1	State of Arkansas As Engrossed: S1/21/25 H2/3/25
2	95th General Assembly A BIII
3	Regular Session, 2025SENATE BILL 3
4	
5	By: Senator D. Sullivan
6	By: Representative Bentley
7	
8	For An Act To Be Entitled
9	AN ACT TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION OR PREFERENTIAL
10	TREATMENT BY THE STATE OF ARKANSAS AND OTHER PUBLIC
11	ENTITIES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12	
13	
14	Subtitle
15	TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION OR
16	PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT BY THE STATE OF
17	ARKANSAS AND OTHER PUBLIC ENTITIES.
18	
19	BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
20	
21	SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative intent.
22	(a) The General Assembly intends for this act to prohibit
23	discrimination by public entities on the basis of race, sex, color,
24	ethnicity, or national origin.
25	(b) The General Assembly does not intend for this act to affect any
26	preferences provided to veterans under the law based on their status as a
27	veteran.
28	
29	SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 3-4-223 is amended to read as follows:
30	3-4-223. Diversity in ownership and financial interest.
31	When issuing a permit under Title 3 of the Arkansas Code, the Alcoholic
32	Beverage Control Division shall consider lack of diversity in ownership and
33	financial interest in the geographic area at issue in the permit application
34	the benefit of competition to consumers.
35	
36	SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-10-111 is amended to read as follows:



1

6-10-111. Equity Equality Assistance Center.

(a) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education is authorized
to establish a special section within its organization, to be known as the
Equity Equality Assistance Center, designed to provide assistance to the
school districts of the state in such activities as affirmative action,
program accessibility, human relations, awareness, and desegregation and
nondiscrimination.

8 (b) This assistance shall include on-site visits, workshops, program 9 review, and any other special activity which might enable the school 10 districts of the state to more effectively meet their civil rights 11 <u>desegregation and nondiscrimination</u> responsibilities.

12 (c)(1) The center created by this section shall be the liaison for the 13 division with the United States Office for Civil Rights.

14 (2) The center shall maintain manuals, guidelines, procedures,
15 and other informational materials setting requirements in the area of eivil
16 rights desegregation and nondiscrimination and describing how determination
17 of compliance is made.

(d) Annually, each local school district in the state shall provide
 the center assurances of compliance with eivil rights desegregation and
 <u>nondiscrimination</u> responsibilities in the form and at the time as is
 designated by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

22 (e) The division may withhold state aid from any school district that 23 fails to file its assurance of compliance with civil rights desegregation and 24 nondiscrimination responsibilities by October 15 each year or fails to file 25 any other information with a published deadline requested from school 26 districts by the center so long as thirty (30) calendar days are given 27 between the request for the information and the published deadline, except 28 that thirty (30) days notice shall not be required when the request comes 29 from a member or committee of the General Assembly.

30 (f) The division is authorized to develop forms and promulgate 31 appropriate rules and procedures as may be required to implement the 32 provisions of this section.

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34 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-15-202(f)(1), concerning school 35 accreditation, development of rules, criteria, and standards, is amended to 36 read as follows:

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1	(1) Section 6-10-111(d)-(f) concerning the Equity Equality
2	Assistance Center;
3	
4	SECTION 5. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 17, Subchapter 19, is
5	repealed.
6	6-17-1901. Teacher and administrator recruitment and retention plan.
7	(a) By August 1, 2022, each public school district and open-enrollment
8	public charter school in the state shall prepare a three-year teacher and
9	administrator recruitment and retention plan.
10	(b) The plan shall set forth goals for:
11	(1) The recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators
12	of minority races and ethnicities who increase diversity among the district
13	staff and, at a minimum, reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the
14	district's students; and
15	(2) Increasing the number of students who pursue careers in
16	education with an emphasis on students of minority races and ethnicities.
17	(c) A school district shall review annually the:
18	(1) Recruitment and retention plan; and
19	(2) Progress of the school district in meeting the goals
20	established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.
21	(d) The plan shall be:
22	(1) Updated annually; and
23	(2) Posted on the school district's or open-enrollment public
24	charter school's website no later than August 1 of each year.
25	
26	6-17-1902. Equity Assistance Center — Coordination and contents of
27	plan.
28	(a) The Equity Assistance Center shall provide technical assistance,
29	guidance, and support to public school districts and public open-enrollment
30	charter schools in developing recruitment and retention plans and setting and
31	meeting annual goals.
32	(b)(1) Each public school district and open-enrollment public charter
33	school shall designate an employee to coordinate the implementation and
34	review of the public school district's and open-enrollment public charter
35	school's recruitment and retention plan.
36	(2) The designated equity assistance coordinator in each public

