

***PLAN 2010***  
***Our Vision for Alabama***

***Our Priority:***

**PROTECT ALABAMA**

One of the state's most fundamental duties is to protect its people, and we have always made this responsibility a top priority. Having six grandchildren, I can tell you that I am constantly reminded of the potential dangers that threaten our communities.

That is why we have passed some of the **toughest laws in the country for sexual predators**, drastically decreased meth labs in Alabama, and given our state troopers a 21% pay raise in the last four years. We have also trained 60 state troopers to question, arrest, and detain illegal immigrants. In addition to our efforts in protecting our citizens from criminals, we have built **an emergency preparedness model that FEMA Director Dave Paulison called "one of the best in the nation."** In times of crisis, Alabamians can rest assured that the state will be as prepared as any in the country.

Our administration has made great strides in making Alabama a safer place to live, and we will never stop working to protect our citizens.

***Our Goal:***

**By 2010**, we will improve the safety of people and property through an aggressive focus on preparedness, enforcement, and rehabilitation.

***Our Plan:***

- **Implement a Safe Roads Initiative that will increase our State Trooper force and expand penalties for dangerous driving**
- **Crack down on illegal immigration to protect our families and our state**
- **Stand strong during emergencies by training local EMA directors and providing shelters for our seniors**
- **Show our gratitude to our veterans by implementing a Veteran's Benefit Initiative**
- **Ensure that all of our military can vote while they are overseas**
- **Reform our state prison system by increasing efficiency, capacity, and rehabilitation**

## **PROTECT ALABAMA**

### **STOPPING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION**

As the debate over illegal immigration continues in Congress and across the nation, Alabama has been a leader in addressing this important issue at the state level. By the end of 2006, 60 State Troopers will be certified by the federal Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency to perform immigration enforcement throughout Alabama. Alabama's Public Safety Department is one of only three state law enforcement agencies in the nation with this type of certification. Our officers have apprehended more than 200 illegal immigrants through their normal work activities, including routine patrol and working in driver's license bureaus. These are individuals with illegal status wanted for outstanding felony warrants or who conduct a felony in the presence of an officer. Illegal immigrants from six continents have been apprehended, convicted, and deported. I will continue to support this training for Alabama State Troopers, and I will also support efforts to enhance local law enforcement agencies' ability to participate in immigration law enforcement wherever possible.

Ensuring that Alabama tax dollars do not go to support illegal immigrants has been a priority of my administration since day one. We have implemented requirements and systems within the Alabama Department of Public Safety and the Alabama Medicaid Agency to ensure only citizens or authorized aliens are able to receive driver's licenses and Medicaid services. But we must do more.

Immigration reform is a complex issue requiring cooperation between federal and state agencies to ensure its success, but there are other actions the state can take to help alleviate this national problem.

#### **We will propose the following items to ensure that Alabama has the toughest illegal immigration laws on the books.**

1. Require government entities in Alabama to verify, through a three-step process, the lawful presence of every adult seeking a government benefit for which citizenship is a requirement. The process includes:
  - Producing a secure photo identification
  - Submitting a sworn affidavit; and
  - Having the application approved through the SAVE (Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements) program.
2. Require employers to prove that they do not knowingly employ illegal immigrants in order to qualify for economic development grants from the state.
3. Require companies to prove that they do not knowingly employ illegal immigrants before they can do business with any state agency.
4. Require that government entities issue and renew commercial and professional licenses, permits, and similar authorizations only for those lawfully present in the U.S.

### **STANDING STRONG DURING EMERGENCIES**

### **Standards for EMA directors**

Hurricanes Katrina and Ivan were two of the most powerful storms to ever hit Alabama's coast. While many of our residents suffered through everything from complete destruction in Bayou la Batre to mass power outages in Huntsville, loss of life was minimal in Alabama. Due in large part to the brave actions of our first-responders, Alabama's responses to the disasters were among the best in the nation.

