

Eunie Smith Receives the ALCAP Dan Ireland Salt and Light Award 2016



L to R Joe Godfrey, Eunie Smith, Dan Ireland

Congratulations to Eunie Smith, President of Eagle Forum of Alabama, on being awarded the 2016 Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) “Dan Ireland Salt and Light Award” for her many years of selfless volunteer work for God, Family and Country/Alabama. ALCAP Executive Director Joe Godfrey cited many of Eunie’s diverse accomplishments including her having been elected by the Southern Baptist Convention to serve seven years as a Trustee and then elected as Chairman of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Committee. He stated, "When our ALCAP Board discussed who should be this year's recipient, there was no question that Eunie should be the person to receive the Dan Ireland Salt & Light Award. She has been a strong advocate for the

cause of Christ for many years and has had a positive impact on our culture that many may never realize." Dr. Ireland himself made the surprise presentation at First Baptist Church Birmingham during the Sunday morning May 15 service. ALCAP is a statewide interdenominational ministry that serves as Alabama’s “moral compass” and lobbies the legislature on behalf of the faith community.

Eagle Forum of Alabama was begun by Eunie Smith, who was tapped by Phyllis Schlafly to lead. For over forty years, Eagle Forum of Alabama, under Eunie's leadership, has sought to help citizens participate in the process of self-government and public policy making. We seek to equip individuals with timely, reliable information from a conservative, Constitutional point of view on public policy issues which affect the family. They will then know how, when and where to express themselves to make their voices heard. This type of participation in self-government is essential for America to continue to be a land of individual liberty, respect for family integrity, public and private virtue, and private enterprise.

2016 Session in Review



Deborah Love
–Executive
Director

Eagle Forum of Alabama testified on behalf of its members at numerous public hearings this session and worked hard to advocate for sound public policy. This is a short overview of the 2016 legislative session and does not cover every major bill. For a fuller review of the session, go to www.alabamaeagle.org

Legislation Opposed by Eagle Forum of Alabama

Data Collection and Monitoring Bill

HB125 (Rep. Terri Collins) would have created the **Alabama State Longitudinal Database System** monitoring and collecting data on private citizens for their entire lives. This bill was pushed by Sen. Del Marsh. HB125 was **defeated**, but Executive Order 6 issued by Governor Bentley on May 21, 2015 remains a major goal of the Workforce Development Committee as well as Bentley’s administration and other government agencies.

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Prep Act

SB316 (Sen. Del Marsh) **Prep Act** sought to regulate and change teacher tenure law. This bill was initially called the Raise Act and originally included HB125 but was split before HB125 was filed. This bill sought to use failed program concepts from No Child Left Behind where teachers' evaluations were linked to Federal test results. Currently, teachers are using Common Core in Alabama. The Prep Act sought to grade teachers in part with their enforcement of Common Core tests. This bill would also have significantly altered tenure law, increasing bureaucracy in public education. This bill faced significant opposition upon its filing and was fortunately **defeated**.

Article V Constitutional Convention

HB42/SB10 (Sen. Allen and Rep. Johnson) was the Alabama version of the **Compact for America Bill**. According to the bill, Alabama would join states to hold an Article V Constitutional Convention for the purpose of balancing the national budget. The Compact for America bill was passed in four other states before the 2016 Session began. This Compact for America bill was **defeated** in Alabama. The Compact for America organization is pushing to hold an Article V Constitutional Convention even though there is no way to limit or control delegates. According to the bill, Alabama would only be able to send three delegates. Constitutional convention delegates are not bound by the initial call. The

Compact for America bill will not lead to reduced Federal spending and endangers the U.S. Constitution. A balanced budget amendment on the federal level will likely lead to increased taxation because it has no direct correlation to decreased spending. Congress has shown they will not cut wasteful programs and will continue to increase spending.

Free Speech Restriction

SB356 (Sen. Orr) required the state to regulate private citizens use of their own money spent for political purposes. It would have required the public disclosure of private donations made by a private citizens. The Citizens United Supreme Court decision recently struck down a similar regulation which aimed to allow government to regulate political speech. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution restricts the Federal government or a State from infringing on this right. Without freedom to engage in free expression and political speech the government has the ability to censor private citizens and unleash great abuse. This bill was **defeated**.

Taxation

H B 3 9 4 (R e p . McCutcheon) The **Gas Tax Bill**, which was pushed by several in the GOP and the Business Council of Alabama would have added six cents per gallon to the cost of gasoline greatly harming businesses and hardworking Alabama families. This bill was **defeated** this session. Alabama, having a lower gas tax than other surrounding states, encourages

tourism and business as well as directly improving the lives of families in Alabama.

