



THE VOICE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA CITIZENS FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

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House vote tables HJR 54: Please call members NOW!

On February 23, the Alabama House TABLED the discussion on the resolution HJR 54 to allow the people to vote on holding a constitutional convention.

Not only did the legislators decide to refuse to let the people vote, but a majority refused to let their fellow legislators vote on the resolution!

The resolution passed in the Rules Committee and went directly to the floor, where Rules Chair Ken Guin offered it and voted to adopt. Speaking on behalf of his resolution, Speaker Pro Tem Demetrius Newton urged his fellow representatives to pass it. James Buskey, as he did last year, began to speak against the resolution. Joining him in speaking against it were Greg Canfield, Paul DeMarco and Spencer Collier. Speaking in favor were Laura Hall and Barbara Boyd.

As the commentary continued, Buskey moved for the resolution to be tabled. Since that action was not challenged, Speaker Seth Hammett called for the vote. The House voted in favor of tabling the resolution 58 to 32, with three abstentions and 12 representatives not voting. Several legislators wanted to speak in favor of the resolution, including Merika Coleman, but she and others were denied that chance because of Buskey's tabling motion. Her speech came after the vote to table was held.

But Speaker Pro Tem Newton plans to bring up the resolution again during this session, vowing, "We shall return."

Those who voted against tabling, and thus in **favor of the resolution**, some of whom have voted against convention resolutions and bills in the past, are:

Speaker Seth Hammett, George Bandy, Marcel Black, Barbara Boyd, DuWayne Bridges, Merika Coleman, Mike Curtis, Paul DeMarco, Bill Dukes, Chris England, James Fields, Betty Carol Graham, Ronald Grantland, Laura Hall, Mike Hill, Earl Hilliard, Jr., Randy Hinshaw, Tammy Irons, Jamie Ison, Thomas Jackson, John Knight, Jr., "A.J" McCampbell, Jeff

McLaughlin, Demetrius Newton, Jack Page, John Robinson, Oliver Robinson, Rod Scott, Thomas Sherer, Butch Taylor, Patricia Todd, Pebblin Warren.

Those who voted to table the resolution included three who were co-sponsors of the resolution: Craig Ford, Ken Guin, and Lawrence McAdory. Two of them later said they were confused about the voting procedure.

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See how they voted . . .
and ACT!**



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THE VOICE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA CITIZENS FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

How the House voted Feb. 23

Representatives who voted to end the discussion and thus **against the resolution need to hear from you NOW!** Many of them had told us they would vote in favor of our resolution, but voted to table the discussion. Their names are in **BOLD** below. Those who abstained are **BOLD UNDERLINED**. Those absent are **UNDERLINED**.

(Name, Party, Hometown, Office number, Home phone)

