

**MINUTES**  
**JOINT MEETING OF**  
**THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**  
**AND**  
**THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
**AND**  
**THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGING, CHILDREN AND YOUTH,**  
**LEGISLATIVE & MILITARY AFFAIRS**  
**AND**  
**THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Tuesday, September 25, 2012**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Room 171, State Capitol**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**

Senator Jimmy Jeffress, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Jimmy Jeffress, Chair; Senator Mary Anne Salmon, Vice Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott; Senator Kim Hendren; and Senator Johnny Key.

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Eddie Cheatham, Chair; Representative Johnnie Roebuck, Vice Chair; Representative Duncan Baird; Representative Toni Bradford; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Ann Clemmer; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Bobby Pierce; Representative Randy Stewart; Representative Tim Summers; and Representative Kathy Webb.

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Kelley Linck; Representative Tiffany Rogers; and Representative Garry Smith.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Missy Irvin, Chair; Senator Jimmy Jeffress; Senator Sue Madison; and Senator Linda Chesterfield.

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGING, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, LEGISLATIVE & MILITARY AFFAIRS IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative David "Bubba" Powers, Vice Chair; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Kim Hammer; Representative Mary P. "Prissy" Hickerson; Representative Jon Hubbard; Representative David Meeks; and Representative Tim Summers.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Paul Bookout; Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Mike Fletcher; Senator Randy Laverty; Representative Fred Allen; Representative Mark Biviano; Representative John Burris; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Clark Hall; Representative Lane Jean; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Greg Leding; Representative Buddy Lovell; Representative Walls McCrary; Representative Mike Patterson; Representative James Ratliff; Representative Mary Slinkard; Representative Nate Steel; Representative Charolette Wagner; and Representative Jon Woods.

**Morning Session**

**The Honorable Missy Irvin**, State Senator, District 10, and Chair, Senate Interim Committee on Children and Youth, was recognized. Senator Irvin welcomed the Committees and said it was an honor to serve with Senator Jimmy Jeffress as Co-Chair of the meeting. She said she is Co-Chair of the Arkansas Legislative Hunger Caucus, and commented that she hoped members would find the speakers on the agenda informative and inspiring and would take the information on hunger issues back to their constituents. Senator Irvin requested that members stand and welcome the **First Lady of Arkansas, Ginger Beebe**, to the meeting. Senator Irvin stated that Mrs. Beebe has led the state graciously and elegantly, and has been a champion of hunger issues. She thanked Mrs. Beebe for attending the meeting and for her work for children and for those who go to bed hungry every night in Arkansas.

Senator Jeffress requested that students from the Greene County Tech School District be recognized, and said he hoped they would enjoy their visit to the Capitol.

Discussion of the No Kid Hungry Campaign

**The Honorable Kathy Webb**, State Representative, District 37, and Executive Director, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, was recognized. Representative Webb remarked that she has been actively involved in the Arkansas Legislative Hunger Caucus over the last six years. She said there's a direct correlation between hunger issues and missed educational opportunities, missed economic opportunities, and poor health outcomes. She said she appreciated the opportunity to have these hearings, then introduced the first speaker on hunger and the many ways it affects Arkansas's communities.

**Ms. Marge Wolf**, Alliance Board President, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, and Chief Executive Officer, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, was recognized. Ms. Wolf spoke on the impact of hunger on Arkansas's children and the resulting impact on education. She stated that in 2010, Arkansas was number one in childhood food insecurity, meaning that, because of hunger, more kids in Arkansas than in any other state were unsure of their next meal and weren't able to learn. She said it meant that more kids were absent from school, and more spent classroom time at the school nurse, or at the principal's office. She noted that these gaps result in poorer education outcomes, poorer nutrition outcomes, and poorer economic outcomes. She said that in 2010 the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance (Alliance) and Share Our Strength joined together with Governor and Mrs. Beebe to launch the Arkansas No Kid Hungry (NKH) Campaign. The Alliance and the NKH Campaign, working in public/private partnerships with the Arkansas Department of Human Services (ADHS), the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), and businesses such as Tyson, Walmart, and the Midwest Dairy Council, learned that those kids who were eligible, weren't participating in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition programs, and that a tremendous gap existed in summer nutrition programs, afterschool programs, breakfast programs, and cooking and shopping programs. She said by 2012, Arkansas had taken a huge step from 2010 and had dropped to ninth worst in childhood food insecurity. She noted one of the main reasons for this drop is the partnership with those active in the NKH Campaign.