Legislation Supported By Eagle Forum of Alabama

Privacy

HB267 (Rep. Arnold Mooney) **Student and Parent Privacy Protection Act** was sponsored by a large bi-partisan group of legislators. Eagle Forum of Alabama helped to lead a privacy coalition also supporting this legislation. The act would have provided important protections for students in Alabama's public schools from pre-k through 12th grade. Currently, there are no meaningful state privacy protections for students in public school. Unfortunately, Representative Collins who serves as Chair of the House Education Policy Committee never even allowed the bill to come up in committee. We expect the bill to be **reintroduced in the next session**.

Education Bills

SB60 (Sen. Glover and Rep. Fincher) **The Alabama Excellence in Education Act** would have replaced Common Core failing standards with the higher standards in place prior to Common Core. These transition standards would have been updated based on proven excellent pre-common core standards from states whose national scores ranked in the top 10% nationally. Senator Marsh passed an amendment in the Senate Education and Youth Affairs Committee significantly gutting the bill which **did not make it out of the committee**.

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Biology Textbook Insert Reinstated

We are pleased that our forces prevailed at the state Board of Education on April 5, 2016, in getting the Biology Textbook Insert reinstated for the next textbook adoption cycle by a UNANIMOUS vote of the board.

Thanks to Board Member Stephanie Bell who alerted us to the need to act and then received a commitment from Superintendent Bice to include the insert in the adoption resolution.

Thanks to Joan Kendall, who was instrumental in getting the insert approved 20 years ago and went to Montgomery to testify for the insert this year. Thanks to Geologist Bill Payne, an inner city science teacher, who spoke.

Thanks to Hannah Ford and to the two witnesses she recruited: Mrs. Tijuanna Adetunjii, mother of 3 in inner city Montgomery schools, and Jacob Marchio, a 16 year-old homeschooled student who will enter the University of Maine next fall.

Each speaker was on target and effective. You may read the insert below.

BIOLOGY TEXTBOOK INSERT: A MESSAGE FROM THE ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The word “theory” has many meanings. Theories are defined as systematically organized knowledge, abstract reasoning, a speculative idea or plan, or a systematic statement of principles. Scientific theories are based on both observations of the natural world and assumptions about the natural world. They are always subject to change in view of new and confirmed observations.

Many scientific theories have been developed over time. The value of scientific work is not only the development of theories but also what is learned from the development process. The Alabama Course of Study: Science includes many theories and studies of scientists’ work. The work of Copernicus, Newton, and Einstein, to name a few, has provided a basis of our knowledge of the world today.

The theory of evolution by natural selection is a controversial theory that is included in this textbook. It is controversial because it states that natural selection provides the basis for the modern scientific explanation for the diversity of living things. Since natural selection has been observed to play a role in influencing small changes in a population, it is assumed that it produces large changes, even though this has not been directly observed. Because of its importance and implications, students should understand the nature of evolutionary theories. They should learn to make distinctions between the multiple meanings of evolution, to distinguish between observations and assumptions used to draw conclusions, and to wrestle with the unanswered questions and unresolved problems still faced by evolutionary theory.

There are many unanswered questions about the origin of life. With the explosion of new scientific knowledge in biochemical and molecular biology and exciting new fossil discoveries, Alabama students may be among those who use their understanding and skills to contribute to knowledge and to answer many unanswered questions. Instructional material associated with controversy should be approached with an open mind, studied carefully, and critically considered.

The average immigrant household draws more than \$6,000 from the welfare system in a year, costing U. S. taxpayers 41 % more than people born in the country, a new study by the Center for Immigration Studies finds. Immigrants with low education levels and higher numbers of children tend to use the most benefits. The benefits come in the form of cash payments, food, Medicaid, and housing. Illegal immigrants are included in the study, since some can access the system through their U. S. born children. More than 24% of immigrant households are led by a high school dropout, compared to 8% of households led by individuals born in the country.

Source: *The Daily Caller*, 5/9/16

Blacks make up only 12% of the population, but 28% of abortions are done on black babies. For many years, pro-lifers have been pointing out that the abortion industry targets racial minorities. One study found that 79% of Planned Parenthood surgical facilities are within walking distance of black and Hispanic neighborhoods. Planned Parenthood was founded by Margaret Sanger, who it is said wanted to rid the world of “defective” minorities. Rev. Arnold Culbreath, Director of Protecting Black Life, told *LifeNews* that abortion is the leading cause of death among black Americans and higher than all other causes combined. Dr. Alveda King has said, “If the media really thought that black lives matter they would be protesting abortion on demand.”

