



Legislative Agenda 2011

2011 State Legislative Agenda

Education

Eagle Forum of Alabama will actively work to:

- **Pass a charter school law.** In 2011, Eagle Forum of Alabama will work to pass a charter school law that increases school choice in Alabama. We are currently one of only 11 states that does not have a law that authorizes charter schools.

Budget Reform

Eagle Forum of Alabama will actively work to:

- **Pass Representative Greg Canfield's Rolling Reserve Budget Act.**
 - The legislature currently bases its budget on projections for next year's revenue from the Legislative Fiscal Office. The erratic changes in ETF revenues from any given year to the next have resulted in projections and budgets that are prorated 30% of the time the legislature enacts a budget in Alabama. To address this problem Rep. Greg Canfield has proposed budgets be based on a 15 year rolling average. In years where the actual revenues exceed the rolling average the bill applies 80% of excess funds above what is necessary to maintain 30% of the ETF budget in the Budget Stabilization Fund to the unfunded liabilities in the TRS and PEEHIP retirement plans. The remaining 20% of those excess revenues flow into a capital fund for public education, increasing the funds available for construction and renovation of public schools.

Eagle Forum of Alabama will support efforts to:

- **Address Alabama's pension shortfalls.** As of September 2007, Alabama had 5.2 billion in unfunded liabilities for the Teacher's Retirement System (TRS) Pension Fund, and 12.6 billion in unfunded liabilities for the Public Education Employees Health Insurance Program (PEEHIP). That combines for a total of 17.8 billion in unfunded liabilities. Total tax revenues are down 22.9%, the education budget is already in proration, and the projected budget shortfall for 2011 is \$586 million or 8.3% of the total budget. This is a problem the next legislature and governor will have to address.

Ethics Reform

Eagle Forum of Alabama will actively work to:

- **Pass a comprehensive ethics reform package** that includes:
 - A ban on PAC to PAC transfers
 - Mandatory ethics training for state legislators
 - Stricter filing requirements for candidates and political action committees

Eagle Forum will support efforts to:

- **Reform the state's online information system and checkbook websites to make them more user-friendly and increase transparency for the citizens of Alabama.**

Health Care

Eagle Forum of Alabama will actively work to:

- **Pass the Alabama Health Care Freedom Act.** This legislation proposes an amendment to the Alabama Constitution that will preserve the freedom of Alabama citizens to make decisions about and provide for their own health care regardless of federal mandates.
- **Provide Alabamians with more options in regard to their health care by passing the Medical Savings Account Act.** This legislation will authorize the establishment of medical savings accounts, commonly known as Health Savings Accounts (HSA's)
- **Pass a Conscience Bill for health care professionals.** This legislation will provide a conscience exception for health care providers and pharmacists who believe in the sanctity of life and choose not to perform procedures or provide medication that do not comply with that belief.

Legal and Judicial Reform

Eagle Forum of Alabama will actively work to:

- **Preserve Alabama law for Alabama courts.** We will work to pass legislation to preserve the United States Constitution by prohibiting judges/courts from relying on foreign and/or international law when deciding cases in state courts.
- **Pass a Marriage Reconciliation Act.** This legislation will impose a mandatory waiting period of one year for divorces where minor children are involved.

Labor Issues

Eagle Forum of Alabama will actively work to:

- **Keep Alabama as a right-to-work state.**
 - We will work to pass the Secret Ballot Protection Act which will protect the rights of citizens in Alabama to vote by secret ballot. It is a nullification of the Employee Free Choice Act should Congress pass that legislation.
- **Pass Immigration Reform Legislation:** Eagle Forum supports legislation to require the verification of citizenship status in order to get government benefits and services, to require employers to verify citizenship status of all of their employees, measures to deny bail to anyone whose citizenship status cannot be verified, and measures that make it illegal to transport or conceal illegal aliens.

Gambling

Eagle Forum will actively work to:

- **Oppose any expansion of legalized gambling in the state of Alabama.**
- **Support tougher penalties for operators of “electronic bingo” halls with illegal slot machines.**

Alabama Constitution

Eagle Forum will actively work to:

- **Oppose any call for a Constitutional Convention to rewrite the Alabama Constitution of 1901.** We believe that any rewrite of the Alabama Constitution by means of a constitutional convention jeopardizes every individual right now upheld in this state.
- **Support efforts to amend the Alabama Constitution article by article.** Article by article reform allows the people of Alabama to know exactly what changes are being made and voted on.
- **Enforce the Constitutional Amendment declaring English the official language of Alabama.**

Taxes and Spending

Eagle Forum will actively work to:

- **Pass a Taxpayer Bill of Rights to protect Alabama citizens from undue tax burdens.** A Taxpayer Bill of Rights will limit the future growth of government by requiring increases in overall state government spending to be tied to inflation and population growth.