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## New name, new look!



By *Chris Sanders*,  
*communications director*

**How do y'all like the new logo?** It's a new take on a familiar old Arise concept:

hopeful people joining together to lift up a vision for a better Alabama. And it's just one example of how we're moving into the future while staying true to our roots.

**The changes started with our name.** After years of having to explain what "ACPP" stood for, we simplified by renaming our 501(c)(3) – the group to which donations are tax-deductible – Alabama Arise. A first step in that rebranding was to adopt the new logo above.

**Our work is far from done.** We're just weeks away from launching a new, more user-friendly website at [alarise.org](http://alarise.org). In 2019, we'll freshen up our newsletters and fact sheets as well. We hope these improvements make our resources more useful for you – and that they help attract more folks to join us than ever before.

## Upcoming events

**Jan. 14, Fairhope** – Baldwin County Arise meeting, Fairhope Friends Meeting House, [6 p.m.](#)

**Jan. 15, Mobile** – Mobile County Arise meeting, Dauphin Way United Methodist Church, [6 p.m.](#)

**March 19, Montgomery** – Arise Legislative Day, Alabama State House, [9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.](#)

# Arise unveils 2019 blueprint for change

## Automatic voter registration joins priority list

By *Chris Sanders*, *communications director*

### Arise's 2019 issue priorities

- Tax reform (including untaxing groceries)
- Adequate state budgets (including Medicaid expansion)
- Public transportation
- Payday and title lending reform
- Automatic universal voter registration
- Criminal justice debt reform
- Death penalty reform

**It was a vote to urge Alabama to break down barriers to voting.** Arise members approved automatic universal voter registration as a new issue priority for 2019 during the organization's annual meeting Sept. 8 at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Montgomery. Nearly 200 members from across Alabama also reaffirmed their commitment to six other issue priorities, including the permanent issues of tax reform and adequate budgets.

**Automatic voter registration (AVR) would allow Alabama to save money while registering more people to vote.** AVR registers eligible citizens or updates their records electronically when they

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*Representatives of the Baptist Church of the Covenant in Birmingham (above) were among the nearly 200 Arise members who assembled at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Montgomery on Sept. 8 to choose our 2019 issue priorities. Thanks to everyone who attended for fueling our movement for a better Alabama!*



## A few words from Robyn

By Robyn Hyden,  
executive director

It's that time of year when all of us at Arise pause and give thanks for you, our amazing members, and what we have accomplished together. With your support, we defended the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid from repeated attempts at sabotage. Because of your advocacy, we prevented cruel cuts to SNAP. Thanks to you, we protected education funds and created new possibilities for public transit funding in Alabama.

The Nov. 6 election showed that across the country – in red, blue and purple states – our issues have broad appeal. From expanding health care to stopping predatory lending to raising wages and increasing voting rights, Arise's people-powered agenda for change is winning. In Alabama, we're accustomed to working for years before we see progress. We often celebrate defensive wins as we struggle to protect hard-fought gains. Those wins are important. But when the playing field changes, sometimes we have to pull out the offensive playbook.

We believe now is the time to play offense. And to support these efforts, I'm asking you to give now more than ever. We've created a Legacy Fund to honor our former executive director, Kimble Forrister, whose parting wish is to leave Arise prepared to take on the next big campaign when the time is right. I believe that time is now. From expanding Medicaid to untaxing groceries, we see more opportunities now than we have in years.

As we look back on 2018, I hope you will feel proud of what we have accomplished. I hope you will feel excited for the opportunities ahead. And I hope you will consider investing more in Arise by sending us your tax-deductible gift by Dec. 31. However much or in whatever way you can give, I'm grateful for you. I wish you happy holidays and blessings for the new year to come.

# Arise celebrates 30 years of success

## Dinner honors Kimble Forrister upon retirement

By Matt Okarmus,  
communications associate

For 30 years, Alabama Arise has worked to build a better Alabama for all. And for 27 of those years, Kimble Forrister led the charge as Arise's executive director. Arise supporters gathered to celebrate that work this fall at a dinner highlighting Arise's 30 years and honoring Forrister, who retired this summer.