LifeNews.com 5/11/2016

As efforts continue to legalize gambling in Alabama, a new study by the website *Wallet Hub* revealed that Alabama is one of the least gambling addicted states in the entire country. In coming up with their ranking, *Wallet Hub* looked at 13 different categories, including the number of commercial and tribal casinos, lottery sales, percentage of people older than 18 with diagnosed gambling disorders, and gambling related arrests. Alabama came in near the bottom of the list, ranked 48 out of 50 nationally. Alabama is also tied for last place when it comes to gambling-related arrests, as well as lottery sales—not surprising since we don’t have a state lottery. The most gambling-addicted state in the country is, of course, Nevada, with the major gambling industries in Las Vegas and Reno. This is a ranking where being last is best. We don’t need state sponsored gambling in Alabama.

Big corporations have come out to criticize state religious liberty measures in Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina as discriminating against those who are not heterosexual, some boycotting states that enact such laws. Several of the more vocal companies supporting LGBT Americans also operate in countries with troubling human rights records. At least 16 of the complaining corporations do business in countries that blatantly and often brutally discriminate (including death) against LGBT persons.

The Daily Signal 4/28/2016

“It is only when the people become ignorant and corrupt ... that they are incapable of exercising their sovereignty. Usurpation is then an easy attainment, and an usurper soon found. The people themselves become the willing instruments of their own debasement and ruin...”

—James Monroe (1817)

Quotes from Ancient Greek Philosophers

“The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations, and benefits.” —Plutarch

“The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.” —Aristotle

“Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws.” —Plato

“We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office.” —Aesop

“Knowledge becomes evil if the aim be not virtuous.” —Plato

“This and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs: when he first appears he is a protector.”
--Plato

“Those who have virtue always in their mouths, and neglect it in practice, are like a harp, which emits a sound pleasing to others, while itself is insensible of the music.” —Diogenes

“Republics decline into democracies and democracies degenerate into despotisms.”—Aristotle

Parental Rights

HB112 (Rep. Matt Fridy)

Parental Rights Protection Bill proposed an Alabama Constitutional Amendment to “provide that every parent has a fundamental right to direct the upbringing, education, care, and custody of his or her children and that the government may not burden that fundamental right unless the government demonstrates that the application of the burden to the person is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest.” While most courts recognize these parental rights, placing these rights into State constitutions ensures that parental rights do not depend on fair court interpretation. The AL Department of Education testified against parental rights at the HB112 public hearing, showing further need now more than ever for protecting parental rights. **The bill did not pass.**

Pro-Life and Religious Liberty Bills

SB363/HB376 (Sen. Williams and Rep. Mack Butler) **The Alabama Unborn Child Protec-**

tion from Dismemberment Abortion Act prohibits dismemberment abortions. Dismemberment abortion is a specific type of abortion which rips a baby limb from limb during the abortion procedure. **This bill passed and has been signed by the Governor.**

HB301/SB205 (Sen. Paul Sanford and Rep. Ed Henry) known as the **2,000 foot bill** which prohibits the presence of an abortion clinic within 2,000 feet of a public school **passed and has been signed by the Governor.** The purpose of this bill is to protect fundamental human rights by ensuring that abortion clinics do not prey on public school students.

HB158 (Rep. Rich Wingo) **Child Care Provider Inclusion Protection Act** seeks to provide protections for private adoption agencies from unfair treatment by state agencies for exercising their deeply held religious views. A large portion of Alabama’s adoption agencies are religious-affiliated agencies. Without adequate protection in state law, these religious affiliated agencies of varying reli-

gious background could face penalties or severe legal challenges to their freedom if an agency decides to suspend their license. This bill **stalled and did not pass over false threats of causing loss of federal funds** even though that claim had already been addressed by the sponsor. There was no evidence it would have resulted in lost Federal funds.

HB157/SB204 (Rep. Arnold Mooney) **The Assisted Suicide Ban Bill did not pass this session.** Assisted suicide bans have been passed in most other states. A few states have legalized assisted suicide which means the state is legally allowing a physician to take the life of a patient intentionally, which is NOT palliative care. Life in all stages should be protected, and intentional taking of human life should be recognized legally as a crime. The few states which have endorsed the intentional destruction of adult human life by physicians target the weak, elderly, and feeble minded for assisted suicide, but the proposed law would not limit its application.

Mississippi Joins “Constitutional Carry” Wave

On April 15, 2016, Mississippi’s Governor Phil Bryant signed bill HB786 to enact open or concealed gun carry without a permit in the state. West Virginia and Idaho passed constitutional carry into law in March, with West Virginia convincingly overriding the veto of the Democrat governor.

