

What is Ahead for Eagle Forum in 2025?



As we celebrate the victories of the 2024 General Election, and follow the news of the new administration starting in 2025, we also know we have our work cut out of us in the next Alabama legislative session. We recall that Eagle Forum of Alabama had a very aggressive list of legislative priorities in 2024. As we covered in our 2nd quarter newsletter, some of those bills failed to pass, while we had successes on other bills of importance to protecting children and families. A number of the bills that failed on the last day of the session will be refiled with new bill numbers for the 2025 session scheduled to start on February 4, 2025.

The Eagle Forum of Alabama 2025 Policy Conference is all day Friday, January 31 at First Baptist Church, Birmingham. We hope you will attend, but space is limited so register ASAP at www.alabamaeagle.org. We will review legislative priorities as shown below.

Protecting Children

Default to Safety Cell Phone Bill: Sponsored by Sen. Chambliss and Rep. Sells, will be reintroduced. It will help prevent accidental exposure of children to pornography on cell phones by requiring new phones sold in Alabama to have their explicit content filter default to “on”. The filters are available on all phones sold in Alabama so there is no additional cost to cell phone companies.

Harmful to Minors Bill: Sponsored by Rep. Mooney, will amend the Alabama obscenity law regarding explicit material and activities where children are present. Libraries will no longer be exempt from circulation of obscene material.

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“And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest....” Luke 2:13-14

Wishing you a most blessed Christmas as we praise God for sending his son.

Eagle Forum of Alabama



Education

Update Abstinence Act: Sponsored by Rep. DuBose, will update the Abstinence Act to ensure that inappropriate sexual material would be prohibited in Alabama schools.

Money

Gold/Silver as Legal Tender Act: This bill will allow use of gold or silver as money.

Debanking bill: This bill will provide that banks cannot freeze accounts because of a customers' ideological view point.

Prohibit Banning the Use of Cash Act: Sponsored by Rep. Chestnut, last year this bill would prohibit retail establishments from discriminating against a cash buyer by requiring that buyer to use a credit or debit card to purchase goods or services. It would also require retail establishments experiencing a cash or coin shortage to provide store credit in the amount of any unavailable change due to a customer in lieu of requiring the customer to provide exact change. This bill is also a protection against a "global digital cash currency."

Medical

Raise Medical Age of Consent: Sponsored by Rep. DuBose, raises the age of medical consent from 14 to 19 years of age to consent to medical, dental, and mental health services unless the minor is married, divorced, pregnant, emancipated, or living independently apart from his or her parents or legal guardian.

Public Safety

Prohibit Alabama Law Enforcement Agency from Using Chinese Drones: Sponsored by Sen. Allen, would prohibit ALEA from purchasing and using drones made in China due to security concerns.

Illegal Immigration: Sponsored by Sen. Elliott and others, would further protect Alabama from the effects of illegal immigration.

Gambling

No bill as yet. We will vigorously continue to oppose the expansion of gambling in Alabama

Other bills

Defining Male and Female in Alabama Law: Sponsored by Rep. DuBose, adds legal definitions of man, woman, mother, father, etc. into Alabama law.

Restoring the 10 Commandments: Sponsored by Rep. Gidley, would encourage display of the 10 Commandments in public places based on the Supreme Court ruling in Kennedy v. Bremerton School District.

This is another challenging agenda for Eagle Forum, but we are dedicated to our work to policy initiatives that protect our way of life and will oppose those that we determine will be detrimental to our state. We will be issue alerts each week of the session to keep you abreast of actions on these and other bills. If you do not get our alerts, be sure to go to our website at <http://alabamaeagle.org> to sign up.

Olive Spann Award

At each Eagle Forum of Alabama banquet we honor an Alabama Eagle with the Olive Spann Award named for a quiet heroine of the conservative movement who volunteered her gifts for years in the early days of Eagle Forum in Alabama. This year's award went to Julia Cleland, 6th District Eagle Forum chair and leader of the Trussville Action Group which is our consistently largest attendance group.

