
The latest news, views, and announcements

Request a Speaker

ACCR Board Members are speaking to groups across Alabama about the need for reform.

New Board Member

ACCR has appointed a new board member:
Attorney and author
Mike Waters.

Home Rule in Alabama

Local governments in Alabama lack substantial home rule to take care of local business.



ACCR Board Member Gerald Johnson, PhD, Professor Emeritus in political science at Auburn University recently spoke to the Auburn Rotary Club.

Need a Speaker? Ask ACCR

– By Dell Witcher

ACCR has more than a few individuals on its board who can accurately be described as constitutional reform warhorses. These are individuals who have been working on reform for as many as 20 to 30 years, from both inside and outside our state government. They continue to advocate for an Alabama Constitution that fairly represents all Alabamians, and they have some stories to tell. Even more important, they have news to share about an exciting new project that harnesses the non-partisan research powerhouse known as the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) to help map next steps for reform.

Our longstanding leaders, as well as board members who joined the fight more recently, are available to speak to your civic club or community group. In recent months ACCR leaders have been spreading out across Alabama to provide historical perspective and an outlook for the future. This year we have enjoyed speaking to groups such as the American Association of University Women, Lee County Sunrise Rotary Club, Montgomery Hole-In-the-Wall Club, Auburn OLLI program, Lee County Discussion Club, League of Women Voters of East Alabama, and more. Contact nanekberg@gmail.com to schedule a speaker.



Mike Waters

ACCR welcomes Attorney Waters to the Board of Directors

Attorney and author Mike Waters has joined the Board of Directors of Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform. Waters, a native of Cullman, has a long and rich history as an advocate for constitutional reform in Alabama. He served as Legal Adviser to Alabama Governor Fob James in 1979 and 1980, during which time James attempted to enact ambitious goals for constitutional reform. Mike was also a member of Governor Bob Riley's Alabama Citizens Commission on Constitutional Reform and was a consultant to Governor's Robert Bentley's Alabama Constitution Revision Commission. He is the author of the book [Governor Fob James of Alabama, Making Headway on Constitutional Rights, 1979-1980 A legal Adviser's Perspective](#). Mike has practiced law in Alabama since 1977 and is a partner in the Corporate Practice Group of Jones Walker, LLP.

You Can Help ACCR Change the Alabama Constitution

Help us fund non-partisan research by the **Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama** on how the constitution impacts the everyday lives of Alabamians.

Donate Today: constitutionalreform.org

Home Rule in Alabama

– By Gary Dunavant

The amount of power a local government holds largely depends on the state in which that government sits. Some states give their local governments broad authority, while other states give their local governments narrower authority, reserving more power for the state legislature. Local governments with broad authority are said to have "Home Rule."

Home Rule in Alabama is significantly limited by the Alabama Constitution. Thus, local governments, i.e., counties and municipalities, must go to the legislature for authority to engage in some desired activities. This may result in either a constitutional amendment which must be initiated by the legislature, or by an act of the legislature (known as "local legislation") giving a local government the authority to carry out a desired action. This includes assessing/increasing a fee or tax and the zoning of land. Some of the larger municipalities in the state have some additional authority, e.g., zoning and limited taxing powers, which they received under local legislation.

According to a recently published article in the [Princeton Legal Journal](#), the lack of consistent Home Rule in Alabama has "led to a convoluted regulatory landscape" and inefficient government. Instead of directly and expeditiously taking needed desirable actions, local governments often require approval of their local legislative delegation and then approval by the full Legislature. And for those actions requiring an amendment to the state Constitution, approval by local voters (and in some cases state voters) is also required. The result can be lengthy and potentially expensive delays in meeting the needs of the residents of a municipality.

The ACCR/PARCA project will examine the impact that the lack of Home Rule in Alabama has on state residents and suggest the best way for this issue to be addressed.