Constitutional carry was very rare until recently. Now there are ten states with some form of law that recognizes that the Second Amendment is the only permit needed to carry a gun for protection. Not only is constitutional carry passing at a rapid pace, but it is doing so by large margins over the objections of powerful law enforcement and other special interest groups.

A bill to allow gun carry in a private vehicle without a permit was introduced in this session of the Alabama legislature by Sen. Gerald Allen, but did not pass. **We have a long way to go in Alabama in recognizing the right protected by the 2nd Amendment.**

Alabama Public Pension Funds Shortfall: \$15 Billion

U. S Public Pension Shortfall totals \$3.4 Trillion

In a recent report by *The Financial Times*, the U. S. public pension system has developed a \$3.4 trillion shortfall that will continue to put pressure on cities and states to cut spending or raise taxes to avoid Detroit-style bankruptcies.

While the most dire prognostication appears to be the pension system of the state of California, most other states are facing the same problem, including Alabama.

According to the Alabama Policy Institute, the shortfall in Alabama is at least \$15 billion that cannot be closed until at least 2050. During that interim period, the projected amount of the state's yearly contribution to close the yearly shortfall is steadily rising topping out at over \$2 billion in 2044. The idea of the system reaching full funding by 2050 is only true if the state does not accrue any additional unfunded liabilities between now and then.

Collectively, the three components of the Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA), the Teachers Retirement System (TRS), the Employees Retirement System (ERS) and the Judicial Retirement Fund (JRF), administer the plans for 1,148 "participating units." These participating units are individual cities, counties, universities, city and county Boards of Education, and various local entities such as fire departments, police departments, and municipal waste departments across the State of Alabama.

As of 2013, total combined membership in these plans consisted of approximately 420,000 current or former employees. As of September 30, 2013, (the latest public information available), the TRS, ERS and JRF (collectively referred to as RSA) held assets of \$29.4 billion and liabilities of \$44.6 billion, resulting in a combined shortfall (commonly referred to as the "unfunded liability") of \$15.2 billion. This means that for every dollar that the pension system owes current and future retirees, it currently has only 66 cents.

Minor reforms were enacted during the past few legislative sessions, but major changes are met with threats from groups that want nothing to change in their "pensions". Those who express the greatest opposition represent individuals who will be most hurt if the pension systems collapse.

So, little has been done to enact major changes, such as those made in the private sector over the past decade that address these same shortfall issues. During the 2015 legislative session, a resolution was passed to form a Joint Committee on Alabama Public Pensions to study and develop consensus recommendations for reforms to be delivered by the 5th day of the 2016 legislative session. When that deadline was not met, HJR 17 was passed this session to extend the deadline to April 1, 2016. However, no legislation was filed and

thus the needed reforms were once again, "kicked down the road" and, according to the resolution, the Joint Committee was dissolved.

This is a two pronged problem. The legislature has the obligation to provide adequate pension programs for employees, but also the obligation not to pass on an unmanageable financial obligation to future taxpayers to pay for pensions that are in many cases more than those available to them in the private sector.

The most common solution to this issue is to change the system for new employees and those not close to retirement from the present defined benefit plan to one that is a defined contribution plan, as most private plans have done. This would create personal accounts to which the employee and the state contribute that are managed much like an IRA plan. Such plans provide more secure funding for the plans as well as controlled funding levels for the state.

As stated in their publication released on April 25, 2016 and authored by Rep. Lynn Greer and Katherine Robertson of API, the Alabama Policy Institute says, "One thing is certain: pension reform *will* come to Alabama. Responsible reforms can be adopted now, or the state will be forced to make hasty, draconian changes during the next severe economic downturn. The involuntary, reactive option will present a much uglier scenario for retirees, tax-

Muslims Entering Canada Endangers U. S.

Canada's new Liberal prime minister Justin Thoreau plans to fast track the acceptance of thousands of Syrian refugees over the next few months. Some in Congress have become concerned about security at the mostly unpatrolled northern border.

Canada and the U. S. share the world's largest undefended international border. It stretches more than 5,520 miles across 13 states over land and water.

FBI Director James Comey testified to Congress that it was virtually impossible to screen the vast majority of people who show up at U. N. refugee camps claiming to be Syrians, but Congress still fully funded the president's ex-

panded refugee program.

In a hearing it was revealed that the northern border is severely undermanned. Only 300 border agents are working at the Canadian border at any given time, according to testimony by Dean Mandel, a U. S. Border Patrol agent assigned to the Buffalo sector. That compares to more than 2,000 agents assigned to the southern border with Mexico at any given time.