ALLEN, Gerald, (R), Cottdale, 531, 205-556-5310
BAKER, Alan, (R), Brewton, 538-A, 251-867-6510
BAKER, Locy "Sonny", (D), Abbeville, 522-D, 251-867-6514
BALL, Mike, (R), Huntsville, 625-C, 256-772-8730
 BANDY, George C., (D), Opelika, 529, 334-749-0051
BARTON, Jim, (R), Mobile, 526-E, 251-666-4642
BEASLEY, Billy, (D), Clayton, 625-A, 334-775-3291
BECK, Warren, (R), Geneva, 630-C, 334-684-3011
BEECH, Elaine, (D), Chatom, 540-B, 251-847-2604
BENTLEY, Robert, (R), Tuscaloosa, 537-D, 205-345-1090
 BLACK, Marcel., (D), Tuscumbia, 516-F, 256-381-5277
BOOTHE, Alan C., (D), Troy, 627-A, 334-566-5742
 BOYD, Barbara B., RULES, (D), Anniston, 530, 256-236-7423
 BRIDGES, Duwayne, (R), Valley, 528-E, 334-756-9553
BROWN, K.L., (R), Jacksonville, 524-B, 256-435-9437
BUSKEY, James E., RULES, (D), Mobile, 540-C, 251-457-7928
CANFIELD, Greg, (R), Vestavia Hills, 625-D, 205-967-5571
CLOUSE, Steve, (R), Ozark, 526-A, 334-774-7384
 COLEMAN, Merika, (D), Birmingham, 539-F, 205-325-5308
COLLIER, Spencer, (R), Irvington, 540-D, 251-654-1540
 CURTIS, Mike, (D), Florence, 522-E, 256-757-2792
DAVIS, Randy, (R), Daphne, 538-B, 251-621-0814
 DeMARCO, Paul, (R), Homewood, 537-F, 205-802-7285
DRAKE, Owen, (R), Leeds, 528-B, 205-699-6655
 DUKES, Bill J., (D), Decatur, 523-A, 256-353-1725
 ENGLAND, Chris, (D), Tuscaloosa, 539-B, 205-345-8284
FAUST, Joe, (R), Fairhope, 524-C, 251-928-5445
 FIELDS, James Jr., (D), Hanceville, 536-D, 256-287-0007
FINCHER, Chad, (R), Semmes, 528-A, 251-649-5153
FORD, Craig, RULES, (D), Gadsden, 517-F, 256-547-2727
GALLIHER, Blaine, RULES, (R), Gadsden, 628-C, 256-442-7517
GASTON, Victor, (R), Mobile, 526-C, 251-639-2555
GIPSON, H. Mac Jr., (R), Prattville, 534-C, 334-365-9529
GORDON, James, (D), Pritchard, 522-C, 251-679-9744
 GRAHAM, Betty Carol, (D), Alexander City, 526-F, 256-234-7068
 GRANTLAND, Ronald, (D), Hartselle, 524-A, 256-773-6796
GREESON, Todd, RULES, (R), Ider, 626, 256-632-3963
GRIMES, David, (R), Montgomery, 537-A, 334-223-7766
GUIN, Ken, RULES CHAIR, (D), Carbon Hill, 519-C, 205-924-4005
 HALL, Laura, (D), Huntsville, 518, 256-859-2234
 HAMMETT, Seth, (D), Andalusia, 519, 334-222-4469
HAMMON, Micky, (R), Decatur, 523-B, 256-350-0375
HARPER, Alan, (D), Aliceville, 538-C, 205-373-2433
 HILL, Mike, (R), Columbiana, 628-D, 205-669-6264
 HILLIARD, Earl Jr., (D), Birmingham, 539-A, 205-798-6976
 HINSHAW, Randy RULES, (D), Meridianville, 535, 256-828-7119
HOLMES, Alvin, (D), Montgomery, 525-A, 334-281-8637
HOWARD, Ralph, (D), Greensboro, 527-D, 334-624-1887
HUBBARD, Mike, (R), Auburn, 536-A, 334-821-9706
HURST, Steve, (D), Munford, 627-C, 256-761-1935
 IRONS, Tammy, (D), Florence, 526-B, 256-335-3600
 ISON, Jamie, (R), Mobile, 527-B, 251-342-6697
 JACKSON, Thomas E., (D), Thomasville, 537-E, 334-636-0094
JOHNSON, Ronald G., (R), Sylacauga, 627-D, 256-249-9489
KENNEDY, Yvonne, (D), Mobile, 537-C, 251-438-9509
 KNIGHT, John F., (D), Montgomery, 516-A, 334-834-7445
LAIRD, Richard J. RULES, (D), Roanoke, 528-D, 334-863-2424
LETSON, John "Jody", (D), Moulton, 541-A, 256-637-6608
LEWIS, Benjamin, (R), Dothan, 540-A, 334-792-1849
LINDSEY, Richard J., (D), Centre, 514, 256-475-3415
LOVE, Jay, (R), Montgomery, 527-A, 334-213-0961
MARTIN, James M. "Jimmy", (D), Clanton, 630-D, 205-755-3483
MASK, Barry, (R), Wetumpka, 527-C, 334-514-0904
MCADORY, Lawrence, (D), Bessemer, 539-C, 205-428-1156
 McCAMPBELL, A.J., (D), Livingston, 539-C, 334-289-5465
McCLAMMY, Thad, (D), Montgomery, 525-D, 334-264-6767
McCLENDON, Jim, (R), Springville, 628-A, 205-467-2656
McCLURKIN, Mary Sue, (R), Indian Springs, 517-D, 205-991-6213
McCUTCHEON, Mac, (R), Capshaw, 524-B, 256-655-3764
McDANIEL, W. Frank, (D), Albertville, 522-B, 256-878-4472
 McLAUGHLIN, Jeff, (D), Guntersville, 517-E, 256-582-5696
McMILLAN, Steve, (R), Bay Minette, 532, 251-948-5575
MILLICAN, Mike, (D), Hamilton, 127, 205-921-3214
MITCHELL, Joseph C., (D), Mobile, 517-A, 251-473-5020
MOORE, Mary, (D), Birmingham, 539-D, 205-322-0254
MOORE, Pat, (R), Pleasant Grove, 523-C, 205-744-1592
MORROW, Johnny M., (D), Red Bay, 628-B, 256-356-8043
NEWTON, Charles O., (D), Greenville, 541-E, 334-382-3370
 NEWTON, Demetrius C., (D), Birmingham, 516-B, 205-324-6053
ODEN, Jeremy H., (R), Vinemont, 537-B, 256-734-4236
 PAGE, Jack G., RULES, (D), Gadsden, 628-E, 256-546-5365
PAYNE, Arthur, RULES, (R), Trussville, 627-B, 205-655-5845
 ROBINSON, John, RULES, (D), Scottsboro, 534-D, 256-609-8292
 ROBINSON, Oliver, (D), Birmingham, 534-B, 205-8413326



Building social capital

By Audrey L. Salgado
Executive Director
ACCR Foundation

“The trouble with the future,” said the American humorist Arnold H. Glasow, “is it usually arrives before we're ready for it.”

