

ACCR
Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform
P.O. Box 10746, Telephone 205-540-7501, Birmingham Alabama 35202

Letter sent to the Birmingham Regional Legislative delegation;

A Public Forum was held August 2, 2005, for the citizens of the Jefferson County Regional Area to address what they want to see in a bill that would call for a constitutional convention to rewrite the 1901 Alabama Constitution. This Public Forum was sponsored by the Birmingham Regional Chapter of Alabama Citizen's for Constitutional reform (ACCR), the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, Region 2020, Greater Birmingham Ministries and the YWCA and was held in the Birmingham City Council Chambers.

A distinguished panel of citizens concerned about our state, volunteered to hear the public speak to these issues and offer suggestions on how to move forward to accomplish this reform. The members of the Citizen's panel were Judge Helen Shores Lee, Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Mr. Tom Carruthers, Chair, Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce Constitutional Reform Task Force and Partner with Bradley, Arant, Rose and White; Rev. Tom Duley, Executive Director of Urban Ministries, and Mr. Alan Hunter, owner, Hunter Films Inc., Founder of Sidewalk Film Festival, developer of WorkPlay. A panel of experts on constitutional matters included Professor Howard Walthall, Cumberland School of Law and Professor Steve Haeberle, chair of the UAB Political Science Dept.

Citizens expressed their concerns about the 1901 Constitution and the contents of a new constitution. The citizens' concerns were about the questionable history surrounding the drafting and ratification of the 1901 Constitution; the need for special interest transparency in campaign financing and the need for the media coverage. College students were especially concerned by the exodus of their fellow students from Alabama after graduation and hoped a new constitution would bring the necessary changes that would keep those graduates here. More issues are in the transcript of the forum proceedings.

The attendees desired to vote on the issue of having a constitutional convention and they understand that it is in your hands as a legislator to permit that vote. We join them in hoping that you will support a bill, if filed, in the 2006 Legislative Session that will allow the people to vote on holding a constitutional convention. Members of the chapter look forward to visiting with you and discussing their desires regarding a convention, new constitution and the need for the people to vote.

The full transcript of the citizens' participation is posted on our website, www.constitutionalreform.org and we urge you to review and see their comments. For your review we have also attached the results of a recent survey on changing the 1901 Alabama Constitution.

We invite you to join the Birmingham Regional Chapter members on January 25th in Montgomery, when ACCR will present many thousands of petitions signed by Alabamians asking for a chance to vote to hold a constitutional convention. We have attached a description of the January 25th activities and look forward to seeing you and working with you on this important effort. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you on January 25th.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ekberg
Co-chair, Birmingham Regional Chapter
Chapter

Cary Page
Co-chair, Birmingham Regional
Chapter

On August 2, 2005, a Public Forum was held in Birmingham on the subject of what a constitutional convention to write a new Alabama constitution should include.

It was sponsored by the Birmingham Chapter of ACCR, the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, Greater Birmingham Ministries, Region 2020 and the YWCA.

Moderator was: Barry Copeland, VP. Public Policy, Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Citizens Panel Included:

Judge Helen Shores Lee, Jefferson County Circuit Court

Mr. Tom Carruthers, Chair, Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce Constitutional Reform Task Force

Rev. Tom Duley, Executive Director of Urban Ministries

Mr. Alan Hunter, owner, Hunter Films Inc., Founder of Sidewalk Film Festival, developer of WorkPlay

Constitution Experts Panel Included:

Prof. Howard Walthall, Cumberland School of Law, Samford University

Dr. Steve Haeberle, Chair, Dept. of Government, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Panelists presentations are not included in this transcript. This transcript includes only audience questions or comments and panelists' responses.

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PUBLIC FORUM
ON
THE PROCESS FOR A CITIZENS CONVENTION
FOR ALABAMA

"PUBLIC COMMENTS"

DATE: August 2, 2005
TIME: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: BIRMINGHAM CITY HALL,
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TAKEN BY: Diana B. Williams, CSR

1 MR. COPELAND: We have heard a
2 tremendous amount of information in the
3 last few minutes, and I'd like to thank our
4 panelists and our expert advisors that are
5 going to be with us through the balance of
6 the evening. I hope that you will be
7 comfortable in giving us your opinions on
8 some of what they've said or on other items
9 that may not have been mentioned.

10 You've heard from the four
11 panelists first, sort of the why they each
12 feel there's a need to do something about
13 our constitution. We got to dodging a
14 little deeper into the technical issues
15 that need to be addressed with Professors
16 Walthall and Haeberle. Now it is time for
17 your comments. Again, I'd ask you, if you
18 would, to limit your comments to two to
19 three minutes. And the reason is I hope
20 you will come up again as you think of
21 other things. We want this to just be a
22 rapid-fire series of comments. And, again,
23 we will record these, and that way we can

1 feed back to our legislators what your
2 thoughts are on this process.

3 Now, two folks have signed up,
4 so we will begin with those. And if in the
5 meantime, you have a further comment you'd
6 like to make, then you can come up.

7 First, let me call on John
8 Northrop. John is from Homewood. And,
9 John, if you will, start us off, and then
10 we will go to Andrew Brashere of Helena.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was
12 just going to ask if we could just take a
13 moment and everybody turn off their cell
14 phones and all the distracting little beeps
15 that are in this room so we can just focus
16 on what we're doing here, please.

17 MR. COPELAND: Good comment. If
18 you've got a cell phone, how about turning
19 it off? The distracting beeps, however,
20 are going to keep us on track, so we might
21 keep those.

22 John Northrop, and you are from
23 Homewood?

1 MR. NORTHROP: Yes. I guess
2 we're speaking to the machine; right?

3 MR. COPELAND: Correct -- well,
4 we have a court reporter here.

5 MR. NORTHROP: Okay. Okay.
6 We'll speak to you.

7 My motto is, "If you can't be
8 coaching and compelling, at least try to be
9 provocative." So, I guess, what I would
10 like to say, first of all, I came tonight
11 with an idea in mind that, I'm told by the
12 information that has been handed out, it's
13 impossible. I'm bothered by the problem of
14 how do you have a level playing field? How
15 do you make sure that real people and not
16 just rich hirelings are actually involved
17 in writing the Constitution? And what came
18 to my mind was some kind of an elaborate
19 lottery system, perhaps adjudicated by the
20 Supreme Court in Montgomery. But the
21 handout says the delegates have to be
22 elected by the people. So I like Professor
23 Haeberle's comment of trying to find the

1 grassroots system that would feed upward
2 into a residue, a rarified selective root
3 with deep grassroots, if that's possible.
4 That may not be possible under what the
5 "Thou shalt" and the "Thou shalt nots"
6 that we have in hand here. Another
7 approach might be to have, kind of, an
8 in-person voting system so that people in a
9 variety of districts across the state come
10 together in big gymnasiums and in person,
11 qualified voters hear from grassroots
12 candidates who would make their pitch, and
13 people would vote on the spot so that the
14 media, the advertising, and all of those
15 things wouldn't be as important as the
16 direct personal contact.

