

Arise Policy Choices 2010

Opening the Door: The Alabama Housing Trust Fund

BACKGROUND:

Low wages affect families in many ways, and one of the most basic is housing. Almost half of Alabama renters can't afford the monthly fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment, according to a recent study by Alabama Arise. And nearly half of the state's households don't make enough to buy a median-priced home.

HB 512 would help Alabama begin to turn these discouraging housing statistics around:

- **HB 512** creates the Alabama Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee, a forum for examining our state's housing needs and finding solutions that work for Alabama.
- **HB 512** contains no funding mechanism but puts into place an Alabama Affordable Housing Trust Fund that will be well-positioned to receive state and federal funds when the economy improves.
- **HB 512** sets the stage for Alabama to receive federal funding from the National Housing Trust Fund. We need to be ready to bring federal dollars to Alabama to provide needed housing here.

Alabama needs HB 512 to help open the doors of housing opportunity to working families, seniors, people with disabilities, and others who can't afford a decent place to call home.

BOTTOM LINE:

More than three-fourths of our sister states have established housing trust funds to promote construction and renovation of low-income housing, provide emergency rental aid and support other affordable housing services. It's time for Alabama to join this important effort.