



MOBILE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2013-2017

**POLICY AND
POSITION STATEMENTS**

This manual is a record of policies and positions taken by the
Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
over the past five years, and is current through December 2017

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MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS

2014

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2014 State Legislative Agenda

The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Critical Issues

1. To relieve growing congestion, advocate for final site selection and funding of the proposed I-10 Mobile River bridge and Bayway widening project from the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.
2. To support growing workforce needs, maintain funding levels that allow for education and job training programs that prepare current and future workers for technical positions in existing and future Alabama businesses and industries; and oppose the repeal of Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards.
3. Establish state-guaranteed, zero-interest small business loans available immediately following a federally-declared natural disaster, such as a hurricane, flood or tornado, to bridge the time until insurance claims are paid and other disaster relief funds or financial assistance can be acquired.
4. Seek legislation to encourage even greater reforms in property insurance to ensure the availability of market-driven property and flood insurance coverage at competitive pricing so that individuals and businesses can find reasonable and available protection for their homes and businesses.
5. Support and encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and procedures that encourage development and growth within the city of Mobile and Mobile County; encourage fair and expeditious permitting practices for both local and out-of-town investors.
6. Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid expansion in Alabama.
7. In order to preserve jobs and economic growth, remove barriers that can derail energy projects and reduce overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
8. Ensure that all projects and initiatives funded by the RESTORE ACT provide for long term environmental restoration and/or economic recovery to Alabama's coastal region. All approved projects and initiatives should adhere to a sound, scientific framework of analyses, an economic benefit assessment and a method of accountability.
9. Continue to support efforts to maintain federal military contracts with Mobile area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels.

10. Continue to advocate for adequate federal funding levels for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District to support annual operations and maintenance dredging of Mobile area waterways, including the Port of Mobile, Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels.
11. Support a comprehensive, federal energy policy that increases the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment, promotes comprehensive energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.

Legislative Action

1. In order make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states, support economic development legislation that includes an incentive structure based on job creation and the investment of capital; and when appropriate, a sales tax exemption for the purchase of machinery.
2. In order to enhance K-12 preparedness and ultimate success of students reaching accountability measures, support increased funding for certified pre-kindergarten programs in Alabama.
3. Support appropriate levels of funding in the FY 2014-15 education budget to allow for the implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, Career and Technical Education Initiative and dual-enrollment programs.
4. Enact the Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II, an update and expansion of the original landmark legislation enacted in 1992, which extends the appeal deadlines for taxpayers.
5. Support legislation that creates the Alabama Tax Appeals Commission as an independent state tax agency to oversee the tax appeals process and take the tax appeals decision authority away from the taxing agency, the Alabama Department of Revenue.
6. In order to enhance the competitiveness of local research institutions, provide support the passage of legislation to provide for a research and development income tax credit parallel to the federal R&D credit, with an extra incentive if a qualified research institution performs the research.
7. Seek amendments to enhance current incentives in order to allow for the sale of state tax credits for the preservation and renovation of historic buildings.
8. Support or assist in the enactment of legislation that encourages investment in early stage, innovative, wealth and job creating businesses that will remain headquartered, along with the majority of its workforce, in the state of Alabama.

9. In order to protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace, oppose any legislation that would keep an employer from restricting unauthorized firearm possession on company property.
10. Support fair trade initiatives and agreements designed to increase access to global markets, including reducing trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
11. Reform federal immigration policy to strengthen our national security, including increasing protection of our borders, while providing a supplemental workforce for American businesses and industry; ensure the continuity and expansion of H-1B, H-2B and L-1 visas for professionals and highly-valued workers.
12. In order to access increased federal funds for medical care of the elderly, support legislation that allows Programs for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) to contribute to the Alabama Healthcare Trust fund.

Policy Statements

1. Seek increased state and federal support and funding to address transportation infrastructure needs including the completion of the four-laning of U.S. Highways 98 and 45, a western Mobile bypass, improved access to Mobile Regional Airport, and improvements at Brookley Aeroplex.
2. Support fair and equitable tax reform to stimulate business growth and development; ensure that taxes and tax reform are applied fairly, without levying a disproportionate burden on individual segments of Alabama's economy.
3. Seek support for legislation that allows for the protection of manufacturers from frivolous plaintiff law suits due to noise and/or other minor nuisances.
4. Support existing eminent domain statutes to maintain economic development and quality of life initiatives, such as new manufacturing facilities and industrial/commercial parks as well as the revitalization of blighted areas, public housing and green space.
5. Support infrastructure project funding and legislative initiatives that improve the prospect of future economic success, including improvements to the port, airport, rail, water, sewer and industrial site infrastructure as well as strategic transportation infrastructure needs.
6. Advocate for stable sources of adequate funding for all state-directed public education initiatives to ensure an increase in student achievement and a fundamentally well-rounded education.
7. Support the review and repeal of unnecessary regulations and seek greater reform, efficiency and accountability in federal, state and local government.
8. Seek to protect the current worker classification of independent contractor as an integral part of the courier and real estate industries.

9. Simplify and reform the 1901 Constitution of the State of Alabama, including the opportunity for counties to choose “home rule” and provide the governor with line-item veto powers.

2015 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Economic Development & Tax

1. Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.
2. Make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states by passing economic development legislation that encourages job creation and the investment of capital by making statutory incentive programs more usable and applicable to new and expanding business.
3. Continue the growing investments in the renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, by extending the Alabama Historic Tax Credit beyond the 2015 expiration date.
4. Support local small business and provide a level playing field for all retailers through the collection of state and local sales tax from all online transactions.
5. Increase access to global markets through fair trade initiatives and agreements, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, approval of federal Trade Promotion Authority and the reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
6. Encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and government procedures that encourage development and growth within the city of Mobile and Mobile County; encourage fair and expeditious permitting practices for both local and out-of-town investors; and support the further analysis of local and regional tax reform.
7. Re-align taxes and regulatory fees paid to the Public Service Commission to better reflect the actual costs of performing necessary day-to-day functions of affected state agencies.

8. Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States.

Education & Workforce Development

1. Increase education funding to enhance k-12 preparedness and the ultimate success of students through the expansion of quality pre-kindergarten educational programs in Alabama.
2. Fully fund the FY '16 Education Budget to allow for the full implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, which includes the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, the Career/Technical Education Initiative dual-enrollment programs, and other innovative and flexible college prep and career-ready programs.

Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

1. Ensure that all projects and initiatives funded by the RESTORE ACT provide for long-term environmental restoration and/or economic recovery to Alabama's coastal region. All approved projects and initiatives should adhere to a sound, scientific framework of analyses, an economic benefit assessment and a method of accountability.
2. Increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment, through a comprehensive, energy policy that promotes energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.
3. Relieve growing congestion by finalizing the final site selection and funding of the proposed I-10 Mobile River bridge and Bayway widening project with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.
4. Support annual operations and maintenance dredging of Mobile area waterways, including the Port of Mobile, Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels by securing adequate federal funding levels for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District. .
5. Preserve jobs and economic growth through the removal of barriers that can derail infrastructure projects and the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
6. Seek a permanent funding solution for the Federal Highway Trust Fund; support reauthorization of a multiyear surface transportation act that will provide stability to state and local government.

Small Business

1. Assist small businesses after a natural disaster by establishing state-guaranteed, zero-interest small business loans available immediately following a federally-declared natural disaster, such as a hurricane, flood or tornado, to bridge the time until insurance claims are paid and other disaster relief funds or financial assistance can be acquired.
2. Reduce the cost of flood insurance for local business and property owners by encouraging reforms in local and state government that will ultimately increase the credits available through National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) and lower the CRS classification in local municipalities.
3. Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer from restricting unauthorized firearm possession on company property.

Healthcare

1. Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama.
2. Encourage local health care providers to quickly and effectively implement the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act.

2016 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services and infrastructure. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Economic Development & Tax

1. In order to make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states and encourage investment and job growth, enact economic development incentives:
 - Extend the Alabama Historic Tax Credit program beyond 2016 and increase amount of credits issued annually.
 - Create Research-and-Development Tax Credits modeled after the federal R&D credit but with an enhanced credit if the research is conducted by Alabama-based academic or nonprofit research institutions.
 - Expand the New Markets Development Tax Credit program by increasing the individual project cap (currently \$10 million) and the aggregate cap (currently \$20 million).
 - Establish a New Income Tax Credit available to companies with increased cargo volume through any publicly-owned facility located within the Port of Mobile.
2. Curb blight and enhance the development and growth within the city of Mobile by restructuring the existing Mobile Redevelopment Authority with an expanded scope to include residential properties.
3. Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile-area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.
4. Increase access to global markets through fair trade initiatives and agreements, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP), and the reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
5. Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States.

Education & Workforce Development

1. Continue to adequately fund Alabama's Education budget in order to ensure the most up-to-date facilities, tools and services for Alabama students and teachers as well as the expansion of Alabama's First Class pre-kindergarten educational programs to all Alabama four-year-olds.
2. Continue the full funding and implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, which includes the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, the Career/Technical Education Initiative dual-enrollment programs, and other innovative and flexible college prep and career-ready programs; and oppose any legislation or administrative action which deters it.
3. Seek a fiscal year 2017 appropriation for the University of South Alabama that reflects the institution's successful enrollment growth.

Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

1. Ensure that RESTORE ACT penalties and BP economic damage settlement funds support the long-term economic and environmental restoration in the Alabama coastal counties and that a significant portion of funds are sent to coastal counties affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and not used to make up state-wide revenue shortfalls or debt payments.
2. Adequately fund the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to ensure the continued environmental scrutiny of economic development and industrial expansion projects in the state and to safeguard against the increased cost of EPA involvement.
3. Preserve jobs and economic growth through the removal of barriers that can derail infrastructure projects and the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
4. Increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment through a comprehensive, energy policy that promotes energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.
5. Seek a permanent funding solution for the Federal Highway Trust Fund; support reauthorization of a multiyear surface transportation act that will provide stability to state and local government.
6. Support funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District for the annual operations, maintenance and necessary dredging of Alabama's waterways, including the Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels to increase Alabama's

economic competitive edge to expand existing or secure new shallow port industries and jobs.

7. Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and the annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel.
8. Support the design phase of the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway widening project and partner with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to actively seek construction funding.

Small Business

1. Seek more affordable and readily available coastal homeowners insurance through the action steps identified by Governor's Hurricane Homeowners workgroup.
2. Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer or property owner from restricting firearm possession on company or private property.
3. Support all efforts to decrease workers' compensation medical costs in Alabama by decreasing fraud in unemployment and workers' compensation claims with stronger statutes:
 - Maintain current Alabama laws that support an employer's right to choose the treating physician and second physician in workers' compensation claims.
 - Enact statutes that allow businesses to perform the Workman's Compensation claim checks prior to hire.
4. Support local small business and provide a level playing field for all retailers through the collection of state and local sales tax from all online transactions.
5. In order to avoid excessive and frivolous lawsuits and ensure fully-accessible public buildings and spaces, close the loophole in Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, by providing clearer rules for identifying and correcting ADA access violations and allowing business and property owners the opportunity to address and correct minor ADA infractions in a defined period of time, prior to an allowable civil law suit.

Healthcare

1. Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama, either through the participation in federal Medicaid expansion or growth of Regional Healthcare Organizations.
2. Seek a permanent funding source for Mobile's Programs for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the expansion of such programs across the state in order to

draw down increased federal funds for the medical care of the state's growing nursing home population at a cost savings to Medicaid.

3. Seek an equitable resolution on the Medicare wage index issue so that hospitals in the region will be fairly reimbursed for the services they provide to the Medicare population.

2017 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services and infrastructure. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Economic Development & Tax

6. In order to keep Alabama more competitive with other Southern states and continue business investment and job growth, enact proven and accountable economic development incentives:
 - Renew the proven Alabama Historic Tax Credit program
 - Expand the New Markets Development Tax Credit program by increasing the individual project cap (currently \$10 million) and the aggregate cap (currently \$20 million).
 - Create Research-and-Development Tax Credits modeled after the federal R&D credit but with an enhanced credit if the research is conducted by Alabama-based academic or nonprofit research institutions.
 - Provide an avenue of access to capital for small business, enact Small Business Investment Company Tax Credit for taxpayers that make capital contributions to an eligible Alabama small business investment fund.
7. Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile-area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Expeditionary Fast Transport vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.
8. Increase access to global markets through fair trade initiatives and agreements, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP), and the continued reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
9. Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States.
10. Preserve jobs and economic growth in all sectors through the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that increase the cost of doing business, create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.

