



## NEWS RELEASE

3-28-13

### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

For more information, contact:

Chris Sanders at (334) 832-9060

## **Alabama's Higher Ed Cuts since 2008 Are Nation's Sixth Deepest**

*Per-Student Funding Decrease of \$4,546 Sends Tuition Soaring, Jeopardizes State's Economic Competitiveness*

Alabama's cuts to state higher education funding since the start of the Great Recession have been the nation's sixth worst, according to [a recent study released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(CBPP\)](#), a nonprofit policy research organization based in Washington, D.C. The funding reductions have fueled tuition increases of more than 50 percent and could endanger Alabama's economic future, ACPP executive director Kimble Forrister said.

The state's per-student support for higher education this year, adjusted for inflation, is 39.8 percent below its fiscal year (FY) 2008 level. Alabama's state funding cuts for two- and four-year institutions have been deeper than in all but five other states, the CBPP report finds. Alabama's \$4,546 per-student higher education funding decrease since FY 2008 is the nation's third largest, according to the CBPP, trailing only Louisiana and New Mexico. Alabama's higher education cuts far outpaced the national average, which saw states spending \$2,353, or 28 percent, less per student.

Tuition has skyrocketed in the last five years as Alabama's state support for higher education has plummeted. Average tuition at the state's four-year public universities has jumped 51.5 percent since FY 2008, the seventh biggest increase in the country. College costs have soared even though Alabama's median household income has declined, and grant aid and tax benefits have not increased enough to offset the rising tuition.

Higher education funding cuts undermine Alabama's economic growth, ACPP's Forrister said. By making it far more expensive for low- and middle-income students to obtain degrees, Alabama is depriving itself of the skilled workforce it will need to compete for future jobs, he said.

"Eviscerating our colleges and universities is not the way to save an ailing economy," Forrister said. "We need to open the doors of opportunity wider for low- and middle-income Alabamians who want to build better lives. But by saddling them with enormous debt or pricing them out of college entirely, we're often slamming those doors shut instead."

The CBPP's full report, "Recent Deep State Higher Education Cuts May Harm Students and the Economy for Years to Come," is available [here](#).

# # #

**Arise Citizens' Policy Project** is a nonprofit statewide coalition of 150 congregations and organizations that promote public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians.