

**Section - POLICY, PROCEDURES & POLITICKING**

**Image** – n/a

**Caption** – n/a

Start Preparing for Legislative Sessions Now

by Kim Robinson

Every year around this time, advocacy groups begin the planning process for the first three to six full months of the next year, also known in many states as the legislative session. The Children's Defense Fund Southern Regional Office (CDF-SRO) is no different. While we are uncertain about the types of legislation that will be introduced throughout the southern region, we are sure of what and who we are fighting for: —CCHILDREN AND FAMILIESchildren and families!

The Southern Region states Legislative calendar goes as follows:

**Alabama** - The 2015 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature convenes at 12:00 Noon, Tuesday, on March 3, 2015 and will adjourn no later than Monday, June 15, 2015.

**Arkansas** - The 2015 Regular Session of the Arkansas Assembly convenes at 12:00 Noon on, Monday, January 12, 2015 and will adjourn no later than Thursday, March 12, 2015.

**Florida** - The 2015 Regular Session of the Florida Legislature convenes at 12:00 Noon, on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 and will adjourn no later than Friday, May 1, 2015.

**Georgia** - The 2015 Regular Session of the Georgia Legislature convenes at 12:00 Noon, Monday on January 12, 2015 and will adjourn no later than Monday, March 9, 2015.

**Louisiana** - The 2015 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature convenes at 12:00 Noon, Monday, on April 13, 2015 and will adjourn no later than Thursday, June 11, 2015

**Mississippi** - The 2015 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature convenes at 12:00 Noon, Tuesday on March 3, 2015 and will adjourn no later than Monday, April 6, 2015.

CDF-SRO works in coalition with many advocacy groups to monitor and track legislation presented by each state's legislation submission deadline each year. —in short, we read through each bill and support bills those that are good for children and families, — And, as can be expected, we strongly oppose the bills that could cause harm to children, families and the communities in which they reside. As in sessions past, CDF-SRO continues to focus on education and particularly the passage of the budgets for each state's Department of Education's K-12 budget, and asking for full funding of the each-states-education formula. For example, in Mississippi, the state's funding formula is called the Mississippi Adequate Education Program, often referred to as MAEP.

We will continue to advocate put pressure on to the legislatures and GGovernors in of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi to do the right thing. One such thing is considering the importance of the hundreds of thousands of hardworking adults that would qualify for health coverage if their GGovernors would decide to expand Medicaid under the provision in the Affordable Care Act.

In addition to those education funding and Medicaid expansion, issues we CDF-SRO also advocate keeps a close eye on and lobbies on behalf of juvenile justice reform (particularly, against zero tolerance school push out policies), for comprehensive early childhood education, expansion of childcare coverage vouchers for those who qualify, and any other such issues that threaten a healthy, head, fair, safe and moral start for arise that we deem harmful to children and their families.

We To stay abreast of CDF-SRO's views about what's happening in the region, hope you will follow our frequent updates and calls to action via our social media outlets. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @cdf\_sro. You can also sign up to receive email alerts by visiting our website at http://www.cdf-sro.org/.

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style, Line spacing: single