



POLICY WATCH 2026

Community Edition

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DR. ELISE SAULSBERRY

CEO & FOUNDER

Dr. Elise T. Saulsberry, PhD (she/her) is a South Memphis-born, North Memphis-raised community educator, author, policy strategist, advocate, and faith leader whose work sits at the intersection of justice, public policy, theology, and community transformation. She serves as Founder of Remnant Community Outreach, a grassroots, 501c3 nonprofit organization advancing community education, policy advocacy, and culturally responsive support systems, and of Gravity Co., LLC, a strategic advisory and policy innovation firm.

Dr. Saulsberry holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology and Theology and a Master of Divinity in Theological Studies with a concentration in Evangelism and Church Planting. Her work integrates Black Liberation, spirituality, and theology with public policy, mental health advocacy, healthcare access, and interfaith organizing. Through her leadership, she advances policy education and community engagement initiatives that center the dignity, safety, and well-being of historically marginalized communities. Dr. Saulsberry's work emphasizes the importance of culturally affirming communication, mental health support, and healthcare equity in policy conversations affecting Black women, LGBTQ communities, and other vulnerable populations.

In recent years, she has contributed to national and regional conversations around reproductive freedom, public health equity, and the role of faith leaders in justice movements. Dr. Saulsberry is also a respected voice in faith and justice spaces. Her work has been featured by several major platforms; and her leadership and theological perspective have also been highlighted in SWERV Magazine, which profiled her LGBTQ-liberated theological approach to justice and community care.

As a speaker, writer, and organizer, Dr. Saulsberry contributes to conferences, policy dialogues, and community forums. Through her nonprofit, ministry, and policy work, she continues to build bridges between faith communities, policy advocates, mental health professionals, and grassroots organizers, creating spaces where people can bring their full identities, engage critical issues, and participate in collective healing and social transformation.

For the 2026 Policy Report, Dr. Saulsberry's leadership reflects a continued commitment to advancing intersectional justice, community-informed policy advocacy, and faith-rooted public engagement. Her work centers on the belief that effective policy must be informed by lived experience, ethical leadership, and a deep commitment to the dignity and liberation of all people.



REMNANT'S MISSION IN POLICY

Remnant Community Outreach works to close the gap between policy and everyday people by translating complex legislation into clear, accessible information that highlights real-life impact. Rather than centering legal jargon, our work begins with the questions communities are already asking: *How will this affect my family's healthcare? What does this mean for the economy, employment, safety, my housing, or my ability to thrive?* Through policy briefings, community forums, digital education, and partnerships with faith communities and service providers, we ensure that critical legislative information reaches those most directly affected by public policy decisions.

Our approach combines policy education with civic empowerment. Remnant equips individuals, faith and community leaders, and grassroots organizers with tools to understand legislation, engage in public comment processes, communicate with elected officials, create and advocate for policies that strengthen community wellbeing. We prioritize cultural competency and accessibility by tailoring policy education to diverse communities and lived experiences, ensuring that civic participation is possible regardless of education level, professional background, or prior policy experience.

As debates around civil rights, healthcare access, criminal justice reform, and religious freedom continue to shape the national policy landscape, Remnant remains committed to helping communities understand how these decisions affect their daily lives. Federal and state proposals related to jobs and business opportunities, housing, healthcare access, LGBTQ+ protections, immigration enforcement, and criminal justice reform demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of policy decisions. For Remnant, policy engagement is not abstract; it is a form of community care. By translating legislation into meaningful dialogue and equipping communities with tools for engagement, we help ensure that those most impacted by policy are informed, empowered, and able to shape and respond to the decisions that affect their lives.

LEGISLATION'S IMPACT ON THE VULNERABLE

Dear Stakeholders, Community Partners, and Advocates,

Public policy decisions shape the conditions under which individuals and families live, work, and access opportunity. For vulnerable communities including low-income families, people experiencing food insecurity, immigrants, seniors, individuals with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, and those experiencing housing instability, legislation often determines whether essential protections and resources are accessible or out of reach. Policies affecting healthcare, housing, civil rights, public safety, and economic opportunity directly influence whether individuals can secure stability, receive care, and live in abundance with dignity and safety.

For many of the communities we serve, the consequences of legislative decisions are immediate and deeply personal. Healthcare policy, particularly decisions related to Medicaid coverage, Medicaid expansion, and access to reproductive healthcare can determine whether individuals receive preventive care, mental health services, maternal healthcare, or treatment for chronic conditions. For survivors of domestic violence, policies that support confidential healthcare access, trauma-informed services, and safe housing options can be critical pathways to safety and recovery. Housing and economic policies also shape whether families remain stably housed or face displacement, while immigration policies can influence whether individuals feel safe accessing healthcare, legal protection, or emergency support.

These realities are compounded by the fact that those most affected by policy decisions often have the least access to the policymaking process. Survivors of domestic violence, individuals living in poverty, and families navigating crises may not have the time, resources, or information necessary to monitor legislation or engage policymakers directly. When policy debates unfold without accessible information or meaningful community input, critical decisions about healthcare access, reproductive rights, housing stability, and public safety may proceed without the voices of those most impacted.

At Remnant Community Outreach, we believe legislative awareness is a form of community protection and empowerment. By translating complex policy developments into clear, accessible information and creating spaces for community education and dialogue, we help ensure that individuals understand how legislation may affect their health, safety, community, and economic stability. When communities are informed, they are better equipped to advocate for policies that expand healthcare access, protect survivors, make affordable housing accessible, strengthen families, and ensure that every voice is visible and remains present in decisions that shape all of our futures.

UNDERSTANDING TERMS IN THIS REPORT

Understanding legislative terms necessary for communities most impacted by elected officials' decisions. When we understand how policies are introduced, passed, or blocked, we strengthen our ability to advocate for justice, equity, and protection.