17 But onto the provocative side of
18 things, I just -- I'm not sure why it is
19 that we feel we have to follow what this
20 constitution presently says we have to do
21 to have a new constitution. Our present
22 Constitution is an illegitimate document.
23 Historians tell us it was approved in a

1 fraudulent vote in 1901. It is not legal.
2 It just happens to be accepted, but it is
3 not legal. And I like what Alan had to say
4 about no more baby steps. Thank goodness.
5 Thank goodness George Washington and
6 Jefferson Davis -- not Jefferson Davis --
7 Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and all those
8 guys -- thank goodness they didn't ask
9 parliament for permission to have a
10 continental congress. The people got
11 together and said this is the way it's
12 going to be. Now, of course, I guess they
13 had greater courage and conviction back
14 then and were willing to risk more, but I
15 don't think we ought to be thinking that we
16 have to go hat in hand to the Alabama
17 legislature for legitimacy when they are
18 not the product of a legitimate system.
19 So an alternative approach down
20 the road, if we ever get the guts, would be
21 to look for some really big sponsors and
22 ask for a huge amount of money at a
23 citizens convention organized itself in

1 this state in the way of Philadelphia in
2 1776, and do it. Then we can get some
3 money and sell that in an advertising
4 campaign and start over.

5 MR. COPELAND: John, thank you
6 very much.

7 We had one other person sign up
8 in advance, and that's Andrew Brashere from
9 Helena. Andrew, thanks for being here.

10 MR. BRASHERE: Thank you. I'm a
11 college student at UAB, so I thank you for
12 being out here, and I thank all of y'all
13 for being out here.

14 I wanted to address my
15 statements -- they may be a little bit
16 off-topic, per se, from the constitutional
17 convention, but on that note, I would like
18 18-year-olds to be allowed to run. And
19 some of you may think 18-year-olds are too
20 young. I've been passionate about this
21 ever since I was 14 years old, going to
22 different things, just like student
23 government and youth legislature, proposing

1 for a new constitution. And I know that a
2 lot of young people are with me on this.

3 I feel that most students in
4 Alabama -- if I hear one complaint more
5 than anything, my generation says, "I can't
6 wait to leave Alabama." And I'm not one of
7 those people. But one of the reasons why
8 is because we are a lost cause to some
9 extent with this Constitution. We have to
10 start over again. And the only way we can
11 begin to have the opportunities and get
12 exposure to start over is with a new
13 constitution so the students will no longer
14 say, I can't wait to leave Alabama, but
15 will say, I can't wait to get involved in,
16 you know, teaching in Alabama; I can't wait
17 to be a businessman, a lawyer, to be, you
18 know, a farmer. Whatever it is that your
19 dream is, I can't wait to do that, and live
20 in my home state and give back to it.

21 I'm partial because I love this
22 state. I feel like there are a lot of good
23 people here, and I can't give up on it. So

1 that's why I'm here before you today saying
2 that we need to do something about our
3 Constitution.

4 I feel that publicity is a big
5 thing. Like, for example, I didn't know
6 about this until I got an e-mail from the
7 doctor over here, and I feel that this room
8 should be filled out. It should be a
9 standing-room crowd. Because I know --
10 I've seen the polls -- the majority of
11 Alabamians would like a new constitution,
12 and we've got to get the word out so that
13 our legislature will start hearing this.
14 And not only that, but the average citizen
15 that believes in constitutional reform
16 needs to start getting on the phone and
17 start telling the representatives, hey,
18 this is what I want; I put you into office,
19 and I can take you out. And I'm just an
20 exception to the rule. The majority of our
21 citizens and students are not that active.
22 So I feel like we have to bring it to the
23 forefront. So I thank you for this, but I

1 ask that you do that.

2 Getting back to the issue at
3 hand, though, I feel that we should make
4 this an issue of the governors. One of the
5 leaders up here said we need to make it
6 known to the governors, you know, put the
7 leadership in there, and let them, kind of,
8 host the event, per se, so we have some
9 good backbone. I feel that the 2006
10 gubernatorial election is going to be a
11 great time to bring that issue up and make
12 it where it's a do-or-die time. You are
13 going to have to address this issue if you
14 want to try to be governor in the state of
15 Alabama. Are you for us or against us?
16 And that's the way we should look at it. I
17 feel that nonpartisan elections as
18 delegates is the best thing for us. We
19 don't need politics. We need principles to
20 be placed in this Constitution. George
21 Washington and John Adams were not
22 bickering over, you know,
23 federalism/anti-federalism; and Thomas

1 Jefferson and a whole bunch weren't
2 debating over the principles and politics
3 of this, that, or the other. They were
4 reunited for a cause. We want
5 representative government. That's how we
6 should be. I don't care who you are. We
7 need to all unite together, and go for this
8 common goal. Not only that, but I also
9 feel as though small donations of a hundred
10 dollars or two hundred dollars, whatever is
11 the guideline, should be the key. We don't
12 want special interest taking over. That's
13 what I hear from my fellow friends and
14 students who are against me in
15 constitutional reform. They are, like,
16 well, we can't trust the legislature. We
17 can't trust, you know, special interest,
18 etc. We have to go out to the people of
19 this good state, the average blue-collar,
20 worker and let them know we're trying to
21 protect your interest. We're not trying to
22 twist special interest into a new
23 constitution. And by doing so, by limiting

1 corporations and from powering in money, we
2 can make sure this is going to be truly a
3 citizens convention, much like Philadelphia
4 in 1776.

5 Finally, I would just like to
6 say that the best thing that we can do is
7 to keep intact to the best of our ability
8 the Preamble, the Declaration of Rights. I
9 know that we can't put that in legislation
10 saying this will stay the same. But for
11 those who do become delegates, who may be
12 many of us in this room, and hopefully me
13 one of these days, if we keep the preamble
14 with, you know, the God being put in there
15 and keep the Declaration of Rights, we'll
16 secure the vast majority of Alabamians,
17 because that's their biggest concern. And
18 I believe that we can do that. And we've
19 got to get the word out. And I thank
20 you-all.