One way we can be ready for the future is to enter unknown territory with a solid grounding in facts and research. The Bring It Back Home Educational Program provides this solid ground about Alabama's past and present. It will prepare us for the future ballot asking, “Do you support a constitution convention to revise and amend the 1901 Constitution?” Yes, or No.

As seven of my colleagues sat around a Montgomery restaurant table in January, we shared our views about the upcoming legislative session, the past support of various Representatives and Senators for a constitution convention, and common reasons some legislators give for their opposition to this process to give the power back to the people. We weighed the possibility of the Senate and House Joint Resolutions passing this year. We prayed for the legislators' wisdom in seeing this as a major step in moving Alabama into the 21st Century. Yet, we ask, are we ready for the vote when

the opportunity arises?

I believe the answer is “Yes” IF each and every citizen understands the impact of the 1901 Alabama Constitution on their daily life and we develop social capital. I challenge each of you to play a role in building our social capital. Invite one person to your home, sit around the kitchen table with your favorite beverage, and start a conversation about how the constitution impacts your daily life. If this person leaves your home enlightened, applies what s/he learned into her/his own story, tells one person her/his story, we will grow at the grassroots level exponentially.

If one person in every county recruits one other person in March, by the end of March, 67 believers become 134. Everyone does this again in April; the 134 multiplies to 268 by April 31. Continue this simple practice of each person talking to one more person every month and by New Years Eve 2010, we have 68,608 supporters. In one year we have 274,432 supporters – over one quarter million persons who “get it.” In theory, by June 1, 2011, ACCR Foundation will successfully have an army of over two million volunteers. It is up to you to make it a reality.

This is how a grassroots citizens'



movement is built, one person at a time. It involves building personal relationships. It means caring about our neighbors. It requires a common statewide message between ACCR and our coalition partners—and we are working on this. It moves us closer to our goal of a new Alabama Constitution. In the end, it prepares all of us for the future and a better Alabama.

“Will you be a spectator, or a citizen? To make a difference in this world, you must be involved. By serving a higher calling here or abroad, you'll make your lives richer and build a more hopeful future for our world.” President George W. Bush remarks made at Calvin College Commencement, Grand Rapids, MI, May 21, 2008.

ROGERS, John W. Jr., (D), Birmingham, 541-D, 205-925-3522

SALAAM, Yusuf, (D), Selma, 539-E, 334-872-6334

SANDERFORD, Howard, (R), Huntsville, 524-F, 256-881-8390

SCOTT, Rod, RULES, (D), Fairfield, 525-C, 205-781-1322

SHERER, Tommy, (D), Jasper, 522-A, 205-387-1321

SHIVER, Harry, (R), Bay Minette, 526-D, 251-937-0240

SPICER, Terry, (D), Elba, 630-B, 334-879-3862

TAYLOR, Butch, (D), Scottsboro, 526-B, 256-723-8436

THIGPEN, William E. Sr., (D), Fayette, 538-D, 205-932-3317

THOMAS, Elwyn, (R), Oneonta, 541-B, 205-274-2316

THOMAS, James L., (D), Selma, 525-B, 334-872-6853

TODD, Patricia, (D), Birmingham, 541-C, 205-599-2856

TREADAWAY, Allen, (R), Morris, 536-D, 205-566-6835

VANCE, Lesley, (D), Phenix City, 630-E, 334-298-0668

WARD, Cam, RULES, (R), Alabaster, 628-F, 205-664-1066

WARREN, Pebblin, RULES, (D), Tuskegee, 520, 334-727-9127

WHITE, Henry, (D), Athens, 528-C, 256-232-7982

WILLIAMS, Jack, (R), Birmingham, 526-B, 205-979-7901

WILLIAMS, Phil, (R), Huntsville, 536-C, 256-489-5471

WOOD, Randy, (R), Anniston, 524-E, 256-820-6700

WREN, Greg, (R), Montgomery, 517-B, 334-395-0123

Bring It Back Home on pace statewide

Under the leadership of Bob Jones, Bring It Back Home is an ACCR unified grassroots citizens' movement with a 67-county strategy. ACCR Inc. is taking the lead in the legislative activities with Doug Seay serving as Bring It Back Home Legislative Director and ACCR Foundation is leading the educational activities with Suzanne Bailey serving as Bring It Back Home Education Curriculum Director. This strategic plan enables Bring It Back Home to act as "One ACCR" when engaging the public and elected officials. Rounding out the Bring It Back Home Statewide Team are Gary Dunavant, Project Coordinator; Susan Grace, Rural Strategist; and Mike Maetz, Constitution Convention Coalition Liaison.