Education & Workforce Development

4. Continue to adequately fund Alabama's Education budget, including Alabama's First Class pre-kindergarten, career tech, dual enrollment and other innovative programs, in order to ensure a competitive increase in student scoring, higher graduation rates and competitive college and career ready graduates; maintain high academic standards and expectations for all Alabama students such as those found in the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards.
5. Seek a fiscal year 2018 Alabama budget appropriation for the University of South Alabama that reflects the institution's successful enrollment growth and additional funding to support the implementation of a much-needed emergency medicine residency at USA Medical Center.

Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

9. Support the design phase of the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway widening project and partner with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to actively seek construction funding.
10. Preserve jobs and economic growth through the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
11. Increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment through a comprehensive, energy policy that promotes energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.
12. Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and the annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel; maintain necessary funding for the operation and maintenance of Alabama's commerce waterways, including the Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels.

Small Business

6. Continue to enact recommended action steps identified by Governor's Hurricane Homeowners workgroup in order to encourage more affordable and readily available coastal homeowners insurance.
7. Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer or property owner from restricting firearm possession on company or private property.
8. Support all efforts to decrease workers' compensation medical costs in Alabama by decreasing fraud in unemployment and workers' compensation claims with stronger statutes:

- Maintain current Alabama laws that support an employer's right to choose the treating physician and second physician in workers' compensation claims.
 - Enact statutes that allow businesses to perform the Workman's Compensation claim checks prior to hire.
9. In order to avoid excessive and frivolous lawsuits and ensure fully-accessible public buildings and spaces, close the loophole in Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, by providing clearer rules for identifying and correcting ADA access violations and allowing business and property owners the opportunity to address and correct minor ADA infractions in a defined period of time, prior to an allowable civil law suit.

Healthcare

4. Explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama, in a way that provides sustainable funding and allows Alabama providers the ability to manage the cost, efficiency, and quality of healthcare provided.
5. Seek a permanent funding source for Mobile's Programs for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the expansion of such programs across the state in order to draw down increased federal funds for the medical care of the state's growing nursing home population at a cost savings to Medicaid.
6. Seek an equitable resolution on the Medicare wage index issue so that hospitals in the region will be fairly reimbursed for the services they provide to the Medicare population.

2018 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services and infrastructure. The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Economic Development & Tax

- ★ In order to keep Alabama competitive with other Southern states and continue business investment and job growth, continue proven and accountable economic development incentives such as the Alabama Historic Tax Credit program, New Markets Development Tax Credit program, and the Alabama Film Credit. And strongly encourage Members of Congress to keep the Historic Tax Credit in the federal tax code. (*carried over*)
- ★ Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile-area based employers, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Frigate Littoral Combat Ships and Expeditionary Fast Transport vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships, destroyers and Coast Guard cutters. (*carried over*)
- ★ Support fair trade and investment agreements that expand access to international markets, reduce trade barriers, and increase foreign direct investment creating a level playing field to put Mobile area families, businesses, and workers first and improving the overall international competitiveness of Alabama exporters. (*updated*)
- ★ Support all efforts to decrease workers' compensation medical costs in Alabama by decreasing fraud in unemployment and workers' compensation claims with stronger statutes:
 - Maintain current Alabama laws that support an employer's right to choose the treating physician and second physician in workers' compensation claims.
 - Enact statutes that allow businesses to perform the Workman's Compensation claim checks prior to hire. (*carried over - moved from Small Business to Economic Development*)
- ★ **Support the continuation of federal payments to Alabama and Mobile and Baldwin counties from the 2006 Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) in 2018 federal budgets. Under GOMESA, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas receive a share of revenue from oil and gas drilling in federal waters, which helps address coastal restoration, hurricane protection and watershed management programs in coastal Alabama. (*new*)**

- ★ Support federal immigration reform that will secure our borders, establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures, and recognize the need to attract professional and highly-valued workers to the United States. (*carried over*)
- ★ Preserve jobs and economic growth in all sectors through the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that increase the cost of doing business, create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth. (*carried over*)

Education & Workforce Training

- ★ Continue to adequately fund Alabama's Education budget, including Alabama's First Class pre-kindergarten, career tech, dual enrollment and other innovative programs, in order to ensure a competitive increase in student scoring, higher graduation rates and competitive college and career ready graduates; maintain high academic standards and expectations for all Alabama students such as those found in the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards. (*carried over*)
- ★ Seek a fiscal year 2019 state budget appropriation for the University of South Alabama that reflects the institution's successful enrollment growth and increased graduation rates over the past ten years, and additional funding to support USA Health and its specialized health care mission. (*updated*)
- ★ **Support funding to establish a program coordinated by the University of South Alabama to support the needs of communities in Southwest Alabama to recruit, train and retain the more than 5,000 seasonal workers needed for the regions hospitality industry. The program would also focus on placing unemployed young Mobilians in unfilled jobs on the Alabama Coast. (*new*)**
- ★ **Continue to identify needs and support demand-driven strategic workforce training initiatives in south Alabama's key economic growth sectors, including aerospace, maritime and advanced manufacturing. (*new*)**
- ★ **Support measures to address the growing opioid crisis in Alabama that has detrimental effects on the availability of a qualified workforce, workplace safety and overall community health. (*new*)**

Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

- ★ Support the funding and construction of the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway widening project and partner with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to actively seek construction funding through **Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA)** Grants and other sources. (*updated*)

- ★ Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and the annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel; maintain necessary funding for the operation and maintenance of Alabama’s commerce waterways, including the deepening of the Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels. *(carried over)*
- ★ **The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports increasing Alabama’s investment in transportation infrastructure to sustain and promote economic growth, job creation, quality of life and public safety. The Chamber recognizes that there is a gap between current state resources and what is required to address the highway, bridge, and other road maintenance and capital needs in Alabama today and in the future, specifically for critical needs such as the completion of the four-laning U.S. Highway 98. *(new – position adopted mid-session 2017)***
- ★ **In order to ensure the consistent and bi-partisan management of the planning, building and maintaining of the state’s multimodal transportation system and the long-term management of state transportation planning and revenues, the Mobile Area Chamber supports legislation to allow for a board-governance structure and a non-political, board-appointed director of the Alabama Department of Transportation. *(new)***