Julia spent two days a week lobbying in Montgomery during the 2024 Legislative session. She was told by a leading gambling proponent that EF was the main reason for the legislative defeat of possibly the largest onslaught in Alabama history to make every form of gambling legal.

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The Case for Classical Civic Learning in Alabama

By Allen Mendenhall of Troy University

Editorial published by 1819 News on 11-16-2024 (abridged for length)

New academic initiatives are sweeping America's public universities to address the concern regarding classical civic education. From Florida to Utah, flagship institutions are establishing centers dedicated to constitutional principles, civic leadership, and American and Western political thought.

These centers profess a similar mission: rekindling student engagement with America's founding principles and civic traditions within the broader context of Western intellectual heritage.

Notably, many are taking root in large state universities across the South and Midwest, suggesting a grassroots demand for civic education that transcends regional boundaries. What of Alabama?

Though laudably conceived, the nascent Shelby Institute for Policy and Leadership at the University of Alabama resembles a promising adolescent who lacks sufficient protein. Its commendable emphasis on contemporary government is, without more, inadequate. The Institute's programming – heavy on guest speakers from today's political firmament – suggests a curious reluctance to acknowledge that politics didn't begin in the last few decades.

Aspiring leaders require more than handshakes with sitting politicians; they need sustained communion with Aristotle's Politics, the forensic brilliance of the Federalist Papers, and the capacious wisdom of Homer, Aeschylus, Plato, Aquinas, Grotius, Shakespeare, Milton, Blackstone, or Adam Smith, who understood that the challenges of governance are perennial, not merely contemporary.

As currently constituted, the Shelby Institute risks sliding into academic irrelevance. Providing students with a direct line to political careers is counterproductive if it merely perpetuates the dysfunction and cronyism that should be scrutinized. Without reform or a creative change in direction, this Institute will be a pale shadow of its peer institutions, which have attracted distinguished faculties with sterling credentials and scholarly gravitas.

Alabama desperately needs an institution dedicated to serious civic scholarship, but who will take up this mantle? Auburn University could enter the void, or an ambitious regional institution like Troy University (my employer) might seize the opportunity. Regardless, the Yellowhammer State seems content to watch from the sidelines while other states forge ahead with innovative solutions to our civic education crisis.

It's a familiar story: Alabama perpetually plays catch-up rather than leading the charge toward excellence. As other states take bold strides in civic education, Alabama stands at a critical juncture: either remain mired in inertia or embrace the rigor and sophistication that our times demand.

The optimal civics education center would combine timeless insights with modern issues to reposition Alabama as a beacon of educational preeminence in the South. Our students deserve better than insipid mingle sessions that merely skim the surface of politics while neglecting the more profound theories and paradigms that have guided human civilization for millennia. Politicians are soon forgotten; ideas shape centuries. We should teach the timeless, not the trending. Why settle for mediocrity when greatness is within our reach?

Allen Mendenhall is Associate Dean and Grady Rosier Professor in the Sorrell College of Business at Troy University and Executive Director of the Manuel H. Johnson Center for Political Economy. Visit his website at AllenMendenhall.com.

Editors Note: Eagle Forum advocates model legislation to require for all college students a program in the history of Western Civilization, and of America, classic literature and philosophy. See General Education Act presentation at Eagle Council 2024.

On November 17, 2024 Fox News reported that the Pentagon fails its seventh consecutive audit as the agency was unable to fully account for its \$824 billion budget. Of its 28 reporting entities that had standalone audits, 9 received an unmodified audit opinion, 1 received a qualified opinion, 15 received disclaimers and 3 opinions remain pending. The objective of earning an unmodified audit is mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act.

This shows that the DoD is sorely in need of help with its management processes from Trump's proposed Dept. of Government Efficiency.

Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) said that a father of an Air Force Academy cadet reached out to him in disgust that official Air Force document forms refer to him (the cadet's father) as the cadet's "non-birthing" parent.

When Pete Hegseth, Trump's nominee for Secretary of Defense, learned of this, he issued a three word reply. "Not for long."

