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Jessie McGruder

Arkansas

State Representative, HD-035 (D)

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33

Lifetime
Freedom
Score

AR Legislative Scorecard 2025

✓ Pro-Freedom ✗ Anti-Freedom – Did not Vote **Vote**

1. Funds Arkansas PBS (Department of Education - Educational Television Division) for FY 2025-26. ✗

Estimated cost per household: **-\$15.00/year.**

Pro-Freedom: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · SB64 · 04/07/2025

2. Removes all race- and gender-based quotas or membership requirements for Arkansas boards, commissions, and advisory councils. ✗

Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · HB1365 · 04/03/2025

3. Applies to Congress for an Article V Convention to propose an amendment imposing term limits on members of Congress. ✓

Pro-Freedom: **No** · Cast: **No** · HJR1004 · 04/01/2025

4. Allows ivermectin for human use to be sold over the counter in the state. ✗

Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · SB189 · 03/18/2025

5. Requires all public schools to offer every student one free breakfast per day starting in the 2025-26 school year, regardless of income. ✗

Pro-Freedom: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · SB59 · 02/13/2025

6. Requires the state Department of Education to update middle- and high-school social studies standards by the 2026-27 school year to emphasize the failures of communism and autocratic governments and the strength of the U.S. constitutional republic. ✓

Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **Yes** · HB1060 · 02/11/2025

Scorecard Votes: 33%

Why do these votes matter?

1. Public Television Funding

SB64 funds Arkansas PBS for FY 2025-26. It authorizes up to 93 regular employees, plus extra-help caps of 5 (state operations) and 46 (cash operations). It appropriates \$7,015,471 from the Educational Television Fund for salaries and \$11,095,044 in cash-funded authority for other operations.

The Arkansas State House of Representatives passed SB64 on April 7, 2025 by a vote of 76 to 17. We have assigned pluses to the nays because such activities are properly left to the free market and private enterprise, not subsidized through compulsory taxation. Public broadcasting, even at the state level, fosters government influence over news and culture, contrary to the limited-government framework established by the Founders.

2. Board Race-and-gender Quota Ban

HB1365 removes all race- and gender-based quotas or membership requirements for multiple Arkansas boards, commissions, and advisory councils. The act strikes language mandating minority, female, or diversity representation across a wide range of state entities. It repeals entire sections that previously required appointments to reflect racial or gender diversity.

The Arkansas State House of Representatives passed HB1365 on April 3, 2025 by a vote of 60 to 24. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because many of these state boards and commissions are unconstitutional in themselves, and eliminating race- and gender-based quotas is a step toward restoring equality under the law. Government should never elevate or exclude individuals based on immutable characteristics such as race or sex.

3. Article V Con-Con

HJR1004 applies to Congress for an Article V Convention to propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution imposing term limits for Congress.

The Arkansas State House of Representatives failed to reconsider HJR1004 on April 1, 2025 by a vote of 48 to 34. We have assigned pluses to the nays because term limits restrict the people's right to choose their own representatives—and even more concerning is the call for an Article V “convention of the states.” Despite claims of limitation, such a convention could easily become a runaway convention with authority to rewrite or fundamentally alter the U.S. Constitution, endangering the very safeguards that restrain government power.

4. Medical Freedom: Ivermectin

SB189 allows ivermectin for human use to be sold over the counter in the state. This means people may buy or sell ivermectin without a prescription or consultation with a healthcare professional.

The Arkansas State House of Representatives passed SB189 on March 18, 2025 by a vote of 78 to 14. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because this measure restores medical freedom and the individual's right to make personal health decisions without government interference. For years, federal agencies such as the FDA and CDC have restricted access to safe, affordable treatments such as ivermectin, despite extensive evidence of its effectiveness and long record of safety in human use.

5. "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 House of Representatives passed SB59 on February 13, 2025 by a vote of 88 to 4. 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 UN's Agenda 2030 “Zero Hunger” initiative, which promotes government control over food distribution.

6. Curriculum: Failures of Communism

HB1060 requires the Department of Education to update social-studies standards by 2026-27 to stress the failures of communism and autocratic regimes, compare forms of government, and highlight constitutional limits—showing how democracies often decline into autocracies and reinforcing appreciation for America's limited, constitutional republic.

The Arkansas State House of Representatives passed HB1060 on February 11, 2025 by a vote of 70 to 16. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because, although parents should seek true education outside government schools, HB1060 is a valuable reform. It counters decades of indoctrination that glorified democracy and ignored the evils of communism, socialism, and authoritarianism by requiring instruction on the failures of collectivist regimes and the safeguards of our constitutional Republic. Properly applied, it can restore understanding that only limited government protects God-given rights and liberty.