

ACCR Short Speech Outline

1. Introduction – who you are, who ACCR is
2. History
 - a. 1901 Constitution is the 6th constitution we've had
 - b. Populist movement – blacks and poor whites begin to find they have common interests – challenged the ruling, conservative Democrats
 - c. Solution to Populist “problem”? – Disenfranchisement – Main reason for 1901 const
 - d. Fraudulently ratified – “winning” majority came from Black Belt
 - e. Gutted democracy – black voters fell from 181k to 3k and 40k whites lost vote
 - f. Concentrated power into Montgomery – easier to control
3. Calls for Reform
 - a. 1st Call for reform: Gov Emmett O'Neal (1914) – “antiquated fundamental law”
 - b. 5 other reform efforts from state leaders over the years – ACCR 1st grassroots
 - c. Judicial article success in 1973 – Heflin
4. Major Problems
 - a. Ineffective Government**
 - i. Constitution supposed to be framework for gov't
 - ii. AL always on bottom of the good lists and top of the bad lists
 1. *Gaering*mag's (2001) lowest avg grade for state gov't
 2. AL ranked 48th for child well-being – Kids Count Study (2003)
 - b. Lack of Local Democracy**
 - i. Local gov't lacking authority to properly govern themselves
 - ii. Only state in SE without local democracy (or “home rule”)
 - iii. Ties up Legislature's time and creates cumbersome process for local gov'ts
 - iv. Reason why we have such crazy amendments like...
 1. 520 – Allows Madison Co to excavate human remains
 2. 497 – Prohibits overgrowth of weeds, junk in Jeff Co
 3. 351 – Tax for Mobile Co to spray for mosquitoes and kill rats
 4. 688 – Prohibit prostitution in Jeff Co
 5. 674 – Bingo in White Hall, Lowndes County (pop. 814)
 - v. Longest constitution in nation, probably world
 1. 743 amendments; 12x longer than avg
 - c. Recurring Revenue Crisis**
 - i. Property and income taxes imbedded – leads to high regressive sales taxes – Heavier burden on poor – Unreliable – Proration

ACCR Short Speech Outline

- ii. Income tax deep into poverty – Family of 4 at \$4600/yr (MS begins at \$19,600)
 - iii. Property tax burden lowest in the nation by far
 - iv. Excessive earmarking – little flexibility – AL 90%, Avg State 20%
5. Methods of Revision
- a. Amendments, article by article, and convention
 - b. All changes must come from Legislature and be approved by voters
6. What you can do
- a. Join ACCR – Blue brochures or online
 - b. Get involved with a local chapter
 - c. Sign up for our mailing list and email list
 - d. Educate yourselves (“Century of Controversy”, ACCR website, newspapers)
 - e. Contact legislators and other public officials
7. Bottom Line: We’ve got to modernize AL’s const before we can reach our potential and be the best AL we can be.