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[www.alarise.org](http://www.alarise.org)

## A few words from Kimble –

Our May 15 celebration was fun! To salute "the people's role" in winning our first step toward tax fairness, Rep. John Knight provided hot dogs on the Capitol lawn. He praised Arise for our tenacity and thorough homework. I praised Knight's leadership and urged folks to avoid the "tax cut" spin and use "tax reform" instead. We need to re-define "tax reform" for those who think it always means "tax increase."

**That day we started a discussion** on the future of tax reform. Our goals fall mostly under "fairness" and "adequacy." "Fairness" requires lower taxes for low- and middle-income taxpayers, who pay too much, and higher taxes for people and businesses that don't pay their fair share. We'll keep pushing fairness until people under the poverty line pay no income tax in Alabama. The critical "adequacy" concern is health care funding, because costs are rising faster than General Fund revenues grow. This will be the incoming Legislature's biggest headache.

**Which is most important?** And what else should we be working on? It's up to you! Arise organizers will hold listening sessions over the next 15 weeks, and our members will vote at the Annual Meeting on Sept. 9. Call your organizer to set up a listening session – the sooner the better, while our momentum is strong.

With peace,



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## Elections 2006

# What Arise, ACPP and you can do

*The 2006 election season is here, and we urge you to get involved. Keep in mind that federal law places strict limits on the political activities of non-profit organizations and their representatives. Some state restrictions also apply. The checklist below, adapted from guidelines provided by the Alliance for Justice ([www.afj.org](http://www.afj.org)), will help you plan your participation.*

### Alabama Arise activities

Federal tax law permits Alabama Arise, as a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization, to engage in partisan election-related activities, as long as these activities are not its primary function. The trade-off is that Alabama Arise gets to engage in unlimited lobbying activity, but contributions to Alabama Arise are not tax-deductible.

### Alabama Arise may:

- engage in unlimited lobbying, including work on ballot measures (such as constitutional amendments)
- hold candidate forums
- prepare candidate questionnaires
- endorse candidates for office in communications limited to our membership and regular press list (*NOTE: Arise chooses not to endorse candidates because we want to remain nonpartisan.*)
- contribute up to a total of \$1,000 toward state (not federal) candidates or ballot measure campaigns (*NOTE: Arise chooses not to contribute to political campaigns because we want to remain nonpartisan.*)
- engage in all of the nonpartisan voter education activity that are allowed for ACPP (see "ACPP activities," below)

### Alabama Arise may not:

- endorse candidates for office in communications to the general public
- make cash or in-kind contributions to federal candidates
- engage in electoral activity as the organization's primary activity

### ACPP activities

As a 501(c)(3) public charity organization, Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP) has more tax law restrictions than Alabama Arise in regard to lobbying. In addition, ACPP is prohibited from engaging in any partisan political activities that support or oppose any candidate for public office. However, ACPP *may* engage in nonpartisan voter-education activities and in a limited amount of issue advocacy (lobbying).

### ACPP may:

- engage in limited lobbying, including work on ballot measures
- offer nonpartisan public education and training sessions about participation in the political process
- educate all of the candidates on issues affecting low-income Alabamians
- distribute non-partisan questionnaires to all candidates for a particular office (*NOTE: ACPP does not issue questionnaires, but Alabama Arise does.*)
- invite all candidates for an office to nonpartisan candidate forums (*NOTE: ACPP does not hold candidate forums, but Alabama Arise does.*)
- conduct nonpartisan get-out-the-vote and voter registration drives

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## Election activities

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### ACPP may not:

- endorse candidates for public office
- publish or communicate anything that explicitly or implicitly favors or opposes a candidate
- make any campaign contributions
- report candidate responses to a questionnaire in a partisan or unequal manner (for example, by editing or highlighting particular responses)
- ask candidates to sign pledges on any issue (tacit endorsement)

### **Individual member activities**

The restrictions noted above do not apply to the activities of ACPP and Alabama Arise staff, board members, individual members and volunteers *acting in their individual capacity*. However, leaders and volunteers may not use the facilities, equipment, personnel or other resources of the organization to provide support or oppose a candidate or campaign. *NOTE: Because*

*(c)(4) organizations like Alabama Arise are less restricted in their political activity, individuals should identify themselves as **members of Alabama Arise** when acting on behalf of the organization.*

### Alabama Arise members may:

- attend candidate forums and ask questions on behalf of Alabama Arise (see "Questionnaire," below)
- distribute Alabama Arise materials on campaign issues (*NOTE: ACPP materials may not be used in partisan political activity.*)
- participate in get-out-the vote and voter registration drives

### Individuals may also:

- volunteer to make phone calls for candidates and issue campaigns
- distribute campaign literature

**Bottom line:** It's good for Alabama Arise and ACPP when our members are active in making our issues prominent in the election season. And it's great for you to get involved in a candidate's campaign – just don't do it in Arise's name.

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## Gubernatorial race 2006

# Arise candidate questionnaire

**Arise does not endorse candidates**, but our members want to know where the candidates stand on the critical issues affecting low-income people. We have sent the following questions to all 10 candidates for governor. We had received responses from fewer than half of the candidates by press time, but we plan to publish the full responses online at [www.alarise.org](http://www.alarise.org). We encourage our members to attend candidate forums and pose these same questions to candidates for all state offices.

**Tax reform:** Do you think Alabama's tax system is fair? Do you support raising the \$12,600 income tax threshold further – above the federal poverty level (\$19,961 for a family of four)? What else should be done to make our state tax system fairer?

**Adequate funding:** Do you think Alabama's funding of public services is adequate? How will you address the impending General Fund budget deficit? Specifically, how will you replace the \$133 million in one-time Katrina relief for Medicaid? Looking long-term, how would you make General Fund revenues more stable?

**Transportation:** Do you support state funding for public transit? If so, what should be the source of funding?

**A moratorium on executions:** Do you support a three-year hold on executions while the state conducts a study of the fairness of our capital justice system?

**Constitutional reform:** Do you think Alabama needs a new constitution? If so, what is the best way to achieve this goal?

## Thank you, contributors!

Mark Berte, Mobile  
AAUW, Shoals Branch  
ADEM Reform Coalition  
All Nations Church of God, Montgomery  
Birmingham Southern College  
Arise Student Chapter  
Carlisa, Inc., Brewton  
Church Women United of the Shoals  
Church Women United of Alabama  
Cooperative Downtown Ministries, Birmingham  
Corpus Christi Parish Church, Mobile  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Tuscaloosa  
Homeless Coalition of the Gulf Coast, Mobile  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Montgomery  
Latinos Unidos de Alabama (LUDA)  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Alabama  
Presbytery of Sheppards & Lapsley  
Providence Hospital, Mobile  
St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Florence  
St. John's Baptist Church, Evergreen  
St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Prattville  
St. Thomas The Apostle Church, Montevallo  
Trinity United Methodist Church, Birmingham  
University Presbyterian Church, Tuscaloosa  
Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church



Rev. Bob Graetz (right) and his wife, Jeannie, welcomed the crowd of some 75 Arise supporters at our May 15 tax reform rally on the Capitol lawn. Joining them were Rep. John Knight and Arise state coordinator Kimble Forrister (left).