



# Office of the Minority Leader

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **HOUSE GOP CAUCUS RELEASES 2008 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA** **TAX CUTS, IMMIGRATION AND, PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES HIGHLIGHT ELEVEN- POINT** **AGENDA**

**Montgomery** – Alabama House Minority Leader Mike Hubbard (R – Auburn) on Thursday joined with members of the House Republican Caucus to announce an eleven-point legislative agenda that will be introduced in the upcoming 2008 regular session. The agenda combines items previously pushed by Republican House members along with several new bills that address issues facing the state.

“Once again, Republicans will push for tax relief for families and businesses, a return to four-year property reappraisals and a tough package of bills to combat illegal immigration,” Hubbard said. “Historically, the Democrat leadership has paid lip service to our agenda by claiming they support its contents while, at the same time, working feverishly to kill each bill. It is our hope that the Democrats will finally allow our bills a free, open and honest debate on the floor of the House so the citizens of Alabama can be given the state they deserve.”

The items in the Caucus’ agenda include:

- **Extending Income Tax Cuts to Middle-Class Alabama Families by Rep. Jay Love (R – Montgomery)** – Building upon the tax cuts previously proposed by Gov. Bob Riley and pushed by Republican legislators, this plan would bring the filing threshold for a family of four to \$15,000 and allow more for personal exemptions, dependent exemptions and standard deductions. Under this plan, 90 percent of Alabama’s families would receive tax relief. The legislation contains a safety trigger to ensure the state budget will not be adversely affected during fiscal downturns.
- **Offering Tax Incentives to Small Businesses that Offer Health Insurance by Rep. Jay Love (R – Montgomery)** – In order to ensure Alabamians and their families are covered by good, quality health insurance programs, the Caucus once again proposes a tax incentive plan for small businesses that cover their employees. Businesses will be allowed to deduct from their taxes twice the amount they pay for health insurance premiums, and, to encourage participation, employees will be able to deduct twice the amount they contribute toward their coverage.

- **Ensuring Property Tax Reappraisals Occur Only Once Every Four Years by Rep. Gerald Allen (R – Tuscaloosa)** – For the past several sessions, Republican lawmakers have pushed this legislation, which would change current law and mandate that property tax reappraisals occur no more often than once every four years. Democrats have consistently buried it in committee and thrown roadblocks to prevent its passage.
- **Allowing Retirees to Deduct the First \$10,000 of Retirement Income from Defined Contribution Plans by Rep. Greg Canfield (R – Vestavia Hills)** – While participants in defined benefit pension plans are allowed to deduct retirement income, other retirees enjoy no such deduction. This legislation would allow those with defined contribution retirement plans, such as a 401K plan, to deduct the first \$10,000 in retirement income they receive.
- **Requiring Immigrants to Prove Legal Residency Before Accessing Public Benefits by Rep. Micky Hammon (R – Decatur)** – In order to ensure that those who access programs funded by taxpayer dollars are living in Alabama legally, this legislation will require immigrants to provide proof of legal residency before receiving public benefits offered by state and local governments, including in-state tuition rates for public universities.
- **Mandating that Public Officials Disclose All Public Funds They Receive by Rep. Mike Ball (R – Madison)** - The measure requires elected officials to notify the Secretary of State’s Office of any employment or contracts that they or their spouse might have with state entities. The secretary is then required to post the information, along with the exact description of the state employment, the state contract and the specific compensation, on the Secretary of State’s website.
- **Strengthening Enforcement of the Mandatory Automobile Liability Insurance Law by Rep. Mike Hubbard (R – Auburn)** – This legislation strengthens enforcement of the state’s mandatory liability insurance law, originally passed by Hubbard during his first year in office, by requiring electronic verification of insurance at the time of registration, increasing penalties for repeat offenders and allowing for the impoundment of vehicles not properly covered by insurance.
- **Banning Transfers of Contributions Between Political Action Committees by Rep. Barry Mask (R – Wetumpka)** – Transferring money among political action committees has long been used to hide the original source of campaign contributions. Mask’s legislation prevents the practice of PAC-to-PAC transfers without opening other loopholes, as some other proposed PAC legislation would do.
- **Statutorily Banning the Practice of Pass-Through Pork by Rep. Mac McCutcheon (R – Capshaw)** - This bill creates the felony offense of hiding money in the state’s budgets and funneling it through state agencies for specific pork projects in a member’s district.

- **Creating the Offense of Aggravated DUI for Those Testing More Than .15 BAC by Rep. Spencer Collier (R – Irvington)** – In order to keep our streets safe from those who drink and drive, this legislation would create the offense of Aggravated DUI for those with a blood alcohol content above .15 and doubles the punishments for those convicted under the statute. Collier, a former state trooper, said the bill does not change the .08 legal limit, nor does it change the penalties for those testing below a .15 BAC.
- **Prohibiting Convicted Felons from Benefiting Financially from the Crimes They Commit by Rep. Cam Ward (R – Alabaster)** – Because the continued protection of crime victims is a primary responsibility of the state, this bill prohibits convicted felons from benefiting financially or marketing items relating to the crimes they committed.

“This package was specifically crafted to keep our economy strong, strengthen ethics requirements and improve public safety,” Hubbard said. “It is time for the Democrats to stop putting politics before priorities. It is time for us to begin addressing the real issues affecting our state without smoke and mirrors. It is time for the Alabama Legislature to take action on this important, and much needed, package of legislation.”

Hubbard, who also serves as Chairman of the Alabama Republican Party, said the Democrat leadership can prove its commitment to the issues in the GOP legislative package by giving each bill early approval in committee and a quick vote on the floor of the House. Historically, they have buried important Republican-sponsored bills in committee.

He noted that a package of bills sponsored by Rep. Micky Hammon (R – Decatur) last session designed to combat illegal immigration is just one example of how the Democrats talk tough on an issue while working to kill the legislation. Among the bills in Hammon’s package was the legislation demanding proof of citizenship before accessing public benefits.

“The Democrats say they want to stop illegal immigrants from setting roots in Alabama, yet they indefinitely postpone every tough bill that Rep. Hammon and other Republicans offer to address the issue,” Hubbard said. “It’s simple. The Democrat leadership, which controls the flow of legislation, is hoping their tough talk will mask their total inaction on this and other important issues.”

In addition, Hubbard pointed out that Democrats have failed in simply passing the bills their Party’s legislative candidates campaigned upon during the last cycle. Of the sixteen items requiring legislation in the Democrats’ “*Covenant for the Future*” campaign platform, none were passed during the last legislative session, nine died in committee in the originating house and three were not even filed.