amends Arkansas Code § 6-
24 60-1504 to prohibit a “state-supported institution of higher
25 education” from granting an excused absence for “political
26 protest; social or public policy advocacy; or attempts to
27 influence legislation or other governmental policymaking at
28 the local, state, or federal level,” and
29

30 Whereas, Section 47 of HB1512 and SB246 also amends Arkansas Code
31 § 6-60-1504 to prohibit “academic standards, teaching
32 standards, education standards, curriculum, teacher
33 professional development, and rules in a state-supported
34 institution of higher education” from authorizing “student
35 walkouts for purposes of: political protest; social or public
36 policy advocacy; or attempts to influence legislation or other
37 governmental policymaking at the local, state, or federal
38 level,” and
39

40 Whereas, These bills, if adopted in their current form, would
41 significantly limit the ability of University of Arkansas
42 Students from expressing their right of freedom of
43 expression and their ability to make changes in their
44 community; and

45
 46 Whereas, These bills, if adopted, would also restrict classes focused on
 47 advocacy, such as the Fay Jones School of Architecture and
 48 Design Landscape Architecture Advocacy Modules; and
 49

50 Whereas, Section 47 of HB1512 and SB246 would also prevent
 51 members of the Razorback Action Group from receiving an
 52 excused absence for their policy and advocacy work,
 53 significantly limiting their ability to represent the students of
 54 the University of Arkansas; and
 55

56 Whereas, Active participation in the governmental process at all levels
 57 offers unique and invaluable educational opportunities for
 58 students; and
 59

60 Whereas, During the joint meeting of the House Committee on
 61 Education and the Senate Committee on Education on
 62 March 10th, multiple University of Arkansas students spoke
 63 to members of the State Legislature about the harms these
 64 bills would provide to students, especially regarding the
 65 changes made by section 47 of HB1512 and SB246; and
 66

67 Whereas, As initially filed, HB1512 and SB246 placed the same
 68 restrictions on excused absences being given to elementary
 69 and secondary students at a public school district or open
 70 enrollment charter school for purposes of “political protest;
 71 social or public policy advocacy; or attempts to influence
 72 legislation or other governmental policymaking at the local,
 73 state, or federal level,” and
 74

75 Whereas, The Committees on Education adopted an amendment
 76 allowing elementary and secondary students at a public
 77 school district or open enrollment charter school to be
 78 granted an excused absence for advocacy if the student has
 79 parental permission; and
 80

81 Whereas, The committee did not, however, amend any provision of
 82 Section 47 to expand access to advocacy for students at state-
 83 supported institutions of higher education; and
 84

85 Whereas, Section 48 of HB1512 and SB246 amends Arkansas Code
 86 Title 6 – Chapter 60 to add an additional subchapter which
 87 prohibits the university from complying “with any

institutional accreditation requirement related to DEI, including without limitation the requirement of a diversity statement from a state-supported institution of higher education or any employee or contractor of a state-supported institution of higher education,” and

Whereas, As of March 11th, 2025, [13 of the 17 agencies](#) which accredit degrees at the University of Arkansas currently require elements of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as part of the accreditation process; and

Whereas, Prohibiting the University of Arkansas from complying with accreditation requirements from these organizations could lead to the loss of accreditations for degrees, including Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interior Design, Nutrition, Journalism, Psychology, Music, Social Work, Teacher Education, Public Health, Counselor Education, and more; and

Whereas, Under the changes proposed in Section 48 of HB1512 and SB246, noncompliance with this section would result in the loss of eligibility for state funding for at least a fiscal year; and

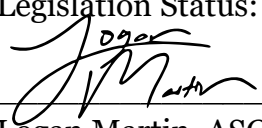
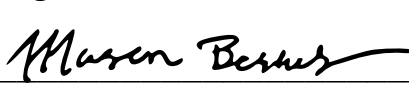
Whereas, Accredited degrees are important for ensuring students can succeed after graduation, especially in securing employment and finding success in their chosen profession; and

Whereas, The added subchapter to Arkansas Code Title 6 – Chapter 60 in Section 48 of HB1512 and SB246 also requires that a “state-supported institution of higher education shall not expend any state funds and shall reject any federal funds whose receipt requires the state-supported institution of higher education to violate” the proposed subchapter, which prohibits a state-supported institution of higher education from engaging in any practices related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and

Whereas, Under the changes proposed in Section 48 of HB1512 and SB246, refusing to deny these funds would result in the loss of eligibility for state funding for at least a fiscal year; and