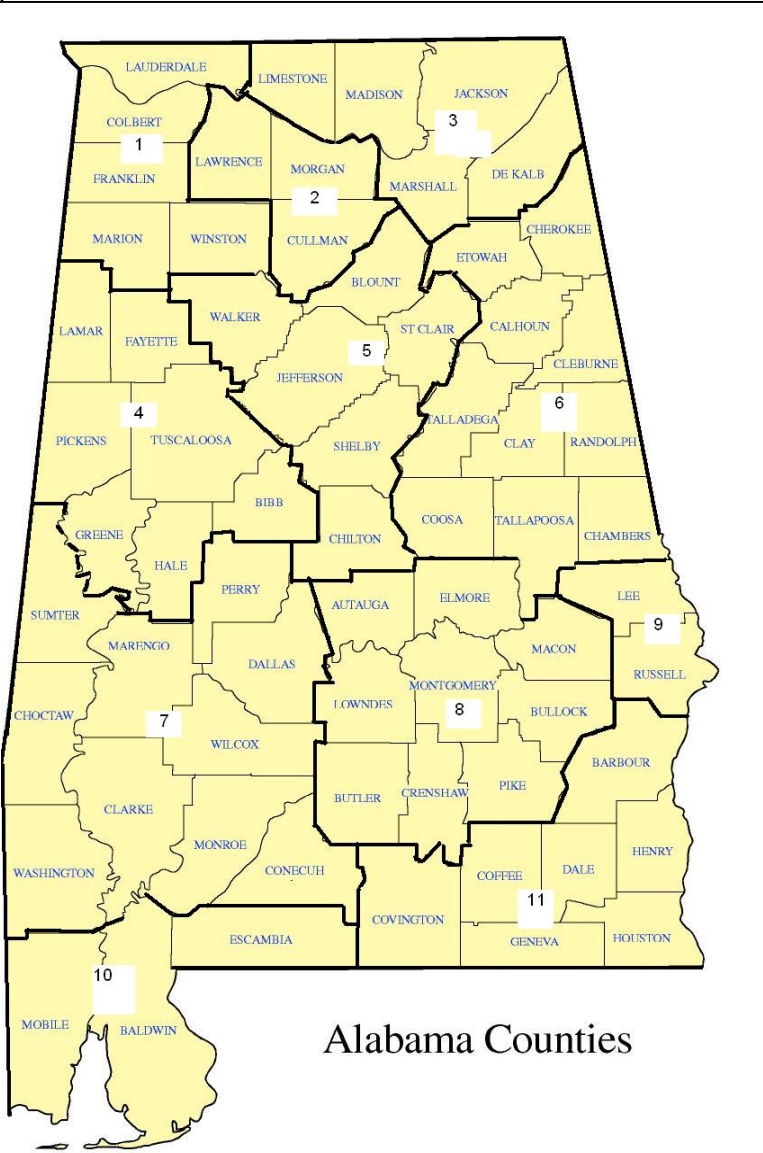
On next page, **Table 1** reflects the status of the 11 ACCR Region Chairs and **Table 2** the status of ACCR County Chapters and President/Coordinators. Region Chairs are the Legislative Resource for each County Chapter. All Region Chairs will be named by March 1, 2010. All County Chapter Presidents/Coordinators will be named by October 1, 2010. The **Alabama Map** depicts the Counties in each Region.

Every Region and County is expected to conduct a minimum of one educational or training session in 2010. All sessions will be based on factual information required to stay focused on the key elements in the often-emotional debates about Constitutional Reform. The educational curriculum passed an alpha test in Huntsville in the summer of 2009 and beta tests in four pilots in the fall of 2009. The new documentary *Open Secret* will be incorporated into the curriculum. All Mock Constitution Convention Delegates are requested to actively contribute to Bring It Back Home. In addition to the 33 Constitution Convention Coalition partners, more partners will be recruited to share their expertise, time, and leadership.

Madison County Chapter holds monthly meetings and conducted a Bring It Back Home Forum in Huntsville in February. Mobile County holds ad hoc meetings and will conduct a Bring It Back Home Forum in Mobile on March 25. A special meeting was held in February with the Birmingham Region Chairs to determine how to organize Jefferson County, as it has the largest population in the state. Montgomery County in the Montgomery Region will require a unique structure as it is the seat of state government in the Special Zone.

Bring It Back Home is achieving its targeted timeline. The challenge for 2010 is recruiting and organizing each county chapter with its own Citizens Action Team.