**Ms. Jen Jinks**, National Campaign Director, No Kid Hungry at Share Our Strength, Washington, DC, was recognized. Using a PowerPoint presentation with a handout, Ms. Jinks discussed the history of Share Our Strength. She said its focus is on a community's ability to help itself. She said there are currently 18 NKH city and state campaigns, the Cooking Matters program is in 37 states, and the NKH

Allies program is in 12 states. Ms. Jinks discussed the crisis of childhood hunger, the problems of access to food, and hunger in the classroom. She said the NKH Campaign is about trying to find a holistic approach to end childhood hunger, with a focus on three areas: 1) increasing access to resources that already exist, 2) increasing education, and 3) increasing awareness. Ms. Jinks related that Share Our Strength connects kids with nutritious food where they live, work, and play. She discussed the state-based campaign model, public/private partnerships, programmatic work, and the universal impact of hunger. In conclusion, Ms. Jinks talked about public/private partnerships at work in Georgia, Texas, and Arkansas.

**Ms. Tonya Russell**, Director, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services, was recognized. Ms. Russell, using a PowerPoint presentation, discussed what was being done by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education around the issue of hunger. She wanted the Committees to be aware that federal funding for early childhood programs is uncapped in Arkansas: the more eligible children being served, the more federal dollars that can be drawn down. She said there is no match requirement on this funding. She said there has been substantial growth in federal dollars over time, from approximately \$35 million when she first started eight years ago to this year's budget request for \$62 million. Ms. Russell commented that working with partners has helped to expand the ability of children to be served during the summertime. She provided data and discussed feeding sites for the USDA Summer Food Service Program, partnerships in communities, and goals for the unique situations that need to be addressed in Arkansas. She said Governor Beebe's goal is to serve 93,000 children in the Summer Meals Program by the end of 2014. She concluded by commenting on technical assistance and training.

**Mr. Darian Smith**, Principal, Mabelvale Elementary School, Little Rock School District, Little Rock, Arkansas, was recognized. Mr. Smith said he has served as Principal of Mabelvale Elementary School for the past seven years. He discussed Southwest Little Rock, the area in which the school is located, and described the school building, rebuilt in 1980. He said this year's attendance is 470 students in pre-K through 5th Grade, an increase of 70 students over last year's enrollment. He related that, with many students at Mablevale Elementary School coming from difficult economic circumstances, and with a free and reduced lunch rate of over 90%, many students arrive at school hungry. Mr. Smith said that Breakfast in the Classroom, introduced in the school in April 2011, is an important program that gives all students access to breakfast at no charge, providing them with nutritional supplements and preparing them to learn. He commented that with students starting the day by having a meal together, Breakfast in the Classroom helps build a sense of classroom community, and enables teachers to instill valuable life skills in students. He said teachers are appreciative of students who have an increased focus on learning because it makes for more effective instruction. Mr. Smith said that as a result of students being more nourished through the Breakfast in the Classroom program, Mabelvale Elementary School has seen a steady rise in test scores, increased attendance, a drop in behavioral issues resulting from hunger, diminished discipline issues, and a drop in health-related absences. He said that providing students with a healthy meal each morning before class begins gives students a boost that they otherwise would not have and offers them the opportunity to learn and to thrive.

