

# WE DARE DEFEND OUR RIGHT TO FREE ENTERPRISE

## The 21st Century Workforce Act House Bill 102, sponsored by Rep. Mac Buttram (R-Cullman)

Taxpayers deserve the strongest economy possible, yet President Obama continues to enact policies that are burdensome to business. Nevertheless, Alabama's economy is improving each year because companies choose to utilize the talent of our state's workforce.

Instead of resting on our laurels, House Republicans want to strengthen the state's investment in career technical education by making sure high school students across the state have access to updated technology and equipment. **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Act** will help prepare tomorrow's workforce with the skills needed for a successful career in whatever field they choose, ensuring that Alabama businesses have the tools, and employees, they need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Summary:

- Through the state's Accelerate Alabama plan, economic development experts have developed a system that recognizes the major industries on the horizon, as well as the gaps in our state's infrastructure that must be filled to recruit those industries. One of the major gaps is the lack of alignment between the offerings of Career Technical Education programs in our public schools and the needs of existing industry.
- **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Act** authorizes the Public School and College Authority to issue \$50 million in bonds, with the proceeds to be used exclusively for providing equipment for Career Technical Education programs in order for those programs to meet industry standards. In determining what equipment to purchase, the programs will use industry developed equipment lists for programs that, using regional workforce data, were included in the Accelerate Alabama plan.
- The bond proceeds will be distributed in three different ways.
  - \$10 million will be allocated to each school system, pro rata, based on the number of Career Technical Education programs in existence during the 2012-2013 school year.
  - \$20 million will be allocated to each school system, pro rata, based on the number of students who were enrolled in a Career Technical Education program during the 2012-2013 school year.
  - \$20 million will be distributed to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Fund.
- Funds in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Fund will be allocated by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Grant Committee, which consists of the State Superintendent, the Secretary of Commerce, the Director of the Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute, the Director of the State Department of Education's Office of Career Technical Education and Workforce Development; and one member, appointed by the Governor, who serves on the Governor's College and Career Ready Task Force. These funds will be allocated only to reimburse Career Technical Education programs for expenses related to purchasing equipment necessary to meet industry standards.