For more information, please reference *The VOICE* Fall and Winter 2009 issues. If you would like to join a Citizens Action Team and make your unique contribution to let the people vote for a new Alabama Constitution, please send an email to accr@constitutionalreform.org.



Alabama Counties


Table 1: ACCR Region Name, Number, and Chair or Point of Contact (POC)

REGION NAME	REGION NUMBER (with # of COUNTIES)	REGION CHAIR
State Government Special Zone in Montgomery County	Applies to all Regions	ACCR, Inc. Legislative Committee - Special Zone
Shoals	1 (5 counties)	Barbara Nash
Decatur-Cullman	2 (3 counties)	Jackie Tipper Posey
Huntsville-Sand Mountain	3 (5 counties)	Doug Seay
Tuscaloosa	4 (7 counties)	Wayne Childress/Kristi Thomson POC
Birmingham	5 (6 counties)	Chris Corts
Anniston-East Alabama	6 (10 counties)	Rich Thompson POC
Southwest	7 (10 counties)	Beth Whitehead POC
Montgomery	8 (9 counties)	Marian Loftin
Auburn	9 (2 counties)	Bill English POC
Gulf Coast	10 (3 counties)	Lucy Tufts
Wiregrass	11 (7 counties)	Susan Grace

Table 2: ACCR Region Number, County Chapter, and Chapter President/Coordinator

State Government Special Zone in Montgomery County	Affiliated with Montgomery Chapter	ACCR, Inc. Legislative Committee – Special Zone
1 (5 counties)	Colbert Lauderdale	Barbara Nash Barbara Nash
2 (3 counties)	Cullman Lawrence	<i>Pending</i> Tammy Roberts
3 (5 counties)	Jackson Madison Marshall	<i>Pending</i> Chuck May <i>Pending</i>
4 (7 counties)	Greene Tuscaloosa	<i>Pending</i> <i>Pending</i>
5 (6 counties)	Jefferson Shelby	Chris Corts Mindy Boggs
6 (10 counties)	Calhoun	<i>Pending</i>
7 (10 counties)		
8 (9 counties)	Macon Montgomery	<i>Pending</i> Marian Loftin
9 (2 counties)	Lee	<i>Pending</i>
10 (3 counties)	Baldwin Escambia Mobile	Cheryl Rooker <i>Pending</i> Karlos Finley
11 (7 counties)	Houston	<i>Pending</i>



A new Alabama constitution ...

The conservative choice!

By Jim Vickrey, Ph.D., J.D.

In the growing chorus of voices being heard debating the issue of *whether or not the people of Alabama themselves should be permitted to vote on having a constitutional convention* to consider revision of the sixth organic document in the history of our State's nine score-score years and one, the assumption has arisen that advocates of such a vote are "liberals" (if not "radicals"), while those who oppose it are the "conservatives." Just as Lincoln in his famous debates with Douglas in 1858-59 successfully argued that he was the conservative, his opponent the liberal, because he, Lincoln, wanted to restore as national policy on slavery the views of the original framers of the U.S. Constitution, so, too, today do those of us who favor such a vote and would vote to have such a convention contend that we are the conservatives in the present debate over the Alabama Constitution of 1901.

Why? Because *we want to see our state go back to the democratic values inherent in our original constitution* — the one our framers wrote in 1819 at Constitution Village in Huntsville. That's the one that was praised nationally at the time for its democratic ideals. That's the one that went into effect after approval by the convention and Congress, a process historians have never labeled "fraudulent." The latter cannot be said of the narrowly ratified one of 1901, when, if the polling data are to

be believed, most Black citizens of the Black Belt region of Alabama, even in the face of a campaign by Tuskegee Institute President Booker T. Washington himself, voted to disenfranchise themselves and poor whites.

By definition, a *conservative* is one who generally favors what is over what could be, the *status quo* over change — basic, tried, and true principles over new ways of doing things.

Lincoln put it succinctly: "What is

We want to see our state go back to the democratic values in our original constitution

conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried against the new and untried?" On the other hand, a *liberal* is one who generally supports change, typically significant change, over the *status quo*, sometimes by harkening back to the tried and true principles that once prevailed but are now abandoned, but often not (as in this case).

To determine who are the conservatives and who are the liberals in the context of the public debate over whether to allow a vote to consider a constitutional convention as the only way to solve some of the intractable problems created by our present 320,000-word, 825-plus-amendment Constitution, one must

know or remember the history of our blessed state's six constitutions, beginning with the first one, concluding with the last one written 109 years ago. It is significant that the one crafted in 1819 was praised for its democratic principles and provisions, whereas its five successors were not ... that the current one is infamous for its anti-democratic approach to constituting a state government, resulting in an almost immediate chorus of calls for its revision, the voices of which have included many governors, legislators, and other leaders of Alabama.

