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**ALABAMA HOUSE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS ANNOUNCES
2015 “ALABAMA FIRST” LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

Montgomery – House Speaker Mike Hubbard (R - Auburn) was joined by Majority Leader Micky Hammon (R - Decatur) and State Rep. Paul Lee (R - Dothan) on Wednesday as they unveiled the House Republican Caucus’s 2015 “Alabama First” legislative agenda.

“The Alabama First agenda is designed to put Alabama firmly on the road toward being first in education and first in economic development,” Hubbard said. “And when it comes to combating liberal mandates and policies from Washington, this agenda puts the interests, needs, and conservative values of Alabama first.”

Lee chaired the Caucus platform committee which solicited Republican lawmakers to submit suggested bills and recommended which ones should be included in the agenda. The full Caucus membership ratified the recommendations at a recent meeting.

“I believe the platform committee crafted a document that truly reflects the needs, concerns, and beliefs that most Alabamians share,” Lee said. “Whether you are a fiscal conservative, a social conservative, or simply someone who cares deeply about improving our public schools, this agenda has something that should appeal to you.”

Hammon said the agenda bills will be given first priority once the session convenes on March 3, which has also been the practice in previous sessions.

“Because Republicans hold such a large number of seats, these bills have already secured the support of a majority of the House membership,” Hammon said. “By quickly passing these agenda bills, we can take important steps toward improving education, strengthening our economy, and protecting the rights of Alabamians.”

The legislation that comprises the “Alabama First” agenda includes:

21st Century Workforce Scholarships

A strong and skilled workforce will help ensure that more Alabamians have long-lasting, good-paying jobs. Career-technical dual enrollment is one of the best tools we have to ensure our state has the highly-skilled and capable workforce we need both now and in the future, so **House Republicans will provide an additional \$5 million in funding for student scholarships in career-tech dual enrollment programs across our state.**

Parental Empowerment Tools

Every child in Alabama deserves access to a quality education regardless of their economic status, race, or zip code, and parents and guardians are the most qualified to make educational decisions on their behalf. As a result, **House Republicans will provide additional school choice options through the creation of public charter schools and other parental empowerment tools vital to a student's educational growth and success.**

Economic Development Reforms

With other states vying for economic development, industrial recruitment, and job creation projects, Alabama must remain competitive in the types of economic incentives it can offer, so **House Republicans are working with Gov. Bentley and the Alabama Department of Commerce on an Economic Development Initiative to overhaul and update our economic development incentives to recruit new business and retain existing business in Alabama.**

Regulation Repeal Act

Over the last four years, House Republicans have passed measures to stop the implementation of job-killing regulations and eliminate taxes and fees that bring in less than they cost to collect. To continue efforts to downsize government and reduce red tape, **House Republicans will repeal more than 300 obsolete, unenforceable, and unneeded laws that are currently on the books.**

Truth in Salary Act

Responsible governing demands transparency and accountability, and state employees and educators deserve to be fully informed about the benefits that taxpayers provide to them – an effort that is common practice across the private sector. To accomplish these goals, **House Republicans will require state agencies and public education entities to provide employees with an annual itemized statement detailing all benefits that are being provided along with their cost to the taxpayers.**

Freedom of Religion in Marriage Protection Act

Our religious liberties and freedoms are under attack by activist judges, an expanding federal government, and liberal interest groups, and an effort to protect these freedoms has become even more imperative with recent actions to overturn the Alabama Sanctity of Marriage Amendment. **House Republicans will pass legislation to protect judges, ministers, and others from being forced to participate in wedding ceremonies that violate their fundamental religious and moral beliefs.**

Student Religious Liberties Act

A series of federal court decisions over the last fifty years have whittled away the rights to prayer and religious expression in schools and created much confusion as to what is now permissible and what is not. **House Republicans will re-establish the freedom of student-led prayer and religious expression in our schools by enacting the Student Religious Liberties Act during the 2015 Legislative Session.**

Capital Punishment Preservation Act

Capital punishment serves as both an effective deterrent and a proper punishment for those who would commit the most heinous crimes on our books, but liberal interest groups and committed political activists are working on multiple fronts to end the use of the death penalty in our state. In order to ensure that the public is protected and sentences for capital crimes are carried out, **House Republicans will allow the Department of Corrections to once again utilize the electric chair as the primary method of execution** if lethal injection is ruled unconstitutional or if the drugs essential to carrying out that death penalty process are unavailable for any reason.