21 MR. COPELAND: Wow. Suddenly I
22 feel better about the future. I would
23 direct your attention to one handout that

1 you might want to keep with you and look at
2 tonight. Perhaps it will stimulate a
3 question. We have a summary here of two
4 pieces of legislation. The one that was
5 most recent was the 2005 bill that was
6 sponsored by Senator Ted Little of Auburn.
7 That's Senate Bill 198. And it's about a
8 page and a half. And then there was a bill
9 back in 2002. It was actually a house
10 joint resolution, I believe, HJR 152. You
11 can kind of see, through looking at the
12 bullets of those two, how the issue matured
13 over the past two or three years. If you
14 have thoughts on any of those things, we
15 certainly would like to take them. No one
16 else has signed up to speak, but surely
17 there must be other thoughts.

18 Yes, sir, if you would come
19 forward and give us your name and where you
20 live, we would appreciate it.

21 MR. KELLER: My name is Bill
22 Keller. I live here in the Birmingham
23 area, and I'm a former manager of the

1 Alabama Press Association, association of
2 state; its daily/weekly newspapers. And I
3 teach some journalism classes down in
4 Tuscaloosa now. And I'm also involved in
5 an organization known as the Alabama Center
6 for Open Government. I can't claim to
7 speak for all newspapers, because by their
8 nature, editors and publishers of our
9 newspapers have a wide variety of news on
10 those subjects. Newspapers rarely work
11 together on anything other than open
12 government.

13 However, leading newspapers here
14 in Alabama over the years have given a lot
15 of attention to many of our problems from
16 prison reform, constitutional reform, tax
17 reform, environmental issues, and you will
18 continue to see that. You will remember
19 that the late Bailey Thomson, a former
20 editorial page editor in the Mobile
21 Register and teacher in Tuscaloosa launched
22 this fight to change the Constitution. And
23 the late Ron Casey, editorial page editor

1 of the Birmingham News won a Pulitzer Prize
2 for his efforts to change our
3 constitutional -- our tax system to make it
4 fair, among other things.

5 I have a few points to make
6 related to this, though. I urge that all
7 processes and procedures related to this
8 constitutional reform should be open to the
9 public, to the press, to gain their trust,
10 to be transparent, and including campaign
11 finances that you've already talked about.
12 We should know, too, that newspapers, as a
13 rule, will give this much more coverage
14 than television. Notice there are no
15 television cameras here tonight I don't
16 think; are there? To get television
17 coverage -- and I don't speak for
18 television -- but you've got to have
19 something visual, something local, and
20 something visceral that they can feel
21 you've got. You've got to come up with
22 something local that people can understand.
23 Just to say we need the ability to make our

1 own rules locally doesn't grab anybody.
2 You've got to show them where something has
3 failed in their community, why they are not
4 getting something that some county in
5 Georgia got or Mississippi or Florida or
6 Tennessee that they don't have because of
7 this constitution. And you also need to
8 expect that not all newspapers will
9 uniformly endorse all of this effort. It's
10 just their nature. Just like they all
11 didn't endorse Amendment I, believe it or
12 not.

13 Again, newspapers don't speak
14 for one voice in the state. Again, I urge
15 you to come up with some local perspective
16 that people can understand at the local
17 level. I urge you to keep -- also to
18 remember that -- keep your local
19 legislatures up-to-date on this process.
20 And if you can have somebody from their
21 district to tell them, that's all the
22 better, because you don't want to hear
23 legislatures say again, nobody from my

1 district is telling me anything or that
2 they are interested in this process at all,
3 because that is not true. Thank you.

4 MR. COPELAND: Thank you.

5 Are there other comments from
6 anyone in the audience? Yes, sir, if you
7 would, come up and tell us your name and if
8 you know what legislative district or where
9 you are from, that would be great.

10 MR. TUBBS: My name is Charles
11 Tubbs. I'm retired. I live in Hoover.
12 Mr. Waggoner is my senator and Mr. Williams
13 is my representative. I'm not sure of the
14 numbers.

15 One of the main concerns I have
16 in this is a special-interest group,
17 specifically, the legislature of Alabama.
18 And it seems to me that history tells us
19 that any power they give up will be very
20 reluctantly, and they will have to be
21 forced into this situation. For this
22 reason, I believe that when we elect these
23 delegates of the people, we need to exclude

1 current office holders. We do need
2 expertise from all levels of government in
3 this, but we need to find another way to
4 apportion them so that they will not be
5 overwhelming the will of the people. In
6 the past several years, they have gone down
7 there, and nobody is satisfied with what
8 they do. Yet very few of them get
9 opposition, and we keep sending the same
10 ones back again year after year. And if we
11 trust them to write the Constitution, we
12 will get the same poor performance out of
13 that that we get out of the legislature
14 every year. Thank you.

15 MR. COPELAND: Thank you.

16 I just realized I think we're
17 missing not recognizing someone who's in
18 the audience tonight. She is serving as
19 co-chair of the Alabama Citizens for
20 Constitutional Reform long before our U.S.
21 Congressman Jack Edwards of Mobile; Lenora
22 Pate is with us tonight. And, Lenora,
23 thank you for being here.

1 We've heard some interesting
2 thoughts so far: The fact that the current
3 constitution is not a legal document; how
4 about grassroots on the site building; to
5 keep the media at bay; and advertising;
6 let's just seek sponsors and go get us a
7 convention; Andrew from Helena told us a
8 lot of things about his thought on having
9 people involved and to keep intact our
10 preamble and Declaration of Rights; Bill
11 Keller from the Birmingham area here spoke
12 out about the importance of the press and
13 openness in the process; and, then -- was
14 it Mr. Tugs? Did I hear that correctly?
15 Did I hear that correctly? Okay.

16 MR. TUBBS: It has two "b"s.

17 MR. COPELAND: Tubbs. I'm
18 sorry -- had concerns about current office
19 holders possibly being excluded. Any other
20 comments at this point?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. COPELAND: In the absence of
23 comments, I'm going to ask our panelists to

1 comment on the comments. I think I said
2 that correctly. But I don't want to
3 exclude you. You've been patient, and
4 you've listened, and we are interested in
5 what you have to say. We're defining
6 awkward silence as something longer than
7 four or five minutes, and what else?

8 MS. Ekberg: I have a question.
9 I'm Nancy Ekberg from Vestavia.

10 MR. COPELAND: Why don't you
11 come up to the microphone so we can hear
12 you. I wonder who will keep time on the
13 time keeper.

14 MS. EKBERG: I'm Nancy Ekberg,
15 and I'm from Vestavia. And my question is:
16 When we have a new constitution -- and I
17 should probably direct this to Professor
18 Walthall -- what happens to all the
19 amendments that have already been passed?
20 Are they grandfathered, and do they stay
21 intact, or do hopefully, the counties, then,
22 have to repass all of those laws? What is
23 the status of the existing amendments and

1 the existing Constitution?