Woke ideology is about to get booted out of the military—along with drag queens and DEI. "The dumbest phrase on planet Earth in the military is "our diversity is our strength," Hegseth stated. He says that the generals, admirals, etc. who support the "woke" ideology need to go. "Either you are in for warfighting, or not." That is the only litmus test for the military. He said that we have to get DEI and CRT out of the military academies. They are not to be training young officers to be baptized in this type of thinking.

Source: Todd Starnes, Nov. 16, 2024

President John Quincy Adams said, "*The law given from Mount Sinai was a civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code; it contained many statutes...of universal application—laws essential to the existence of men in society; and most of which have been enacted by every nation which ever professed an code of laws....Vain, indeed, would be the search among the writings of profane antiquity...to find so broad, so complete and so solid a basis for morality as this Decalogue [the Ten Commandments] lays down.*"

In 1971, the Supreme Court established the Lemon Test which said that any public religious expression must not advance religion and must avoid creating any entanglement with religion. This outlawed almost all religious displays. Nearly 50 years later, the Supreme Court rejected the Lemon Test. With the Court's renouncement of the Lemon Test, the 10 Commandments may once again be permitted in schools, and 10 Commandments monuments and plaques may be displayed. We believe it is time we do this again in Alabama.

Source: Wallbuilders

A recent audit by the Treasury Dept. reported that 149,000 federal employees owe \$1.5 billion in unpaid taxes. Many of these are repeat tax cheats. More than 5,800 employees of the IRS and its contractors owe almost \$50 million in back taxes. A bill was introduced in 2023 to disqualify such employees from continued employment, but it went nowhere in the Democrat Senate. This is a great subject for the Dept. of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to address right out of the gate with the new administration. *The Patriot United.com*

"There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humor."

*Charles Dickens,
A Christmas Carol*

"Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked: leadership is defined by results not attributes."

Peter Drucker

"We'll preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we'll sentence them to take the last step into a thousand years of darkness."

Ronald Reagan

"Don't rule out working with your hands. It does not preclude using your head."

Andy Rooney

"Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility."

Peter Drucker

"Within the character of the citizen, lies the welfare of the nation."

Cicero

"I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music."

Johann Sebastian Bach, composer

"Show me a family of readers, and I will show you the people who move the world."

Napoleon Bonaparte

"Time is a created thing. To say 'I don't have time' is like saying, 'I don't want to.'"

Leo Tzu

Cullman Student Eagles Held Successful “Run for Life”

By Brady Johnson and Rebecca Blocher



Runners Ready to Start 5K Race to Support Pregnancy Resource Center

After six months of planning and hard work, the Cullman Student Eagles are happy to report that the 2024 Cullman Run For Life was a success! Many local businesses, churches, and individuals helped make the event possible. A total of \$7,500 was raised to help support moms and babies through First Source For Women Pregnancy Center. To promote the event, students designed a flyer, built social media pages, created videos, wrote articles, and were interviewed on Cullman Television. They set up a table at Eagle Forum meetings across the state and at local churches several times a week to hand out flyers and speak about the need to take a stand for the pro-life movement.

“All human beings are made in God’s image which is why we believe all human life matters and is worthy of protection”, said Cullman Student Eagle Co-President Brady Johnson.

This sentiment was echoed in the design for the for the event t-shirts which read Imago Dei, the Latin translation for “The Image of God.” “We are hoping, said Co-President Jill Blocher, “that people will ask us what our t-shirts mean and open the door to a gospel conversation.”

“Throughout the planning for the event, God’s faithfulness was on display. Students spent all summer talking to local businesses to sell sponsorships, but two weeks before the run, only ten runners had paid their registration fee. It was time to order t-shirts and pay several other large expenses, so a decision needed to be made. The leadership team met to decide whether or not to cancel the event. The students decided to pray and ask God to send runners. Within an hour after praying, registrations began coming in, another local business signed up to be a sponsor, and a generous donor gave \$500 online. It was evident God wanted them to move forward. So, in faith, they ordered enough shirts and bibs for a hundred runners. The night before the run, they were excited to see fifty-eight people registered online. The next morning, though, they woke up to dark clouds, chilly wind, and steady rain. Everyone wondered how many people might show up given the terrible conditions. Once again they prayed. Fifteen minutes before registration was to begin, the rain stopped, and the clouds lifted. As the sun started coming out, the line of runners grew. Fifty unexpected walk-ups signed up that morning, and the students gave out all 100 bibb numbers, exactly what they had been lead to plan for. Over 150 attendees enjoyed the bake sale, bouncy castle, live music, and face painting. The Student Eagles team was so grateful to all of those who participated or volunteered to help take a stand for life and make a difference in their community.