Small Business and Entrepreneurial Growth

- ★ Encourage the creation of a cabinet level position in the executive branch to focus on the creation and growth of small businesses and entrepreneurial development in Alabama. *(new)*
- ★ Support the growth and development of Mobile’s entrepreneurial community and Innovation PortAL’s mapping of entrepreneurial talent to meet the growing technological needs of industry with early state funding opportunities such as the State of Alabama Full Sail fund. The Full Sail entrepreneurial fund will provide much-needed programming, skills training and funding for entrepreneurial clients as well as enable the engagement of local industry to identify technological solutions to small business challenges. *(new)*
- ★ To support the growing 'social enterprises' entrepreneurial demand in Alabama, expand the legal definition of a Limited Liability Company in Alabama’s code to include a low-profit limited liability company, or ‘L3C’ and a Benefit Corporation or ‘B Corp’, for-profit, social-benefit corporate entity. *(new)*
- ★ To support the growth and expansion of local restaurants and consumer offerings in the restaurant industry’s fastest growing segment, work to achieve the local authority necessary to implement the statewide “Brunch Bill” passed in 2017 that allows for 10:00 am on-premises alcohol sales on Sunday. *(new)*

- ★ In order to avoid excessive and frivolous lawsuits and ensure fully-accessible public buildings and spaces, close the loophole in Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, by providing clearer rules for identifying and correcting ADA access violations and allowing business and property owners the opportunity to address and correct minor ADA infractions in a defined period of time, prior to an allowable civil law suit. (*carried over*)
- ★ Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer or property owner from restricting firearm possession on company or private property. (*carried over*)

Healthcare

- ★ Support a health provider-driven approach to reforming Alabama's current Medicaid program to ensure access to care, control costs and maximize the return of Alabama's tax dollars to the state. (*updated*)
- ★ Seek an equitable resolution on the Medicare wage index issue so that hospitals in the region will be fairly reimbursed for the services they provide to the Medicare population. (*carried over*)
- ★ Seek a permanent funding source for Mobile's Programs for All-inclusive Care of the Elderly (PACE) and the expansion of such programs across the state in order to draw down increased federal funds for the medical care of the state's growing nursing home population at a cost savings to Medicaid. (*carried over*)

2016 Legislative Position – Energy, Environment and Infrastructure

Ensure that RESTORE Act penalties and BP economic damage settlement funds support the long-term economic and environmental restoration in the Alabama coastal counties and that a significant portion of funds are sent to coastal counties affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and not used to make up statewide revenue shortfalls or debt payments.

Philosophy Guiding Project Support

The mission of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is to serve as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the area's economic well-being. The Chamber recognizes that the BP oil disaster was an environmental and economic disaster for our area. Furthermore, the Chamber also recognizes that the coastal environment and its natural resources are a key part of Mobile's economic landscape and quality of life.

As such, Chamber leadership will review suggested uses of RESTORE Act and BP funds for their strategic impact on Mobile's economy. The Chamber of Commerce will advocate for the funding of projects based on the intention of the specific funds.

Specifically, we will prioritize our support of projects based upon their impact on the following four critical elements:

1. Economy – projects designed to have a direct, ongoing and strategic (long-term) impact on the Mobile economy.
2. Infrastructure – projects having positive impact on critical elements of our infrastructure, including stormwater, transportation and the Port of Mobile.
3. Resiliency -- projects increasing the resilience of Mobile, therefore enabling businesses to more quickly and successfully recover from disasters and future extreme events.
4. Environment – projects of environmental importance that increase quality of life.

Amendment Eight

Ballot Text:

*Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to declare that it is the public policy of Alabama that the right of persons to work may not be denied or abridged on account of membership or non-membership in a labor union or labor organization; to prohibit an agreement to deny the right to work, or place conditions on prospective employment, on account of membership or non-membership in a labor union or labor organization; to prohibit an employer from requiring its employees to abstain from union membership as a condition of employment; and to provide that an employer may not require a person, as a condition of employment or continuation of employment, to pay dues, fees, or other charges of any kind to any labor union or labor organization.
(Proposed by Act 2016-86)*

Summary:

This amendment reinforces Alabama's position as a right-to-work state in the state constitution. The right of employment, whether a member of a labor organization or not, has been Alabama law since 1958. The amendment would simply add it into the constitution.

Rationale:

- *One major component of Alabama's economic development success and growth in the manufacturing sector is its longstanding status as a right-to-work state.*
- *Passage of Amendment 8 will showcase voter support for the right to work without paying union dues and serve as a deterrent to pro-union legislation or promotion in the state.*
- *As the area's lead economic development agency, the Chamber has a long-held policy that "encourages and endorses legislation which enhances interaction between management and the workforce, improving communication, morale, productivity and product quality. " This position clearly calls for healthy labor - management relations in order to negate the need for third party or union interference.*

Proposed Statement of Support:

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce believes that Alabama's right-to-work status is essential in order to remain competitive in the site selection process and continue to grow valuable jobs and a strong economy. The Chamber will continue to call upon elected officials, community leaders and all voters to defend Alabama's Right to work status when necessary. To showcase statewide support and further reinforce right-to-work importance, the Mobile Chamber supports and encourages a "yes" vote to Amendment 8 on the Alabama ballot on November 8.

RESOLUTION
Done this 30th Day of January, 2013

WHEREAS, Winthrop M. Hallett, III has announced his plans to retire as President of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce (“President”) to be effective at a date in the future; and

WHEREAS, in order to search for, recruit, interview, negotiate with and agree with candidates for the job of President, Michael Pierce, during his term as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, formed a committee (hereinafter called the “Search Committee”); and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to give the Search Committee the authority to search for, recruit, interview and agree with candidates for the job of President, including the authority to enter into an employment agreement with the candidate selected; and

WHEREAS, the acts of the Search Committee, including any employment agreement may need to be done on a confidential basis with information shared only with those who, in the discretion of the Search Committee, have a need to know; and

WHEREAS, all actions of the Search Committee related to the search, including finalizing an employment agreement shall be on behalf of and the act of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce;

NOW THEREFORE, it is resolved as follows:

1. Mike Saxon, Chairman, is hereby given the authority to confirm appointments to the Search Committee. The Search Committee may consist of present or past officers or directors of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, employees of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, members of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce or subject matter experts in the area of chamber leadership. It shall consist of no more than nine (9) persons although the committee may, in its discretion, include others *ex officio* to consult with on an *ad hoc* basis.