In the discussion that followed the presentations, topics included:

- collecting data to identify causes of hunger and the obesity epidemic in Arkansas,
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),
- quality of food served in school lunches,
- focus of the NKH Campaign being more on application and less on regulation,

- having dietitians or nutritionists in grocery stores to assist parents,
- using a debit card to pay for lunch,
- connection of the NKH Campaign with the National School Lunch Program (NSLP),
- using existing funding in a smarter way,
- educating those with a lower income on how to buy fresh fruits and vegetables,
- challenges of hunger issues with regard to rural schools,
- percentage of state dollars that go for meals and go for administration,
- partnering with food banks,
- outreach food programs reaching infants and toddlers not yet in preschool,
- Arkansas WIC (Women Infants & Children) Program, and
- collecting data to identify that nutrition education is working.

Senator Jeffress thanked the participants for the presentation and discussion on hunger issues.

Discussion and Receipt of Report Concerning Interim Study Proposal 2011-169/Interim Study Proposal 2011-170, TO PLACE THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES ADMINISTERED BY THE DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES UNDER THE AUTHORITY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT IN WHICH THE FACILITY IS LOCATED.

**The Honorable Johnnie Roebuck**, State Representative, District 20, was recognized. Representative Roebuck furnished background for the Interim Study and said many hours of meetings, conversation, and research had gone into its completion. She commended all stakeholders for coming up with solutions to problems. She also thanked the children in the Division of Youth Services (DYS) centers who shared their stories of wanting a better educational system.

**The Honorable David “Bubba” Powers**, State Representative, District 3, was recognized. Representative Powers added his thanks, and said he wanted the Interim Study to be a roadmap going forward. He said the Study indicates that if the educational system is improved, the tide of the prison population will be stemmed. He wanted the Study to be a guide, especially for the legislature, to understanding that to prevent criminality in the future, a quality education must be provided to those youth who have already committed crimes.

**Ms. Nell Smith**, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith presented the research report, *Interim Study on the Educational System of the Division of Youth Services, ISP 2011-169 and 2011-170, September 2012*. She explained that the report is the product of two Senate Committees and two House Subcommittees. She said that, beginning in June 2011, the combined group met six (6) times to discuss education provided to youth in settings throughout the juvenile justice system, including county juvenile detention centers and private residential treatment facilities, and to look at how education is funded, delivered, and monitored in each setting. She said the Subcommittees also discussed the role of schools in the cradle to prison pipeline. Ms. Smith briefly reviewed the report.

Representative Roebuck and Representative Powers discussed recommendations developed to address concerns uncovered in the report.

**Mr. Ron Angel**, Director, Division of Youth Services, was recognized, and thanked Representative Roebuck and Representative Powers for bringing issues to light that have led to improvements in educational services for youth in the juvenile justice system.

**Dr. Tom Kimbrell**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Dr. Kimbrell made summative remarks on how the system has failed youth, and what the ADE needs to do to further improve educational services received by children in the juvenile justice system.

Dr. Kimbrell and **Mr. Brett Smith**, Superintendent of Schools, Division of Youth Services, were recognized, and participated, as needed, in the discussion that followed. Topics included:

- ∴ eligibility of teachers in DYS and other facilities to participate in the teacher retirement system,
- ∴ ultimate responsibility for problems in providing an adequate education to those in the juvenile justice system,
- ∴ Department of Justice recommendations lacking provisions for career education,
- ∴ salary schedule and benefits for teachers in DYS compared to compensation for public school teachers,
- ∴ retirement program for teachers in DYS,
- ∴ having a center under the educational control of the local school district is off the table,
- ∴ evaluating use of assessments in the centers,
- ∴ recommendations in the report are from everyone sitting around the table,
- ∴ alternative learning programs in the recommendations,
- ∴ utilizing school resource officers, and
- ∴ special education in the centers.

At the conclusion of Representative Roebuck's remarks, Senator Jeffress thanked the participants for the presentation and discussion.

The Committees recessed for lunch until 1:30 p.m.

### Afternoon Session

The meeting was reconvened at 1:43 p.m. by Senator Jimmy Jeffress.

#### Discussion of Hunger in Arkansas

**Ms. Marge Wolf**, Alliance Board President, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance (the Alliance), and Chief Executive Officer, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, was recognized. Ms. Wolf thanked everyone for their attendance and spoke of two programs called Cooking Matters and Shopping Matters.

