THE API WATCHLIST

2022 POLICY MAKER SCORECARD

PURPOSE, SCORING, AND CRITERIA FOR THE 2022 SESSION

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PURPOSE

To inform the general public on the conservative stances taken or rejected by their elected State Senators and Representatives.

SCORING & EVALUATION

1. Annual scores will be issued at the close of each Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature.
2. Lifetime scores will be averaged for each year of graded time in elected office.
3. Legislators who recieve a score above 80% will be awarded a green rating, scores between 70-80% will render a yellow rating, and score below 70% will result in a red rating.
4. API began scoring with the Regular Session of 2021. There is no scoring based on prior years.

CRITERIA

Key Votes

70% of the Overall Score
"Key Votes" are those bills that API has identified as being key to the advancement of, or potential harm to, the conservative principles of limited government, free markets, and strong families. Key Votes will be preannounced before coming to the time for a vote, and when possible, before the onset of the legislative session. The 2022 Key Votes, and API's position are detailed on page 2 of this document. API reserves the right to alter our position on a Key Vote if amendments change the content of the legislation.

Local Bills/Taxes Raised at Home

10% of the Overall Score
API will review all local legislation introduced during the legislative session. Those local bills that are designed to raise taxes in a legislator's district will be assessed. Whether or not a legislator votes to raise taxes on his/her constituents will determine how many points (of 10) they receive in that category. Sales and use tax increases will result in a loss of 5 points per bill, while ad valorem and targeted taxes will result in a loss of 2.5 points per bill. Legislators are encouraged to not allow their names to be inadvertently added to the voting rolls on another district's local tax bills. The only votes that will be assessed, however, in this category are votes cast in regard to a legislator's own district.

Attendance

10% of the Overall Score
Legislators will begin each legislative session with the possibility of earning a 100% (10 points) for attendance. For each bill of general application for which a legislator is noted as voting "P" for Present, or "A" for Absent, the percentage will be reduced. Being absent or merely present for more than 15% of votes counted will result in a failed grade (0 of 10 points) in this category. Members of the State House of Representatives are encouraged not to vote another member's machine in their absence.

Public Accessibility

10% of the Overall Score
API encourages all members of the Alabama Senate and House to be open, transparent, and available to their constituents. API has gathered all legislative websites and social media for the members of the legislature. API has also established online alerts for any reference to a state legislator who provides public comment, interviews, radio shows, etc. API will assess the effort made by legislators to be visible and to discuss the issues that concern the general public, including their positions on Key Votes.

2022 KEY VOTES

Budgets
Multiple Bills

API STANCE DEPENDENT ON BUDGET CONTENT

The legislature must this year reestablish fiscal conservatism in state government. State Finance Director Bill Poole has stated that a "fiscal cliff" is coming. Increased spending is government expansion. After years of record budgets, legislators should freeze spending at its current levels and end this historic period of government expansion. Counted individually, proposed budgets for the General Fund and the Education Trust Fund that freeze spending will be considered Key "Yes" Votes. Budgets that increase spending over last year's levels will be Key "No" Votes.

Gambling Legalization
Multiple Bills

API WILL OPPOSE

Senator Greg Albritton (R-Atmore) has promised to file another gambling and casino bill this session. As introduced in 2021 that legislation sought to give monopolies to entities that have traditionally flaunted Alabama's laws and several of which have notoriously failed to pay taxes. API continues to believe that seeking revenue and basing budgets on gambling revenues is both bad social and fiscal policy. Any gambling bill will be a Key "No" Vote in 2022.

Grocery Tax Repeal
Bill Not Yet Filed

API WILL SUPPORT

A bill that eliminates the state's 4% tax on groceries will be considered a Key "Yes" vote if the bill does not increase taxes elsewhere. Though a full repeal of the grocery tax is essential in light of increasing revenues, a partial repeal, as rumored in the State House, will likewise be a Key "Yes" Vote if it does not seek to increase taxes elsewhere.

Business Privilege Tax Repeal
Bill Not Yet Filed

API WILL SUPPORT

Alabama's business privilege tax is levied simply for doing business in our state. Kansas, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia have eliminated their business privilege tax and a bill to do so in Alabama is likely to be filed this session. This will be considered a Key "Yes" Vote.

Decrease Taxes on Deferred Compensation Retirement Plan Income
SB18

API WILL SUPPORT

Alabama currently taxes distributions from deferred compensation benefit plans. Senator Arthur Orr (R-Decatur) has filed SB18, a bill that would exempt the first $10,000 of retirement benefits from being taxable as income. This will result in a net tax cut and will be considered a Key "Yes" Vote.

School Choice
Bill Not Yet Filed

An expansive bill to increase school choice in Alabama is likely to be debated within both the Senate and the House. As the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of schools and a lack of curriculum transparency has made evident, parents deserve to direct their children's education. This bill, or others like it that contemplate giving parents a say in what is best for their child's educational wellbeing will be considered a Key "Yes" Vote.

Shared Responsibility for Emergency Powers
Bill Not Filed Yet

API WILL SUPPORT

During 2020 it became clear that the legislative branch of state government had little to no opportunity for official action in an extended state of emergency. To be sure, a governor must have emergency executive authority. At some point, however, the representative branch of government must be given a voice in any extended shutdowns, mandates, or societal restrictions to ensure that their constituents' needs are being addressed. Many states allow the legislature to reject exetended states of emergency and Alabama should join them. Any bill that does so will be considered a Key "Yes" Vote.

State Health Officer
Bill Not Filed Yet

API WILL SUPPORT

Today, the State Health Officer of Alabama is appointed by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama. Alabama is the only state in which the top public health official is neither elected or appointed by an elected official. A bill that shifts this position to one that is appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate will be considered a Key "Yes" Vote.

Increased Legislative Autonomy
Bill Not Filed Yet

API WILL SUPPORT

Currently, the Alabama legislature only engages in legislative activity during the regularly-scheduled annual session or when the governor calls for a special session. In thirty-six states, the legislature has the power to call itself into session. Alabama is not one of those states. Any attempt to bring our state into this best practice should be supported by state legislators and will be considered a Key "Yes" Vote.

A NOTE ON KEY VOTES

As the session continues, API will as needed announce further Key Votes that align with our recently released conservative platform. We will also provide bill numbers on Key Votes once the bills are filed in their respective houses. Updates will be available on our website, alabamapolicy.org and on Twitter @alabamapolicy.

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