2. The Search Committee is given the authority to search for, recruit, interview, negotiate with and make agreements with candidates for the position of President. This includes the authority to enter into a firm and binding employment agreement, on such terms as the Search Committee deems advisable, with the person selected to be President of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

3. All actions of the Search Committee, including the terms of the agreement reached, may be confidential, and may remain confidential, subject to the discretion of the Chairman. All actions and agreements shall be on behalf of and as the act of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

4. Any final employment agreement between The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and the person who is selected to become President shall not have terms which exceed the compensation and/or benefits of the agreement now in place with Winthrop M. Hallett III, unless specifically approved by the Chamber’s Executive Committee.

5. Any action taken heretofore by Mr. Saxon, Mr. Michael Pierce, and/or any persons selected or appointed by them as members of the Search Committee are hereby ratified and approved.

RESOLVED: The Board of Directors of The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce approves and adopts this Resolution.

Michael E. Pierce, Immediate Past Chairman Michael Chambers, Chairman-Elect

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
BARTON ACADEMY RENOVATION AND
ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVANCED WORLD STUDIES SCHOOL
March 26, 2013**

WHEREAS, Barton Academy is Alabama's oldest public school building, having been constructed between 1836-1839; and

WHEREAS, Barton Academy has served generations of Mobile residents who, at various times, received their elementary, middle and high school education there; and

WHEREAS, Barton Academy remains a significant historical and cultural resource as signified by its inclusion in the National Registry of Historic Places in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Barton Academy's future is threatened by the lack of maintenance associated with the vacancy of the building, and it has twice been listed on Alabama's "Places in Peril;" and

WHEREAS, the Mobile County Public Schools superintendent and staff have developed a concept for an exceptional magnet school at Barton Academy, emphasizing advanced core subjects, world geography, global economies and foreign languages; and

WHEREAS, on August 23, 2011, the Mobile County Board of School Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution endorsing the concept of an advanced world studies magnet school at Barton Academy; and

WHEREAS, the Barton Academy Foundation was incorporated in April, 2012 by various civic leaders as a private, non-profit foundation to support the Mobile County Public School System in its efforts to renovate Barton Academy and establish an advanced world studies magnet school there; and

WHEREAS, international business investment is critical to the area's economic stability and growth; and

WHEREAS, a school for advanced world studies will make Mobile a more attractive site for international investment and jobs, and will be a significant economic development tool; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of an advanced world studies magnet school will prepare both local and international students for careers in an increasingly global workforce;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports the Barton Academy Foundation's efforts to renovate the historic Barton Academy facility; and supports the Mobile County Public School System's plan to establish an advanced world studies magnet school at the renovated facility.

Done this 26TH day of March 2013.



R. Michael Saxon, Chairman



Winthrop M. Hallett III, President

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO
SAMUEL L. JONES**

- WHEREAS: Sam Jones, a native of Mobile, has served in leadership positions throughout his career, in the United States Navy, in Mobile County and in the City of Mobile; and
- WHEREAS: Sam Jones served as Mobile County Commissioner from 1987 through 2005, where he held the presidency, and also served as the president of the Alabama Association of County Commissions; and
- WHEREAS: Sam Jones, during his tenure on the County Commission, enhanced quality of life in the county through the construction and resurfacing of thousands of miles of roads; and
- WHEREAS: Commissioner Jones, a consensus builder, initiated partnerships that led to the construction of Mobile Government Plaza and the Mobile Metro Jail; and
- WHEREAS: Commissioner Jones saw inmate overcrowding in the Metro Jail and teamed up with former Presiding Circuit Court Judge Braxton Kittrell to create Mobile County Community Corrections Center, an in-house facility to address first-time offenders – a move that resulted in the development of the Drug Court program; and
- WHEREAS: Sam Jones has been an outspoken advocate for quality education, notably in support of public education referendums to provide stable revenue for Mobile County Public Schools; by spearheading a grant from the U.S. Conference of Mayors that gave the Mobile Area Education Foundation needed funding to create “RAMP Blueprint,” an initiative to reduce the county’s dropout rate; and as a member of the University of South Alabama’s board of trustees; and
- WHEREAS: Sam Jones was elected Mayor of Mobile in 2005, where he oversaw creation of Mobile 311, a citizen-based service response system that answers 100,000 inquiries annually, and the city’s first accountability program, CitiSmart, which holds city departments responsible for tax dollars and employee productivity; and
- WHEREAS: Mayor Jones, a supporter of the business community, created eMobile, an online payment system to give business owners easy access to pay their business license fees; and
- WHEREAS: Mayor Jones devised and implemented a creative campaign to enlarge Mobile’s populace through two annexations: Mobile Terrace/western corridor and portions of the Theodore/Tillman’s Corner communities; and

WHEREAS: Sam Jones exhibited staunch support and vision for public/private partnerships between Mobile County, the City of Mobile, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization and many local, national and international businesses and industries; and

WHEREAS: Mayor Jones, a visionary leader who knows and values the amenities Mobile and its surrounding communities offer, assisted in recruiting such industries as Airbus, ThyssenKrupp Steel and Stainless, Austal, BAE Systems, Labinal, ST Aerospace Mobile, SSAB, Aker Solutions, APM Terminals, Berg Spiral Pipe and numerous others, which are transforming the economic landscape of Mobile and the region; and

WHEREAS: Sam Jones has fostered relationships that have grown the region's reputation in the global marketplace, now home to companies from Australia, England, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and others;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors expresses its appreciation and gratitude to Mayor Sam Jones for his leadership and dedication to the betterment of the City of Mobile and Mobile County and its citizenry, leaving a benchmark of progress that will carry the Mobile region to future prosperity.

Done this 25 day of September, 2013.

R. Michael Saxon, Chairman of the Board

William B. Sisson, President and CEO

**MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION
2014 TRANSPORTATION
PAY-AS-YOU-GO REFERENDUM
Board of Directors Approved on September 25, 2014**

The **MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION** directed the Mobile County Engineering Department to prepare the following Engineering Report for the proposed 2014 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program. The County Wide Projects are selected by the Commission for their benefit to the entire County regardless of which County Commission District they are located.