Mandel said the visa waiver agreement the U. S. has with Canada presents a special risk. He said that the visa waiver system is a huge security gap, because it is based on the assumption that if you are from Canada,

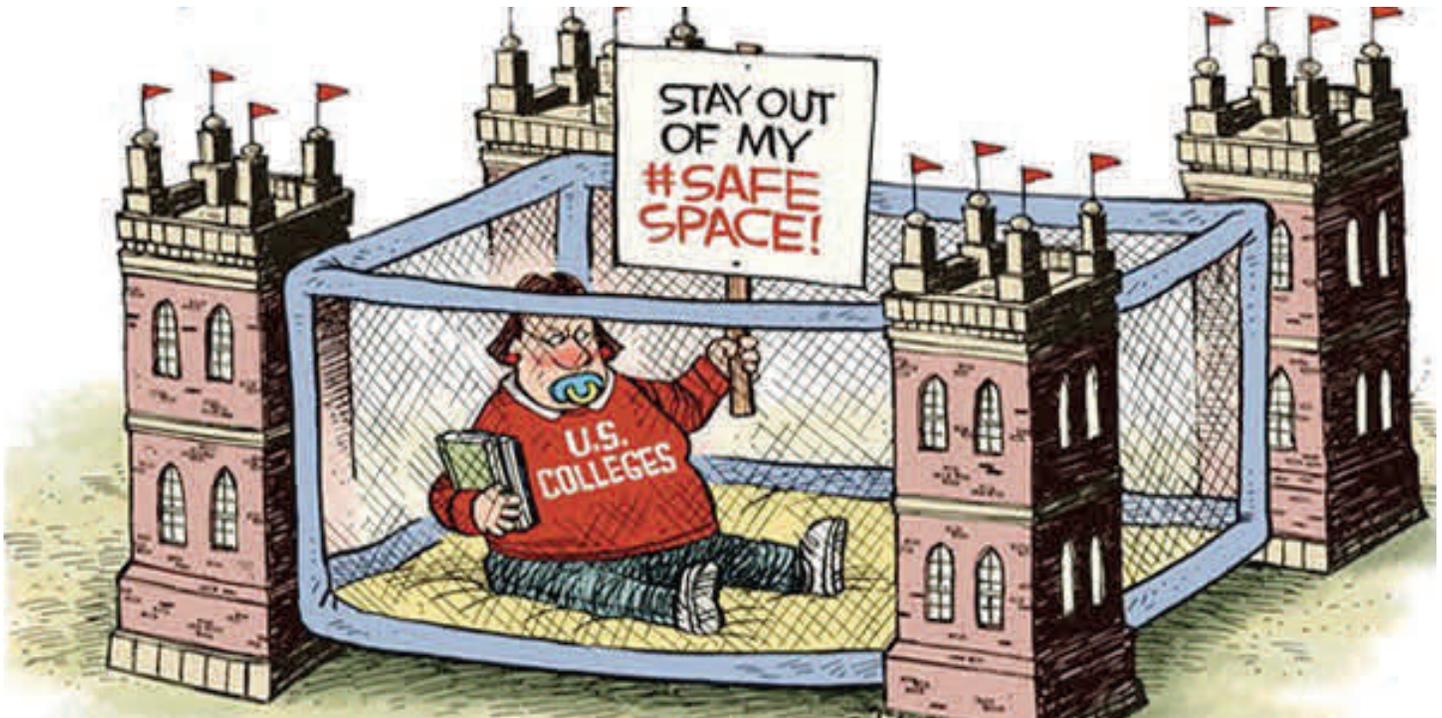
a friendly country, you are no security risk. In his testimony Mandel said, "We have failed to properly invest in our northern border. So we are gambling...relying so heavily on a foreign government concerns me." He said, "Sending 25,000 Syrians to Canada would be the equivalent of sending 225,000 to the United States." If the FBI says that they cannot vet 10,000 refugees, it is not likely that Canada could adequately screen two and a half times that many in just three months."

Money could be better spent helping refugees in Middle Eastern countries rather than bringing them to either Canada or the U.S. *Source: wnd.com 2/18/16*

"Liberal" Academia Intolerant of Dissenting Thought

Conservative and Christian ideas are marginalized in the place where people go to supposedly experience a cornucopia of thought. Conservative speakers are "disinvited" from speaking because some students and faculty would have been "offended", and students need "safe spaces" when they feel uncomfortable with ideas with which they do not agree.

Source: Patriotpost.us.posts 5/9/2016





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