

ALABAMA CITIZENS ACTION PROGRAM (ALCAP)

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EDUCATION: Once again the school year was a period filled with transition, change, flexibility and uniqueness. 2008/2009 was a period in which thirty one speakers/teachers made 2,050 module presentations in twelve different subject disciplines to 625 public and private schools, reaching 99,090 students with clear, concise and constructive communication for healthy, drug-free living based upon the fundamental principle of abstinence. In addition to these programs, modules were presented in the state and private universities and colleges at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Kinesiology; education and wellness; and fitness programs. Also added were segments of the National Trio Programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search and Student Support Services) plus community out-reach programs, Link, Nu-Start, RESTART 21st Century and local summer school activities involving another 6,800 students. The new modules in Gambling and Skills for Life were well accepted and showed signs of keen interest. ALCAP teachers and speakers were provided opportunities for continuing education and training with ten regional conferences held in key geographical areas. New teachers and volunteers were added this year and the demand continues to increase to involve others in this very meaningful statewide ministry. If you are interested please contact Dr. Bill Day at the ALCAP office. (205.985.9062 or by e-mail at bday@alcap.com). Help us continue to change Alabama one student at a time!

LEGISLATION: ALCAP monitored 114 bills during the 2009 Legislative Session. The good news is that *ALL* gambling bills were defeated! In fact, none of the bills that had been introduced garnered enough votes to even be brought up on the floor of either the House or the Senate! The word we received was that the “Sweet Home Alabama” TV ads and direct mail pieces (which advocated “getting rid of *illegal* gambling in Alabama” by *legalizing* it) actually resulted in a backlash—many legislators told us that they received far more calls, e-mails and letters asking them to *oppose* the “Sweet Home Alabama” bills than calls supporting the bills. While we celebrate this victory, we must remember that the same people who poured millions of dollars into the “Sweet Home Alabama” ads will be pouring even more money into the campaigns of pro-gambling candidates in the 2010 elections! And, note, too, that their ads will probably present their candidates as pro-family, church-going people. It is imperative that the faith community does its homework before going to the polls in June of 2010! We must find out who is genuinely pro-family, pro-life, pro-moral and, especially, who will take a strong stand against expanded gambling in our state before we mark our ballots next year!

This most recent legislative session was not good with regards to the expansion of alcohol in our state. The most dangerous bill to pass was HB175, introduced by Rep. Jimmy Martin (D-Dist. 42). This new law allows cities with a population of 1000 or more which are located in dry counties to call for a municipal option (wet/dry vote). Small communities in dry counties all over the state are beginning to line up to have wet/dry referenda. This is going to become a constant battle over the next several years. The citizens of dry counties who have fought to keep alcohol out of their counties are going to be forced to have alcohol sold in their areas whether they want it or not!

HB175 was vetoed by Governor Riley, but the House voted to override his veto by two votes and the Senate voted to override his veto by only one vote. That Senate vote came after two previous attempts in which the override vote failed—they kept on voting until the lobbyists for the alcohol distributors got the vote they wanted!

Two other alcohol-related bills that passed and were signed into law were HB373, which increases the alcohol level in a container of beer from 6% to 13.9% (the so-called “gourmet beer bill”) and SB263 (and its companion bill HB448), which increases the level of alcohol in a container of table wine from 14.9% to 16.5%.

CONSULTATION: ALCAP continues to provide resource material to municipalities and counties that are fighting wet/dry referenda and gambling expansion. In 2008 we consulted with 4 counties (Blount, Clay, Cleburne and Geneva) and one municipality (Arab) in their wet/dry elections. Blount, Randolph and Geneva Counties all voted to stay dry, while Cleburne County and the city of Arab voted to go wet. All of those who worked hard to oppose the sale of alcoholic beverages in these local elections are to be commended!

ALCAP, also, met with leaders from Houston, Etowah and St. Clair Counties in their fight to stop the establishment of electronic bingo machines (more accurately, SLOT MACHINES) in their communities. This battle is expanding and needs our continued attention.

We are grateful for the support of the faith community throughout Alabama and we need your continued financial and prayer support in the coming months! With the passage of HB175, more small communities will be having wet/dry elections and they will need the resources that ALCAP provides. With the continued push for gambling expansion in our state, ALCAP needs your help to stand strong against the gambling moguls! We need your financial support, your prayer support and your involvement! The churches of Alabama need ALCAP in order to coordinate the efforts of the faith community and to keep churches and faith leaders informed about the issues that could destroy the family-friendly culture we hold dear in Alabama! Visit our website (www.alcap.com) to find resources and learn how you can help us make a difference!