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## A few words

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**I remember working our hearts out** for the tax reform vote five years ago, leading 170 presentations in 90 days, writing 12 publications and sending daily e-mail reports to energize our base.

I remember sitting in John Knight's office before we walked across the street for the signing ceremony on the tax reform bill in 2006. I asked if he worried that we would wind up in a Riley campaign commercial. He said, "Kimble, I don't care! We tried for years to get other governors to do something and they didn't give us the time of day. Bob Riley worked with us, and he deserves credit for that."

**For all of Arise's history, we have struggled in a conservative environment.** Come to think of it, I started my first organizing job as Ronald Reagan was cutting domestic programs in 1982 and we saw the return of hunger and homelessness. And it all grew from an irresponsible stewardship that refused to cut energy consumption or even collect the taxes to pay the bills. If we recklessly cut taxes and regulation, they said, business will thrive... and so the bubbles began. And the whipping boys were welfare moms and foreign aid, which people thought were half the budget when they were really more like a tenth.

**Twenty years ago, Arise was created by thirty-somethings.** Now a new generation of staff and members are bringing their energy and ideas to the work, and the time is right to re-fashion citizens' relationships to their government. It's a time to agree that we want to pay for a *good* system of education, a *good* system of healthcare and child care and transportation ... because all those supports for families are good for business, good for our people, good for Alabama.

And we're testing new ways to engage people, to help them see how their stories connect with our story. Arise will continue to believe that passionate organizing, sound policy analysis, and persistent advocacy will cause Alabama to Arise.

With peace,



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Sign up for our listserv by clicking  
"Join the Arise discussion list" at  
[www.alarise.org](http://www.alarise.org).

## A few words from Kimble –

I remember my first encounter with Alabama Arise, the Ways & Means room packed with Black and White, young and old people from Huntsville to Mobile.

I remember Governor Hunt naming a tax reform task force in 1991 and leaving us out. We faxed in about 50 letters on member groups' letterheads – and we won a seat.

I remember Arise co-founder Angie Wright conducting evaluations in 1994 with 80 member groups. She found it striking that most of them referred to Arise as "us," not "you." We continue to cultivate that sense of ownership.

I remember the listening sessions on welfare reform: "What do you need to help you move from welfare to work?" We spread newsprints all over the floor of my office, and it soon became clear that people needed jobs, child care and transportation, not the punitive approach of Gov. Fob James.

I remember the late Vicki Quatman standing on a chair, role-playing the CEO of McDonald's, asking everyone to respond to the company's quarterly earning goals and buy a burger. We learned that dollar goals don't make people give; people give because they believe in our mission.

Our member giving is now at a gratifying level. Our members know that they can't cut their Arise member dues in hard times – because we need a vigorous Arise to fight cuts to child care and health care in hard times.

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## Nov. 8 Picnic on Goat Hill

# Arise members celebrate 20 years



The Capitol grounds provided chilly shade and a majestic backdrop for Arise's 20th anniversary picnic. Some 80 Arise friends from across the state enjoyed a barbecue lunch and reflections from two of our founders, Angie Wright and Carol Gundlach. State coordinator Kimble Forrister offered his own 17-year perspective (see "A Few Words"). Congressman Artur Davis stirred the crowd with a testimony to the power of citizen advocacy.