

**John Payton**

Arkansas

Senator, SD-022 (R)

freedomindex.us/2363/**67**Lifetime
Freedom
ScoreScan to view
vote history**AR Legislative Scorecard 2025****Based on the Principles of the U.S. Constitution**

The Legislative Scorecard is a nationwide, nonpartisan educational program of The John Birch Society intended to inform voters about legislators' voting records. It does not promote any candidate or political party. Bills are chosen for their constitutional implications and taxpayer costs.

★ Constitutional ✗ Unconstitutional ? Did not Vote	Vote
1. HB1706 Ranked-choice-voting Ban (Passed 28 to 4 on 4/14/2025). Bans the use of ranked-choice voting (RCV) in Arkansas elections.	YES ★
2. HB1918 Real Money (Passed 33 to 0 on 4/14/2025). Updates Arkansas law on specie and legal tender, authorizing the use of bullion depositories and a precious-metals-backed electronic payment system.	YES ★
3. SB478 Diesel-regulation Nullification (Passed 35 to 0 on 4/8/2025). Declares that the federal government has no constitutional authority to regulate diesel engines operating solely within Arkansas.	YES ★
4. SB520 Local-government DEI Ban (Passed 22 to 7 on 4/8/2025). Prohibits "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) offices, officers, policies, and practices within Arkansas local governments, including counties, cities, and towns.	NONE ?
5. HB1444 Corporate Welfare: Data Centers (Passed 24 to 4 on 3/31/2025). Updates the state's sales-and-use tax exemption for data centers.	NONE ?
6. SB59 "Free" School Meals (Passed 24 to 1 on 2/17/2025). Requires all public schools to offer every student one free breakfast per day starting in the 2025-26 school year, regardless of income	YES ✗

Scorecard Votes: 75%**View the Freedom Toolbox**

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\$293,188

U.S. National Debt Per Household as of July 16, 2026

Why do these votes matter?

1. Ranked-choice-voting Ban

HB1706 bans the use of RCV in Arkansas elections. The law defines ranked-choice voting as a system that allows voters to rank candidates by preference and counts votes in multiple rounds until one candidate achieves a majority.

The Arkansas State Senate passed HB1706 on April 14, 2025 by a vote of 28 to 4. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because RCV undermines election integrity and the electorate's ability to choose the best candidate. By design, RCV favors moderate-to-leftist candidates who often fail to uphold the Constitution. This complex, multi-round system can result in winners who lack true plurality support, and imposes ballot-marking requirements that may pressure voters to act against their conscience.

2. Real Money

HB1918 updates Arkansas law on specie and legal tender, authorizing the use of bullion depositories and a precious-metals-backed electronic payment system. The act defines terms such as bullion, specie, and transactional gold and silver, and allows gold and silver to be used as legal tender for private debts, taxes, and fees if accepted by the receiving government.

The Arkansas State Senate passed HB1918 on April 14, 2025 by a vote of 33 to 0. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because this bill is an important step toward restoring sound, constitutional money and reestablishing the role of gold and silver as legal tender, in accordance with Article I, Section 10 of the U.S. Constitution.

3. Diesel-regulation Nullification

SB478 declares that the federal government has no constitutional authority to regulate diesel engines operating solely within Arkansas. The act asserts the state's 10th Amendment-protected rights, prohibiting any state agency or local government from enforcing federal rules requiring the use of diesel exhaust fluid or other federal emissions mandates on intrastate engines.

The Arkansas State Senate passed SB478 on April 8, 2025 by a vote of 35 to 0. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because the several states have both the right and duty to interpose on behalf of their citizens and nullify unconstitutional federal actions. The U.S. Constitution created a federal government of limited, enumerated powers, reserving all others to the states or the people under the 10th Amendment.

4. Local-government DEI Ban

SB520 prohibits DEI offices, officers, policies, and practices within Arkansas local governments, including counties, cities, and towns. The law bans local officials and employees from establishing or participating in DEI initiatives that promote preferential or differential treatment based on race, sex, ethnicity, color, or national origin, or that compel individuals to affirm such beliefs.

The Arkansas State Senate passed SB520 on April 8, 2025 by a vote of 22 to 7. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because DEI promotes divisive myths and false historical narratives (from CRT, feminist, and LGBTQ activist currents), and is a modern outgrowth of Marxist "long-march" efforts to subvert institutions, impose conformity, and expand the welfare state. Pursuing "social justice" and forced equal outcomes threatens liberty and leads to tyranny; the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment instead secure the general welfare by protecting each person's unalienable rights to life, liberty, and property.

5. Corporate Welfare: Data Centers

HB1444 updates the state's sales-and-use tax exemption for data centers. The law broadens what qualifies as "data center equipment" to include software, cooling systems, power infrastructure, and related services, and establishes new investment and compensation thresholds for companies to qualify.

The Arkansas State Senate passed HB1444 on March 31, 2025 by a vote of 24 to 4. We have assigned pluses to the nays because government should not be in the business of picking economic winners and losers. By granting selective tax exemptions to large corporations, the state unfairly advantages certain industries at the expense of smaller competitors and ordinary taxpayers. Such favoritism violates the Declaration of Independence's principle that all men are created equal, and undermines the 14th Amendment.

6. "Free" School Meals

SB59 requires all public schools to offer every student one free breakfast per day starting in the 2025-26 school year, regardless of income. It creates a Food Insecurity Fund to cover costs using general revenues, private grants, and tax revenue from medical marijuana sales.

The Arkansas State Senate passed SB59 on February 17, 2025 by a vote of 24 to 1. We have assigned pluses to the nays because feeding and educating children are duties of parents, not government. By using taxpayer dollars to provide "free" meals, the state expands the unconstitutional welfare system and fosters dependency rather than self-reliance. SB59 also aligns with the United Nations' Agenda 2030 "Zero Hunger" initiative, which promotes government control over food distribution.