



2022 Legislative Agenda

Pro-Growth * Pro-Innovation * Pro-Alabama

The Alabama House Democratic Caucus presents their 2022 Legislative Agenda: “Pro-Growth * Pro-Innovation * Pro-Alabama” as a cohesive, practical plan to address the unprecedented and critical issues that face all of Alabama. We believe that these innovative policy solutions will result in a healthier and more prosperous Alabama that embraces diversity, inclusion, fairness, and growth. As we rebound and rebuild from the many devastating aspects of the pandemic, this is now our opportunity to move Alabama forward and manifest our unlimited potential.



Economic Growth

Alabama House Democrats are stalwart champions of vibrant economic growth and strongly support strengthening small businesses by ensuring they have the financial and human capital they need to thrive. Whether it's reducing the tax burden for family-owned businesses, ensuring fair wages, upgrading our supply-chain infrastructure, or creating tangible opportunities for entrepreneurial innovation, House Democrats continue to lead the way in pro-growth policies that help all Alabamians prosper. We vehemently oppose the majority's efforts to defy and replace federal vaccination mandates with conflicting state mandates, which has now essentially resulted in the largest tax on small businesses in the history of Alabama. To be clear, we support spending federal COVID relief dollars the way they were allocated and intended. That includes expanding access to affordable housing by making sure that COVID housing relief monies are used to keep struggling families in their homes.

For Alabama to achieve its highest economic potential, we must level the playing field by closing the income inequality gap and meet the training demands of new high-tech industries. It's not only time to reinvest in traditional infrastructure upgrades, but also time to embrace new and emerging technologies that affect workers in every type of job. Alabama House Democrats

believe that we must continue our efforts to support our local businesses by “buying small” and helping them access education and training to maintain their competitive edge and grow. Democrats understand the impact that COVID has had on their bottom line and that’s why we propose a COVID relief tax break for small businesses in Alabama. We also must make certain that public spending is fair by including minority and women-owned businesses in state procurements. Further, we must end the regressive tax on groceries which disproportionately hurts the poorest and most disadvantaged among us. **We know that we must invest in Alabama because economic growth does not happen on its own.**



Affordable Healthcare

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and strain our entire healthcare system, we must increase our capacity for testing, vaccinations, boosters, and other public health measures to mitigate and eradicate the virus. The pandemic made evident the many gaps in Alabama’s healthcare system including hundreds of thousands of citizens who still remain uninsured, the lack of adequate mental health resources, and an alarming shortage of physicians and healthcare workers. Simply put, there’s never been a more important time to expand Medicaid and we must do everything we can to ensure access to affordable quality healthcare. In addition, we believe that the state should add dietitians, as well as nutritional and vascular services to the list of reimbursable Medicaid procedures. This will provide short and long-term health benefits for many thousands of people in our state.

House Democrats will continue to fight Alabama’s high rate of infant mortality by advocating for the expansion of Medicaid services, particularly to new mothers. We will continue to find ways to incentivize and bring doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers to Alabama. This includes enhancing and increasing telemedicine programs and helping struggling hospitals avoid permanent closure. **We know that a healthy Alabama is the basic foundation for our wellness, growth, and prosperity.**



Education Innovation

Alabama House Democrats know that our children deserve the best in education so that upon graduation they are career ready for whatever field they choose. It starts with investing in and expanding Kindergarten and Pre-K programs, closing the achievement gap, and increasing dual enrollment programs for high school students – and helping students from disadvantaged households understand the value of the program. We have asked so much of our educators and students through this unprecedented pandemic, but that is also why we are asking the state to delay the implementation of the Literacy Act. We should not penalize teachers or students for circumstances that are obviously beyond their control. In light of the new demands on educators

as we all continue to battle this pandemic, we must continue our efforts to increase teachers' pay. We support a 'cost-of-living adjustment' for our retired educators, as well as a pay raise for all educators, including administrators and support personnel. That is how we attract and retain the very best and brightest for our children's education.

House Democrats support innovation in education, for example, public-private partnerships that allow young people the hands-on experience and training they need to compete for jobs of the future. That also means refocusing or individualizing some educational efforts to prepare students for middle-skill jobs – those that require education past high school, but not a four-year degree. For those who do attend four-year colleges and universities, House Democrats call for greater investment in need-based scholarships and financial aid for short-term postsecondary training. **We know that a well-educated Alabama is how we secure our brightest future.**



Voting Rights

In our cherished democracy, there is nothing more sacred than our Constitutional right to vote in free, fair, and honest elections. Alabama House Democrats know that voting should be made easier and more accessible to all citizens. No one should have to spend hours in line to cast a ballot, especially during a pandemic. Simply put, it's time to end voter suppression in all of its forms. We should have more than just one day during a pandemic to allow eligible citizens to vote. Most importantly, we must ensure that our election system is not only accurate, but safe from the type of dangerous political forces that led to the failed, but destructive and deadly, Insurrection at our nation's Capitol on January 6, 2021. No person, faction, or party should ever have the power to overturn a legitimate free and fair election simply because it did not turn out in their favor. We must do everything we can to protect our right to vote and keep our elections free from domestic and foreign political meddling.

House Democrats know that to increase voter participation and turnout, we must allow early voting, create automatic voter registration upon the age of 18, eliminate requirements to pay fines and fees to regain the right to vote, and we must expand eligibility for the restoration of voting rights. We support voter education and ensuring that the elderly and infirmed can exercise their democratic rights. Barriers to voting must be removed so that no eligible voter is denied the right to vote. **We know that voting rights are the cornerstone of our democracy.**



Justice for All

House Democrats have long championed the critical need for a comprehensive and pragmatic approach to the state's prison crisis, criminal justice system, and social justice issues. House

Democrats have continually said it will take more than bricks and mortar to fix Alabama prisons, and stated that it was a mistake for the majority of the Alabama Legislature to vote to appropriate federal COVID-19 relief dollars to fund prison construction. The funds were misappropriated and criminal justice reform legislation proposed by Democrats was ignored. Nonetheless, we will continue our efforts to repeal the 2019 Habitual Felony Offender Act and onerous consecutive (or mandatory) sentencing guidelines. We seek to reduce recidivism and boost the success rate of an ex-offender's reentry into society. We must also address the many problems within our broken Pardons and Paroles Board. Simply put, the Board itself is the problem because it lacks guidance, transparency, and accountability. The process for earning a parole or pardon should be objective, evidence-based, and subject to an open and timely appeals process.

'Justice for all' also means acknowledging that diversity is our greatest strength and that every person has fundamental human and civil rights that must be protected and celebrated. Racism and discrimination have no place in Alabama. We will continue to fight for the removal of Confederate monuments and symbols, the elimination of racial profiling, and stand against efforts to diminish our right to assemble in peaceful protest. **We know that if there is not justice for all, there is justice for none.**