



**Disability  
Rights  
Arkansas**

**\*\*UPDATED MEDIA ADVISORY\*\***

**February 25, 2023**

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**Press Conference: Advocacy Groups Weigh In on Details of LEARNS Act  
Noon Monday, Feb. 27**

**Dissecting the Good, the Bad & the Ugly of SB294**

**LITTLE ROCK** — This week, Arkansas witnessed a 144-page omnibus education bill be filed, pass through committee and pass in the Senate Chamber, all in less than 72 hours. We found both the time given to digest this legislation before it was heard, as well as the 5 minutes allotted for testimony, insufficient to cover the sweeping changes proposed by SB294. Therefore, we are submitting written comments on the bill to legislators and will share these comments and suggestions with members of the media and take questions at noon Monday, February 27, at the Arkansas Education Association building.

We share the goals articulated by the sponsors and the Governor of improving Arkansas' education system. Our members are not satisfied with the status quo where Arkansas lags behind much of the rest of the country in education. We believe in evidence-based reforms and robust community engagement to achieve that better education system. We share the same goals of building a world-class education system accessible to all in Arkansas.

However, there are many components of this bill that are not evidence-based and that will undermine the goal of a quality education system accessible to everyone. We call on legislators to address some of our concerns and strengthen the impact, accountability and transparency of some of the proposals in SB294.

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**WHAT:** Media Event & Public Discussion on SB294 (LEARNS Act)

**WHO:** Leaders from the Arkansas Public Policy Panel, Arkansas Education Association, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families, Disability Rights Arkansas

**WHERE:** Arkansas Education Association building, 1500 W. 4th St. #200, Little Rock, AR 72201

**WHEN:** Monday, Feb. 27, 2023

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**About [Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families](#):**

The mission of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families is to ensure that all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential. It serves as a voice for children at the Arkansas State Capitol and in Washington, D.C., gathers and analyzes data to support public policy that serves all children and families, and organizes coalitions of diverse groups to drive change.

**About [Citizens First Congress](#):**

Citizens First Congress is a multi-issue and non-partisan coalition of organizations who work together for progressive changes in state policy. Coalition members come from all corners of the state and work on many different issues. At the Arkansas Legislature, the coalition members lobby together on a common agenda. They also watchdog the legislature, and lobby against threats to progressive policy.

**About [Disability Rights Arkansas](#):**

Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA) is a private, nonprofit agency with offices in Little Rock, Arkansas. Since 1977, the Governor of Arkansas has designated DRA the independent Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency for persons with disabilities in Arkansas. We work with other disability rights and civil rights organizations and agencies, the private bar, and legal services to protect the rights of people with disabilities.

**About [Arkansas Education Association](#):**

The Arkansas Education Association is a professional organization for teachers, education support professionals, students and advocates. Its fundamental objective is to work for quality and equitable public education for all Arkansas students, the betterment of the Arkansas state education system and quality working conditions for educators.

**About [Arkansas Public Policy Panel](#):**

The Arkansas Public Policy Panel is a 501c3 that advances social and economic justice through respect for human dignity, diversity, empowerment and an inclusive, fair and transparent political process. The Panel organizes groups all over the state, helping them become effective agents of change in their communities and supports the Citizens First Congress, whose 68 member organizations represent over 32,000 Arkansans at the Capitol.