Student Eagle Co-President Brady Johnson

Alabama Social Studies Course of Study

Over the past few months, Eagle Forum of Alabama has been involved with the review of a proposed 165 page draft of the update of the Alabama Social Studies Course of Study. The guidelines for teachers in Alabama have not been updated since 2010. We were concerned about a number of issues, but the first thing that caught our eyes was at the very beginning where it described the United States as a “constitutional democracy” rather than a “constitutional republic”. We provided copies to the committee of the American Birthright, a model course of study crafted by the Civics Alliance, that teaches students to identify the ideals, institutions, and individual examples of human liberty, individualism, religious freedom, and republican government.

President Eunie Smith and Katherine Patton, an Eagle Forum member who had previously served on a Social Studies Course of Study Committee, reviewed the entire document and provided numerous suggestions relative to criteria for each grade level from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Eagle Forum also recruited a number of college professors to critique the proposed course of study. They each provided their own detailed review of the material to the Course of Study committee. A great many of our suggestions and those of the professors we recruited have been incorporated into the document that was presented to the Board of Education for their review and approval at their December meeting.

A sampling of our suggestions that have been incorporated include:

- Changing terminology from “constitutional democracy” to “constitutional republic.”
- Addition of elements on American Exceptionalism, including John Winthrop’s “City on a Hill” sermon,
- Addition of Milton Friedman to the standard (Grade 11, 17b) on Reagan’s economic policies.
- Addition of famous Alabama military heroes, including Medal of Honor recipients (Grade 5, 9b and 14a).
- Addition of Booker T. Washington, A.G. Gaston, and Condoleeza Rice.
- Studied the *American Birthright* standards to bring in examples and other references to support the Kindergarten through Grade 2 standards. These include, but are not limited to, American founders as well as American holidays. Similarly, you will find civic and geography standards in these grades like those in American Birthright.
- Expanded the coverage of communism in the Grade 9 standards to address the horrors committed under such regimes (examples included since the August draft, but are not limited to: Grade 9, 9a; Grade 9, 13c).
- Removed the phrase “American imperialism” from the World History 9 standards.
- References to human trafficking were added in the “Contemporary World Issues” course (7a and 7c) and added elements regarding child labor and trafficking to Grade 9 World History (Grade 9, 17b) throughout Grade 8. Additionally, a new standard has been added on Ancient Israel in Grade 7.
- There is an expansion of early Church history and later developments throughout Grade 8.
- Rewrote a standard to address the differences between BC/AD and BCE/CE (Grade 7, 3a).
- Utilized the phrase “supply-side economics” as opposed to “voodoo economics” (Grade 11, 17b).
- Reworded the standard on Title IX and Equal Rights Amendment to focus it on a specific period as well as included Phyllis Schlafly to show women engaged in both sides of the debate (Grade 11, 14b).
- Removed the phrase “promoting equity” in Grade 12 Economics standards.

Eagle Forum continues to be instrumental in improving education for Alabama students. We thank the course of study committee for addressing many of our concerns.

Olive Spann Award cont’d from page 2

A visionary, in August she pioneered our first Pastors’ Roundtable to view and discuss the Eric Metaxas movie “Letter to the American Church”. According to its producer, the movie subsequently has had more church showings in Alabama than in any other state in the nation. Voter registration drives resulted.

Her enthusiasm for promoting Eagle Forum as a guide stone for pro God, family, and country activities is contagious, almost as contagious as her happy and winsome demeanor and her humble walk in faith. She is constantly looking for new growth opportunities for EF as we seek to counter the ever expanding mischief of those who would destroy America’s core values, abuse America’s children, and undermine America’s future in freedom.

