



NEWS RELEASE

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Grocery tax bill helps families make ends meet

Community leaders speak out on urgent need for repeal of state's 4 percent sales tax on food

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. – State senators have just one more legislative day to consider a bill that would lower the price of groceries by 4 percent statewide. The bill would also raise the state income tax threshold to \$20,000 for a family of four and pay for these changes by eliminating the state income tax deduction for federal taxes paid, a break that favors the highest earners. HB 274 has passed the Alabama House and remains stalled in the Senate, one vote shy of passage.

Sens. Tom Butler of Madison and Arthur Orr of Decatur were two of three senators who abstained on a vote to bring the bill up for debate last week. Monday, May 19, is the last day of the current legislative session.

Tennessee Valley community leaders held a news conference Friday at the Food Bank of North Alabama to highlight the bill's benefits for low- and middle-income families and to urge local legislators to support the measure. Dick Hiatt, executive director of the Food Bank, stressed the importance of every dollar families can save as the cost of basic necessities rises.

“For a long time, the food banks across Alabama have understood that grocery prices can force low-income working people to do without things they need,” Hiatt said. “This bill will give Alabama voters the opportunity to lower everyone’s grocery costs by four percent and help struggling families make ends meet.”

Kimble Forrister spoke on behalf of Alabama Arise, an advocacy group for low-income people. “This plan will lower grocery taxes and make the income tax fairer next January,” Forrister said. “With the help of one more senator, we can give Alabamians a chance to approve a more family-friendly tax system than we’ve ever seen in our state.”

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Alabama Arise is a nonprofit statewide citizens’ organization comprising 152 congregations and community groups dedicated to improving the lives of low-income Alabamians.