



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

WEEK 1: MARCH 7-9, 2023 | WEEK 2: MARCH 14-16, 2023

### OUR MISSION AND VISION:

**Mission:** To speak for the well-being of Alabama's children through research, public awareness, and advocacy.

**Vision:** All Alabama's children are safe, healthy, educated, and economically secure so that they, their families, and our state can thrive.

### ADVOCACY TIP OF THE WEEK:

#### What is a Special Session?

Special sessions may be called by the Governor. They are limited to 12 legislative days within 30 calendar days. It takes a 2/3 vote by each house to bring up legislation other than the subject called for by the Governor.

### IMPORTANT DATES:

**March 7:** 2023 Session begins

**March 8:** Special Session begins

**March 21:** Regular Session resumes

**April 11:** Child Advocacy Day

### VOICES IS HIRING!

VOICES is looking for our next Policy/Data Analyst. Visit the link below to learn more and apply today!

[VFAC JOB POSTING!](#)

## 2023 POLICY PRIORITIES:

Support Medicaid expansion to provide health coverage for the 340,000 working Alabamians currently uninsured.

Support increased funding for mental health services for Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR), Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADHM) and Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) that would increase access to services through their respective programs.

Support the request of the Department of Human Resources (DHR) of \$49M to fund the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that works with licensed childcare providers to improve the quality of care.

Support the request of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE) to increase funding of the First Class Pre-K Program.

\*For more information on our policy priorities, please click on the link below or visit our website!

[2023 POLICY PRIORITIES](#)

\*To stay in-the-know, follow us on social media!



## THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION HAS BEGUN!

### WEEK 1: MARCH 7-9, 2023

#### ALABAMA IS *THRIVING!*

- On March 7, 2023, the 2023 Alabama Legislature was called into Session. That evening, Governor Ivey opened her State of the State address by reporting that the state of Alabama is *thriving*. She then called the Legislature into Special Session to begin on March 8, 2023 to address the allocation of \$1.1 billion

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Lawmakers are set to return to regular Session on March 21, 2023.

## **BILLION – WITH A “B”**

- In her inaugural address, Governor Ivey promised that she would work to reduce the burdens that are holding back small businesses in Alabama by 25% over the next two years.
- During her tenure, over \$42 billion – “with a b,” as she would say – have been invested in Alabama, thus creating nearly 78,000 jobs.
- Governor Ivey credits the Alabama Jobs Act and the Growing Alabama Act for the positive outcomes we have experienced, and she plans to renew and improve these acts heading into this year.

## **THE GAME PLAN**

- Governor Ivey is calling this year’s strategy for a successful economy “The Game Plan.”
- Included in this plan are development investment and acceleration, stimulation of high-tech jobs, and transparency in incentive programs.

## **QUALITY EDUCATION**

- Governor Ivey’s top priority is for Alabama’s children to receive a quality education.
- Because of the results seen in children who were a part of our First Class Pre-K program, Governor Ivey has instructed the Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE) to prioritize classroom funding for the most “challenged areas” of Alabama – those with a poverty rate of 20 percent or above.
- The Governor is also pushing for there to be a requirement for students to complete kindergarten, increased funding for additional math and reading coaches, funding after school programs, funding for computer science education, higher salaries for teachers, and school choice.

## **ALABAMA’S HEALTHCARE HIGH SCHOOL**

- Governor Ivey proposed the establishment of the Alabama School of Healthcare Sciences to address the shortage of healthcare workers. This magnet healthcare high school is set to be located in Demopolis, Alabama, offering educational opportunities for 9th-12th grade students interested in being exposed to a curriculum of healthcare and STEM courses as well as experiences in clinical training.

## **SAFETY IN OUR STATE**

- The Governor has instructed the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) to make the lethal drug Fentanyl the Alabama Drug Task Force’s top priority. She urged the Legislature to pass House Bill 1 so that Alabama can put the traffickers of this drug behind bars indefinitely.
- Governor Ivey commended Alabama’s Corrections officers and military personnel, and encouraged lawmakers to prioritize increasing their salaries and benefits as well as offering support however we can.

[READ MORE ABOUT ARPA BILL HB1!](#)

## **WEEK 2: MARCH 14-16, 2023**

### **THE END OF SPECIAL SESSION**

- The Legislature has adjourned the Special Session Sine Die.
- ARPA Bill HB1 allocations for \$1.1 billion dollars was passed with a few amendments and very few changes.
- The regular session will start back on Tuesday, March 21, 2023. We expect to get a first look at the Governor’s recommended budget for fiscal year (FY) 2024.

That is all for weeks 1 and 2!

Yours in advocacy,

VOICES for Alabama’s Children

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