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1	school district and open-enrollment public charter school may serve as the
2	coordinator of the public school district's and open-enrollment public
3	charter school's recruitment and retention plan.
4	(c) The teacher and administrator recruitment and retention plan shall
5	include, but not be limited to, the following information:
6	(1) The annual goals of the public school district or open-
7	enrollment public charter school established pursuant to § 6-17-1901(b);
8	(2) The actions and steps the public school district or open-
9	enrollment public charter school has taken and will take to meet each of the
10	public school district's and open-enrollment public charter school's goals;
11	(3) The progress of the public school district or open-
12	enrollment public charter school in meeting each of the public school
13	district's and open-enrollment public charter school's goals;
14	(4) The evaluative methods the public school district or open-
15	enrollment public charter school will use to measure progress towards meeting
16	the public school district's or open-enrollment public charter school's
17	goals;
18	(5) If the public school district or open-enrollment public
19	charter school did not meet the public school district's or open-enrollment
20	public charter school's goals for the previous reporting period, the public
21	school district or open-enrollment public charter school shall state the
22	reasons for not meeting the goals and the steps the public school district or
23	open-enrollment public charter school will take to overcome the reasons for
24	not meeting the goals;
25	(6) The steps the public school district or open-enrollment
26	public charter school will take to encourage students to pursue a career in
27	education, including steps specific to students of minority races and
28	ethnicities;
29	(7) Public school district or open-enrollment public charter
30	school teacher and administrator recruitment and retention data to show the:
31	(A) Racial and ethnic composition of teachers and
32	administrators employed by the public school district or open-enrollment
33	public charter school for each of the previous three (3) years; and
34	(B) Effectiveness of the plan; and
35	(8) The racial and ethnic composition of the student body and
36	the racial and ethnic composition of the residents of the public school

1	district or open-enrollment public charter school.
2	(d) The State Board of Education may promulgate rules necessary for
3	implementation of this subchapter.
4	
5	6-17-1903. Department of Education — Minority Teacher and Administrator
6	Preparation and Recruitment Strategic Plan.
7	(a)(1) The Department of Education shall set goals for increasing the
8	number of teachers and administrators of minority races and ethnicities in
9	this state.
10	(2)(A) The Division of Higher Education shall collaborate with
11	the State Board of Education, local universities, colleges, public school
12	districts, and open-enrollment public charter schools to develop a strategic
13	plan for increasing the number of teachers and administrators of minority
14	races and ethnicities in this state.
15	(B) The Minority Teacher and Administrator Preparation and
16	Recruitment Strategic Plan shall include without limitation recommendations
17	to institutions with educator preparation programs on ways to:
18	(i) Identify methods for increasing the percentage
19	of teachers and administrators of minority races and ethnicities in
20	proportion to the number of students of minority races and ethnicities in
21	this state; and
22	(ii) Establish programs to identify and recruit
23	individuals of minority races and ethnicities who have already earned college
24	degrees in other job fields to become teachers and administrators.
25	(b) The division shall:
26	(1) Promote educator preparation programs that increase the
27	percentage of individuals of minority races and ethnicities who enter and
28	successfully complete a four-year educator preparatory program and provide
29	support to students of minority races and ethnicities who meet the
30	requirements for entering educator preparation programs; and
31	(2) Submit a report no later than July 1, 2022, and every two
32	(2) years following to the House Committee on Education and the Senate
33	Committee on Education.
34	
35	SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 6-60-703(b)(3), concerning the
36	Comprehensive Arkansas Higher Education Annual Report, is repealed.

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1	(3) Every five (5) years, beginning in 2015:
2	(A) Minority retention plans, § 6-61-122; and
3	(B) Affirmative action program plans, § 6-63-103(c).
4	
5	SECTION 7. Arkansas Code §§ 6-61-121 and 6-61-122 are repealed.
6	6-61-121. Higher education minority retention programs - Definition.
7	For purposes of this section and § 6-61-122, the term "minority" refers
8	to African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Native
9	Americans.
10	
11	6-61-122. Higher education minority retention programs — Establishment
12	- Reports.
13	(a) All state-supported colleges and universities shall establish a
14	program for the retention of blacks and other members of minority groups as
15	students, faculty, and staff. Retention action plans shall be prepared on a
16	continuing basis for future five-year periods.
17	(b) Each state-supported college and university shall annually prepare
18	a progress report on the steps that have been taken to reach the goals of the
19	plan. The report shall include information relative to students, faculty, and
20	staff within the institution.
21	(c) Copies of each institution's five-year plan and annual report
22	shall be filed by June 30 with the Division of Higher Education, the board of
23	trustees of the institution, the House Committee on Education and the Senate
24	Committee on Education, and the board of visitors of the institution, if
25	applicable.
26	(d) The division shall develop appropriate forms for reporting and
27	shall monitor the retention plans and annual reports.
28	(e) In carrying out the retention action plans, each institution shall
29	provide for a part-time or full-time employee by reassignment, appointment,
30	or employment to assist the institution in the retention of blacks and
31	members of other minority groups for faculty and staff positions.
32	
33	SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 6-63-103 is repealed.
34	6-63-103. Affirmative action programs — Plans — Annual reports.
35	(a)(1) Each state-supported institution of higher education shall
36	prepare an affirmative action program for the recruitment of African-

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1	Americans and other members of minorities for faculty and staff positions and
2	for enrollment as students.
3	(2) Affirmative action plans shall be prepared on a continuing
4	basis for future five-year periods.
5	(b)(1) Each state-supported institution of higher education shall
6	prepare annually a summary report on the steps that have been taken to reach
7	the goals of the plan.
8	(2) The report shall:
9	(A) Include information on the progress made by each
10	institution for the various levels of employment within the institution; and
11	(B) Be presented in a table format limited to no more than
12	five (5) pages.
13	(c) Copies of the five-year plan and annual reports summaries of each
14	institution of higher education shall be included in the Comprehensive
15	Arkansas Higher Education Annual Report, filed with the Covernor, the
16	Division of Higher Education, the president and board of trustees of the
17	institution, the board of visitors of the institution, if applicable, and the
18	House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education.
19	(d) In carrying out the affirmative action plans, each institution of
20	higher education shall provide for a part-time or full-time employee to
21	assist the institution in the recruitment of African-Americans and other
22	members of minorities for faculty and staff positions and for enrollment as
23	students.
24	
25	SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1501 is amended to read as follows:
26	6-82-1501. Title.
27	This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Arkansas
28	Geographical Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program Act of
29	2001".
30	
31	SECTION 10. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1502 is amended to read as follows:
32	6-82-1502. Program established — Purpose <u>— Effect</u> .
33	(a) There is established the Critical Needs Minority Teacher
34	Scholarship Program.
35	(b) The purpose of the program is to attract qualified minority
36	teachers to the Delta and those geographical areas of the state where there

exists a critical shortage of teachers by awarding scholarships to minorities
 <u>individuals</u> declaring an intention to serve in the teaching field who
 actually render service to this state while possessing an appropriate
 teaching license.

5 (c) This subchapter does not affect any preference given to veterans
 6 in public education.

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8 SECTION 11. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1503(a) and (b), concerning the 9 eligibility for scholarships, are amended to read as follows:

10 (a)(1) The term "minority" when used in this subchapter shall refer to
 11 Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans.

12 (2) The Native American group includes all persons having
 13 origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintain
 14 cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

15 (b) Any individual who is a minority and who is enrolled in or 16 accepted for enrollment at a baccalaureate degree-granting institution of 17 higher education whose teacher education program is approved by the State 18 Board of Education or at an accredited state-supported community college in 19 the State of Arkansas who expresses in writing an intention to teach in a 20 geographical area of the state in which there exists a critical shortage of 21 teachers, as designated by the state board, shall be eligible for a financial 22 Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship to be applied toward the costs of 23 the individual's college education, if:

(1) The applicant has a grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0
scale in high school if the applicant graduated within the five (5) preceding
years; and

(2) The applicant scored nineteen (19) or above on the ACT
composite or the equivalent as defined by the University of Arkansas at Pine
Bluff.