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|--|
| 130 | Whereas, | Refusal of federal funds would limit the University of |
| 131 | | Arkansas's impact on students, and could lead to less |
| 132 | | programing, a loss of student jobs or research opportunities |
| 133 | | in fields adjacent to DEI, and more unforeseen impacts; and |
| 134 | | |
| 135 | Whereas, | There is still an opportunity for HB1512 and SB246 to be |
| 136 | | amended, whether on the House and Senate floor, |
| 137 | | respectively, or by being rereferred to committee, to change |
| 138 | | the provisions of Sections 47 and 48; and |
| 139 | | |
| 140 | Whereas, | The purpose of the Associated Student Government is to act |
| 141 | | as an organized voice for all undergraduate students of the |
| 142 | | University of Arkansas, to effectively represent |
| 143 | | undergraduate students in the University's decision and |
| 144 | | policy making process, and to provide a broad educational |
| 145 | | experience for undergraduate students while promoting |
| 146 | | citizenship on campus and in the greater community; and |
| 147 | | |
| 148 | Whereas, | Prohibiting students from engaging in political and social |
| 149 | | advocacy, political protests, or attempting to influence |
| 150 | | legislative decisions actively deters students from becoming |
| 151 | | involved and becoming citizens of their greater community |
| 152 | | and limits educational experiences; and |
| 153 | | |
| 154 | Whereas, | The loss of opportunities for future success for students |
| 155 | | caused by a loss of accreditation for a degree or the decrease |
| 156 | | in opportunities caused by a decrease in federal funding |
| 157 | | would limit the educational experience of undergraduate |
| 158 | | students at the University of Arkansas; and |
| 159 | | |
| 160 | Whereas, | The Associated Student Government Senate, as the |
| 161 | | democratically elected representatives of the undergraduate |
| 162 | | student body of the University of Arkansas, has an obligation |
| 163 | | to advocate on behalf of the best interests of the |
| 164 | | undergraduate students of the University of Arkansas and to |
| 165 | | uphold the purpose of the Associated Student Government; |
| 166 | | |
| 167 | Be it therefore resolved: | The Associated Student Government Senate |
| 168 | | supports the rights of all students to express |
| 169 | | their ideas, opinions, and themselves; and |
| 170 | | |
| 171 | Be it further resolved: | The Associated Student Government Senate |
| 172 | | believes the proposed changes in Section 47 of |

| | | |
|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 173 | | HB1512 and SB246 constitute an attack on the |
| 174 | | liberties of the students of the University of |
| 175 | | Arkansas; and |
| 176 | | |
| 177 | Be it further resolved: | The Associated Student Government Senate |
| 178 | | believes the proposed changes in Section 48 of |
| 179 | | HB1512 and SB246 related to complying with |
| 180 | | accrediting agencies and denying federal |
| 181 | | funding are harmful to the interests, |
| 182 | | opportunities, and futures of the students of |
| 183 | | the University of Arkansas; and |
| 184 | | |
| 185 | Be it further resolved: | The Associated Student Government Senate |
| 186 | | supports significant and substantial |
| 187 | | amendment of HB1512 and SB246 before |
| 188 | | adoption by the General Assembly, including: |
| 189 | | • The adoption of amendments which |
| 190 | | guarantee the right to students of state- |
| 191 | | supported institutions of higher education |
| 192 | | to receive excused absences for purposes of |
| 193 | | political protest; social or public policy |
| 194 | | advocacy; or attempts to influence |
| 195 | | legislation or other governmental |
| 196 | | policymaking at the local, state, or federal |
| 197 | | level; |
| 198 | | • The adoption of amendments which allow |
| 199 | | academic standards, teaching standards, |
| 200 | | education standards, curriculum, teacher |
| 201 | | professional development, and rules in a |
| 202 | | state-supported institution of higher |
| 203 | | education to authorize student walkouts for |
| 204 | | purposes of political protest; social or |
| 205 | | public policy advocacy; or attempts to |
| 206 | | influence legislation or other governmental |
| 207 | | policymaking at the local, state, or federal |
| 208 | | level; |
| 209 | | • The adoption of amendments which allow a |
| 210 | | state-supported institution of higher |
| 211 | | education to comply with accreditation |
| 212 | | requirements related to DEI; |
| 213 | | • The adoption of amendments which allow a |
| 214 | | state-supported institution of higher |

215 education to not deny federal funding
 216 related to DEI; and
 217
 218 Be it further resolved: If these bills are not significantly and
 219 substantially amended to address the concerns
 220 expressed above, the Associated Student
 221 Government Senate does not support the
 222 passage, adoption, or signing into law of
 223 HB1512 or SB246; and
 224
 225 Be it further Resolved: The Senate Leadership Council will draft, as
 226 soon as possible, a letter to the Fayetteville
 227 General Assembly Representatives expressing
 228 the Senate's opposition to the Arkansas
 229 ACCESS bill in its current form and expressing
 230 the Senate's support for the amendments
 231 specified in the Resolution. The Office of
 232 Governmental Relations shall be consulted in
 233 the writing of this letter. This Letter and
 234 Resolution shall be sent digitally and physically
 235 to the Fayetteville General Assembly
 236 Representatives.
 237
 238 Be it Further Resolved: The Senate will make the letter available to any
 239 agent of ASG to cosign prior to its being sent,
 240 digitally and physically to the state legislature.
 241
 242 Be it finally resolved: A copy of this legislation be sent to Vice
 243 Chancellor for Governmental Relations Randy
 244 Massanelli and Associate Vice Chancellor for
 245 Governmental Relations Rebeca Haley.
 246
 247 Amendments: _____
 248
 249 Vote Count: Aye 33 Nay 1 Abstentions 3
 250
 251 Legislation Status: Passed X Failed _____ Other _____
 252  _____
 253 3.11.25
 254 Logan Martin, ASG Chair of the Senate Date
 255  _____
 256 3-11-25
 257 Mason Berres, ASG President Date