2 MR. COPELAND: Nancy, thanks.

3 Professor, would you mind taking
4 a shot at that?

5 PROFESSOR WALTHALL: That's a
6 very good question. The convention could
7 either propose to keep those amendments, or
8 it could rewrite the powers of local
9 government in a more generic fashion so
10 that it would -- those would then cover the
11 territory covered presently by the sum
12 three or four hundred local amendments. I
13 think there would definitely have to be a
14 savings clause in the Constitution so that
15 if a county or municipality had, pursuant
16 to a specific amendment, Amendment 439 or
17 whatever, issued bonds and levied taxes to
18 support those bonds, that there would be --
19 that authorization would not be
20 invalidated. But I think -- I think it is
21 a technical matter, that kind of transition
22 from a large number of local amendments to
23 more generic language could be done.

1 MR. COPELAND: Who else has
2 thoughts, comments, or questions? Yes,
3 sir?

4 MR. FORSEE: My name is Tom
5 Forsee. I live in Homewood. I would just
6 like to give a real plug to Steve
7 Haeberle's idea. I think this is an
8 incredible idea to maybe reindoctrinate the
9 people of Alabama how democracy really
10 works. I think democracy in many ways has
11 been lost in the various processes we have
12 here. And just to take an example, the tax
13 reform issue that went before the voters a
14 year and a half ago, I think a lot of
15 people that looked at this thought it was
16 pretty good legislation, but the people of
17 Alabama didn't trust it. And I think they
18 didn't trust it because they weren't
19 involved in it. So I think you have to
20 find a way to get the people of Alabama
21 involved. I think the comment that we need
22 grassroots efforts -- we need local effort.
23 I would love to hear what some of the other

1 people on the panel might comment on this
2 particular idea, because I think it really
3 deserves some close attention. Thank you.

4 MR. COPELAND: Thank you, Tom.

5 Thoughts from the panel on that
6 or from either --

7 PROFESSOR WALTHALL: I will
8 comment on that.

9 MR. COPELAND: Sure.

10 PROFESSOR WALTHALL: First of
11 all, when Steve and I were talking and he
12 first mentioned this to me, I was like, oh,
13 I wish I would have thought of that. I
14 think the idea of somehow driving the
15 delegate selection down into smaller, more
16 democratic units has an awful lot of
17 appeal. I will be the skunk at the garden
18 party and tell you some difficulties. One
19 is that we now -- the delegate selection
20 process would almost certainly have to be
21 carried out pursuant to the federal
22 constitution's requirements of proportional
23 representation, one person/one vote, so

1 that if the districts are not drawn in a
2 way in which they represent one person/one
3 vote, it would take some structuring and
4 some restructuring to get to the point
5 where you have precincts that were
6 affiliated or work together in order to
7 have proportional representation --

8 DR. HAEBERLE: Or weighted
9 voting scheme.

10 PROFESSOR WALTHALL: -- or some
11 weighted voting scheme. And, you know, if
12 you get into weighted voting scheme, I
13 think, you know -- I think that, in and of
14 itself, is something that people don't
15 embrace readily.

16 The second thing, besides the
17 proportionate representation requirements
18 of the Constitution, you would also have to
19 deal with -- we are here on the anniversary
20 of the voter process, I think. And you
21 would have to comply with the preapproval,
22 prescreening requirements of the justice
23 department. This would have to be

1 submitted for preapproval, I think, to do
2 this.

3 One reason, in 2002, we did the
4 off-the-shelf, let's just use the 105 state
5 legislative house of representative
6 districts, is that those districts had just
7 then been approved, and so there would not
8 be the necessity of jumping through that
9 hoop, or if you didn't jump through that
10 hoop, you know, facing a challenge from
11 someone in the Court system as to the
12 structure of the election. So it would
13 take some work to come up with that. And
14 even to go further and to have something
15 like precinct caucuses would take a lot
16 more work in order to bring it within the
17 requirements of federal constitutional and
18 voter right's laws.

19 MR. COPELAND: Yes, sir?

20 MR. FULLER: Mr. Moderator and
21 this panel of my brothers and sisters, I'm
22 Bill Fuller. I'm from LaFayette, Alabama,
23 and to give you just a sense of the

1 spiritual burden that I bring to this
2 podium, LaFayette, Alabama was the home of
3 the secretary of the 1901 Convention,
4 Thomas "Cotton Tom" Heflin. So what a
5 terrible burden I bear from LaFayette into
6 this forum. I live in Birmingham now. I
7 practice law in the area of environmental
8 law, but I have the extraordinary
9 experience of witnessing, in 18 years in
10 the Alabama house and almost four years as
11 Alabama's Commissioner of human resource,
12 the extraordinary array of injustice that
13 is inflicted on the people of this state
14 every day solely resulting from the present
15 Constitution. The affect on the ordinary
16 lives of the working families of this
17 state, the crippling effect on the young
18 minds of the children of this state, the
19 inability of poor people in this state to
20 lift themselves into any sort of meaningful
21 economic opportunity is simply shackled,
22 shackled, by the present Constitution.

23 Because I have experienced so

1 much of the political process in this
2 state, I will simply share with you briefly
3 tonight two strategies that I believe are
4 absolutely vital to the work of the
5 constitutional convention effort in this
6 state. The first of those strategies is to
7 build on what my brother, Bill Keller,
8 raised to you, which is to make the
9 campaign for the constitutional convention
10 come alive, to make the true stories, the
11 case examples, the blood-and-guts, life and
12 death stories not only local as Bill said,
13 but also deeply meaningful through our
14 churches, through our social service
15 organizations, through our courts, through
16 our children's organizations, through our
17 advocacy for the elderly organizations. We
18 should be able to compile thousands,
19 thousands -- Judge Shores gave examples of
20 our men and women and children's lives who
21 are touched every day by the disgraceful
22 constitution that we have at this point.

23 This constitution does contain

1 life-and-death issues. And our ability to
2 convey the life-and-death questions
3 contained in the Constitution to our people
4 is the only way, and, I suggest, the
5 gateway to a reawakening in this state,
6 almost a spiritual reawakening in this
7 state, of the human urgency, the human
8 urgency of a fresh Alabama constitution.
9 We must tell the stories in ways that are
10 compelling and in ways that are convincing
11 to the decision-makers.