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31 SECTION 12. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1503(c)(1), concerning the 32 eligibility for scholarships, is amended to read as follows:

33 (c)(1) The university is authorized to develop selection criteria 34 through Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program rules, which 35 combine an applicant's ACT superscore, as defined by § 6-85-204, or ACT 36 equivalent score and grade point average in the core curriculum into a

1 selection index. 2 3 SECTION 13. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1503(e)(1), concerning the 4 eligibility for scholarships, is amended to read as follows: 5 (e)(1) Awards granted under the Critical Needs Minority Teacher 6 Scholarship Program shall be available to both full-time and part-time 7 students. 8 9 SECTION 14. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1504(a), concerning service 10 requirement for scholarship recipients, is amended to read as follows: 11 (a) Except in those cases where employment positions may not be 12 available upon completion of licensure requirements, at the beginning of the 13 first school year in which a recipient of a Critical Needs Minority Teacher 14 Scholarship is eligible for employment as a licensed teacher, that person 15 shall begin to render service as a licensed teacher in a public school 16 district in a geographical area of the state where there is a critical 17 shortage of teachers or in the Mississippi Delta, as designated by the 18 Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. 19 20 SECTION 15. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1505(a), concerning rules, 21 administration, and reports for the administration of the Critical Needs 22 Minority Teacher Scholarship Program, is amended to read as follows: 23 The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and the Division of (a) 24 Higher Education shall jointly promulgate rules necessary for the proper 25 administration of the Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program. 26 27 SECTION 16. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1506(a), concerning the Critical 28 Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program Committee, is amended to read as 29 follows: 30 There is established a committee to be known as the Critical Needs (a) 31 Minority Teacher Scholarship Program Committee. 32 33 SECTION 17. Arkansas Code § 6-82-1506(h)(2), concerning the Critical 34 Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program Committee, is amended to read as 35 follows: 36 (2) Perform other duties or functions regarding the Critical

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1 Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program as may be requested by the 2 chancellor. 3 4 SECTION 18. Arkansas Code § 16-123-338(4), concerning relief for a 5 discriminatory housing practice, is amended to read as follows: 6 (4) Subject to § 16-123-339, any permanent or temporary 7 injunction, temporary restraining order, or other order, including an order 8 enjoining the defendant from engaging in the discriminatory housing practice 9 or ordering affirmative other action as may be appropriate. 10 11 SECTION 19. Arkansas Code § 21-3-101 is amended to read as follows: 12 21-3-101. Equal employment hiring program. 13 (a) Every state department, agency, board, commission, and institution 14 of higher education and every constitutional officer as defined in Arkansas 15 Constitution, Amendment 56, § 1, shall adopt and pursue a comprehensive equal 16 employment hiring program designed to achieve a goal of increasing the 17 percentage of minority employees within the state department, agency, board, 18 commission, and institution of higher education and within the constitutional 19 office to a level that approximates the percentage of minorities in the 20 state's population. 21 (b)(1) Every state department, agency, board, commission, and 22 institution of higher education and every constitutional officer shall report 23 to the Legislative Council on June 30 of each year regarding its efforts to 24 achieve its equal employment hiring program goal. (2) However, the report required of any institution by § 6-63-25 26 103 may be used in lieu of the report required under this subsection and 27 shall be filed as provided in this subsection. 28 (c) The employee handbook or manual of every state department, agency, 29 board, commission, and institution of higher education and every employee 30 handbook or manual of every constitutional office shall include the following 31 statement in describing the equal employment opportunity hiring program 32 required under this section: 33 "The State of Arkansas does not discriminate in access to 34 employment opportunities or in employment or practices on the basis of race, 35 color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic 36 information."

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1	(b) A statement included in an employee handbook or manual under this
2	section does not affect any preference given to veterans in employment.
3	
4	SECTION 20. Arkansas Code § 22-9-203(i), concerning the award
5	procedure for public improvements generally, is amended to read as follows:
6	(i) No contract providing for the making of major repairs or
7	alterations, for the erection of buildings or other structures, or for making
8	other permanent improvements shall be entered into by the state, any agency
9	of the state, any county, municipality, school district, or other local
10	taxing unit with any contractor in instances where all estimated costs of the
11	work shall exceed the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) unless
12	the bid documents contain statements which encourage the participation of
13	small, minority, and women's business enterprises and veteran-owned business
14	enterprises.
15	
16	SECTION 21. Arkansas Code Title 25, Chapter 1, Subchapter 1, is
17	amended to add an additional section to read as follows:
18	25-1-130. Prohibition of discrimination or preferential treatment by
19	state entities.
20	(a) As used in this section, "state" means the State of Arkansas, a
21	city, a county, an institution of higher education, a public school district,
22	a public special school district, or a political subdivision or governmental
23	instrumentality of the state.
24	(b) The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential
25	treatment to, an individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color,
26	ethnicity, or national origin in matters of state employment, public
27	education, or state procurement.
28	(c) This section applies only to an action taken after the effective
29	date of this act.
30	(d) This section does not:
31	(1) Prohibit the consideration by the state of bona fide
32	qualifications based on sex that are reasonably necessary to the normal
33	functions of state employment, public education, or state procurement;
34	(2) Invalidate a court order or consent decree that is in force
35	as of the effective date of this act;
36	(3) Prohibit an action necessary to establish or maintain

