

At its Jan. 5th meeting, the Alabama Retail Association board of directors approved this legislative agenda for the 2010 regular session of the Alabama Legislature. During the session, which began Jan. 12th and will end by April 26, ARA will monitor all bills with the potential to impact retailers.

For more on these issues, ARA members please go to Issue Briefs in the Political Affairs section of www.alabamaretail.org

The ALABAMA RETAIL ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS:

GENERAL BUSINESS

▶ legislation to **CREATE PARITY AND FAIRNESS** for retailers **ON LATE FEE CHARGES** for consumer credit transactions. We are asking for an increase in the minimum that can be collected from \$10 to \$18.



ARA supports fairness for retailers on late fee charges for consumer credit transactions.

▶ **AMENDMENT-BY-AMENDMENT CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM** in order to streamline Alabama's constitution, remove archaic and offensive language and provide avenues by which the Alabama Legislature can enact meaningful tax reform.

▶ legislation that allows consumers to place a **SECURITY FREEZE** on their **CONSUMER CREDIT REPORTS**.

LEGAL

▶ the Alabama Civil Justice Reform Committee (ACJRC) in **TORT REFORM** efforts, including previously introduced bills concerning post-judgment interest, mental anguish and product liability.

▶ the **"COMMON SENSE CONSUMPTION ACT,"** legislation that spells out that those in the chain of distribution are not civilly liable for a consumer's weight gain or obesity.



It is wrong to hold restaurants, grocers and other retailers liable for obesity-related health problems.

WORKERS'/UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

▶ legislation designed to **REDUCE FRAUD** in **WORKERS' COMPENSATION** and **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**.

TAX

▶ **INCREASING THE TAX DEDUCTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES** that provide healthcare coverage for their employees from 150 percent to 200 percent.



ARA supports increasing the tax credits for small businesses that provide healthcare for employees.

▶ the **STREAMLINED SALES TAX** initiative that levels the playing field for in-state and out-of-state retailers. This will provide a simplified sales tax system that makes the collection of sales taxes more manageable for businesses.

▶ creation of the **ALABAMA TAX APPEALS COMMISSION** as an independent state tax court headed by a judge with specific training in the area of state and local taxation. These administrative law judges would be removed from the authority of the Alabama Department of Revenue and placed under the Office of the Attorney General as a separate division.

PHARMACY/HEALTH

▶ maximizing **FEDERAL MATCHING MONEY FOR ALABAMA'S MEDICAID PROGRAM**.

▶ legislation to **PROHIBIT LOCALITIES** from enacting **EMPLOYEE BENEFIT MANDATES**.

▶ legislation to allow pharmacies to capture a **DIGITAL IMAGE OF A PRESCRIPTION** that will constitute the original prescription.



FOOD AND BEVERAGE

▶ the **COALITION FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS** in efforts to allow local governments the option to vote on whether or not to have seven-day sales of alcohol.

The ARA OPPOSES:

GENERAL BUSINESS

▶ legislation restricting **EXPIRATION DATES ON GIFT CARDS OR CERTIFICATES**.



ARA opposes legislation restricting expiration dates on gift cards or certificates. ARA also opposes "custodial taking" of unused balances on gift cards.

▶ **"CUSTODIAL TAKING"** legislation that pushes unused gift-card balances to the state treasury when those balances go unclaimed.

▶ legislation to restrict the normal **USE OF CUSTOMER INFORMATION** obtained in the regular course of business.

▶ **MANDATORY EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND WAGES**.

▶ **TAXING PLASTIC BAGS**.

LEGAL

▶ legislation to eliminate or restrict **CONTRACTUAL ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS**.

▶ legislation to change the current **ELECTION PROCESS FOR APPELLATE JUDGES**.

WORKERS'/UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

▶ any **ATTEMPTS TO WEAKEN** Alabama's status as a **RIGHT-TO-WORK STATE**.

TAX

▶ **BAND-AID** or **QUICK-FIX TAX SCHEMES** or singling out one particular industry or segment of business for punitive tax increases. ARA vehemently opposes any patchwork tax efforts.

▶ required **UNITARY COMBINED REPORTING** for corporate taxpayers.

PHARMACY/HEALTH

▶ **MANDATORY HEALTH CARE BENEFITS** that can further increase the price of healthcare coverage.

▶ **MANDATES ON THE PRICE** for which retailers can **SELL PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**.

▶ **RESTRICTIONS ON** the **SUBSTITUTION OF GENERIC DRUGS**.

The ARA WILL MONITOR:

ANY LEGISLATION ON THESE SUBJECTS

▶ caps on weekly workers' compensation benefits received by injured workers.

▶ electronics (E-waste) recycling.

▶ changes to Alabama's price-gouging statute.



▶ alterations to taxes paid on groceries

▶ restrictions to the sale of any products, especially:



- tobacco
- alcohol
- printed or recorded materials
- video games

You can view this agenda online under **Legislative Agenda** in the **Political Affairs** section of www.alabamaretail.org