12 And to the second strategy, I
13 would simply say to you there is only one
14 way that really works in convicting the
15 decision-makers, and I don't mean grand
16 juries in trials. Every member of the
17 legislature finds himself or herself either
18 not in this room tonight or any of these
19 public forums -- in fact, they are --
20 believe themselves to be comfortably
21 removed from this discussion. Most of the
22 members of the Alabama house and senate
23 tonight, God bless them all, my brothers

1 and sisters and friends of ours, we know
2 them all, but all of them tonight believe
3 that this effort will never reach them.
4 They believe that it will be caught up
5 somehow in a too diffused grassroots
6 movement, that it will be viewed as an
7 academic discussion, perhaps an idealistic
8 discussion, and perhaps a faith-based
9 discussion, hopefully, but it will never
10 reach them. They know that they possess --
11 both the current members of the house and
12 senate and those who are planning to run
13 for election or reelection and the new
14 legislature next year know that they will
15 have within their veil of power these
16 enormous questions that Walthall and the
17 professor outlined and that they hold the
18 originating legislation. They hold the
19 ability to craft that legislation through
20 the lens of the special-interest septic
21 tank in Montgomery. They know that they
22 will have many points at which they can
23 effect the selection of the delegates.

1 Many of them know to the "T" the boundaries
2 of their legislative districts. And that's
3 a good thing. Because I suggest to all of
4 us here tonight and all across this state,
5 and as Lenora and I've discussed, we're
6 going to talk about it all across this
7 state in the next few months, a magnificent
8 opportunity that we have in the 2006
9 legislative elections to bring into focus
10 the urgency of a constitutional convention.
11 Let me make the radical suggestion here in
12 Birmingham tonight and that this fan out to
13 all of our local chapters that in 140
14 legislative districts, 105 house districts,
15 35 state senate districts, that we must
16 begin today recruiting single-issue
17 candidates for the house districts and the
18 senate districts all across this state if
19 we are for real -- as our teenage children
20 say, "Are you for real?" We must put forth
21 legislative candidates, not leave it to the
22 statewide candidates, but in these house
23 and senate districts, challenge every

1 single incumbent member of legislature on
2 the issue of their commitment and their
3 conviction to make the constitutional
4 convention. There has never been in the
5 history of this state a stronger
6 opportunity to force the issue. It cannot
7 go slowly. We must, God-willing, raise
8 ourselves up to be bold in 2006. Children
9 and their children and the generations to
10 come depend on, not legislation, but on the
11 men and women and the young people in this
12 room, and the 2006 legislative elections
13 are our best opportunity. You will terrify
14 members of the house and senate by
15 recruiting 140 people who are willing
16 to only -- the qualifying fee is \$1,400 to
17 run for the legislature. If we have -- we
18 have 140 candidates for the legislature
19 committed to forcing a discussion and a
20 vote on a constitutional convention, then
21 we will have set the grassroots of this
22 state on fire, and that blaze will shine
23 for generations to come.

1 What a great opportunity to be
2 with all of you tonight. Father Johnson
3 left us in his -- some of his closing
4 remarks, this, that I would share with you.
5 "God's friends are called to be citizens of
6 a Heavenly city to transcend earthly
7 political boundaries and to become agents
8 of transformation in history." This
9 movement is one of transformation. Thank
10 you very much.

11 MR. COPELAND: Wow. Thanks.
12 Bill, we appreciate you being here tonight
13 as well. What other comments might we
14 have?

15 (No response.)

16 MR. COPELAND: While you're
17 thinking on that, I'll ask any of our
18 panelists if what you've heard over the
19 last seven speakers has stimulated any
20 thought, and -- Tom, do we have one? I'm
21 sorry. Hold that, and I will come right
22 back.

23 Yes, ma'am.

1 MS. LIKIS: I'm Betty Likis. I
2 live in Homewood. I would like to make two
3 points. We all know that this is a very
4 religious state. Everybody is
5 affiliated -- almost everybody is
6 affiliated with some faith group. I think
7 we ought to use that however we can. We
8 have people that are opposed to a new
9 constitution, and they say they are basing
10 it on religious reasons. They say a new
11 constitution would somehow be evil. I
12 never have quite understood what they are
13 saying, but they are trying to scare people
14 into thinking that it's going to be evil
15 and bring about some immoral, evil things.
16 I think we who don't believe that need to
17 make a point with as many people as we can
18 and at as many places as we can that it is
19 immoral to keep this constitution that we
20 have, and that we can bring about the
21 justice that we need to bring about that
22 has been spoken about already so eloquently
23 with a new constitution. And I think,

1 then, each one of us -- everybody in this
2 room who feels compelled to do this, and I
3 hope all do, each one of us should go home
4 and call our current legislator maybe once
5 and maybe many times, whatever it takes. I
6 know we talk about it an awful lot, but
7 sometimes we don't actually make that phone
8 call. We need to go and contact every one
9 of our legislators that are represented in
10 this room -- by people in this room. I
11 didn't quite say that right. Each one of
12 us needs to contact our representatives,
13 our senators, and let them know how we feel
14 as we've been told and remind them. They
15 aren't going to be moved to do anything,
16 and they won't have to do anything unless
17 we show them that we really mean this and
18 that we really want something to happen. I
19 know there's a wonderful campaign on
20 getting signatures, but that's only -- that
21 may not convince them either. We've got to
22 show them that their constituents want
23 this. Thank you.

1 MR. COPELAND: Thank you,
2 Ms. Likis.
3 Reverend Duley, I had just a
4 thought. You have so much experience with
5 agencies that represent low income
6 Alabamians, and there has been a suggestion
7 made that perhaps limiting the amount of
8 contributions to someone who would run for
9 a delegate's position would be a good idea
10 that was made earlier. I just wonder, do
11 you see that in any particular light?
12 Would that disadvantage a low-income person
13 who chose to run if they could not rely on
14 substantial contributions, or would folks
15 like Alabama arise and endorse that
16 concept?

17 REVEREND DULEY: Well, I can't
18 speak for Alabama -- excuse me, arise
19 obviously. But I think that the problem
20 would not be discouraging low-income people
21 from being a part of it or running or being
22 involved in the process if the fees were
23 kept low or the contributions were kept

1 low. I think that -- my experience tells
2 me that low income people in Alabama are so
3 beaten down that they don't even know this
4 is happening. And that is one of the big
5 hurdles that I think those of us who are
6 encouraging constitutional reform have to
7 face; and that is, one of the results, I
8 think, of the disenfranchisement, even
9 though it's gone away because of the
10 federal creed and the voting rights acts
11 and so forth. I think psychologically and
12 spiritually it is still very deeply in
13 place in Alabama. So I think there's a
14 prior question to the one you asked; and
15 that is, how do we get low income people
16 who are very obviously negatively affected
17 by the current constitution involved in
18 trying to work for a constitution that
19 would be more positive and more fair toward
20 them? And I don't know that I have the
21 answer to that. But I do believe that part
22 of the answer is what Professor Haeberle
23 has said, and that is, to get it as close

1 to the local level as we possibly can. I
2 think people trust people that they know
3 and people that they can interact with; and
4 by that I mean on a personal basis, a
5 personal level. So I think we need to get
6 as close to the grassroots level as we
7 possibly can.

8 MR. COPELAND: Thank you. And,
9 Alan, I was thinking of the same thing in
10 terms of young professionals and young
11 people in our community and around the
12 state. Would it be a barrier necessary to
13 a young person not to be able to accept
14 contributions of a certain level or above?

15 MR. HUNTER: Well, I think the
16 grassroots part of this whole thing is
17 really what's coming through. The
18 relevancy to everybody and how it affects
19 them in their lives is really a point that,
20 I think, really is the biggest point for
21 me. And how do we make everybody
22 understand how this affects them? The poor
23 folks that weren't intelligent enough to

1 know that their TV commercial they were
2 seeing lobbying against Amendment I or
3 whatever we were doing two years ago was
4 not -- you know, was not going to benefit
5 them to vote that down. So from my
6 perspective, obviously, it's a media
7 campaign. When Jonathan spoke about
8 getting the message out in the right way,
9 you've got to make it relevant to people --
10 I'm totally not really for calling -- and
11 by the way, I do call the legislator. I
12 called them recently about an amendment
13 that was going to hurt the film industry in
14 the state, and I think that's a very good
15 economic device for change around here.
16 But I'm not sure that calling my legislator
17 is the way to go here. I believe it really
18 is the people that are going to bring this
19 thing closer to fruition. And I believe
20 the grassroots effort is really the only
21 way.

22 I really feel like -- I'm
23 looking for a ray of hope right now. I'm

1 the kind of guy who sits in a room full of
2 people all of the time discussing ideas,
3 and somewhere someone's going to have to
4 say, that's the best idea right there. I
5 feel like it's the space shuttle, and we've
6 got a problem, and there's a leak
7 somewhere, and somewhere the knuckle heads
8 are going to have to sit in a room, and we
9 call them brilliant scientists, and they
10 are going to have to figure out how to do
11 this.

12 I'm probably a little bit
13 confused. Maybe I speak for some other
14 folks about, you know, are we being mired
15 in a pre-Iraq government situation? Is
16 this Pakistan? Are we ever really going to
17 form ourselves enough? Or are we just
18 going to argue about the issue? I know
19 that's on everybody's mind. And tonight
20 we're pretending as if we are moving
21 forward, and it's really just the how-to
22 part of it. But I'm trying -- like the
23 rest of us, the how-to part and who is

1 really going to tell us what the best way
2 to go is. I have this vision that there is
3 one -- there are one or two best ways to
4 go, and all we've got to do is say, I like
5 that one, and then let's go. I'm
6 personally willing to lead the charge with
7 a big grassroots campaign and be a part of
8 whatever media I can help with, as long as
9 I know which is the best way to go. I sure
10 as hell believe it's with the people and
11 not with the people that have been in power
12 up until now. And the young people -- for
13 Heaven's sake, the young man that came up
14 here, I was crying. That is the problem
15 right there. Young people feel like there
16 is no hope at all. And I'm personally
17 trying to find the fine balance between the
18 right amount of -- that lets me move
19 forward to get something done, because I
20 don't know better. I feel like it's a
21 Jimmy Stewart movie of some sort. And the
22 balance of knowledge that I've got to work
23 the halls of power correctly and with some

1 intelligence so I don't get screwed over
2 and that we don't, you know, get trotted
3 over by the good ole boys who say to you
4 constantly in this state -- not to me -- I
5 haven't been beaten down. I'm not jaded
6 yet -- but whether or not you are not going
7 to do able to do that. You know it's not
8 going to happen. And you're going to have
9 to do it this way and that way. I mean,
10 it's a cliché. We've got to get over that
11 cliché. So I don't know. I'm still
12 listening.

13 HONORABLE HELEN SHORES LEE:
14 We've heard a lot about the grassroots
15 campaign and getting folks at that level
16 involved. But the question is: How do we
17 get them to want to become involved? Do
18 they understand the impact it has on them
19 or what part they can play in perhaps
20 bringing about a change? And I see an
21 educational process. First, we're going to
22 have to get out and educate the people as
23 to the importance. And how do we do that,

1 you know, by example? I mean, we hear a
2 lot about constitutional reform. To a lot
3 of folks, it's just a word that's being
4 tossed about out there. But how do we get
5 at these people? As I look over the room
6 tonight and see everyone sitting around, I
7 agree with the young man; this room should
8 have been filled. And are we, kind of,
9 preaching to the choir to those that are
10 out there and have some understanding of
11 what this movement is all about? But if we
12 truly want to involve the people in a
13 process that's going to impact changes that
14 will influence their quality of life -- I
15 think we have an opportunity to get out
16 there and find some mechanism by which we
17 can talk and educate them on the importance
18 of their involvement.

19 MR. COPELAND: Tom Carruthers,
20 do you have a comment?

21 MR. CARRUTHERS: I want to
22 pursue with Joe Fuller the idea about the
23 people who was the single issue, because

1 generally single issue is just a terrible
2 thing. Here you are saying we'll do it in
3 order to commit the other candidates or
4 what? And then I want to ask you suppose
5 that Judge Lee and I were both from the
6 same districts and both of us come to you,
7 somebody, and say, okay, we'll be single
8 issue. Are we going to run against each
9 other or what?

10 MR. FULLER: Tom Carruthers, I'm
11 honored that you would ask me to come back
12 so I can deal with the appellate courts now
13 and respond to a profound question. All of
14 the views are profound. My suggestion that
15 the true constitutional reform as all over
16 the state and truest of those who want a
17 convention purist -- challenge the 140
18 current legislative districts on the issue
19 of commitment to constitutional reform and
20 the commitment to holding a constitutional
21 convention. My experience has been, as
22 many others in this room in legislative
23 races, that vital statewide issues too

1 often will get lost in local issues. And
2 the blur of statewide races, particularly
3 in the media, on television, and in
4 advertising, obscures the really critical
5 issues. And I forget whether it was Barry
6 or who tonight talked about the concept of
7 the laser beam -- all I'm suggesting about
8 the single-issue candidacy of the
9 legislators is that we laser beam and
10 spotlight those members of the senate and
11 the house forcing everyone of them to make
12 it very clear what their commitment is to
13 this constitution effort. Some of them,
14 God willing, will be defeated by our
15 candidates. Many will not be.