Cooking Matters is a six week cooking class that empowers families at risk of hunger with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy and affordable meals. Through hands-on classes taught by volunteer culinary and nutrition experts, course participants learn how to select nutritious and low cost ingredients and prepare them in ways that provide the best nourishment to their families.

Shopping Matters is a free grocery store tour that teaches low income families how to make healthy and affordable choices at the supermarket.

Goals of the Alliance are as follows:

1. To assist everyone in making the connection between hunger and poor health outcomes, hunger and missed educational opportunities, hunger and lower economic outcomes
2. To work together with our partners across the state to alleviate hunger
3. To create new opportunities for partnerships as we work to move Arkansas forward

**Mr. Ted Clemons**, Director, River Valley Regional Food Bank (RVRFB), Fort Smith, Arkansas, was recognized. Mr. Clemons said the RVRFB is a member of a larger organization called Feeding America which has over 200 food banks nationwide and is also a member of the state association, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. The State of Arkansas has 6 food banks that collect and distribute food and non-food products to pantries which in turn distribute these products to Arkansas's 75 counties. Food is acquired from local manufacturers, local retail pick-ups, local restaurant pick-ups (perishable food) and gardens.

There are many programs that enable the food banks to provide for those in need. Some of those are Core Distributors, the Feeding America BackPack Program, Commodities, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Mobile Pantries, Rural Delivery, Senior Mobile Pantries, School Pantries and Soup Kitchens. Mr. Clemons said the USDA program or TEFAP buys food, which includes processing and packaging, and ships it to participating states to be distributed by select local organizations. Amounts received by each state depend on its low-income and unemployed population.

Representative Meeks was recognized, and asked if organizations can distinguish between those in need from those that abuse the system. Mr. Clemons said the agencies that distribute the food have learned how to eliminate those that are not eligible for help.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Hughes**, Lunch Box Ministry, First United Methodist Church, Mountain View, Arkansas, was recognized. Ms. Hughes said the Lunch Box Ministries began in April, 2008. The purpose is to provide food for children during the summer months when school is not in session. Funding is provided by the First United Methodist Church of Mountain View, other surrounding churches and private donations. This summer an average of 123 children were served weekly.

**Ms. Christie Jordan**, Executive Director, Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas, Jonesboro, Arkansas, was recognized. Ms. Jordan said that according to the 2010 Hunger Study, 14% of clients served by food

pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in Arkansas are elderly. Many of the food banks have specific programs that target seniors.

When the six food banks represented today joined together to create the Alliance, one of the primary goals was to explore non-traditional avenues of food donations. The Alliance discovered that thousands of pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables were going to waste in Arkansas fields after the primary harvest was complete. With the cooperation of Arkansas farmers, the Alliance began the gleaning network. This year, thanks to a partnership with the Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC), 1.1 million pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables were gleaned from Arkansas fields and were distributed to food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and senior citizen centers throughout the state.

**Mr. Ronnie Ritter**, Executive Director, Arkansas Hunters Feeding the Hungry (AHFH), was recognized. Mr. Ritter said AHFH, established in 2000, is a community-minded program that provides venison and other wild game to the hungry. Individuals, organizations, businesses and churches provide financial support to cover processing costs. AHFH has been responsible for processing more than 3 million servings of meat for soup kitchens and food pantries across Arkansas. All meat is distributed free of charge and is usually donated and used in the same county.

AHFH has four main goals as follows:

1. To share the harvest of an abundant resource with Arkansans who are hungry
2. To provide a much needed free, low-fat, high protein food source to many agencies and organizations across Arkansas
3. To create a "Provider Purpose" for hunters who participate, allowing them to give back and share with others
4. To partner with the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission (AGFC) to provide a solution for a balanced deer herd

He noted also that AHFH needs financial support to help offset the cost of processing the meat to feed the hungry.

