

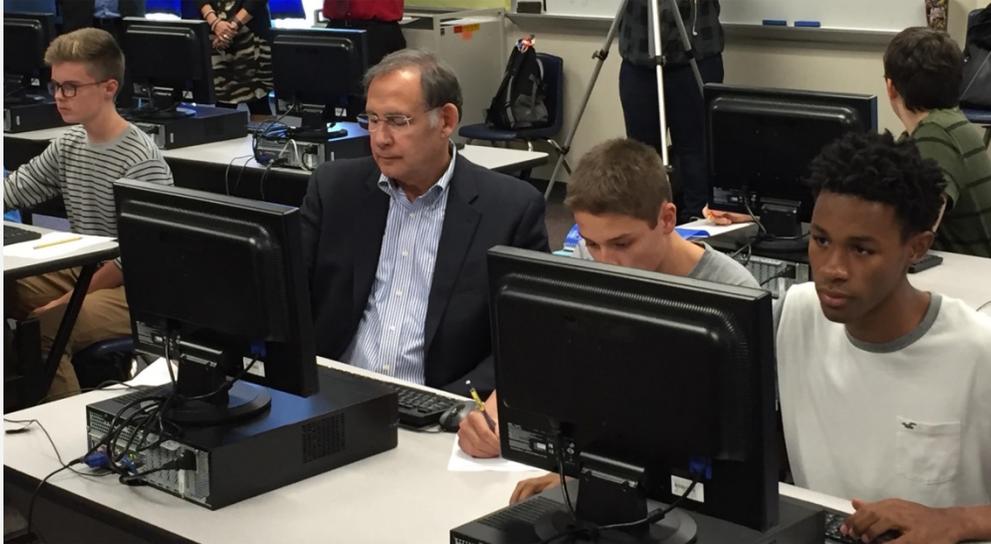
Boozman Bulletin: A 21st Century Education

Preparing students for 21st century careers starts with providing them with the tools and resources to learn skills needed in the modern workforce. In this interconnected digital age, computer science plays an important role. Statewide efforts to empower students in this field are creating excitement and a path toward future success.

Last year, the state legislature passed a law requiring all public high schools to offer at least one computer science class. The idea is to foster a technologically savvy workforce to help recruit business to our state and grow the economy. That begins with coding, the language of computers.

Governor Asa Hutchinson is a nationwide leader in this effort. This school year he launched his second computer science coding tour to inspire students to enroll in these classes.

I'm committed to encouraging Arkansas students to pursue computer sciences courses. Last year, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, which strengthens state and local control to improve student achievement. This law includes a provision that provides state and local districts more flexibility to fund computer science through a new block grant.



Last week I had an opportunity to attend a computer science class to get a hands-on lesson in coding and hear from students about their experiences in the class and how it helps prepare them for life in the workforce. This is a skill set that will benefit students and help meet the demands of employers.

Computers are a necessary tool in today's education curriculum, but maintaining an updated computer lab is costly. I'm working to close the digital divide in Arkansas as a participant in the [Senate's Computers for Schools program](#). This program allows me to donate computers no longer used in the Senate to schools in Arkansas, giving students the opportunity to learn to code on more modern equipment. Helping Arkansas students develop their computer skills and connect them to technology with surplus equipment is a win for us all.

This school year I've talked with [hundreds of students throughout Arkansas](#) about my work to represent them and their families. I was able to do this via Skype, an online video chat service.

The ability to access the internet is as essential as having modern roads and bridges. Digital infrastructure like high-speed internet is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity. This is why I recently [launched the Senate Broadband Caucus](#) with the mission to increase access to broadband in rural and underserved areas, which will help prepare more young Arkansans to be leaders in the modern workforce.

Quick Takes:

- **Celebrating African-American History and Culture:** [The long-awaited National Museum of African American History and Culture \(NMAAHC\) recently opened its doors.](#) The museum, shaped by generations of people who broke barriers and changed the status quo, tells a more complete history of our country, through the African-American experience. I was pleased to [celebrate the dedication of this museum with a longtime friend](#) from Arkansas and can provide information for your future visit to the museum.

- **Supporting Family Owned Farms and Businesses:** The death tax forces an unnecessary burden on America's family farms and businesses following the death of a loved one. The Obama administration recently proposed a new regulation that would make it more difficult and costly for families to transfer ownership of their farms and businesses to their children. That's why I'm pushing back. [I pressed Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew to withdraw the proposed regulation in a letter sent last month.](#)
- **Fighting Department of Labor Overreach:** An update of the federal overtime rule is set to take effect in December. This rule increases the salary threshold under which employees qualify for overtime pay from \$23,660 to \$47,476. Unfortunately, the rule threatens jobs in Arkansas and across the country. It could result in fewer hours for employees, and according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, millions of salaried professionals will have to be reclassified as hourly employees. [That's why I support legislative efforts to block the implementation of this rule.](#)
- **Recognizing Arkansas Rice Producers** - As the number one producer of rice, Arkansas has a unique role in the industry. That's why [I was proud to recognize the 26th anniversary of National Rice Month on the Senate floor](#) and highlight the significant role of the industry in our state.
- **Continuing Veterans Housing Programs:** In late September, President Obama signed into law the *Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2016*. This authorizes a number of veterans' programs for the next fiscal year. Among the programs reauthorized by the law are seven Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor programs that [provide outreach and services to homeless veterans and their families](#). The language to reauthorize these seven programs is similar to the *Keeping Our Commitment to Ending Veteran Homelessness Act* I introduced with my colleague Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) earlier this summer.
- **Honoring Arkansas Veterans:** My 'Salute to Veterans' series honors the service and sacrifice of Arkansas veterans who served our nation in uniform. In the latest edition, I recognized [Lt. Col. \(retired\) William Ledbetter, a WWII veteran](#) who continued his service after the war as a member of the Arkansas National Guard. I am proud to recognize his service and dedication to our nation. His memories of his time in uniform are an important part of our history that will be submitted to the Veterans History Project.
- **Angels in Adoption:** I was proud to recognize [Buck and DeAndra Gibson of Searcy as 2016 Congressional Angels in Adoption](#) for their commitment to strengthening families and advocating for adoption. Having witnessed the difficulties that some children face when lacking a strong family unit, the Gibsons chose to open their home to a child in need of a loving family.
- **Let Me Help You:** I'm proud of what my staff and I have accomplished to resolve [issues involving the federal government on behalf of hardworking Arkansas families](#) including problems with Social Security, Medicare paperwork glitches, passport troubles, tax matters or veterans issues. Let us help you. [Come and visit with my staff at mobile offices they're hosting next week](#) in Wynne, Yellville and Van Buren.
- **Connect on Social Media:** I traveled around Arkansas last week. Stay up to date with what I'm doing in the state via social media. You can find me

on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



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