16 MR. CARRUTHERS: But how are you
17 going to suggest the things that Judge Lee
18 or someone else --

19 MR. FULLER: I'm only
20 suggesting -- no, sir. I'm only suggesting
21 either in the primary and/or in the general
22 elections in these legislative districts
23 that there be a challenger on the

1 Constitution issue. I'm not trying to
2 chose between candidates. It's the only
3 way to highlight this very important issue
4 and otherwise -- it's a very radical idea.
5 But I'm suggesting to you -- and you know
6 many members and many people here do --
7 that most members are counting on this
8 issue being swept aside by other matters.
9 And the most direct attack we can make on
10 that is for constitutional reformists to
11 register and run as candidates for the
12 legislature in each senate and house
13 district forcing the issue to the top of
14 the discussion.

15 MR. COPELAND: We have another
16 gentleman who would like to speak here, and
17 then we can come back and visit that more
18 if we'd like too. But let's take as much
19 public comment as we can in the time
20 remaining.

21 MR. WISAVANT: My name is
22 Harrison Wisavant (phonetic) from Clay,
23 Alabama. I'm just a pipe fitter. And I

1 waited for that lady to come up here and
2 speak -- and darn if you didn't get back up
3 here -- so I wouldn't have to follow you.
4 I found out about this meeting just from --
5 I read the editorial page in Sunday's
6 paper. And I won't go into how much I love
7 this state. I would be preaching to the
8 choir. But I did have a question -- some
9 questions crossed my mind as I was reading
10 the editorial and thinking about a
11 convention. The cost of the convention --
12 has anybody estimated the cost of such a
13 convention and how we would pay for it?
14 And that's all of my questions. Thank you.

15 MR. COPELAND: That was great.
16 Do we have any thoughts on that from the
17 panel here? And I see a hand over here who
18 might know an answer if the panelists
19 don't. What about the cost of the
20 convention, Lenora?

21 MS. PATE: It's really a
22 function of what we end up having in the
23 enabling legislation. For example, if we

1 decide there are going to be 105 delegates,
2 then those delegates would ordinarily
3 receive some type of compensation for the
4 period of time that they would be in
5 session. Just like some of the bills that
6 you have seen before you that are
7 circulated here have looked at issues like
8 compensating them for a certain number of
9 days, perhaps 60 days out of perhaps
10 120 days that they could literally be in
11 session, but maybe they would be
12 compensated on the same rates that
13 legislators are compensated. That would
14 also be a function of if you are going to
15 have paid staff or not-paid staff. So when
16 you look at, for example, what some of the
17 special sessions may cost, sometimes the
18 special session of a legislature costs
19 several hundred thousand dollars. But if
20 you were to extend that and use the same
21 number over a longer period of time, it
22 could run into a couple of million dollars,
23 depending on how long the constitutional

1 convention lasts. And so with that said, I
2 might just take a moment to say that while
3 I am very intrigued by the comments that I
4 have heard tonight about how to select
5 delegates, to motivate grassroots, I am
6 concerned about the complexity of new and
7 novel systems, although I think they are
8 worth considering, because what we have
9 learned is that the people do want us to be
10 real straightforward and real simple in
11 what they can expect in a convention. And
12 if there is a way for us to take either the
13 districts that have already been
14 precleared, 105 of them, if you will, and
15 have one or two delegates from each of
16 those, perhaps one of the bills had a male
17 and female from each one, and to build in
18 some of the safeguards that we're talking
19 about so that we could begin to zero in
20 from a unity standpoint on structure, and
21 that our energies could become focused on
22 mobilizing the grassroots as you're talking
23 about.

1 I would like to say that ACCR
2 statewide has chapters now in all of the
3 four corners of the state. And in many, if
4 not all, of the institutions of higher
5 education, we have student chapters, just
6 like the young man that you heard speak
7 earlier. There is an incredible
8 petition-drive underway where individual
9 members are going around with their
10 petitions in their bags, standing in
11 restaurants like George Sarris' Fish
12 Market, and getting people to sign as they
13 go in at lunch or standing at polls. In
14 north Alabama just last week at a local
15 election where there are about 7 to 10,000
16 people who voted in that election, over
17 half of the individuals who went to the
18 polls signed a petition asking for the
19 vote. That is the process we are doing.
20 We are also asking corporations -- every
21 one of you who have connections with
22 not-for-profit corporations to go back and
23 ask those organizations to pass a

1 resolution. We're also calling on the
2 legislature to allow us to vote on this
3 question. And the goal is to do that
4 massive grassroots rollout in the early
5 part of the 2006 general session in January
6 with masses of individuals coming from the
7 four corners of the state on Dexter Avenue
8 in Montgomery on the capital steps to
9 physically hand over the handwritten
10 petitions and the corporate resolution and
11 to have the individuals line up so that
12 that momentum begins that process. And it
13 will be in that 2006 legislative session
14 that we hope these issues that we are
15 taking public comments on tonight will
16 begin to be debated and forced into an
17 enabling legislation that we hope will
18 pass. There was one that passed the senate
19 committee last spring but did not go any
20 further. If it does not pass the 2006
21 general session, then it is our hope that
22 during that primary election that every one
23 of those individual legislators who kept us

1 from having the right to vote will be
2 singled out and targeted, and there will be
3 a single issue that confronts them wherever
4 they go, whether it's a single-issue
5 candidate or a single issue on
6 constitutional reform. And not only in the
7 legislative races but also in the statewide
8 races as well, because it is clear that we
9 need the leadership.

10 But these issues tonight that
11 we've focused on, whether or not we allow
12 public officials to run or not; whether or
13 not we compensate; whether or not we limit
14 campaign restrictions; many of the thoughts
15 that have already come out in some of the
16 public forums have been to limit it to a
17 people's delegation and not have public
18 officials run; to allow public officials to
19 serve in some type of advisory capacity, if
20 needed, to provide that type of leadership
21 that you're talking about; and to have
22 perhaps money for appointed experts so that
23 there could be those neutral but competent

1 individuals.

2 But thank you very much for all
3 that you are doing tonight.

4 MR. COPELAND: Thank you,
5 Lenora. And for the record, that's Lenora
6 Pate.

7 We have less than ten minutes
8 remaining, and there is a city function
9 that's scheduled in this room immediately
10 following. So if you have other thoughts,
11 let's hit them as quickly as we can. Let's
12 go with this gentleman first, and then we
13 will come right back over here as quickly
14 as possible.

