

# Opelika-Auburn News

## It's past time for Legislature to repeal 4 percent grocery tax

Editorial

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The proposal of eliminating the state's 4 percent sales tax on food isn't going away, and that's a good thing.

Rep. John Knight (D-Montgomery) has proposed the bill for the last four years, only to see it die on the Statehouse floor. But aren't state representatives in Montgomery working toward the betterment of their constituents? It's been noted that ridding Alabamians of the 4 percent sales tax on food would save residents an estimated \$300 million annually.

Considering that 48 states do not have a sales tax on groceries, maybe it's time Alabama sees the light and does away with a taxation that hammers the poor.

"I think the most important thing we can do at this time is remove the sales tax off groceries in the state of Alabama," Knight has said.

"I don't know of any other time in the history of this state that this would be so important to working families across the state of Alabama."

Knight said the bill would allow couples making a combined \$200,000 or less annually (which includes the majority of Alabama residents) to keep their entire federal income tax deduction, a sticking point among state Republicans.

Perhaps a happy medium can be reached between the dissenting camps, because surely, there are two strong points of views.

But this is a regressive tax that affects those who can least afford it.

We won't argue sales taxes on unnecessary items, but things such as milk and bread are basic necessities of life.

Families below the poverty level struggling to raise three kids must pay the same amount of tax on groceries as those who are much better off financially.

As long as the poor are continually hit over the head with regressive taxes, they will remain poor. Even if the taxes are repealed, those who struggle to pay the bills might remain poor, but at least they can have some relief.

Granted, a major item on the legislative agenda should be the education budget — and how the state can find money for our schools — but it's time we take a hint from neighboring states and do something about the grocery tax once and for all. Our residents deserve a break.