

Church Bill 1

DJB/MEH

1/27/2021(WedPM/ThursAM)

Arkansas lawmakers have advanced a bill that would allow churches and other places of worship to stay open during emergency declarations, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the House State Agencies and Governmental Affairs today (Wed) approved House Bill 1211, sponsored by Republican Rep. Mary Bentley of Perryville. Speaking in support of her bill, Bentley said it would prevent courts from imposing restrictions on religious liberties.

News01

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“...First Amendment rights.”

Bentley says her bill does allow the state to restrict crowd size at places of worship, though it doesn't allow for those guidelines to be less restrictive than other public venues. The bill also forbids the governor from imposing fines or tax penalties on places of worship during a state of emergency. The bill now heads to the full House of Representatives for consideration.

Church Bill 2

DJB/MEH

1/27/2021(WedPM/ThursAM)

A bill that would forbid churches, mosques and other houses of worship from being closed during a state of emergency is one step closer to becoming law. The Arkansas House State Agencies and Governmental Affairs Committee approved the bill on a voice vote today (Wed), and it now heads to the full House for a vote. Ken Yang, governmental affairs director with the conservative advocacy group the Family Council, spoke in favor of the bill.

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“...in the future.”

Republican state Rep. Mary Bentley of Perryville sponsored the bill, which still requires houses of worship to comply with public health and other state guidelines.