15 MR. DOUGLAS: My name is Scott
16 Douglas, and I will be virtually brief. I
17 live in Huffman, a neighborhood in
18 Birmingham. Just something I haven't said
19 before that the monomeric nature of our
20 constitution is because of the fact it
21 requires the very body that it gives this
22 apportion of power be the body that has to
23 relinquish that power to the people. The

1 guys next-door, one, may not have been very
2 generous or very loving, but they were
3 slick. They figured it out. Secondly, the
4 barrier we face is Alabama is a state
5 that's high in fear, low in trust, and
6 steeped in a way for alienation. That's a
7 big barrier. That's why I agree with Tom
8 Duley, the conversations in Alabama have to
9 begin at the very local level, even at the
10 family-table level. And how we translate
11 that into the lives of the people is our
12 work. That's our work. We need to do that
13 translation. It would not happen
14 automatically.

15 And, finally, I want to say that
16 this room should be filled. This room and
17 rooms like Boutwell will be filled with
18 meetings beginning like this. Thank you
19 very much.

20 MR. COPELAND: Thank you.

21 MR. BROWN: My name is Steve
22 Brown, and I live in Avondale. And hitting
23 on something Alan said earlier, right now

1 this room does not reflect the diversity of
2 our community; and, in fact, the folks on
3 the podium, with all due respect, do not
4 reflect the diversity of the community.
5 And I think we have to do a better job
6 selling. The newspapers are the only media
7 outlets that seem to be picking this up.
8 And there's going to be a picture tonight
9 that shows basically a bunch of white
10 gentlemen up at the podium here, which I
11 think is going to further disenfranchise
12 some of the have-nots of this state. The
13 other thing I would like to say is I think
14 that we need to get a grassroots media
15 campaign started. I don't know if ACCR has
16 a pac, an active lobbying arm. Perhaps
17 Alan Hunter can use some of his film-making
18 skills to produce short commercials on
19 behalf of ACCR which illustrate small
20 stories from the community at large in
21 Alabama, how this suppressive document has
22 held people down, whether it's done through
23 interviews or clever little niches and that

1 in commercials and start to build a
2 grassroots involving the churches that way.
3 There's going to have to be a lot more
4 money brought in by the people who are
5 committed to this and getting a lot more
6 media exposure before we get more diverse
7 and fill the room to push this process
8 forward. With this kind of turnout here,
9 we're really not making the kind of headway
10 we need to be making headway on. We need
11 to start really becoming a political entity
12 to counteract the political entities that
13 we're going to be going against. We have
14 to be organized and have to go to war
15 against these people. We have to use
16 campaign finance laws creatively, just like
17 they do. Thank you.

18 MR. COPELAND: Steve, thank you
19 very much. Just to the point of Steve's
20 question, does ACCR have a pac?

21 MS. PATE: No.

22 MR. COPELAND: Does not. Okay.
23 Other comments?

1 MR. HUNTER: I've got a
2 question. Oh, I'm sorry.

3 MR. COPELAND: Hang on. Just
4 let us get this one. I believe this is
5 Andrew; correct?

6 MR. BRASHERE: That's correct.

7 I wanted to let the record show
8 that my representatives are John French of
9 Montevallo and Cam Ward of Alabaster, so I
10 hope they're reading the stuff when they
11 receive it. And desperate times call for
12 desperate measures. And I believe that
13 we're at a point -- you know, we agree that
14 since this document is illegitimate,
15 something needs to be done about it.
16 Regardless of whether it's radical, we need
17 to do something that is as simple as going
18 through the process and getting an
19 amendment passed and having people vote on
20 a call for a citizens convention.

21 But the fact remains that when
22 we became a state in 1818, we had the most
23 progressive constitution in the entire

1 United States. That's amazing. Alabama
2 was number one when we first became a
3 state. Why? Because we lead -- at this
4 time by our standard, it's not very
5 progressive, but by the standards of the
6 time, all white males could vote. You
7 didn't have to have -- to own property, and
8 it didn't matter who you were. If you
9 owned property, if you were a free white
10 male, you could vote. Now we've sunk into
11 a place where we're last place, or we're at
12 least fighting for last place with
13 Mississippi; and that's not the legacy that
14 I want to uphold and that I want my
15 children to uphold for years to come. The
16 only way we can change this is through
17 publicity as we've been talking about. And
18 I feel that if we as individuals went out
19 like Christ over the disciples and to
20 evangelize, send out two -- you know, and
21 go throughout different towns, if we become
22 the disciples and start going around to
23 family tables, to people we know, to

1 friends, family, etc., and said, look, here
2 are the facts about the Constitution, this
3 is what's wrong about it, and let them
4 become enlightened as to what's going on,
5 then they will change their attitudes, or
6 they will become more active in supporting
7 constitutional reform. And it's going to
8 take people going out to the county fairs,
9 the small towns, and talk with people who
10 are interested in making a little bit of
11 money -- in other words, to get their
12 family bread on the table. We have to go
13 after those people and let them know this
14 is how this document is hurting you. Let's
15 go out there and find a way to help you and
16 help ourselves and help the people of
17 Alabama. And with that, I have to say that
18 we have to sell this idea before we can
19 determine and organize or how to organize
20 the convention. We can't put the cart
21 before the horse. So let's all go out and
22 lobby legislators. And it's great that
23 we've had this talk. It's really been

1 great. But let's go out and become men of
2 action. Thank you.

3 MR. COPELAND: Thank you.

4 Folks, you should know that the
5 folks on the panel, regardless of their
6 diversity, are people who have a lot to
7 offer on this subject, and they have given
8 of their time this evening to listen more
9 than they've talked. And that's kind of
10 unusual in a panel situation. But I wish
11 that for both our panelists and the members
12 of -- our two professors who are experts
13 tonight, I wish you would help me in
14 thanking them for spending their time
15 tonight. Our thanks, again, to Diana
16 Williams with American Court Reporting.
17 Diana, thank you so much for being with us
18 tonight.

19 I would simply leave you with
20 this, there is a website for the ACCR. It
21 is www.constitutionalreform.com. It's a
22 good way to stay plugged into this issue.
23 We'll keep you posted and try to do a

1 better job next time when we have another
2 one of these to get more people to fill up
3 this room. Thank you for being here
4 tonight.

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6 (The proceeding ended at

7 7:00 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE

2

3 STATE OF ALABAMA)

4 JEFFERSON COUNTY)

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6 I hereby certify that the above and
7 foregoing proceeding was taken down by me
8 in stenotype, and the proceeding thereto
9 were transcribed by means of computer-aided
10 transcription, and that the foregoing
11 represents a true and correct transcript of
12 the proceeding given.

13 I further certify that I am neither
14 of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the
15 action, nor am I in anywise interested in
16 the result of said cause.

17

18

19

20 Diana B. Williams, CSR
21 Freelance Judicial Reporter

22 My Commission expires
23 March 14, 2007

