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From August 8 to August 10, the place to be in Alabama was the Business Council of Alabama's Annual Government Affairs Conference.

For the past four decades, BCA has served as the voice of business in the state, advocating for pro-growth policies, uniting the private sector with policymakers, and ensuring Alabama remains competitive nationally and globally. The Government Affairs Conference (GAC) has become the organization's signature event and the premier venue for networking, exchanging ideas, and setting priorities for the years ahead.

Hosted each August at The Grand Hotel, the Government Affairs Conference is the largest event of its kind in the state, drawing more than 850 executives, elected officials, business owners, and policy experts. This year's conference not only focused on key policy discussions but also marked BCA's 40 years of impact.

The 2025 speaker lineup included Governor Kay Ivey, U.S. Senators Katie Britt and Tommy Tuberville, U.S. Representatives Robert Aderholt, Shomari Figures, Barry Moore, and Mike Rogers, along with Gray Swoope, President & CEO of



VisionFirst Advisors, and pollster Mitchell Brown, Partner at Cygnal.

BCA Chairman Kevin Savoy underscored the progress Alabama has made and the momentum that is still building.

"Our economy is strong. Our unemployment rate remains among the lowest in the nation. Our roads, bridges, ports, fiber networks, and power infrastructure are being built to world-class standards. We are truly laying the foundation for the next generation of prosperity," Savoy said.

VOTERS PRIORITIZE ECONOMIC ISSUES

Polling presented by Cygnal's Mitchell Brown found that Republican primary voters in Alabama overwhelmingly rank economic issues as their top priorities heading into the 2026 elections. Inflation and cost of living, taxes and government spending, and jobs and the economy were the top three concerns, follo-

wed by infrastructure and roads.

Nearly 80% of respondents listed an economic issue as their first or second priority, and almost 59% said they want the Legislature to focus on economic policy over cultural issues.

"These economic undertones are exactly what is going to not only win their vote—it's going to help these people grow," Brown said. "Economic policy is just good politics."

It's the kind of policy BCA promotes and has worked for decades to advance.

ENERGY CAPACITY A KEY CONCERN

Gray Swoope, an economic development consultant and former Florida secretary of commerce, praised the state's recent investments in roads and high-speed internet, thanks to legislation like Rebuild Alabama and broadband expansion.



But with projections showing Alabama will need 33% more power in the next decade than it produces today, he said the biggest infrastructure challenge ahead is the expanding need for electricity.

Swoope praised this year's passage of Senate Bill 304, which authorizes the State Industrial Development Authority to issue up to \$1 billion in bonds to provide loans and other financial assistance for eligible energy infrastructure projects through an "energy infrastructure bank." Forty percent of those funds are reserved for projects in rural counties.

"You're putting things in place to help your utilities figure out ways to solve our energy needs of the future," Swoope said, noting that Texas is the only other state where he has seen a similar effort.

Members of Alabama's federal delegation agreed that energy is an urgent priority.

"We've got to have more access to energy, and that reliability, making sure the grid is prepared to meet the needs of the growing economy

lems," Tuberville said. "We're going to be fighting Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Florida, and they surround us, okay? And whoever

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-SENATOR KATIE BRITT

that we have here in the state is important," Senator Britt said.

Senator Tuberville said the state cannot wait for Washington to act.

"If we wait on the federal government to do something about energy, we're going to have huge prob-

lems," Tuberville said. "We're going to be fighting Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Florida, and they surround us, okay? And whoever gets the most energy, whoever plans for the future, is going to win that race of getting manufacturing back to the state. So we can't wait."

Local and state leadership will ultimately make that happen, and BCA is working to ensure the right people are at the helm.



BCA'S PROGRESSPAC RAISES THE BAR

Last year, BCA leaders pledged to recruit and defend 2026 pro-business candidates across the state.

ProgressPAC Chair Gary Smith reported that the PAC has taken in about \$4.2 million to support business-minded candidates, surpassing its original goal of \$4 million and now extending that goal to \$5 million. BCA said it will prioritize electing leaders who “won’t buckle under pressure and who understand the risks you take every day as busi-

ness owners.”

Smith noted that 2026 will be a critical and competitive year. Term limits mean several statewide offices—including governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and agriculture commissioner—will be open. Candidate shuffling has also opened the secretary of state and auditor posts, and all 140 members of the Legislature will be up for reelection if they choose to run.

FORTY YEARS OF ADVOCACY

For the past four decades, BCA has been instrumental in pro-

moting investment, reducing regulatory barriers, strengthening workforce development, and creating a political climate that supports business growth—a mission it plans to continue for the next 40 years.

Governor Ivey echoed that vision, saying, “Future generations of Alabamians deserve our hardest work today. This is our opportunity.”

This year’s Government Affairs Conference was made possible through the support of BCA sponsors, whose contributions enable the organization to continue bringing together business and government leaders to unlock Alabama’s full potential.

The Business Advocate is published by the Business Council of Alabama, a non-partisan, statewide business association representing the interests and concerns of nearly 1 million working Alabamians through its member companies and its partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama. For more information on the Business Council of Alabama, please contact us at (334) 834-6000 or visit us online at bcatoday.org.