Types of Bills & Resolutions

- **H.R.:** House Bill (Federal): A proposed law introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. Used for major federal policies like healthcare, taxes, and education. Example: H.R. 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act (2025) proposed sweeping changes to Medicaid and ACA eligibility, placing millions of low-income individuals at risk of losing healthcare coverage.
- **S.:** Senate Bill (Federal): A proposed law introduced in the U.S. Senate. Works the same as an H.R. bill but starts in the Senate. Example: A Senate bill (S.) may propose nationwide criminal justice reforms or restrictions that impact sentencing, incarceration, or federal funding to states.
- **H.J. Res.:** House Joint Resolution: A targeted measure introduced in the House, often used to propose constitutional amendments, approve or overturn federal policies, or fund the government temporarily. Example: H.J. Res. Joint Resolution targeting federal DEI programs (2025–2026) seeks to eliminate or block Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives across federal agencies, impacting hiring equity and protections for marginalized communities.
- **S.J. Res.:** Senate Joint Resolution: The Senate version of a joint resolution. Same purpose but introduced in the Senate. Example: An S.J. Res. may be used to reverse federal agency rules, such as labor protections or environmental regulations that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.
- **H.B.:** House Bill (State Level): A bill introduced in a state legislature's House. These impact state laws like policing, education, and healthcare access. Example: North Carolina H.B. 171 – Equality in State Agencies / Prohibition on DEI restricts DEI programs in state agencies, limiting equity-focused hiring and inclusion efforts.
- **S.B.:** Senate Bill (State Level): A bill introduced in a state Senate that shapes state-level policy decisions. Example: Tennessee S.B. – Proposed legislation expanding criminal penalties or restricting reproductive healthcare access can directly impact women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and low-income families across the state.
- **H. Res.:** House Resolution: Applies only to the U.S. House. Used for internal rules, recognizing events or people, and expressing opinions. 🗡️ Does not become law. Example: A House Resolution may formally oppose DEI programs or express support for certain national policies without creating enforceable law.
- **S. Res.:** Senate Resolution: Applies only to the Senate. Used similarly to House resolutions. 🗡️ Does not become law. Example: A Senate Resolution may recognize a national issue (such as mental health awareness) or signal political priorities without requiring policy change.
- **(H. Con. Res. / S. Con. Res.)/Concurrent Resolution** : Passed by both the House and Senate but not sent to the President. Used for budgets and expressing Congress's position. 🗡️ Does not become law. Example: A concurrent resolution may set federal budget priorities that reduce funding for social services, indirectly impacting housing, healthcare, and food assistance programs.

Understanding Bill Status

- **Introduced:** The bill has been formally presented but not yet debated or voted on. Example: A newly introduced bill restricting abortion access enters the legislative process but has not yet been reviewed.
- **In Committee:** Lawmakers are reviewing, debating, and possibly changing the bill. Example: A criminal justice bill adding mandatory minimum sentences may be debated in committee before moving forward.
- **Passed (House or Senate):** The bill has been approved in one chamber. Example: H.R. 4922 – D.C. CRIMES Act of 2025 passed the House, advancing policies that could increase incarceration rates and limit local control.
- **Pending:** The bill is still active and under consideration. Example: A bill targeting LGBTQ+ rights in a Bible Belt state remains pending while awaiting votes or revisions.
- **Enacted** (Signed into Law): The bill has passed both chambers and been signed into law. Example: A federal law reducing access to public benefits becomes enforceable nationwide after being enacted.
- **Vetoed:** The President or Governor has rejected the bill. Example: A governor vetoes a bill that would criminalize certain healthcare decisions, preventing it from becoming law.
- **Failed:** The bill did not receive enough support to move forward. Example: A proposed bill expanding maternal healthcare protections fails to pass due to lack of legislative support.



**TOP 7 IMPACTFUL FEDERAL
POLICIES (2025-2026)**

TOP 7 IMPACTFUL FEDERAL POLICIES (2025-2026)

H.R. 1: One Big Beautiful Bill Act. This act reduces taxes, reduces or increases spending for various federal programs, increases the statutory debt limit, and otherwise addresses agencies and programs throughout the federal government.

Sponsor: Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX)

Status: Enacted

What This Bill Means: H.R. 1 is a sweeping federal law that restructures major components of Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA), resulting in reduced access to healthcare for millions of low-income Americans. The law introduces stricter work and reporting requirements for Medicaid recipients, increases administrative eligibility checks, and allows for higher out-of-pocket costs for certain healthcare services. These provisions create significant barriers to maintaining consistent coverage, particularly for individuals with unstable employment, caregivers, people with disabilities, and those living in rural or medically underserved communities. (Nonpartisan estimates suggest that approximately 17 million people could lose health insurance as a result of these changes, including children, pregnant people, seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.)

Remnant's Viewpoint from a Human Rights Perspective. ✘ This bill is harmful.

Access to healthcare is not a privilege it is a fundamental right tied to dignity, survival, and community well-being. H.R. 1 undermines this right by placing procedural and financial barriers between people and essential care. Policies that condition healthcare access on employment status or burdensome reporting requirements disproportionately harm those already navigating systemic inequities, including Black and brown communities, disabled individuals, and low-income families.

Remnant Community Outreach affirms that healthcare systems must be rooted in equity, accessibility, and compassion, not restriction. We oppose policies that strip coverage from vulnerable populations and instead advocate for healthcare frameworks that prioritize universal access, protect medically underserved communities, and address the structural conditions that create health disparities. This bill reflects a shift away from collective care and toward exclusion, which stands in direct opposition to a human dignity-centered policy framework.

