



NEWS RELEASE

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Many Alabama Workers Have Little to Celebrate This Labor Day

ACPP Report: State Faces High Unemployment, Stagnant Wages, Lost Jobs, Income Inequality

This Labor Day will be a difficult one for many Alabama workers, according to [a new ACPP report released today as part of *The State of Working Alabama 2014*](#). Unemployment remains high. Jobs have disappeared. Wages are stagnant. The wealth gap between the rich and everyone else has grown. And trends in unemployment, job loss, wages and income inequality all suggest that the state will continue to feel the Great Recession's effects for years to come.

Among the report's key findings:

- Alabama's unemployment rate remained among the nation's highest at 7 percent in July 2014. Alabama is the only state whose unemployment rate is higher than it was in July 2013.
- Alabama has lost 5 percent of its non-farm jobs since 2007, more than 16 times worse than the national job loss rate of 0.3 percent. The losses have been particularly severe among construction jobs. Job losses from 2007 to 2011 topped 20 percent in some rural counties.
- Wages are stagnant. Alabama workers have seen a real wage increase of only 4 percent in the last decade, adjusted for inflation.
- Wage stagnation has fueled a dramatic increase in income inequality in Alabama, measured by the income gap between the very rich and the rest of the population. Between 2009 and 2011, the income of the richest 1 percent in Alabama increased by 4.3 percent while the average incomes of the rest fell by 2.9 percent. Alabama is in the top half of all states for income inequality, and its rate of increased inequality is one of the nation's highest.

The report reveals, in stark terms, the systemic challenges that Alabama's workers face as they strive to climb the economic ladder, ACPP executive director Kimble Forrister said. But he said the state can act now to reduce those barriers and to build a stronger foundation for future growth.

"Investing in Alabama today will make it easier for more of our people to achieve the American dream tomorrow," Forrister said. "Our leaders can and should create more high-paying jobs by expanding Medicaid, investing in infrastructure and supporting workers still struggling to recover from the recession."

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Arise Citizens' Policy Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of 145 congregations and organizations that promote public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians.