



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS  
GOVERNOR

Dear Co-Chairs:

Upon taking this office, I made a promise to the people of Arkansas. I told them I would limit the growth of government and improve efficiency at state agencies while still investing in the areas of greatest need. Achieving all those goals in one budget is a complicated balancing act. After months of hard work, though, I am confident we have made meaningful progress on each one.

This budget's greatest accomplishment is its size: only a 1.76% increase over last fiscal year. This is far below the 3% year-over-year increase our state has averaged in the recent past. And it is largely thanks to the diligence of our Cabinet secretaries, whom I asked to submit budgets that did not increase funding for their agencies, while still providing the services Arkansans count on.

While this budget slows the growth of government, it also makes significant investments in the areas that I have prioritized as Governor. Arkansans want their tax dollars spent wisely, not wastefully. This budget invests their money in what matters: schools, police, parks, and more.

The LEARNS Act was the largest overhaul of Arkansas' school system in modern history. But signing the law was just the first step. Implementation is where the rubber meets the road. That's why this budget funds last year's commitment to put an additional \$100 million to raise starting teacher pay to \$50,000 - taking us from 48<sup>th</sup> in the country to the top five - expand education freedom to thousands of new families, and invest in literacy coaches statewide. In the same vein, it includes an additional \$2 million for the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff's land grant matching program, bringing the state's total contribution to the program to \$5.8 million.

Finally, this budget increases funding for the Arkansas State Police. Government has no higher calling than its duty to protect its citizens, and I am committed to fulfilling that obligation. My budget allocates \$3.8 million to fund an additional ASP trooper school, allowing us to renew the ranks of state police and focus on keeping all Arkansans safe.

I am proud that this year's budget puts an end to government's spiraling growth, while still fulfilling the priorities Arkansans elected me to implement. I look forward to your consideration and to working together collaboratively to cut costs, improve services, and make Arkansas the best state in America to live, work, and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Sanders".

Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Governor of Arkansas