



THE API WATCHLIST

2021 POLICY MAKER SCORECARD

PURPOSE, SCORING, AND CRITERIA FOR THE 2021 SESSION

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 receive 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 will score beginning with the Regular Session of 2021. There will be 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 2021 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.

2021 KEY VOTES

RESTORING THE BALANCE OF POWER

Shared Responsibility for Emergency Powers

API WILL SUPPORT

SB97 - Senator Whatley

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. Legislation has been proposed that would require any emergency actions by the Executive Branch such as those described to require the Legislative Branch to approve after 14 days.

Increased Legislative Autonomy

API WILL SUPPORT

HB21 - Rep. Nordgren

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.

LEGALIZATION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Medical Marijuana

API WILL OPPOSE

SB46 - Senator Melson

During the 2020 Regular Session, a bill by State Senator Tim Melson was viewed by API as one of the most dangerous bills to come before the legislature in recent memory. Under the auspices of medical treatment by means of marijuana, the bill grew an entire new department of government, raised taxes at unparalleled levels, impeded on civil rights by allowing warrantless search and seizure, and portrayed a substance currently banned by federal law as acceptable to the state.

PANDEMIC RELIEF

Coronavirus-Related Tort Reform

API WILL SUPPORT

SB30 - Senator Orr

State Senator Arthur Orr previously carried a bill in the Alabama Senate that failed to be considered by the House before adjourning in the Spring of 2020. API sees this bill as of paramount importance to protect Alabama businesses from frivolous litigation by claimants seeking lawsuits under the idea that a business was at fault for coronavirus-related injuries. Without passage of this important legislation, Alabama's business community could face an onslaught of expensive and crushing litigation.

Tax Relief for Individuals and Businesses Who Received Federal Coronavirus Funds

API WILL SUPPORT

Numerous Bills in Both the House and Senate

Alabama is one of a handful of states whose revenue code could allow the state to view the coronavirus relief checks received by individuals or the Payroll Protection Program funds received by businesses as windfall dollars taxable by the state. Several legislators in both the State Senate and House have pre-filed legislation to prevent the State of Alabama from taxing those relief dollars.

BUSINESS TAX RELIEF

Business Tax Relief

API WILL SUPPORT

HB170 - Rep. Garrett, SB98 - Senator Roberts

API is keenly interested in legislation that is being carried by Representative Danny Garrett and State Senator Dan Roberts that removes impediments to business growth and modernizes the code of Alabama into one more attractive to business and investment. The bill also ensures that coronavirus relief funds received by Alabama residents and businesses are not taxable by the state of Alabama.

A NOTE ON KEY VOTES

API will also be watching with great interest any legislation that increases state debt, expands government, denies or inhibits school choice, or propagates occupational licensure, civil asset forfeiture, or the certificate of need process. Bills that support or oppose a biblical worldview on the issues of life, sex, or gender will also be subject to review.

We reserve the right to add Key Votes on these topics to this list as they are formally discussed in the State House. API will announce via press release, available on our website (alabamapolicy.org), and social media our support or opposition to any additional Key Votes at least 24 hours before they are expected to be voted on.