Why? Because it centralizes most political power in Montgomery ... at the State Capitol on Goat Hill and the nearby State House ... in the hands of legislators, denying local county government, e.g., the political tools required to exercise the normal powers of local governing bodies and so to be accountable to the citizens most affected by their actions — without going to local legislators seeking statutory or constitutional approval of decisions that ought to be made locally, not in Montgomery. THAT is why there are so many amendments to our Constitution, many of which are anything but statewide in relevance (my favorite is the amendment permitting the speed limit in a gated community in one of our 67 counties to be changed!). THAT is what makes local legislators so powerful and some don't want to give up their power, even to the people and their local elected officials, even



though it results in their having to spend more than half their time in a given session on "local bills," not trying to solve the many statewide problems that are more critical. It's ironic that our 1901 Constitution treats local governments thus the way most statewide elected officials say the federal government treats the state. That is why "state's rights" and "the right of home rule" function the same here in their absence!

Those of us who want to return to Alabama's basic, more original, DEMOCRATIC foundation of government crafted 181 years ago and turn away from that of its successor documents are thus the conservatives in the ongoing debate, for we favor and want to return to the progressive, democratic principles and provisions the first leaders of

The usurpers of 1901 overturned the democratic order and gave us the liberal, indeed, radical constitution of today

our state hammered out in Huntsville. Those opposed to "LET THE PEOPLE VOTE" on the issue of whether or not they would like a convention of elected citizens to review the present Constitution for its conformity with democratic values are the liberals in the Alabama sense of the term: favoring retention of the anti-democratic centralization of powers of the 1901 Constitution, with its principles and procedures.

So, it's not the number of amendments to or the number of words in, it's not even the length of, the Alabama Constitution of 1901 that cry out most for change, although

even lawyers don't know what is in it at any point in time; it's the nature of the document itself that offers the strongest case for change: It was crafted carefully by an all-white, all-male body of well-to-do Alabamians who wanted to ensure Jim Crowism in the state we love. To do that, they not only disenfranchised minority and poor citizens; they made it impossible for such Alabamians to have influence at the local level by taking away the possibility that a Black local county government, e.g., might arise somewhere in the state. In doing so, they handicapped ALL citizens of the State.

When Lincoln debated Douglas for an Illinois Senate seat in the most famous debates in American history, he persuasively showed that the Framers of our national government took a position on slavery more like his than "the Little Giant's." Those of us in Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform here are in the same posture: We believe and are arguing, as here, that the Founders of our state, the original Framers of the Constitution of 1819, not only drafted a democratic founding document, but they got it right in terms of the values of the time. It was the usurpers of 1901 who overturned their democratic order and gave us the liberal, indeed, radical, constitution we enjoy today — one that's holding back enhancement of virtually every aspect of life from the Tennessee Valley to the Gulf Shore.

Jim Vickrey is a Montgerian by birth and by choice, former university president, lawyer-mediator, professor of speech communication at Troy University Montgomery, and president, Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform Foundation Board. jimvickrey@gmail.com



Planners look to 10th anniversary celebration

On Thursday, August 19, in Tuscaloosa, where the current constitutional reform movement was born and ACCR founded, we will gather at the Bryant Conference Center on the campus of the University of Alabama to celebrate 10 years of leadership and work. It will be a great time to come together and keep the constitutional reform fire burning brightly in Alabama.

Planning is underway by co-chairs (above, from left) Cathy Randall, Johnnie Aycok, and Riley Lumpkin, plus a dedicated team of volunteers that include Wayne Childress, Awards, and Marion Loftin, Development.

At the annual Bailey Thompson Awards Luncheon, keynote speaker will be Dr. David Mathews, CEO of the Kettering Foundation, former President of the University of Alabama and former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The program will expand this year with a forum on constitutional reform featuring the Democratic and Republican candidates for Governor of Alabama. There will also be a time to renew acquaintances, visit with friends and colleagues in the fight for constitutional reform in our great state.

Mark your calendar!



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Debbie Hunter-Snow, left, and Robin Snow



“Who are the mavens in Alabama?”
This was the call for enthusiastic experts in February as more than 20 volunteer leaders gathered in a Birmingham planning session to develop an ACCR marketing strategy.

Posing the question to the ACCR Marketing Team was Debbie Hunter-Snow, a new member of the ACCR Foundation Board of Directors. Hunter-Snow has held the position of Associate Vice President, UAB Health System Marketing, for the past 10 years and served UAB in various capacities for 30 years. She leads a department of people who manage the marketing activities of 33 UAB clinical specialties, as well as the internet sites of the UAB Health System.

