

St. Clair Times

Our view: Repeal grocery tax ... now

02.10.10 - 12:52 pm

Here we are again — Alabama lawmakers at the crossroads of doing the right thing or choosing to ignore a constituency that could really use the help.

That's what it means to repeal the 4 cents Alabamians pay the state in sales tax on groceries and over the counter medicine. It would mean a break on every dollar families spend to put food on the table.

Yet when state Rep. John Knight, D-Montgomery, raises the issue each legislative session, it succumbs to an untimely death. Why? Because to pay for it, it would eliminate the state tax deduction for federal income tax on single filers making \$150,000 and joint filers making more than \$300,000.

That's lawmakers favoring four percent of the people in Alabama, leaving 96 percent without relief they could use so the wealthiest can take advantage of a tax deduction. And it leaves Alabama as only one of two states in the country that still charges tax on groceries.

It is unconscionable that a bill that would offer such widespread relief continues to hit roadblocks once it arrives in Montgomery, but this state's leaders seem to put more emphasis on gambling under the guise of calling it a tax on the poor rather than taking a chance on actually helping poorer citizens.

The bill has been introduced once again, and it is hoped that this time around — especially in these economic times — lawmakers realize just how critical it could be in serving the people of this state.

© thestclairtimes.com 2010