More than 150 people came to Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Montgomery on Oct. 13 to reflect on the past and look ahead to the future. Stories focused on Arise's early days and Forrister's leadership style, which many speakers praised as diplomatic.

"Thank you, Alabama Arise, for taking a chance on me 27 years ago," Forrister said. "Just as I hoped, I've been able to work with some of the most inspiring people all across the state. I've worked with some outstanding board members and a mighty fine staff."

Cindy Lowry, former Arise board president, said the word "integrity" comes to mind when she thinks of Forrister. "To lead a progressive, relatively small nonprofit organization in a state like Alabama, to consistently bring in funding and move important policies forward while working against huge odds and remain so pure and true to the values of transparency, honesty and morality that this organization represents is a colossal feat," she said.



Former Arise executive director Kimble Forrister (above) reflected on a 27-year career here during Arise's 30th anniversary dinner Oct. 13. Other speakers at the event (below, center to right) included Nick Johnson, senior vice president for fiscal policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; Gladys Washington, deputy director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation; and Sophia Bracy Harris, former executive director of the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL).



In a way, the celebratory night also served as a passing-of-the-torch moment. Attendees honored Forrister for his achievements with standing ovations both before and after his speech, but he and others also showed optimism for the future of Arise under new executive director Robyn Hyden.

"What's been really reassuring for me is that she's thoughtful, she's authentic – not pretentious – and she's humble," Forrister said. "And she deeply appreciates Arise."

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# Meet-and-greet shows Arise spirit

## Dozens turn out from Mobile, Baldwin counties

By Presdelane Harris, organizing director

On a cold, rainy evening Nov. 13, dozens of Arise members from Baldwin and Mobile counties gathered at Dauphin Way United Methodist Church in Mobile with our new executive director, Robyn Hyden. The event was billed as a chance for folks to meet Robyn and hear her speak about our plans for 2019.

**But the night turned into something much more important to Arise staff: a chance to hear from our members.**

Each of the almost 40 people attending introduced themselves, asked questions and made comments about their hopes for Alabama. They talked about how much Arise inspired them. They inspired each other. And they inspired us.

Arise embraces organizing as essential to our work, and the heart of organizing is relationships. As we listen, talk, discover common hopes, and share disappointments and challenges, we strengthen relationships and gain motivation to work toward our shared vision for Alabama. That's how a cold, rainy evening in Mobile became a warm, bright spot of inspiration and encouragement. Thank you, Arise members, for the work you do to help us build a better Alabama for all!



*Dr. Ben and Miranda Schrubbe (left) were among dozens of Arise supporters from Mobile and Baldwin counties who came to say hello to new Arise executive director Robyn Hyden at Dauphin Way United Methodist Church in Mobile on Nov. 13. We appreciate the support from folks from across the Mobile Bay area – and from all the Arise members everywhere who make our work possible!*

## 30th anniversary dinner

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Hyden, a former Arise organizer, began her role as executive director in July. Like her predecessor, Hyden was selfless in her remarks, focusing on the breakthroughs she seeks for Arise and the vital role that members play in making them happen.

**“The work we are doing together is necessary – we’re bringing hope,” Hyden said. “I believe that together we’ll rise. And if not together, then not at all. Thank you for being together with us, and thank you for your support.”**

Gladys Washington, deputy director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in North Carolina, spoke on her relationship with Forrister and Arise that dated back to 1990. She, too, highlighted the future of Arise and thanked Forrister for laying a strong foundation for change in Alabama.