Joining Hunter-Snow at the podium was Robin Snow, Greystone.Net, who specializes in the application of sophisticated browser-based technologies to meet critical marketing goals, including sophisticated web-based channeled communications, podcasting, streaming online media and eCRM. Robin has 30 years experience in marketing communications as a strategic consultant, advertising

executive, copywriter, creative director, broadcast writer/producer and communications technology specialist.

The Marketing Team met to work through the steps in developing a marketing plan, building targeted messages to targeted groups, and looking at today's marketing communication tools. Hunter-Snow stated, “Your messages need to be tailored to each person hearing them.” As she discussed the value of trust, she quoted Lenora Pate, ACCR Inc. President: “It's just amazing, isn't it, that [candidates] want to trust the people and

From left, Paul Budd, Cutressa Williams, Jay Girard



Grace Norville





Seeking the MAVENS of REFORM

MAVEN:

‘One who is experienced or knowledgeable: EXPERT’

ask them to vote for them, but they don't want to trust us to vote on this issue. Something is inherently inconsistent with that.”

Over the next few months, ACCR will be creating a brand map. During the session, attendees divided into groups for an ideation session to get the message set. The three topics were legislative, fund-raising, and community support. The groups focused on the features (the physical characteristics of a product or service) and benefits (those characteristics that improve performance) of a message.

At the next working session on March 27, the Marketing Team will focus the message on the values: finding a way into the human heart, telling the story of me – how has this changed my life; telling the story of we – how has it changed the life of my community; and telling the story of now – what is happening now that can help us make that change. Also, the Marketing Team will begin to name the reform mavens in Alabama.

Any ACCR supporter or Alabama citizen interested in participating on the Marketing Team, may contact Audrey L. Salgado at audrey@constitutionalreform.org or call her at 205 437-0951.

Naveen Manivannan, left, and Jay Girard



**Above, from top, Susan Sheppard,
Carolyn Foster and Anna Blair**

**Photos by Jazzmin Franklin,
University of Alabama**



Two ACCR leaders earn headlines in *Birmingham News* 'Viewpoints'

February 14, 2010

VIEWPOINTS:
Redefining 'special interests' will help constitutional reform

By H. Michael Maetz

It has become almost a rite of spring in recent years for the Alabama Legislature to consider a bill or resolution that would grant voters the opportunity to vote on whether a convention should be called to rewrite the state's constitution.

That constitution, a legacy of the 1901 Legislature, was created by a select group of white landowners, lawyers and politicians who shared a common goal of centralized power and control. The well-documented structural flaws of this document have resulted in, among other things, significant restrictions on cities and counties to make "home-rule" decisions.

Nonetheless, while the justification for a new constitution may be obvious to some, a significant number of legislators who agree changes are needed have opposed a constitutional convention, preferring a legislative, article-by-article revision. The most commonly stated reason for opposing a convention approach is that it would be controlled by "special interests," clearly reminiscent of the process in 1901. A broadened perspective on this term is needed.

Webster defines a special interest as a body of persons (e.g., corporation, organization) that seeks or receives benefits or privileged treatment, especially through legislation. While the term "special interest" has negative implications for many, one can legitimately argue that any group attempting to influence a legislative or policy decision, whether that group represents the corporate sector, a nonprofit organization or the "average" citizen, is representing a special interest, since all of us are parts of special interests by virtue of the work we do or the causes we champion.

Indeed, the citizen—not the corporation or organization—is the constitutional source of power in our form of government, so citizens have the most important, albeit often passive, role in that process. With respect to the constitutional convention issue, all three categories of special interests are in play, each attempting to influence the legislative process in a manner that reflects the respective organizational or individual objectives and agenda. So, depending on one's perspective, the influence of a certain special interest could have a positive or a negative impact. In an open democratic society like ours, however, this is the way the world works.

Today, 109 years after the constitution was written, we have constant reminders of how that document impedes Alabama's ability to conduct its business and properly serve its citizens. While the special interests have changed over time,

the influence of those interests on the legislative decision-making process continues to be significant. Thus, legislators expressing concerns about special-interest (usually corporate) control of a constitutional convention process know something about how those interests work.

With that in mind, and in direct response to the concern about "special-interest control," the constitutional convention process being proposed, if the people first vote "yes" to have one, includes a number of safeguards to ensure that whatever results from that process reflects not organizational special interests, but the "public special interest." Examples of these safeguards, incorporated into a joint resolution being considered by the Legislature, include the following:

- Candidates for convention delegates will be prohibited from accepting campaign contributions of more than \$100 from any one source, those sources will be limited to citizens of Alabama, and all contributions must be reported.
- Alabama voters will elect two convention delegates from each district of the House of Representatives, with the delegates meeting voter and district residency requirements. A total of 210 delegates will be elected.
- Delegates can be any "average" citizens from that district, including incumbent elected officials.
- Delegates may not accept contributions after their election



and are subject to the Alabama ethics law.