TOP 7 IMPACTFUL FEDERAL POLICIES (2025-2026)

H.J. Resolution 142 D.C. Tax Conformity Disapproval Act; **Sponsor:** Rep. Byron Donalds (R); **Status:** Passed House (Not law)

What This Bill Means: This joint resolution uses the authority granted by the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to overturn a locally passed D.C. law, the "D.C. Income and Franchise Tax Conformity and Revision Temporary Amendment Act of 2025." The disapproved D.C. law was designed to align the District's local tax code with recent federal tax changes, a routine practice that ensures predictable tax administration. By blocking this local law, Congress prevents D.C. from implementing tax policies created by its own democratically elected officials to serve the needs of its residents, creating fiscal uncertainty and administrative challenges for the District's government.

Remnant's Response (Human Rights Perspective): ✗ This bill is harmful.

The right to self-determination and democratic governance is a cornerstone of political freedom. H.J.Res. 142 undermines the fundamental right of the residents of the District of Columbia to govern their own local affairs. By nullifying a law passed by the D.C. Council, Congress is imposing its will on a jurisdiction whose residents lack full voting representation in that same body. This action is inconsistent with principles of democratic accountability and self-governance. Remnant Community Outreach affirms that the people of D.C. deserve the same rights to local autonomy as all other citizens. We oppose congressional overreach that disenfranchises D.C. residents and advocate for the full recognition of D.C. home rule and eventual statehood. This being allowed can set a dangerous precedent across the country.

Bill Number: H.R. 4922 The D.C. CRIMES Act of 2025. **Sponsor:** Rep. Byron Donalds (R); **Status:** Enacted

What This Bill Means: This federal law significantly curtails the District of Columbia's authority to set its own criminal justice policies. The D.C. CRIMES Act of 2025 narrows the definition of a "youth offender" from individuals up to age 24 down to age 18, exposing more young adults to harsher adult sentencing and incarceration. It also strips the D.C. Council of its power to reduce criminal penalties and mandates the creation of a public database for juvenile crime statistics. These provisions represent a direct federal intervention into the local criminal legal system, overriding the judgment of D.C.'s elected officials and community stakeholders on matters of public safety and justice reform.

Remnant's Response (Human Rights Perspective): ✗ This bill is harmful.

Justice systems should be grounded in principles of proportionality, rehabilitation, and local accountability. H.R. 4922 violates these principles by imposing a one-size-fits-all federal mandate that disregards evidence-based practices in juvenile justice, which show that treating young adults as youth leads to better outcomes and lower recidivism. Subjecting 19- to 24-year-olds, a group that disproportionately includes Black and brown youth, to the adult carceral system perpetuates cycles of harm and runs counter to the goal of rehabilitation. Furthermore, this act is a profound violation of D.C.'s right to self-governance. Remnant Community Outreach affirms that local communities are best equipped to design justice systems that reflect their values and needs. We oppose federal interference that undermines local democracy and perpetuates mass incarceration, and we advocate for policies that prioritize restorative justice, rehabilitation, and community-led safety solutions.

TOP 7 IMPACTFUL FEDERAL POLICIES (2025-2026)

Executive Order 14173: Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity; **Sponsor:** President
Status: In Effect

What This Executive Order Means: Executive Order 14173 dismantles federal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) programs and revokes longstanding affirmative-action requirements for federal contractors. By removing diversity initiatives and restricting agencies from implementing equity-focused hiring and workforce policies, the order weakens federal efforts to address systemic discrimination and expand opportunity for historically marginalized groups, including Black and brown communities, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities.

Remnant's Response (Human Rights Perspective): ✗ This executive order is harmful.

From a human rights perspective, access to equitable opportunities and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights. E.O. 14173 undermines these rights by systematically dismantling mechanisms designed to address historical and ongoing inequities. Policies that roll back DEIA initiatives disproportionately harm those already navigating systemic disadvantages, exacerbating existing disparities in employment and economic well-being. Remnant Community Outreach affirms that policies must actively promote equity and inclusion to ensure that all individuals, regardless of background, have equal access to opportunities. We oppose measures that weaken protections against discrimination and advocate for frameworks that prioritize the advancement of human rights through inclusive practices. Note: Naming the executive order 'Ending Illegal Discrimination...' does not remove its influence from enabling illegal discrimination. This EO was signed in January 2025; and as of October 2025, more than 300,000 Black women have been laid off from their jobs.

Executive Order 14159: Protecting the American People Against Invasion. **Sponsor:** President; **Status:** In effect

What This Executive Order Means: Executive Order 14159 significantly expands immigration enforcement and deportation authority in the United States. The policy increases the use of expedited removal, allowing immigration authorities to deport individuals without a full court hearing in many cases, and directs federal agencies to prioritize the removal of undocumented immigrants. It also threatens to cut federal funding to sanctuary jurisdictions and imposes penalties on undocumented individuals who fail to register with the federal government. Critics warn that these measures weaken due-process protections and increase the risk of families being separated or individuals being deported without the opportunity to challenge their removal. Civil rights groups argue the policy disproportionately impacts immigrant communities, particularly Latino, Black, and Caribbean migrants who already face structural barriers in the legal system.

Remnant's Response (Human Rights Perspective): ✗ This executive order is harmful.

From a human rights perspective, due process, family unity, and protection from arbitrary detention are fundamental rights for all individuals, regardless of immigration status. E.O. 14159 undermines these rights by expanding expedited removal and prioritizing deportations, which can lead to family separation and deny individuals fair legal proceedings. Policies that criminalize undocumented immigrants and target sanctuary cities create a climate of fear and insecurity, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities. Remnant Community Outreach affirms that immigration policies must uphold human dignity, ensure due process, and protect the rights of all migrants. We oppose measures that erode legal protections and advocate for comprehensive immigration reform that prioritizes compassion, family unity, and the humane treatment of all individuals.