Congratulations to Julia for this well deserved award.

What's Good About America?

The Brilliance of the Electoral College in Our Republic

By Rev. John Killian, Special Contributor

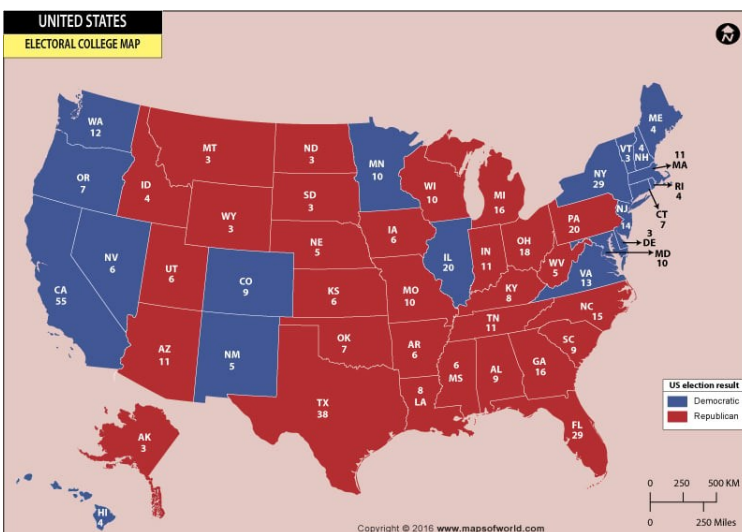
One evening, a man approached me as I finished speaking and asked me the point of voting in a presidential election. His reasoning was that his vote did not count since the Electoral College made the decision, regardless of his personal vote. As I sought to speak with respect and kindness, I explained why the system of electing presidents through the Electoral College is a positive and truly small “r” republican system is of determining the Chief Executive of our federal system.

Nonetheless, the latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone and online survey finds that 55% of Likely U.S. Voters favor eliminating the Electoral College so that whoever wins a majority of the popular vote wins the presidential election, including 35% who Strongly Favor it. Thirty-six percent (36%) are opposed to getting rid of this system, including 25% who Strongly Oppose ditching the Electoral College.¹ This is another example of the lack of proper civics and history education in America.

Why then do we have the Electoral College? Why don't we elect our country's Executive by popular vote? Critics of the Electoral College love to point out that in the presidential elections of 1824, 1876, 2000 and 2016, the candidate who won the election was runner-up in the popular vote. Why do we have a system where someone may be outpolled in the popular vote but still be elected President? Consider the safeguards of the Electoral College:

First, keeping the Electoral College affirms the important role of the states in our constitutional Republic (as enshrined in the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution), which is often referred to as federalism. Discarding the Electoral College in favor of a national popular vote would be a big step toward converting our Republic into a Democracy.

Second, the number of votes each state is allotted in the Electoral College provides an upper limit on the influence on presidential elections exerted by large population states. For example, with the Electoral College, California's influence on elections compared to Wyoming's influence is capped by the ratio of 55 (electoral votes) to 3 (electoral votes). No matter how many more millions of votes are received by the winning candidate as compared to the losing candidate in California, that candidate would still only get 55 votes in the Electoral College, and Wyoming would still get its 3 votes. This feature of the **Electoral College helps prevent the tyranny of the majority problem associated with democracies.**



2024 Electoral College map

Third, with the Electoral College widespread voter fraud in a large population state like California, a safe, blue state, would very rarely change the outcome of a presidential election because under the “winner take all” rules of nearly all states, if the winner gets only one vote more statewide than the opponent, the winner gets (in the example of California) 55 electoral votes. If the winner would receive millions more votes through voter fraud instead, he or she would still get only 55 electoral votes. The same would be true for large population red states. Therefore, the Electoral College serves to prevent voter fraud from changing who wins presidential elections.

¹https://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/biden_administration/majority_favor_eliminating_electoral_college

4200 Stone River Circle, Birmingham, AL 35213

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Birmingham, AL 35213

Eunie Smith, Managing Director, Elaine Little, Editor

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