Our Local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) directors were the first line of response to these terrible storms. Many of these men and women have done an incredible job in the face of disasters that have threatened the lives of thousands of Alabamians.

Currently, though, there is no real professional standard for local EMA directors. Anyone, regardless of experience or training could become a local EMA director. We must ensure that each county's EMA director has the professional training they need to protect Alabama's citizens.

**During the next four years, every county's EMA director will be required to meet strict standards set by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency.**

The state will offer training to help current directors meet the requirements. In a time of crisis, every county should be able to rest easy knowing that they are in capable and competent hands.

### **Safe Centers for Seniors**

Emergencies take a serious toll on all of those involved, but many times, seniors have unique challenges in times of great disaster. During Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina, we realized that these challenges require us to respond in a unique way.

That is why we **set up the nation's first "Safe Center" for seniors**. This facility is a senior center that will be used daily by residents, but in a time of disaster, it will be a place for seniors in the affected areas to regain a sense of normalcy.

The Safe Center is equipped with generator power and extra wall outlets that can be used to operate light medical equipment, such as portable oxygen machines. The center has an area for seniors in the early stages of Alzheimer's or dementia. Each facility will have a satellite telephone to ensure communication after storms and other natural disasters.

The building is designed according to Federal Emergency Management Agency standards. The center is also equipped with food, showers, and laundry equipment in the event that visitors need to stay for an extended amount of time.

**Our Safe Centers for seniors has become a model for the rest of the nation.**

**We will build a minimum of seven Safe Centers for seniors in disaster prone regions across the state to meet their unique needs in case of an emergency.**

## **SAFE ROADS INITIATIVE**

One of our top priorities in state government is to protect Alabama citizens on our highways and roads. Due to painful funding cuts in our General Fund and uncompetitive pay, our trooper force was greatly diminished by the end of the previous administration. Since taking office, we have increased funding for the Department of Public Safety by approximately \$30 million and **increased Trooper pay up to 21%** in an effort to reward our hard-working troopers and attract new quality personnel. This has been a difficult process, but we are making great headway.

In addition to putting additional troopers on the roadways, we must also do more to target the dangerous areas and practices on our roads.

**We will begin a “Safe Roads Initiative” that will reduce traffic fatalities and make Alabama roads safer for our citizens.**

**We will strengthen our Trooper Force.** By 2010, we will increase our trooper force by 50%, putting a total of 600 troopers on our roadways. More than 32% of deaths on Alabama’s roadways are caused by excessive speed. With increased enforcement, our drivers will slow down and make it to their destination alive.

**We will allow all local law enforcement to patrol interstates.** Under current law, only certain local law enforcement officials can patrol Alabama interstates. We will propose legislation to ensure that all qualified law enforcement officials can assist our efforts to reduce fatalities on our interstates.

**We will create Safe Zones for dangerous roads.** We will propose legislation to allow the Alabama Department of Transportation and county commissions to designate dangerous areas as “Safe Zones.” Those who are ticketed for excessive speed in these Safe Zones will have to pay an extra \$100 in addition to their fine.

**We will strengthen our DUI laws by adding tougher penalties for drunk drivers.**

## **SUPPORTING THOSE WHO DEFEND US**

### **Veterans Benefit Initiative**

We owe all of the freedoms that we enjoy today to our veterans. These men and women put their lives on the line so that we can live productive and successful lives without fear of our enemies.

I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of veterans’ groups over the years, but one of those visits I will not soon forget. A year or so ago, I visited a group of D-Day vets in Birmingham. These veterans were aged, and many were disabled. But when the program began with the Pledge of Allegiance, these

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men lit up with life. Their voices were strong, their backs were straight, and their chests swelled with pride.

I talked to many of these vets afterwards, and they told me about storming the beaches of Normandy and climbing the steep cliffs as German fire rained down, killing many of their friends. If you want to see a picture of pure patriotism, go see a veteran. Their level of sacrifice and loyalty deserves our full and heartfelt support.