TOP 7 IMPACTFUL FEDERAL POLICIES (2025-2026)

Executive Order 14160: Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship; **Sponsor:** President; **Status:** Blocked

What This Executive Order Means: Executive Order 14160 attempts to end birthright citizenship for children born in the United States to undocumented immigrants or to people in the country on temporary visas such as student, work, or tourist visas. The order challenges the long-standing interpretation of the 14th Amendment's Citizenship Clause, which has historically granted citizenship to nearly all people born on U.S. soil. Civil rights organizations warn that eliminating birthright citizenship would create a permanent class of stateless or undocumented children born in the United States and disproportionately harm immigrant families, particularly Latino, Asian, African, and Caribbean communities. The order has been challenged in multiple courts and temporarily blocked by federal judges.

Remnant's Response (Human Rights Perspective): ✗ This Executive Order is Harmful.

The right to a nationality and protection from statelessness are fundamental. E.O. 14160 directly challenges the principle of birthright citizenship, a cornerstone of the 14th Amendment, which protects children born on U.S. soil from becoming stateless. Policies that seek to deny citizenship based on parental immigration status create a vulnerable class of individuals, undermining their access to essential rights and services. Remnant Community Outreach affirms that all children born within a nation's borders should be recognized as citizens, ensuring their fundamental rights and preventing the creation of a marginalized population. We oppose measures that seek to diminish the value of citizenship for any group and advocate for policies that uphold the universal right to a nationality.

Executive Order 14257: Regulating Imports with a Reciprocal Tariff to Rectify Trade Practices That Contribute to Large and Persistent Annual United States Goods Trade Deficits; **Sponsor:** President; **Status:** In effect as of April 2, 2025

What This Executive Order Means: Executive Order 14257 imposed sweeping "reciprocal tariffs" on imported goods entering the United States, including a baseline tariff on most imports and higher tariffs on goods from certain countries. While framed as a strategy to reduce trade deficits and pressure other nations to adjust trade practices, economists warn that broad tariffs increase the cost of imported products and raw materials. These price increases are often passed on to consumers and small businesses, raising the cost of everyday goods such as food, household items, and construction materials. Because low-income households spend a larger share of their income on basic necessities, tariff-driven price increases can disproportionately burden economically vulnerable communities while also disrupting supply chains and international trade relationships.

Remnant's Response (Human Rights Perspective): ✗ This Executive Order is Harmful.

Access to affordable necessities, including food and housing, is a fundamental component of economic and social rights. E.O. 14257, through its imposition of broad tariffs, increases the cost of essential goods, disproportionately impacting low-income households and exacerbating economic inequality. Policies that raise the cost of living for vulnerable populations undermine their ability to secure basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living. Remnant Community Outreach affirms that economic policies must prioritize the well-being of all individuals, especially those in economically vulnerable communities. We oppose measures that increase financial burdens on marginalized groups and advocate for trade policies that promote equitable access to resources and do not compromise the economic rights of the populace.



2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: TENNESSEE

BILL HB 1835/ SB 1911: Human Services, Dept. of - As introduced, requires the department to apply for federal grants and other federal funds available to the state through the federal summer electronic benefits transfer (SEBT) for children program during any year in which the program is offered, for the purpose of providing nutrition assistance through SEBT during the summer months for each eligible child. - Amends TCA Title 49 and Title 71.

SPONSORS: Representative Michael Hale (R); and Senator Paul Bailey (R). [This bill reportedly has bipartisan support]

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: For the second year in a row, Tennessee leaders declined to pursue federal summer food benefits that could help about 700,000 children from low-income households across the state. This bill was introduced to require the state to apply for that funding so children can get grocery help during the summer, when school meals are not available. Without that support, more children may go hungry, and parents and caregivers who are already struggling may face even more financial pressure.

STATUS: Pending. As of mid-March 2026, the bill had been filed and assigned in the Tennessee General Assembly, and a fiscal note was issued on February 28, 2026. *More updates to come as Tennessee's 2026 legislative session is still active*

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: This bill is beneficial.

No child should go hungry when help is available. Access to food is a basic human need, not a political game. Tennessee should accept every available resource that helps children eat, supports families, and reduces harm during the summer months and beyond.

BILL HB 0570/SB 0738: As introduced, directs the state capitol commission to be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the monument to unborn children through funds appropriated to the commission. (Amends TCA Title 4; Title 8; Title 20; Title 29; Title 36; Title 39; Title 40; Title 41; Title 49; Title 56; Title 63; Title 68 and Title 71.)

SPONSORS: Senator Mark Pody (R); and Representative Jody Barrett (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: In its initial form, this bill was introduced to place responsibility for maintaining a monument "to unborn children" under the State Capitol Commission. But Representative Jody Barrett later pushed an amendment that would have treated abortion as homicide, which could have exposed women and other pregnant people to severe criminal penalties, including life in prison or even the death penalty.

STATUS: This bill failed for lack of motion in the Population Health Subcommittee on March 10, 2026, so it is not moving forward this session.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: This bill is harmful.

This bill is harmful because, if passed, it would punish people for pregnancy outcomes and abortion care. It takes away a person's right to make private health decisions with their doctor. Politicians should not be making personal medical choices for families. Bills like this can also hurt Black and brown communities most, because they are often punished more harshly by the legal system. It could also lead to birthing people being surveilled, investigated, or even charged after a miscarriage, stillbirth, or other pregnancy emergency. Instead of helping families, this bill places more emphasis on control and criminalization.

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: GEORGIA

BILL HB 947: As introduced, this bill changes Georgia's public assistance rules by requiring additional verification steps for SNAP applicants, including data checks related to citizenship and identity before benefits can be approved. It also adds new limits on some prepared food and drink purchases made with SNAP benefits.