PROPOSED APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION 2014 TRANSPORTATION
PAY-AS-YOU-GO PROGRAM FUNDS

\$54,000,000
<u>FEDERAL FUNDS</u>
<u>\$11,700,000</u>
TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING
\$65,700,000

All Mobile County 2014 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program funding itemized in this report is based on the passage of the 2014 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program referendum to be voted on by the voters of Mobile County on November 4, 2014.

The County Wide Projects are selected by the Commission for their benefit to the entire county regardless of which county commission district they are located.

Description of each Project:

- Removal of the existing two lane bridge carrying Padgett Switch Road over Carl's Creek and constructing a new two lane bridge with realigned approaches.
- Removal of the existing two lane bridge carrying Wilmer-Georgetown Road over Big Creek and constructing a new two lane bridge with realigned approaches.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing Theodore Dawes Road from the I-10 Service Road eastward to the Mobile City limits.
- Reconstruction of a .6 mile segment of Bellingrath Road in the vicinity of Fowl River.
- Construction of a new paved road from West Lake Road northward to Johnson Road South.
- Paving of an existing segment of Glass Road and the construction of a new paved road, thereby creating a connecting road from the west end of Hurricane Blvd to Hwy 188.
- Resurface the road from Celeste Road eastward to Hwy 43.
- Resurface the road from Airport Blvd northward to Tanner Williams Road.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Henderson Camp Road and resurface the paved road from Hwy 188 to the south end of the pavement.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Ramsey Road and resurface the road from Hwy 188 northward to Old Pascagoula Road.
- Resurface Henry Davis Road from Celeste Road eastward to Broad Branch Road.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Dawes Road and resurface the road from Three Notch Road northward to Cottage Hill Road.
- Widen Dawes Road from Cottage Hill Road northward to .1 mile south of Jeff Hamilton Road.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Tanner Williams Road and resurface the paved road from Wilmer Road eastward to .2 miles west of Eliza Jordan Road North.
- Pave a portion of the shoulder of Dawes Road and resurface the road from Grand Bay Wilmer Road South eastward to Three Notch Road.

THE MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORTS A “YES” VOTE ON THE NOVEMBER 4 REFERENDUM TO ADDRESS CRITICAL ROAD PROJECTS FOR THE COUNTY. THESE PROJECTS ARE PAID FOR BY A PORTION OF THE AD VALOREM TAXES COLLECTED WITHIN MOBILE COUNTY.

**MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION
2016 TRANSPORTATION
PAY-AS-YOU-GO REFERENDUM**

The **MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION** directed the Mobile County Engineering Department to prepare the following Preliminary Engineering Report for the proposed 2016 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program.

PROPOSED APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION 2016 TRANSPORTATION PAY-AS-YOU-GO PROGRAM FUNDS	\$48,000,000
FEDERAL FUNDS	
<hr/>	
\$61,680,292	
TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING	\$109,680,292

All Mobile County 2016 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program funding itemized in this report is based on the passage of the 2016 Transportation Pay-As-You-Go program referendum to be voted on by the voters of Mobile County on November 8, 2016.

The County-Wide Projects are selected by the Commission for their benefit to the entire county, regardless of which county commission district they are located.

Description of each Project:

- Widening of the existing road section to five or more lanes from I-10 to .1 mile north of Old Pascagoula Road.
- Widening of the existing road section to five or more lanes from .1 mile east of Tanner Williams Road to .1 mile east of Schillinger Road North.
- Construction of a new, paved road from .1 mile north of Old Pascagoula Road to Three Notch-Kroner Road.
- Widening of an existing road section to four or more lanes from Athey Road eastward to Forest Hill Drive.
- Widening of an existing road section to four or more lanes from Schillinger Road North eastward to Cody Road North.
- Widening of an existing road section to three or more lanes from Airport Blvd northward to Dauphin Street, a new bridge culvert over Eslava Creek and intersection improvements for the intersection of Dauphin Street/Wimbledon Drive East at South McGregor Avenue.
- Resurfacing of the road from Highway 90 northward to County Farm Road.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing the paved road from Louis Tillman Road eastward to McDonald Road.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing the paved road from Half Mile Road northward to Highway 90.
- Resurfacing of the existing paved road from Highway 43 eastward to the End of Maintenance.
- Paving of a portion of the shoulder and resurfacing the paved road from Dawes Road eastward to McDonald Road.
- Resurfacing of the road from Old Howells Ferry Road northward to Highway 98.

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports a “FOR” vote on the November 8 referendum to address critical road projects for the County. These projects are paid for by a portion of the ad valorem taxes collected within Mobile County.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
POSITION STATEMENT**

Adopted on behalf of the Board of Directors April 17, 2014

“The mission of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is to “serve as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the Mobile-area’s economic well-being.”

As the area’s lead economic development agency, the Chamber has a long-held policy to “support and encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and procedures that encourage development and growth within the City and County. The Chamber believes economic investment in our community should benefit the Mobile-area economy in a fair and balanced manner, providing opportunities for our citizens and children for years to come. If local, state and/or federal approvals are required, the Chamber encourages fair and expeditious practices.”

VT MOBILE AEROSPACE ENGINEERING'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

WHEREAS, Singapore Technologies Aerospace, a division of Singapore Technologies Engineering, established ST Mobile Aerospace Engineering in September, 1990; and

WHEREAS, a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility with special expertise in modifications and engineering services was established at Brookley Industrial Complex to serve the North and South American aerospace markets; and

WHEREAS, the company, now known as VT MAE, received its FFA 145 certificate to perform maintenance on all metal construction large commercial aircraft in January, 1991; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE hired its first direct employee on September 10, 1990, and now employs over 1,000 direct employees, including technical, engineering and administrative personnel, consisting mainly of licensed aircraft mechanics; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE's facilities consist of eight hangars equipped with eight wide-body and ten narrow-body aircraft bays; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE's footprint at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley (formerly Brookley Industrial Complex) has grown to almost 900,000 square feet; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE has supported 4,626 aircraft maintenance service and modifications since 1991, on Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed and Airbus airframes; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE continues to grow its capacity, scheduled to launch its first Boeing 777-300 maintenance program in November, 2015; and

WHEREAS, VT MAE and its employees have contributed to Mobile's quality of life through its support of the American Cancer Society's Annual Chili Cook-off, WKRG's annual Great Toy Drive, Partners in Education, American Red Cross blood drives, and the Worlds of Opportunity Career Expo to name a few.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes and congratulates VT MAE and its employees for 25 years of successful operation and support of Mobile's economy and community.

