



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Alabama's K-12 cuts since recession among nation's worst, report finds**

*Forrister: Education cuts harm Alabama's economic future, put communities at risk*

Alabama ranks second worst in the country in state K-12 education funding cuts, with state formula support down 17.3 percent since the start of the Great Recession, according to [a report released Thursday by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(CBPP\)](#), a nonpartisan policy research organization based in Washington, D.C. Only Oklahoma has seen deeper per-student state funding cuts since 2008 than Alabama has. Overall, Alabama cut its total state and local investment in K-12 schools by 11.3 percent per student between 2008 and 2014, the seventh worst cut in the nation.

This erosion in education support could make it harder for workers to compete for highly skilled jobs in the global economy, said Kimble Forrister, executive director of Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP). Cutting education also could make it more difficult for communities to attract well-paying jobs and could deprive local businesses of a strong customer base, Forrister said.

"If we want a strong future for our state, we need to invest in it now," Forrister said. "Alabama must invest in our schools so our children and grandchildren can receive the education they need to succeed in life and help their families get ahead."

Even as the recovery boosted revenues this year, Alabama restored only a small fraction of the K-12 funding cut during the downturn. Parents and educators want to strengthen schools by reducing class size, improving teacher quality and expanding early education. But improvements cost money, and funding cuts undermine those efforts. For one example, Alabama still needs to hire additional middle school teachers to ensure students in that age range stay on track to graduate high school.

"As the nation is trying to produce workers with the skills to master new technologies and adapt to the complexities of a global economy, states should be investing more – not less – so our kids get a strong education," said CBPP state fiscal research director Michael Leachman, a report co-author.

Reducing investment in schools weakens the economy in the long term. Quality education is a crucial foundation to help children succeed in college and the workplace. The money they earn later helps Alabama through stronger tax revenues and consumer spending. Budgets that force school layoffs or cut pay for teachers and staff can reduce purchasing power and slow economic recovery.

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[Arise Citizens' Policy Project](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of 150 congregations and organizations promoting public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians.