

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025
4

A Bill

SENATE BILL 489

5 By: Senators G. Leding, G. Stubblefield
6 By: Representatives Clowney, D. Garner, D. Whitaker
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT TO AMEND ARKANSAS LAW CONCERNING THE PLACEMENT
10 OF A MONUMENT ON THE STATE CAPITOL GROUNDS IN
11 RECOGNITION OF THE DESEGREGATION OF THE CHARLESTON
12 AND FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 1954; AND FOR
13 OTHER PURPOSES.
14
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Subtitle

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17 TO AMEND ARKANSAS LAW CONCERNING THE
18 PLACEMENT OF A MONUMENT ON THE STATE
19 CAPITOL GROUNDS IN RECOGNITION OF THE
20 DESEGREGATION OF THE CHARLESTON AND
21 FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 1954.
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23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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25 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. FINDINGS AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT. (a) The
26 General Assembly finds that:

27 (1) Charleston School District in Charleston, Arkansas, and
28 Fayetteville School District in Fayetteville, Arkansas, were acknowledged as
29 the first school districts to desegregate their schools in the former
30 Confederate States of America;

31 (2) Following the May 17, 1954, decision of the United States
32 Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education, the school boards of
33 Fayetteville and Charleston voted to integrate their schools beginning in the
34 fall of 1954, with Fayetteville making the decision just four (4) days after
35 the Brown v. Board of Education opinion;

36 (3) On August 23, 1954, eleven (11) African-American students



1 attended classes in Charleston with no publicity as the school board and the
 2 superintendent persuaded the local newspaper and civic and business leaders
 3 not to discuss their desegregation plans with out-of-town sources;

4 (4) When Fayetteville High School integrated on September 10,
 5 1954, the Charleston School Board President revealed that Charleston had
 6 peacefully integrated three (3) weeks earlier;

7 (5) While integration in Charleston and Fayetteville was spared
 8 some of the problems experienced by other schools during the early days of
 9 desegregation, the districts faced challenges such as football teams refusing
 10 to play Charleston and Fayetteville as there were black players on the teams
 11 and Charleston being excluded from some band competitions because of their
 12 black band members;

13 (6) United States Senator Dale Bumpers, a former member of the
 14 Charleston School Board, sponsored legislation in 1998 designating Charleston
 15 High School as a National Commemorative Site; and

16 (7) It is appropriate to commemorate the historic achievement of
 17 being the first school districts in the former Confederate States of America
 18 to desegregate their schools by placing a monument on the State Capitol
 19 grounds in recognition of the school districts in Charleston and
 20 Fayetteville.

21 (b) It is the intent of this act to place a monument on the State
 22 Capitol grounds in recognition of the historic desegregation of the
 23 Charleston School District and the Fayetteville School District in 1954.

24
 25 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 19-5-1125(e)(2), concerning the Arkansas
 26 Capitol Grounds Monument and Memorial Preservation Fund and as amended by
 27 Acts 2025, No. 251, is amended to read as follows:

28 (2) Before the expenditure of any moneys from the Arkansas
 29 Capitol Grounds Monument and Memorial Preservation Fund for the maintenance,
 30 repair, alteration, addition, reconstruction, or upkeep of any kind for a
 31 specific monument or memorial areas on State Capitol grounds, if there is a
 32 fund dedicated to that specific monument or memorial, the Secretary of State
 33 shall utilize the gifts, grants, and donations made to the following funds
 34 for the maintenance, repair, alteration, addition, reconstruction, or upkeep
 35 of that specific monument or memorial:

36 (A) Vietnam Veterans Monument Fund;

- 1 (B) Arkansas Military War Veterans Monument Fund;
- 2 (C) Ten Commandments Monument Display Act under § 22-3-
- 3 221;
- 4 (D) Gold Star Family Memorial Monument Fund;
- 5 (E) Arkansas Fallen Firefighters Memorial Board under §
- 6 22-3-1704; ~~and~~
- 7 (F) Hoxie: The First Stand Memorial Monument Fund; and
- 8 (G) Charleston and Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial
- 9 Monument Fund.

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 11 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 19, Chapter 5, Subchapter 11, is
 12 amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

13 19-5-1161. Charleston and Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial Monument
 14 Fund.

15 (a) There is established on the books of the Treasurer of State, the
 16 Auditor of State, and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a trust fund to
 17 be known as the “Charleston and Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial Monument
 18 Fund”.

19 (b) The fund shall consist of gifts, grants, and donations from
 20 individuals and organizations as provided under the Charleson and
 21 Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial Monument Act, § 22-3-225, and other funds
 22 as may be provided by law.

23 (c) The fund shall be used exclusively for the purpose of erecting and
 24 maintaining a suitable monument on the State Capitol grounds in recognition
 25 of the desegregation of the Charleston and Fayetteville school districts in
 26 1954, as provided in the Charleston and Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial
 27 Monument Act, § 22-3-225.

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 29 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code Title 22, Chapter 3, Subchapter 2, is amended
 30 to add an additional section to read as follows:

31 22-3-225. Charleston and Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial Monument
 32 Act.

33 (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Charleston
 34 and Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial Monument Act”.

35 (b)(1) The Secretary of State shall permit and arrange for the
 36 placement on the State Capitol grounds of a monument commemorating the

1 desegregation of the Charleston and Fayetteville School Districts in 1954.

2 (2) The monument shall be placed on the State Capitol grounds
3 where there are other monuments.

4 (3) The Secretary of State shall approve the design and site
5 selection for the monument through consultation with the Capitol Arts and
6 Grounds Commission.

7 (c) The Secretary of State may accept gifts, grants, and donations
8 from individuals and organizations to be deposited as trust funds into the
9 Charleston and Fayetteville Desegregation Memorial Monument Fund.

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12 **APPROVED: 4/21/25**
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