SPONSOR: Representative Martin Momtahan (R).

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: This bill could make it harder for poor people and struggling families to get food assistance by adding more paperwork, more checks, and more chances for delay or denial. Even when a family qualifies for help, extra verification rules can create barriers for people who have trouble getting documents, transportation, internet access, or time off work. That means more children, seniors, disabled people, and low-income households could face more food insecurity while trying to navigate the system

STATUS: Pending. Referred to the House Human Relations & Aging Committee

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is harmful.

Food is a basic human need. Bills that place more barriers in front of food assistance can hurt poor people across Georgia, especially families already living paycheck to paycheck. Instead of making food harder to access, the state should focus on making sure people can eat, children can thrive, and families can get help without unnecessary obstacles.

BILL HB 1308: A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and secondary education, so as to provide for local and state charter schools and charter school petitioners to have the right to lease, utilize, or buy unused facilities of a local board of education, subject to conditions; to provide for such conditions; to provide for construction; to revise a definition; to make conforming changes and to modernize certain terms; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

SPONSORS: Rep. Deborah Silcox (R); Rep. Scott Hilton (R), Rep. Jan Jones (R); Rep. Carmen Rice (R); Rep. Brent Cox (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: This could be harmful for Black and brown students especially because neighborhood public schools are often the schools most deeply rooted in Black and working-class communities. When public buildings are redirected in ways that weaken traditional school systems, students in already underfunded communities can lose stability, resources, and local control. Even when a bill is framed as school choice or efficiency, the real-world result can be fewer protections for students in historically excluded communities. Also, when disinvestment in schools occurs, education is diminished, some communities fail, and gentrification and criminalization erupt.

STATUS: Pending. In the House Education Committee.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is harmful.

Public school buildings are public goods. Policies that make it easier to move those assets away from neighborhood schools can harm children in communities that have already faced disinvestment for generations. Black and brown students deserve stronger public schools, not weaker ones.

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: GEORGIA

BILL SB 476: Income Tax Reduction Act of 2026. This bill would make major changes to Georgia's tax code, including lowering the state personal and corporate income tax rate to 4.99% and increasing the standard deduction for some filers. Reporting on the bill also says it would eliminate state income tax on the first \$50,000 of income for individual filers and the first \$100,000 for joint filers.

SPONSOR: Senator Blake Tillery (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: This bill is meant to lower state income taxes so Georgians can keep more of their earnings. For individuals and families, that could mean more money available for groceries, rent, bills, transportation, child care, and savings. For businesses, the lower corporate tax rate is intended to reduce tax burden and improve Georgia's economic competitiveness. Supporters present it as a broad tax-relief measure that could benefit many households across the state.

STATUS: Pending. SB 476 passed the Georgia Senate and is pending in the House Ways and Means Committee.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: This bill is concerning.

When families are struggling with the cost of living, tax relief can help people keep more of what they earn and better meet basic needs. A policy like this can offer financial breathing room to households across Georgia and support economic stability. Tax policy should help everyday people live with greater dignity, security, and opportunity. The concern is how much will ultimately impact communities from revenue losses - which also might impact community programs, etc.? Also, the greater gain will be to Georgia's wealthiest residents. Lastly, elimination of some of the tax credits, such as affordable housing tax credits, might ultimately be detrimental.

BILL HOUSE RESOLUTION 1530: "Ending Slavery in Georgia Amendment." The resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to remove language from the Georgia Constitution that currently allows involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime. If approved by the legislature, the amendment would then go to Georgia voters for ratification

SPONSORS: Rep. Ruwa Romman (D), Rep. Al Williams (D), Rep. Carolyn Hugley (D), Rep. Scott Holcomb (D), Rep. Anne Westbrook (D), and Rep. Jasmine Clark (D).

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: Georgia's constitution currently includes language similar to the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which allows involuntary servitude for people convicted of crimes. This resolution seeks to remove that exception so that slavery and involuntary servitude are fully prohibited in Georgia law. If adopted and approved by voters, the amendment would symbolically and legally clarify that forced labor cannot exist in the state's constitution.

STATUS: Pending. In the House Special Rules Committee.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: This resolution is beneficial (with questions).

Removing language that allows involuntary servitude as punishment strengthens the principle that no person should be subjected to slavery in any form. Clarifying this in Georgia's constitution affirms human dignity and aligns state law with modern human rights standards. However, an important question remains: if this language is removed, what will it mean for incarcerated people who currently work within the prison system? Will their labor conditions change, and will compensation increase? Ending the constitutional language is an important step, but real justice will depend on how prison labor is treated moving forward.

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: ALABAMA

BILL HB 300: Breast Exam Coverage Without Cost-Sharing. This bill requires health insurance plans in Alabama that cover breast cancer screening or diagnostic breast imaging to provide those services without deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, or other cost-sharing requirements. The measure expands existing law to ensure that medically necessary follow-up imaging—such as MRIs or ultrasounds—is also covered without out-of-pocket costs for patients.

SPONSORS: Representative Frances Holk-Jones (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: Under previous practice, many insurance plans covered basic mammograms but still required patients to pay out-of-pocket for additional imaging needed when a screening found an abnormality or when someone had higher risk factors. This bill removes those financial barriers so patients can receive necessary follow-up exams without paying deductibles or copayments. Supporters say this change will help detect breast cancer earlier, when treatment is more effective and survival rates are higher.

STATUS: Signed into law March 5, 2026!

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✓ This bill is beneficial.

Removing cost barriers to preventive healthcare helps ensure that women can access life-saving screenings regardless of income. This policy is especially important in the South, where Black women experience higher breast cancer mortality rates and are often diagnosed at later stages due to barriers in healthcare access. Expanding no-cost screenings and follow-up care can help close those gaps and improve health outcomes for women and families across Alabama.