**“Over that time, Kimble was hopeful when it was sometimes hard to be hopeful,” Washington said. “We are grateful for that hope, and wish Kimble the very best as he moves to the next phase of his life. You leave with the knowledge that Arise will remain on the battlefield for what is right.”**

## A note from Brenda



By Brenda Boman, development director

**Arise members are generous and resourceful people.** Here are three smart and easy ways to help

stretch your giving dollars further:

**(1) Support Arise when you buy on Amazon.** Order any Amazon purchases at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and choose Alabama Arise as the charity of your choice. It's just that easy! For every \$100 you spend, Amazon will donate 50 cents to support our research and education on poverty issues. Fifty cents may not seem like a lot, but it does add up!

**(2) Consider a contribution through a tax-deferred retirement savings account.** This option is especially useful for our members who are at least 70 ½ years old and drawing income from an account such as a traditional IRA, 401(k), 403(k), 403(b) or Thrift Savings Plan. Whether you itemize deductions or take the standard deduction, up to \$100,000 of your 2019 required minimum distribution (RMD) can be **tax-free** when you give it to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD).

**The check must be made payable directly to the charity,** but you can have it sent to you and then mail it yourself if you prefer. If you want to take advantage of the tax savings, be sure to apply for the QCD before you take your full RMD for 2019. Please have the check made payable to Alabama Arise. You'll need our Employer Identification Number (EIN): 63-1186365.

**(3) Consider supporting our work through a donor-advised fund.** These funds can operate through a Community Foundation or other independent public charity. If you're interested in this opportunity to maximize your giving, I would be happy to share some useful resources on how to get started. Just email me at [brenda@alarise.org](mailto:brenda@alarise.org) or call the Arise office at 334-832-9060. Thank you for making our work possible!

# Fighting for a better future: Arise's 2018 annual meeting



*Public transportation (right) was a top vote-getter at Arise's 2018 annual meeting. Policy analyst Dev Wakeley (below) and other staffers assessed each issue proposal's legislative prospects before members voted. The energetic event inspired many attendees to action, including Ana Sophia Valeriano (left), seen here flexing her advocacy muscles to her father, Juan Valeriano.*



## 2019 issue priorities

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apply for a driver's license or share information with public agencies in other routine ways. People can opt out if they do not wish to be registered.

**Fifteen states, including Georgia, and the District of Columbia have approved a form of AVR,** according to the Brennan Center for Justice. All but one offer AVR through the department of motor vehicles, and several provide AVR through other agencies as well. The policy increases voter registration, promotes greater voter roll accuracy, and reduces printing, mailing and personnel costs connected to processing registration forms by hand.

**Members also urged Arise to seek to rein in civil asset forfeiture** as part of its criminal justice reform work. This practice allows law enforcement to seize a home, car or other property from people who have not been convicted of

a crime. Alabamians who cannot afford to hire a lawyer to try to recover the property are especially vulnerable.

**Arise will support policies to reduce the burden that civil asset forfeiture and high court fees and fines place on many families living in poverty.**

Other priorities include state public transportation funding, stronger consumer protections on payday and auto title loans, and reforms to the state's death penalty process.

**Medicaid expansion will be a focus of intense Arise advocacy this year.**

Alabama's failure to expand Medicaid to cover adults with low wages has trapped about 300,000 people in a coverage gap. They make too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to get subsidies for Marketplace coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

**Expanding Medicaid would save hundreds of lives, create thousands of jobs** and pump hundreds of millions

of dollars a year into the state economy. It also would help keep rural hospitals and clinics open across Alabama.

**Arise will continue its long-standing campaign to untax groceries this year.** Alabama is one of only three states with no sales tax break on groceries. (The others are Mississippi and South Dakota.) The grocery tax adds hundreds of dollars a year to the cost of a basic necessity of life for families. The tax also is a key driver of Alabama's upside-down tax system, which on average forces families with low and moderate incomes to pay twice as much of what they make in state and local taxes as the richest Alabamians do.

**"Public policy barriers block the path to real opportunity and justice for far too many Alabamians,"** Arise executive director Robyn Hyden said. "We're excited to unveil our 2019 blueprint to build a more just, inclusive state and make it easier for all families to make ends meet."