**Ms. Jill Whittington**, Executive Director, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank, Texarkana, Arkansas, was recognized. Ms. Whittington said the Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank strives to reach the underserved population in Arkansas through the Feeding America BackPack Program and the Mobile Pantry Program. The BackPack Program helps children who come to school on Monday morning hungry. The BackPack Program works with the schools to identify chronically hungry children and provide them with a supply of food every Friday afternoon. This includes meals that children can fix themselves, are shelf-stable, are nutritious and well-balanced, and can help bridge the gap until Monday morning. The backpacks are discretely filled while children are away from the classroom in order to provide the recipient with confidentiality and with the utmost respect for their personal dignity. An amount of food is provided each week that the child can rely on, that is nutritious, and meets the needs of growing bodies. This teaches the child to be self-sufficient and to share with others. By providing regular meals, schools report that behavior improves and attendance is better, especially on Fridays. Their academic performance and social skills improve as well. School counselors report that the BackPack Program opens communications between the school and the parents. Approximately a year ago, the Mobile Pantry Program was established. Volunteers in the Texarkana area pack boxes in the warehouse, load the truck with enough food for 125 families, and advertise the area where food boxes will be dispensed. The response has been overwhelming.

**Ms. Meg Green**, Clinical Nutrition Department, Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH), was recognized. Ms. Green spoke about the Natural Wonders Program. Natural Wonders Partnership Council is composed of organizations that serve ACH and hopes to identify the health needs of the state's children, and to develop a

plan for improving health and quality of life. The Council Partnership includes: First Lady Ginger Beebe, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), Arkansas Department of Human Services (ADHS), Arkansas Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BC/BS), Arkansas Minority Health Commission (AMHC), and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). Through this alliance, programs and initiatives are created to accomplish goals such as an investment in education, health and parent involvement for children ages 0-5, newborn health screens that allow for early diagnostic tests, oral health needs including fluoridation of water, and statewide programs to address childhood obesity.

The federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) offers many opportunities to improve the health of Arkansans. It will increase the opportunity of affordable health care coverage and services. This act will include money for childhood obesity reduction, oral health care education, and home programs for pregnant women and mothers of school-age children. All of the services mentioned today have nutritional implications. The only healthcare professionals educated and trained for medical nutrition therapy are registered dietitians. This year, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) decided that intensive behavioral therapy for obesity can only be provided by primary care physicians. CMS eliminated access and coverage to the most qualified providers who have shown the most evidence-based success. Registered dietitian reimbursement would not only add to the increased provider workload anticipated from this act, but also provide a specialist and an expert in standard health care. Children's HealthWatch is a group of academic pediatricians who focus on infant growth, with all practicing in a growth clinic. They collect data to influence public policy. Children's HealthWatch collects data in five urban safety net hospitals, produce scientific research that is original, timely and inform policy decisions. ACH's emergency room is one of the three in the nation who participate. Through this program, families and patients with food insecurities are identified. From 2007-2009, Arkansas was the leading state with food insecurity with a 17.7% rate but we are now tied for that position at 19.2%. The effects of food insecurity on children are detrimental. Effects can include a 40% chance of developmental delay, academic problems, poor educational achievements, and mental health issues. It is correlated to malnutrition, including obesity. There are approximately 195,000 food-insecure children in Arkansas, with 71% income eligible for federal nutrition programs. With 38% of Arkansas public school students being overweight or obese, 65% of the obese 5-10 year olds have at least one cardiovascular risk, 25% have a minimum of two cardiovascular health risks. It has been determined that this generation of kids will have a life span of 10 years less than their parents. The ACH is currently working to qualify eligible, food-insecure eligible patients for SNAP. On average, we complete 270 new Women, Infants and Children (WIC) referrals in a month in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) and high risk newborn clinics. There are Wellness, Health, Action and Motivation (WHAM) classes offered monthly as a family centered obesity education program. The weight management clinic sees 500 new patients a year, with a 5-6 month delay in scheduling for the program. The Academy of Pediatrics determined that obese patients are supposed to be seen once a week for 12 weeks. The programs are not adequately funded or are operating on expired gifts.

Senator Jimmy Jeffress thanked the presenters for their informative remarks.

Senator Jimmy Jeffress said the next Education meeting will be Monday, October 1, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 171.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

*Approved: 11/26/12*