

“Climbing Rates,” by Dr. Chris Jones

Arkansas Home Insurance Is Climbing. Here’s What You Can Do—And What Congress Should Do.

If your home insurance bill jumped, you’re not imagining it. Across Arkansas, more people are paying more to protect their homes. Storms cost more, materials and labor cost more, and some companies have pulled back from writing new policies. That pressure shows up in your premium.

The good news: you still have moves. And while the state sets most insurance rules, Congress also has tools that can help. Here’s a plain-English guide.

Why rates are going up

- **Big weather, big losses.** Tornadoes and hail hit hard here. More claims = higher costs for everyone.
- **Rebuild costs are up.** Roofs, lumber, shingles, and labor all cost more.
- **Policy fine print changed.** Many now use **wind/hail deductibles** as a **percent** of your home’s value, and some roofs are paid at **actual cash value** (depreciated), not full replacement.

What you can do right now

Shop—and reshop. Get quotes from 3–5 companies or independent agents. Ask about **bundles**, **claim-free**, and **loyalty** discounts. Recheck at renewal.

Know your deductibles. If your dwelling limit is \$250,000 and your wind deductible is **1%**, you pay **\$2,500** before insurance kicks in.

Harden the roof. When replacing, ask about **impact-resistant (Class 3/4)** shingles and which carriers discount them. Keep photos and receipts.

Prevent losses. Trim trees, clean gutters, secure outdoor items, add smoke/monitored alarms, and fix known hazards like old wiring or leaky plumbing. Fewer losses can mean better pricing.

Check flood, even off the map. Heavy rain still floods homes. Compare **NFIP** and private flood quotes.

Need help? If you’re non-renewed or a hike looks off, call the **Arkansas Insurance Department** consumer services.

What Congress can—and should—do

States regulate rates, but Congress controls big levers that shape what you pay:

1) Lower the cost of disaster backstop.

Create a **federal reinsurance safety net** for big storms. If reinsurance is cheaper, premiums face less pressure.

2) Fund stronger roofs.

Offer grants and tax credits for **FORTIFIED-standard roofs** and tie federal dollars to insurer discounts so families see savings on their bills.

3) Keep flood insurance steady and fair.

Reauthorize and improve the **National Flood Insurance Program**. Keep guardrails on annual increases, make pricing more transparent, and allow private flood where it's cheaper.

4) Pay for prevention before the storm.

Boost **pre-disaster mitigation** and reward towns that use modern building codes. One dollar spent now saves many later.

5) Turn tax relief into resilience.

Let families deduct part of homeowners insurance—with **bigger breaks for upgrades** like impact-resistant roofs or flood vents.

6) Shine a light on rate moves.

Require clearer data behind large hikes and keep watch so families aren't left without options.

The bottom line

You can't control the weather, but you can control your plan. Shop widely. Know your deductibles. Fortify your roof. Keep records. Ask, "What discount do I get if I do X?"

Then tell your members of Congress you want a reinsurance safety net, stronger roof grants, steady flood insurance, more prevention funding, tax relief tied to upgrades, and real transparency.

That's how we protect Arkansas homes—and wallets—now and for the storms ahead.