Done this 22nd day of October, 2015

Frank J. Lott III, Chairman of the Board

William B. Sisson, President and CEO

ALABAMA TAXPAYERS' BILL OF RIGHTS II
Statement of Support for HB105 sponsored by Rep. Paul DeMarco.

Support legislation to create the Alabama Tax Appeals Commission (ATAC) as an independent state tax agency, headed by a judge selected in a non-partisan manner who has specific training in state and local taxation; and seek passage of the Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II, an update and expansion of the original landmark legislation enacted in 1992, which extends the appeal deadlines for taxpayers.

This legislation amends a number of elements that were either not addressed or have not been successful from the original Taxpayer Bill of Rights. Changes to the law are mostly in favor of the taxpayer and include:

- Under current law, an Alabama taxpayer dispute is heard by an Administrative Law Judge that works under the Alabama Law Division. Currently, the Alabama Law Division acts as a department of the Department of Revenue, the party adverse to the taxpayer. While there is no reason to believe that the Administrative Law judge is biased in favor of his employer, (in fact, history of rulings clearly shows his independence), it does give the appearance of unfairness.
- **Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II** makes the Alabama Law Division, and its presiding judge, an independent body by creating the Alabama Tax Appeals Commission. It abolishes the current Administrative Law Division of the Alabama Department of Revenue and transfers both the personnel and equipment to a newly-formed state agency, under the executive branch. Without such a change Alabama will remain in the distinct minority of states that lack an independent tax appeals tribunal. Alabama received a "D" on the latest State Tax Due Process Scorecard issued by the Council on State Taxation, primarily for this reason.
- In addition to extending the taxpayer's appeal period from 30 days to 60 days, **Alabama Taxpayers' Bill of Rights II** aligns many of Alabama's tax penalties, regulations and statute of limitations to those of the federal tax laws.
- The Business Associations' Tax Coalition, the Business Council of Alabama, the Alabama Society of CPAs, the Birmingham Business Alliance, the Alabama State Bar, Eagle Forum, the American Bar Association, the Council on State Taxation and the National Taxpayers Union have all endorsed these changes. The Legislative Fiscal Office scored last year's version of the bill, HB 427, as revenue neutral.



USCG Aviation Training Center Mobile 50th Anniversary

WHEREAS, United States Coast Guard Aviation Training Center Mobile (ATC), was officially commissioned on December 17, 1966 as Air Station Mobile; and

WHEREAS, a training section was established at Mobile in 1967, with the primary mission to transition newly designated aviators to the HU-16E and HH-52A and send them to their units as designated co-pilots; and

WHEREAS, in July 1969 Air Station Mobile was renamed the USCG Aviation Training Center and was designated a headquarters unit to facilitate and coordinate the movement of several hundred pilots in and out of Mobile each year; and

WHEREAS, ATC Mobile's facilities consist of 230 acres, and 46 buildings which include two aircraft hangars; and

WHEREAS, ATC Mobile is one of the largest units in the Coast Guard and one of the largest non-industrial employers in Mobile County with authorized personnel of 158 officers, 383 enlisted and 45 civilians, generating nearly \$98 million in payroll impact; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 ATC Mobile recorded 169 Search & Rescue missions representing 683 flight hours whereby 10 lives were saved, 36 lives assisted and \$570,000 in property assisted/saved; and

WHEREAS, ATC Mobile has played a key role in responding to natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, and tragedies such as the Dauphin Island Regatta incident, as well as the BP oil spill that kept our waterways open, they also work together to support Coast Guard missions worldwide; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude for the commitment and sacrifice of the men and women of the USCG to our country and to our local region. The Chamber recognizes and congratulates ATC Mobile for the contribution to Mobile's quality of life by securing our borders, contributing to our local economy, and being a vital part of our national defense for the past 50 years.

Done this 26nd day of May 2016

D. Mark Nix, Chairman of the Board

William B. Sisson, President and CEO

STATEMENT of SUPPORT
Letter mailed to U.S. Senators on Common Core
February 28, 2013

The Alabama Legislature has made great strides in recent years to make our State more attractive to business. We are currently facing a threat to that trend that requires your immediate attention. SB 190 and HB 254 would prohibit the State from implementing the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards for education. We are very concerned that this effort could seriously damage our “business friendly” status.

The quality of public education in the State of Alabama is critical to economic development success. Businesses locate, stay and expand where they are able to find educated workers and where their employees can access quality education for their children. Alabama is competing with the rest of the nation and the world for aerospace, automotive, biotech, information technology and other high-growth industries, and our graduates must be able to perform as well as or better than those in other states and countries. The only way to ensure this is to teach to the same high standards that other states use and to evaluate our students against those standards.

In 2010 the Alabama Board of Education adopted the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards which aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards were developed by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. They do not direct content or curriculum but instead set common standards that should be met by students at each grade level, regardless of where in the United States they live. The Common Core State Standards are used to develop the ACT and other nationally recognized assessments that are already being used in Alabama. The Alabama State Department of Education has adopted Plan 2020 which will lead to every high school graduate being college and career ready. This will be accomplished through the rigor of the Common Core State Standards and an aggressive data-based assessment and intervention strategy.

House Bill 254 and Senate Bill 190 threaten not only the vision of Plan 2020 but the economic viability of the State of Alabama by eliminating all funding for implementation of the Common Core State Standards, severely restricting collection and use of data in making decisions, and placing cumbersome requirements on the adoption of education standards, requirements that undermine the authority of the State Board of Education.

The crusade against the Common Core State Standards is part of national campaign of disinformation, claiming that the standards are a federal mandate and that they will force particular content or curriculum into classrooms. These statements are both false.

We urge you to oppose SB 190 and HB 254 and any other similar effort that would undermine quality education and place Alabama at a competitive disadvantage in our economic development efforts.