- The same rules and restrictions relating to lobbyists' interaction with the Legislature apply to the convention delegates.

In summary, what is being proposed for constitutional reform is an objective, citizen-driven process that will allow any special-interest perspective to be considered, but no select few interests to dominate. In essence, this will be a public-interest process.

H. Michael Maetz is chairman of Greater Birmingham Ministries Constitutional Reform Task Force and a board member of the Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform Foundation. E-mail: Maetz169@charter.net.

February 14, 2010

MY VIEW:

State constitution ensures dysfunction

By Bill Bennett

The Alabama Legislature is well into its session. Their show might be called "To Catch a Leak."

Picture a cartoon family, the Simpsons, for example, running around the house with pots and pans desperately trying to catch rainwater that is leaking through the ceiling and onto the furniture. Each person is focused on saving that which is most important to him. Yet never does anyone stop to think they could avoid all of the drama, desperation and damage if they would just fix the roof.

The "roof" I refer to is our 1901 constitution, our fundamental law and basis for state government. Just

as a 109-year-old roof would no longer serve its purpose, our 109-year-old constitution is all but designed to guarantee that each legislative session will be an exercise in government at its worst.

This is not a condemnation of our House and Senate members. Many, perhaps most, take their jobs very seriously. It is the process that is dysfunctional, a process dictated by the 1901 constitution. The process is dysfunctional because it bestows tremendous power in the hands of a very few. These powerful interests prefer things just as they are, and they will fight to maintain the privileged position they hold.

For example, each year, legislation is introduced that would offer much-needed change, such as ethics reform. But it always fails to pass. Who in his right mind would be against strong ethics laws? The answer to that question is those same powerful interests that favor the status quo and block reform of any kind. So, once again, we rock along year after year focused on the leaks rather than fixing the fundamental source of so many of our problems.

Some politicians, especially those running for governor, state publicly they agree the constitution needs fixing, but they want to revise it article by article in the Legislature. They seem sincere, but they know this is never going to happen. At least it hasn't yet, and it's been more than 100 years.

The only reasonable and doable solution, and, by far, the best solution, is for Alabama citizens to write a new constitution. Citizens chosen in a free and fair election. Men and women, blacks and whites, all coming together to forge a document that will fit the needs of Alabama in the 21st century.

If you agree it's time to replace Alabama's leaking roof, I invite you to visit the web site of Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform, www.constitutionalreform.org. There, you can learn more about why we need a new constitution and sign up for newsletters and updates on how to contact your state representatives and senators to let them know your position on this issue.

Remember, democracy is what people do, not what governments

State Farm expo to feature ACCR

On Friday, March 19, the ACCR Foundation will participate in a **Good Neighbors Expo** sponsored by State Farm Insurance. The Expo, being held at Birmingham's Colonial Brookwood Village, is a chance for local nonprofits to showcase their causes and let the public know how to volunteer. Please come by our table between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and meet some of our volunteers, learn about our initiatives to further constitutional reform, and find out how you can become more involved.

do. Too often, we sit back and expect our elected representatives to do things for us without getting involved ourselves. That's not how it works.

To fix this roof, we'll have to roll up our sleeves and make it happen. It will take work. It will take money. It will be hard. But if we are to ever realize this state's full potential, it must be done.

Bill Bennett is a Birmingham businessman and treasurer of Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform. E-mail: bill@sunbeltbiz.com.



THE VOICE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA CITIZENS FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Published by Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform. We welcome submissions of articles, announcements, opinions, photographs, and suggestions related to Alabama constitutional reform. All submissions are subject to approval by the ACCR editorial board.

To submit:
E-mail: accrvoice@yahoo.com

ACCR Foundation or ACCR, Inc.:
P. O. Box 10746
Birmingham, AL 35202-0746

Phone and E-mail:

ACCR Foundation
(205) 437-0951

ACCRFoundation@constitutionALreform.org

ACCR, Inc.
(205) 514-3074

ACCRInc@constitutionALreform.org

The ACCR FOUNDATION is a 501(c)3 non-profit information organization with a 501(h) elective, and ACCR, INC., is a 501(c)4 advocacy organization. Both of these non-partisan groups grew out of a rally in Tuscaloosa on April 7, 2000, as part of a grassroots movement for civic renewal and constitutional revision.

We are devoted to the idea that people deserve the best government they can design. We want a state constitution that unites, rather than divides, our people. We want to create a civic atmosphere in which politics can function for the benefit of all citizens, rather than for a few powerful interests.

The Constitutional Reform Movement begins with the citizen, who holds the highest office in our democracy.

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