

Arkansans For the Arts

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ARKANSANS
FOR THE ARTS
EDUCATE | INFORM | ADVANCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sen. Elliot & Rep. Warren Introduce and File SB531

The Board & Staff of Arkansans for the Arts

Little Rock, AR | March 12th, 2021: Arkansas Senator Joyce Elliott and Representative Les Warren presented a new piece of legislation creating the “Arkansas Legislative Arts and Technology Bootcamp” at a press conference on Thursday, March 11 at noon, at the Capitol Rotunda. The bill, SB531, was filed the same day.

Elliott and Warren, along with over half of the members of the Arkansas Senate and House, have signed on to this bill which establishes the “Arkansas Legislative Arts and Technology Boot Camp,” a bicameral legislative workgroup. The Boot Camp will consist of eight senators and eight representatives, along with the bill's two sponsors. This group will participate in a series of events, ideally one in each of the eight Arkansas arts districts, where professionals and educators in art and technology, artists, and makers will come together and share their successes, challenges, needs, and specifically address the intersection of the Arts and technology. The result of this effort will be a comprehensive report that includes an inventory of statewide arts and culture assets organized by the creative economy industry cluster and a plan for identifying and leveraging current and future assets and talents in the areas of arts and technology.

The idea behind the Arts and Technology Boot Camp came about through a series of conversations between Senator Elliot, Representative Les Warren, and leadership in Arkansans for the Arts (ARftA). The Creative Economy Committee of ARftA has been collecting and presenting data on the creative economy in Arkansas for over five years and it became obvious that an exciting intersection exists between art and tech. Elliott and Warren, the founders of the Arkansas Legislative Arts Caucus, saw in the numbers a great opportunity to draft legislation to support the growth of the arts and the creative economy in Arkansas. The arts in Arkansas represents over 8% of its workforce and \$3 Billion annually in GDP. It is vital to tourism, revitalizes communities, and is the primary pipeline for talent and our future workforce.

Jobs and business growth will flourish at the intersection of art and technology. The Art and Technology Boot Camp will connect assets to GROW, RETAIN, RE-TRAIN, and ATTRACT the creative economy workforce while building Arkansas’ entrepreneurial spirit. The movement of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) to STEAM (the addition of Art) exemplifies the wave of the future as the Arts teach the creative process necessary for successful innovation. A regional inventory of art and technology assets will connect partners, ascertain gaps, and network collaborators for successful grant proposals

SB531 will help to expand Arkansas’ arts and cultural production from the current \$2.9 billion sector to even greater economic impact. Bringing our art and technology assets together will produce future online entertainment, education learning programs, tele-medicine, and businesses we cannot even dream of today. Art and technology share the skills of persistence, patience, and creative thinking necessary to grow Arkansas’ creative economy. Connecting arts and technology organizations will also strengthen grant applications.

Arkansans for the Arts, an arts advocacy nonprofit dedicated to advancing the arts and the creative economy, cohosted the event. Arkansans for the Arts serves the people of Arkansas as an independent statewide organization providing leadership focused on the promotion and advancement of the creative economy, on transforming policy in arts education, and uniting the state into one voice with a call to action by policy makers to increase investment in the arts.

For more information please contact Erin Holliday, Executive Director of Arkansans for the Arts at eholliday@arkansansforthearts.org or **501-655-0836**, Creative Economy Co-Chair Dr. Lenore Shoults (shoults3@gmail.com), or Board Chair Sandy Martin (procommeureka@gmail.com).

Other Materials

LINK TO SB531:

<https://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/FTPDocument?path=%2FBills%2F2021R%2FPublic%2FSB531.pdf>

PRESS CONFERENCE VIDEO LINKS:

Elliott Clip 1: <https://youtu.be/7HhGywsJfFs>

Warren Clip: <https://youtu.be/4IADH4Kru9U>

Elliott Interview 1: <https://youtu.be/F-iZci4WEsQ>

Elliott Interview 2: <https://youtu.be/pVBZy9q5wX8>

Full Press Conference: <https://youtu.be/5HROt8bWdWs>

PHOTOS:

Senator Joyce Elliott, Representative Les Warren, Sandy Martin - President Arkansans for the Arts