Sincerely,

Chip Cherry, CCE
Chamber of Commerce of
Huntsville/Madison County

Brian Hilson
Birmingham
Business Alliance

Randall L. George
Montgomery Area
Chamber of Commerce

Win Hallett
Mobile Area
Chamber of Commerce

GREER'S MARKETS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

WHEREAS, in 1916, Autry Greer, founder of Greer's, opened a grocery store in the Northwest corner of Water and St. Michael Streets in downtown Mobile;

WHEREAS, this original store was a pioneer in the "Cash and Carry" food store concept;

WHEREAS, the Greer's store at Water and St. Michael was the first, and for a long time, the only store to advertise prices – these prices were the lowest in town because other stores sold on credit and delivered;

WHEREAS, five generations later, Greer's is still owned by the Greer family.

WHEREAS, Greer's currently operates 33 supermarkets in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida with a Greer's Ace Hardware Express in Quitman, MS and Mobile and employs over 700 people;

WHEREAS, Greer's Team Vision is "To bring added joy well-being and value to people's lives!" reminds all who work at Greer's that they are in the business of serving others;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes and congratulates Greer's on 100 years of successful operation and support of Mobile's economy and community.

Done this 31st day of March 2016.

D. Mark Nix, Chairman of the Board

William B. Sisson, President and CEO

THAMES BATRÉ 125TH ANNIVERSARY

WHEREAS, in 1891, Thames Batré began as a partnership between Gustav Thames and Lloyd Batré;

WHEREAS, even though there is no longer a Thames or a Batré in their ranks, the seeds they planted continue to grow and prosper;

WHEREAS, along the way, mergers brought together the Harry Mattei Agency, Ison Insurance Agency and Beville Insurance Agency, all adding strength, depth and perpetuation to Thames Batré's solid and firm foundation;

WHEREAS, under the thoughtful guidance of today's group of owners and leaders, Thames Batré continues to add youthful talent with creative and energetic ideas, all assuring a future as bright and promising as their past;

WHEREAS, Thames Batré has been selected as a "Best Practices Agency" for 16 consecutive years, one of only 216 awarded in the United States;

WHEREAS, Thames Batré is the only firm based in Mobile, Alabama to receive this designation and one of only six across all of Alabama;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes and congratulates Thames Batré on 125 years of successful operation and support of Mobile's economy and community.

Done this 31st day of March 2016.

D. Mark Nix, Chairman of the Board

William B. Sisson, President and CEO

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO
CONGRESSMAN JO BONNER**

Done this 23rd day of October 2013

WHEREAS: Jo Bonner, a native of South Alabama, served as both press secretary and chief of staff to former Congressman Sonny Callahan for 18 years; and

WHEREAS: Jo Bonner was elected to serve as South Alabama's First District Congressman in 2002 and was re-elected in 2012 to a sixth term representing the state's fastest-growing region, the Gulf Coast; and

WHEREAS: Jo Bonner, in partnership with local and state leaders, has been proactive in helping to successfully attract new industries to the First District and was presented the "2012 Governor Bob Riley 'Building a Better Alabama' Award" by the Business Council of Alabama; and

WHEREAS: Jo Bonner was an integral part of "Team Alabama" and participated in the successful recruitment of Airbus's first North American aircraft assembly plant to Mobile, which will create 1,000 direct jobs, 2,500 construction jobs and generate more than 4,000 supplier jobs; and

WHEREAS: Congressman Bonner, a visionary leader who knows and values the amenities Mobile and its surrounding communities offer, assisted in recruiting such industries as Airbus, ThyssenKrupp Steel and Stainless, Austal, BAE Systems, Labinal, ST Aerospace Mobile, SSAB, Aker Solutions, APM Terminals, Berg Spiral Pipe and numerous others, which are transforming the economic landscape of Mobile and the region; and

WHEREAS: Jo Bonner, has fostered relationships that have greatly enhanced the region's reputation in the global marketplace, and encouraged direct investment by companies from Australia, England, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and others;

WHEREAS: Jo Bonner, during the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010, worked closely with federal, state and local authorities to coordinate emergency response efforts, while simultaneously working to hold BP accountable through the Gulf Coast Claims Facility;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors expresses its appreciation and gratitude to Congressman Jo Bonner for his leadership and dedication to the betterment of South Alabama and its citizenry, leaving a benchmark of progress that will carry the region to future prosperity.

R. Michael Saxon, Chairman of the Board

William B. Sisson, President and CEO

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
Statement of opposition to Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017

As an extension of the Mobile Area Chamber's advocacy purpose to encourage work at all levels of government that stimulates jobs, the Chamber opposes enacting any legislation or regulation that would have an unnecessary or detrimental effect on existing industry, infrastructure improvements or economic development.

The Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017, introduced as SB60/HB99, would prohibit the movement, renaming, relocation, and even the temporary relocation, of any public monument or marker on state, county or city property. Although in certain cases a waiver from the Permanent Joint Committee on Alabama Monument Protection may be applied for, the process could be lengthy and complex. If allowed at all, the waiver procedure could take months, if not years, and dramatically alter the progress of a new industrial development, economic development project, neighborhood enhancement and all other community building projects. The waiver or project may be denied all together and permanently deter the development, prospect or infrastructure improvement.

Given these reasons and guided by advocacy purpose, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce opposes the Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017.

Approved:

February 23, 2017

Promotion of Other Organizations' Events

Though the Chamber desires to promote positive, impactful events in our community, the organization's first responsibility is to publicize Chamber events to help ensure they are productive, well attended, profitable and impactful to the Chamber's mission and annual plan of action.

Requests to promote another organizations' events should be referred to the Chamber's Communications and Marketing Department for their consideration. Additionally, business news and events may be submitted for publication in the Chamber's Business View Weekly e-newsletter, through the Chamber's website, www.mobilechamber.com/calendar.

Approved:

April 20, 2017

Volkswagen 2.0-litr TDI Buy Back

Be it resolved this 22nd day of February 2017 that the Board of Directors governing the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce hereby authorizes and approves:

THAT Matthew Hariel, Vice President of Finance, be hereby designated and appointed to act on behalf of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of submitting a claim under the Volkswagen 2.0-liter TDI Class Action Settlement, and completing the buyback transaction along with any and all acts and duties necessary to complete the said process.

Adopted this 22nd day of February, 2017.