1	eligibility for a federal program if ineligibility would demonstrably result
2	in a loss of federal funds to the state;
3	(4) Affect any preference given to veterans in matters of state
4	employment, public education, or state procurement; or
5	(5) Preempt state discrimination law or federal discrimination
6	law.
7	(e)(1) A person who believes his or her rights have been impacted under
8	this section may bring a civil action in circuit court to:
9	(A) Enjoin a violation of this section; and
10	(B) Recover reasonable court costs and attorney's fees.
11	(2) In an action brought under this section, if the court finds
12	that a violation occurred, the court shall:
13	(A) Award:
14	(i) Injunctive relief; and
15	(ii) Court costs and attorney's fees, if the court
16	may award court costs and attorney's fees against the defendant; and
17	(B) If the court may not award court costs and attorney's
18	fees against the defendant, order the Arkansas State Claims Commission to
19	award court costs and attorney's fees.
20	
21	SECTION 22. Arkansas Code § 25-36-103 is repealed.
22	25-36-103. Agency contracting — Diversity.
23	(a) A state agency shall include in all requests for proposals and
24	requests for qualifications, language that encourages minority participation
25	in each request for proposals and request for qualifications issued by the
26	state agency.
27	(b)(1) State agency requests for proposals and requests for
28	qualifications shall take into consideration minority inclusion in the
29	proposed project.
30	(2) Requests for proposals and requests for qualifications shall
31	provide that an applicant unable to include minority-owned businesses may
32	explain the circumstances preventing minority inclusion.
33	
34	SECTION 23. DO NOT CODIFY. <u>Report to Legislative Council.</u>
35	(a) All state agencies shall begin developing a plan to implement this
36	act immediately upon the effective date of this act.

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1	(b)(l) If a state agency has not complied with this act within six (6)
2	months of the effective date of this act, the state agency shall submit a
3	detailed compliance plan to the Legislative Council or its appropriate
4	subcommittee within six (6) months of the effective date of this act stating
5	the:
6	(A) Steps the state agency will take to comply with this
7	act;
8	(B) Estimated time needed for the state agency to
9	implement changes necessary to comply with this act;
10	(C) Individual responsible for overseeing the
11	implementation of this act; and
12	(D) Description of the steps the state agency is taking to
13	address any failure to comply with this act.
14	(2) The executive head of each state agency shall appear before
15	the Legislative Council or its appropriate subcommittee at the time the
16	compliance plan in subdivision (b)(l) of this section is submitted and
17	provide the following information:
18	(A) Whether the state agency has been successful in
19	complying with the requirements of subdivision (b)(l) of this section;
20	(B) An update on the current status of the necessary
21	changes;
22	(C) The ongoing steps the state agency is taking to
23	address any failure to comply with this act; and
24	(D) The anticipated date for when the state agency shall
25	be in full compliance with this act.
26	(3) If the state agency has not been successful in complying
27	with this act within nine (9) months of the appearance before the Legislative
28	Council or its appropriate subcommittee required in subdivision (b)(2) of
29	this section:
30	(A) The executive head of the state agency shall appear
31	before the Legislative Council; and
32	(B) The state agency shall provide an updated report and
33	compliance plan to the Legislative Council or its appropriate subcommittee,
34	including the anticipated date of compliance.
35	(c)(l) If after one (l) year from the effective date of this act a
36	state agency has not complied fully with this act, in addition to the

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executive head of the state agency, the cabinet-level department secretary overseeing that state agency shall also appear before the Legislative Council or its appropriate subcommittee to provide an update. (2) After the appearance under subdivision (c)(1) of this section, every three (3) months until the state agency reaches full compliance with this act, the executive head of the state agency and the cabinet-level department secretary overseeing that state agency shall: (A) Appear before the Legislative Council or its appropriate subcommittee; and (B) Provide an updated report and compliance plan to the Legislative Council or its appropriate subcommittee, including the anticipated date of compliance. (3) A cabinet-level department secretary is in violation of this act if the secretary fails to be in full compliance with this act within twenty-four (24) months of sine die adjournment of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly meeting in regular session. /s/D. Sullivan