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## Health reform update

There's one lesson that comes with every reform campaign. We learned it in the tax reform effort of 2006, and we're learning it again with health care reform: *It's easy to make things up to scare people.*

This time, the rumors, half-truths and outright lies have reached new proportions, causing even many well-informed, well-meaning folks to sour on the whole issue. If the myths and scare tactics are hooking your friends and loved ones, or just getting you down, the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania has the antidote you need!

The center's nonpartisan, non-profit [Factcheck.org](http://Factcheck.org) web project has produced a resource called "Twenty-six Lies About H.R. 3200" that nails most of the untruths circulating about health care reform. Visit [Factcheck.org](http://Factcheck.org) today and get a dose of reality! For more health reform resources, go to [arisecitizens.org](http://arisecitizens.org).

## Welcome, Roderick!

We have a student intern for the fall semester – Roderick Clark, a senior in political science at Alabama State University in Montgomery. He plans to graduate in December. Roderick's advisor, Dr. William Dowdy, describes the Union Springs native as "a real go-getter." He is interested in a life of service and hopes to hold an elected office someday. Welcome, Roderick, and thanks for serving with Arise!

# Report

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## New issue: Housing trust fund

## Member voices heard at annual meeting

By *Jim Carnes, communications director*

**From disaster recovery to an overhaul of the state's criminal justice system, ACP's legislative priorities** for the coming year reflect a strategic effort to balance short- and long-term goals.

Members charted the organization's 2010 course at the annual meeting on Sept. 19 in Montgomery.

**"On some issues, we measure progress in decades,"** ACP executive director Kimble Forrister said. "So it helps to set a few targets at shorter range."

**The 2010 priorities include the two permanent goals** of tax reform and adequate budgets for human services, along with adequate Hurricane Katrina relief; worker savings incentives; constitutional reform; a moratorium on the death penalty; and an affordable housing trust fund. The latter is a new priority this year, introduced by the Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama. Recent progress on two of the issues has raised hopes for a breakthrough in the coming legislative session.

**Four years after Katrina devastated Alabama's coast,** hundreds of working families remain in damaged housing. But calls for additional federal relief gained momentum earlier this year when Bill Johnson, then director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), appealed to U.S.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., sponsor of a Katrina housing bill, for \$110 million to meet Alabama's recovery needs.

**The proposal for worker savings incentives made it through the Legislature this spring,** only to die on Gov.

Bob Riley's desk without his signature – an outcome known as a "pocket veto." The bill calls for state participation in the Individual Development Account (IDA) program that allows low-income workers to receive federal and third-party dollars for savings up to \$2,000 toward educa-

tion, first-time home purchase or business start-up.

**"We proved this bill can pass,"** Alabama Arise legislative coordinator Melissa Oliver told the crowd. "Next time, we need to make sure the governor signs it."

**Two other proposals received ACP's endorsements:** state funding for public transit and establishment of an equal pay commission to study wage disparities among population groups in the state.

**Members also voted to approve two new member groups:** First Baptist Church of Heron Bay and Save Our Shells, Inc., an organization in Coden that advocates for local oyster fisheries. Dauphin Way United Methodist Church of Mobile and Birmingham Coalition for the Homeless, voted in earlier this year, also received a welcome.



*Gwen Gray (left) and Nancy Brennan of Montgomery review this year's issue proposals.*

## A few words from Kimble –

**I don't recommend meeting with your member of Congress at 30 miles per hour in separate cars.** It's just that Bobby Bright has such a busy schedule. So I pulled alongside his pick-up – he was in the passenger seat – and we rolled down our windows.

**"How's Alabama Alive?" he asked.** Hmm. "We're fine, but I have a question for you!" I replied, trying to stay in my lane and keep pace. "How many calls are you getting on health care?"

**"I don't know, but I do know this: They're running 4-to-1 against it."** The next day, Rep. Artur Davis said his ran 10-to-1 against. It's a splash of cold water for those of us trying to get voters engaged. But I take consolation in this: Many of the opposition calls are coming from talk radio and cable TV listeners who aren't well-informed on the bills. Ours should do better.

**We count on the ripple effect from our members.** We know you share our fact sheets and bulletin inserts. You write letters to the editor. You forward our e-mail alerts.

**Our most valuable role is to open up a vision of hope for a just society.** The other side is good at making noise, but we believe history is on our side – we're going to see an end to the grocery tax, we will close the tax breaks at the top, and Medicaid soon will cover more low-income workers. It's simply unsustainable for the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer every year.

**We also have a vision of a broader membership base.** Do you realize this newsletter only goes to about 1,700 addresses? What if we could add 1,000 more names this fall? That's the vision behind our temporary \$15 introductory membership rate (only through November). It's a chance for hundreds of people to experience Arise member advocacy during our historic work on health care reform and grocery tax reform. But most of all: **We need their voice for advocacy.** Please take this opportunity to introduce new people to Arise so they can play a pivotal role in the change that's coming!

Yours in hope,

## Thanks for your support!

*Contributions to Arise Citizens' Policy Project support research and education on issues affecting low-income Alabamians. We thank the following donors for their generous gifts received between Aug. 22 and Sept. 20, 2009:*

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### A note from Brenda

At the Sept. 19 annual meeting, Arise members accepted two challenges they can sink their teeth into over the coming months:

**1.) Beefing up our advocacy.** Help us collect signatures on either of our sign-up sheets: "Why Tax Groceries?" or "Affordable Health Care for All!" As we add to our database, we build our capacity to educate and advocate, through messages and alerts. Print 8½ x 14 sign-up sheets at [arisecitizens.org](http://arisecitizens.org), keep them at the ready, and mail completed sheets to the Arise office.

### 2.) Providing nourishment for growth.

Invite friends and family to join Arise at our special \$15 introductory membership rate, available through Nov. 30. A few generous donors have promised to match the first 1,000 new memberships, so each \$15 gift becomes a \$30 contribution to help us build a stronger financial base. How many new members can you recruit in the next two months? To request three or more membership brochures, call (800) 832-9060 or e-mail [Brenda@alarise.org](mailto:Brenda@alarise.org). Or print the membership application at [arisecitizens.org](http://arisecitizens.org). Thank you!

Brenda Boman, development director