That is why I personally called for public hearings when I heard our veteran's nursing homes were not being effectively run. After hearing from many vets and their families, I signed a competitively-bid contract that brought new and better management—and most importantly, better care—to our veterans' nursing homes. **I was also proud to be honored by veterans when I became the only governor in the nation and the first Alabamian to receive the VFW's Medal of Merit and Citation, the group's highest national civilian honor.**

We also began **“Operation Grateful Heart,”** which is a statewide effort to show our appreciation and support for our service members and their families while they are deployed - and to help them make the sometimes difficult transition back to their communities when they return home. Alabamians can be proud our state is again leading the way as the first state in the nation to have such an initiative.

No matter how much we do for our veterans, we can never say thank you enough. We have spent the past four years protecting and supporting our veterans, we must show them how much we appreciate them.

**We will implement the “Veterans Benefit Initiative,” which will consist of the following items designed to let our vets know how much they mean to Alabama.**

- 1. Determine a plan for veterans' long-term care**
- 2. Plan for a new Veterans nursing home**
- 3. Free lifetime hunting and fishing licenses for Disabled Veterans who are legal residents of Alabama**
- 4. Create an Iraq War Veteran Tag and an Afghanistan War Veteran Tag**
- 5. Support the National Cemetery Welcome Center at the American Village in Montevallo**

In addition, I will also oppose proposals to raid the Veterans Assistance Fund, which pays for existing veterans programs including health care services.

### **Ensure Active Duty Military Can Vote**

If there is any group of people who understand the importance of voting, it is the men and women of our armed forces. They risk their lives to ensure that we will always have the right to elect our leaders.

But, many times, the very people who are defending our freedom to hold democratic elections are faced with red tape and hardships at election time. Alabamians who are on active military duty abroad must go through an absentee ballot system that can be extremely difficult to navigate.

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This is a disgrace to our system and must be stopped. Our military personnel deserve the opportunity to vote in every election without a time-consuming bureaucratic system standing in their way

**By 2008, every Alabamian on active military duty abroad will have the opportunity to vote electronically over the Internet.**

Alabama should be the first state in the union to implement an Internet-based Secure Encryption Paperless Balloting System. This user-friendly system will be completely protected from hackers and will be in place in time for the 2008 election.

### **REFORM THE STATE'S PRISON SYSTEM**

While we have made significant progress, one of our most challenging problems is the state of our corrections system. As a result of financial constraints and years of neglect, our prisons are operating at almost 200% capacity. Many of our facilities are outdated and, oftentimes, one officer has to supervise a prison dorm of 250 to 300 inmates. While our Department of Corrections staff has risen to the challenge, this is an unsustainable situation that must be addressed.

That is why we have just passed the first significant prison reform package in years. Our taskforce on Prison Overcrowding recommended a number of these reforms that will bring our prison system into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our package is expected to open up 2,200 beds in the prison system and save the taxpayers \$28 million by 2010.

We must do everything we can to keep the people who need to be behind bars safely locked in prison so they will never again be a threat to our society – and we know how to make it happen.

**Over the next four years, we will reform our prison system and improve the safety of the public.**

Our top priority will be to reduce prison overcrowding. To do this we will reclassify a number of facilities across the state to allow them to house medium security prisoners. We will also continue expanding our community corrections programs into every county in the state.

In addition to reducing overcrowding, we will also make efforts to recruit and retain quality prison guards. In addition to the strong recruitment efforts that we have already put in place, we will ask the Legislature to approve a 10% raise for our Department of Corrections officers to ensure they will be competitive with other state law enforcement agencies.

We will also continue our work to make sure that prisoners are ready to become productive citizens when they leave. Our retraining programs and transition centers have been extremely successful at reducing the amount of people who make their way back into the prison system.

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In order to defray the costs of incarceration, **we will also put more prisoners to work.** We will expand our Correctional Industries program as well as our work-release program for low-risk offenders to ensure that the inmates – and not the taxpayers – pay more of their own way.