BILL HB 37 / SB 233: Eluding Law Enforcement Penalties. This bill revises Alabama law to increase criminal penalties for fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer, including raising the base offense and creating stronger penalties when aggravating circumstances are present.

SPONSORS: HB 37: Representative Reed Ingram (R); SB 233: Senator Lance Bell (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: Under current Alabama law, attempting to flee from law enforcement during a traffic stop is generally treated as a misdemeanor offense. This legislation would increase the severity of penalties, potentially elevating some cases to felony charges depending on the circumstances of the incident.

STATUS: Pending.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is harmful; and raises concerns.

Public safety is important, but increasing criminal penalties does not always address the root causes of dangerous encounters between civilians and law enforcement. Expanding felony charges can increase incarceration and may disproportionately impact poor communities and communities of color that are already overrepresented in the criminal legal system. Policies that rely primarily on punishment risk widening existing disparities if safeguards are not clearly defined. This raises important questions about how the law will be applied in practice: What specific situations will be considered "aggravating circumstances," and who determines that standard? How will the state monitor these cases to ensure fairness and prevent racial disparities in charging and sentencing? Without clear oversight and accountability, policies like this can unintentionally deepen inequities rather than improve public safety.

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: MISSISSIPPI

BILL HB 1944: An Act To Amend Section 27-7-22.41, Mississippi Code Of 1972, Which Provides An Income Tax Credit, Insurance Premium Tax Credit And Ad Valorem Tax Credit For Contributions Made By Certain Taxpayers To Certain Eligible Charitable Organizations, To Increase The Maximum Aggregate Amount Of Tax Credits That May Be Allocated By The Department Of Revenue Under This Section During A Calendar Year;....etc.

SPONSORS: Representative Trey Lamar (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: Under this program, individuals and businesses can donate money to eligible organizations and receive dollar-for-dollar tax credits against their state tax liability. HB 1944 would expand the total amount of credits available, increasing the funding that can ultimately support private schools. The bill raises the program cap from about \$9 million currently to \$16 million in 2026, \$18 million in 2027, and \$20 million annually by 2028

STATUS: Pending. In the House Ways and Means Committee

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is harmful.

Expanding tax credits that redirect public revenue to private education raises important questions about fairness and accountability. While school choice may benefit some families, policies that shift public resources away from the public education system can affect the schools that serve the majority of Mississippi students. Ensuring transparency, accountability, and equitable investment in public education remains essential for strengthening opportunity for all children across the state.

BILL HB 1739: Corrections Overview Task Force. An Act To Establish The Corrections Overview Task Force; To Provide The Membership Of The Task Force; To Prescribe The Powers And Duties Of Such Task Force; To Amend Sections 47-5-10, 47-5-473, 47-5-579 And 47-7-3, Mississippi Code Of 1972, To Provide That Certain Duties Shall Be Performed By The Corrections Overview Task Force Rather Than The Corrections And Criminal Justice Task Force; To Repeal Section 47-5-6, Mississippi Code Of 1972; etc.

SPONSORS: Representative Becky Currie (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: HB 1739 creates a new task force that will examine Mississippi's prison system, including operations within the Mississippi Department of Corrections. A key focus of the bill is prison death oversight, responding to growing concerns about deaths occurring in Mississippi prisons and the need for greater transparency and accountability. The task force would review prison conditions, incarceration trends, and correctional practices, and then report recommendations to lawmakers for potential reforms.

STATUS: This bill failed on March 11, 2026.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✓ This bill is beneficial; and it raises concerns.

Establishing oversight of prison conditions and deaths in custody can be an important step toward transparency and accountability in the criminal justice system. Mississippi has faced longstanding concerns regarding prison safety, deaths in custody, and the treatment of incarcerated people. A task force focused on these issues could help identify systemic problems and propose reforms that protect human dignity and improve safety. However, oversight alone does not guarantee change. For this effort to be meaningful, the state must ensure that the task force's findings lead to real policy improvements that address prison conditions, prevent unnecessary deaths in custody, and strengthen accountability within the corrections system. This proposal also raises important questions about implementation and transparency. Will community members, families of incarcerated individuals, or independent advocates be allowed to participate in the task force or respond to its findings? Additionally, what immediate actions are already being taken to reduce and prevent deaths among currently incarcerated people while the task force conducts its review?

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: FLORIDA

BILL SB 1296: Requires public sector labor unions can recertify only if they have secured at least 50% of all of the employees in the bargaining unit to vote, and that the vote itself wins 50% plus one support. Currently, unions only need a majority of those who voted. This bill exempts public safety unions; the policy primarily affects unions representing educators and other government workers.

SPONSORS: Sen. Jonathan Martin, (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: SB 1296 raises the threshold required for public-sector unions to maintain certification as the official bargaining representative for employees. Under the new rules, unions must demonstrate support from a larger share of the entire workforce, not just those who participate in union elections.

STATUS: Passed House and Senate. Pending Governor's Signature.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is harmful

Labor unions have historically played an important role in protecting workers' rights, ensuring fair wages, and providing a collective voice for employees in the workplace. Policies that significantly raise the barriers for unions to maintain certification may weaken workers' ability to organize and negotiate collectively. This bill raises questions about fairness and consistency in labor policy. If the intent is to ensure accountability for all public-sector unions, why are public safety unions exempt from the new requirements while others are not? Additionally, what safeguards will exist to ensure workers who may face barriers to participating in union elections, such as scheduling conflicts, lack of information, or workplace pressures are not effectively stripped of representation? Policies that reshape collective-bargaining rights should prioritize worker voice, fairness, and equal treatment across professions, ensuring that all employees have a meaningful opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their livelihoods.

BILL HB 429: Criteria for Determining Criminal Gang Membership

This bill revises Florida law defining who can be classified as a "criminal gang member." The legislation expands the list of criteria used by law enforcement and prosecutors to identify individuals as gang members and introduces the definition of "gang-related language."

SPONSORS: Representative Jessica Baker (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: HB 429 broadens the legal definition of gang membership by allowing individuals to be labeled a criminal gang member if they meet two or more listed criteria. These criteria can include: Admitting gang affiliation in person or on social media; being identified as a gang member by a parent, guardian, spouse, or informant; wearing clothing or using hand signs associated with gangs; having tattoos linked to gang groups; associating with known gang members; using gang-related language online or in written communication

STATUS: Passed House and Senate.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is horrifying!

Addressing gang violence and protecting community safety are important goals. However, expanding the criteria used to label individuals as gang members raises significant questions about fairness, civil liberties, and due process. When gang identification can be based on associations, social media posts, clothing, or language, individuals may be categorized in ways that are subjective or difficult to challenge. These policies may also carry disproportionate impacts for young people and communities of color who are already more likely to be surveilled by law enforcement. Clear standards, transparency in gang databases, and oversight of how these classifications are used in prosecutions will be essential to ensure the law does not unintentionally widen disparities within the criminal justice system.

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: NORTH CAROLINA

BILL H87: Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA). This bill would allow North Carolina to opt into a federal tax-credit program for donations to scholarship-granting organizations (SGOs) that provide K-12 education scholarships. The State Education Assistance Authority would be responsible for certifying and publishing a list of eligible organizations participating in the program.

SPONSORS: Representative Neal Jackson (R); Rep. Brian Biggs (R); Rep. Mike Schietzelt (R); Rep. Blair Eddins (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: H87 would allow taxpayers to receive a federal tax credit for donations made to nonprofit organizations that provide private-school scholarships. Under the federal program, donors could receive a reimbursement of up to \$1,700 annually for donations that support tuition or other K-12 education expenses through scholarship organizations.

STATUS: Passed; but vetoed by Governor Josh Stein. The legislature could attempt to override the veto. It is placed on 2/2026 calendar.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is harmful

Expanding access to educational opportunities can benefit families seeking alternatives for their children. However, policies that rely on tax credits to fund private school scholarships raise important questions about fairness and long-term investment in public education. Public schools remain the primary educational resource for most children, including those from low-income and rural communities. Policymakers must carefully consider whether expanding tax-credit scholarship programs strengthens educational opportunity for all students or primarily benefits families who already have access to private education. Key questions remain: How will the program ensure equitable access for lower-income families? And how will the state maintain strong investment in public schools that continue to serve the majority of North Carolina students?

BILL HB 171: Equality in State Agencies/Prohibition on DEI . This bill eliminates Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives within North Carolina state agencies and local government. The legislation prohibits state entities from promoting, supporting, funding, or maintaining DEI programs, including dedicated DEI staff positions, training programs, and policies that consider diversity or equity in hiring or workplace practices.

SPONSORS: Rep. Brenden Jones (R), Rep. Neal Jackson (R), Rep. Ben Moss (R), and Rep. Jeff Zenger (R)

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: HB 171 would require state agencies, local governments, and some organizations receiving state funds to eliminate DEI-related programs and activities. This includes banning: mandatory DEI training for government employees; dedicated DEI staff positions or offices; consideration of diversity or equity in hiring or workplace policies; the use of public funds for DEI programs or initiatives.

STATUS: Passed; but vetoed by Governor Josh Stein. The legislature could attempt to override the veto in 2026.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: ✗ This bill is harmful

Efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in public institutions have historically aimed to address barriers that prevent equal access to opportunity. Eliminating these initiatives raises concerns about whether state agencies will still have the tools needed to identify and respond to disparities affecting marginalized communities. Policies that prohibit DEI programs may also create uncertainty for public institutions attempting to ensure fair hiring practices, equitable access to services, and inclusive workplaces. Protecting equal treatment under the law should not prevent institutions from acknowledging and addressing the real social and economic barriers that many communities continue to face. Key questions remain: How will state agencies address inequities in public services without the ability to implement targeted inclusion strategies? And what safeguards will exist to ensure fairness and equal opportunity remain central to public policy?

2026 IMPACTFUL BILLS INTRODUCED IN 'BIBLE BELT' STATES

State: SOUTH CAROLINA

BILL S.143: Domestic Violence Protection Expansion (Dating Relationship Protections). Amend The South Carolina Code Of Laws By Amending Section 20-4-20, Relating To Definitions Pertaining To Domestic Abuse, So As To Include Persons Who Are Or Were Dating To The List Of Persons Defined As "Household Member"; And By Amending Section 20-4-40, Relating To Petitions For An Order Of Protection, So As To Include A Parent, Guardian, Legal Counsel, Or Other Appropriate Adult As A Person Who Can Petition On Behalf Of Minors In The Person's Household.

SPONSORS: Senator Tameika Isaac Devine (D); Senator Jeff Zell (R). [This bill reportedly has bipartisan support]

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: Under previous South Carolina law, victims could typically obtain a civil order of protection only if the alleged abuser was a spouse, former spouse, cohabiting partner, or someone with whom the victim shares a child. Individuals in dating relationships were largely excluded from these protections. S.143 closes that gap by recognizing that violence can occur in dating relationships just as it does in marriages or cohabiting partnerships. By adding dating partners to the definition of "household member," the bill allows victims in those relationships to seek protective court orders more quickly and with stronger legal backing.

STATUS: Pending. In Senate Judiciary Committee.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: This bill is beneficial.

Expanding domestic violence protections to include dating partners strengthens safety and access to justice for survivors of abuse. Violence in intimate relationships does not only occur within marriage or cohabitation, and the law should reflect the realities of modern relationships. By allowing victims in dating relationships to obtain protective orders, the state helps close a legal gap that has historically left some survivors without immediate legal protection. Ensuring that both adults and minors can access protective orders through responsible advocates also supports early intervention and prevention of further harm. At the same time, the effectiveness of this policy will depend on implementation, including public awareness, accessible court processes, and survivor-centered support services that help individuals safely pursue protection when needed.

BILL H. 4713: Attempted Murder Mandatory Minimum. Amends the South Carolina Code of laws by amending Section 16-3-29, relating to the offense of attempted murder, so as to provide a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of five years for a violation.

SPONSORS: Representatives McCravy, Oremus, Edgerton and White

WHAT THIS BILL MEANS: H. 4713 amends South Carolina law regarding attempted murder by establishing a mandatory minimum sentence of five years imprisonment for any conviction under the statute. The sentence cannot be suspended, and probation may not be granted, meaning judges would be required to impose at least five years of incarceration regardless of the circumstances of the case.

STATUS: Pending. As of the 2026 legislative session, H. 4713 has been referred to the South Carolina House Judiciary Committee and remains under consideration.

REMNANT'S VIEWPOINT from a HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE: This bill is harmful

Protecting public safety is an important goal, and violent crime should be taken seriously. However, policies that rely on rigid mandatory minimum sentences can weaken the justice system's ability to respond fairly to complex circumstances. Justice requires both accountability and discretion. Removing the court's ability to consider mitigating factors risks expanding incarceration without necessarily improving community safety.

PUBLIC POLICY GLOSSARY

- **Advocacy:** Speaking up, organizing, or taking action to influence laws, policies, or decisions that affect communities.
- **Bill:** A proposal for a new law or a change to an existing law that is introduced in Congress.
- **Civil Rights:** Rights that protect people from unfair treatment or discrimination based on characteristics such as race, gender, religion, orientation, religion, or disability.
- **Committee:** A smaller group of lawmakers that reviews bills, studies the issue, holds discussions or hearings, and decides whether a bill should move forward.
- **Congress:** The United States Congress, which is responsible for creating federal laws. Congress is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- **Election Day:** A day legally established for the election of public officials; especially the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in an even year designated for national elections in the U.S. and observed as a legal holiday in many states
- **Enacted:** A bill has officially become law after being approved by both chambers of Congress and signed by the President (or allowed to become law without a signature).
- **Enrolled bill:** A Senate or House measure approved by both houses and signed by the legislative officers, which is sent to the Governor for action and transmittal to the Secretary of State or filed directly with the Secretary of State. The bill is enrolled in the house of origin under the supervision of the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House.
- **Equity:** Ensuring people have fair access to opportunities, resources, and protection under the law, recognizing that different communities may need different levels of support.
- **Federal Law:** A law passed by the federal government that applies across the entire United States.
- **House of Representatives:** The United States House of Representatives, one half of Congress where members represent districts within each state and vote on proposed laws.

PUBLIC POLICY GLOSSARY

- **In Committee:** The bill is currently being reviewed and debated by a congressional committee and has not yet moved forward for a full vote.
- **Introduced:** A bill has been formally proposed in Congress but has not yet been debated or voted on.
- **Marginalized Communities:** Groups of people who have historically experienced barriers, discrimination, or limited access to resources and opportunities.
- **Omnibus Bill:** A large bill that combines many different policy changes or laws into one piece of legislation.
- **Override:** When Congress votes again on a bill after a presidential veto and passes it with a two-thirds majority so the bill can still become law.
- **Passed Congress:** Both chambers of Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate, have approved the bill and sent it to the President.
- **Passed House:** The bill has been approved by the House of Representatives but still needs approval from the Senate.
- **Passed Senate:** The bill has been approved by the Senate but still needs approval from the House of Representatives.
- **Public Policy:** The laws, regulations, and decisions governments make to address public issues such as healthcare, education, housing, or safety.
- **Senate:** The United States Senate, one half of Congress where each state is represented by two senators.
- **State Law:** A law passed by a state government that applies only within that state.
- **Veto:** When the President rejects a bill passed by Congress, preventing it from becoming law unless Congress overrides the veto.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

VOTE LIKE IT MATTERS!

The bills and executive orders in this report are not abstract policy debates. They are decisions that determine whether your child eats this summer, whether you can keep your health insurance, whether your neighbor can be deported without a court hearing, and whether the person who harmed you can be held accountable. Every single policy covered in these pages was put into motion by someone who was elected to office. That means every single one of them could have gone differently if different people had been in those seats.

Voting is not a civic formality. It is literally survival. This policy report does not cover half the harm being imposed on Americans; so, consider what is at stake in just this one report alone. The information in it was not accidents of policy; but they are direct results of who holds power and who (or what) placed them there.

At the state level, the consequences are just as immediate. In Tennessee, children are going hungry during the summer months because the governor declined to pursue available federal food assistance that could have helped 700,000 kids. In Florida, a bill expanding gang membership classifications passed both chambers of the legislature, meaning that a social media post, a piece of clothing, or an association could now be used to label someone as a gang member. In North Carolina and Georgia, bills targeting DEI programs and redirecting public school resources have advanced through legislatures, threatening equity in education and employment for communities that have already faced generations of disinvestment. These outcomes were shaped by elections. And they will be shaped by elections again.

When communities do not vote – or are prevented from voting – the people making these decisions face less accountability. Laws get passed that cut healthcare, expand incarceration, restrict workers' rights, and redirect public resources away from the people who need them most. When communities do vote, they send a message about what they will and will not accept. They determine who sits on school boards, who becomes a state legislator, who goes to Congress, and who signs executive orders into law.

Voting is also an act of honoring those who fought and died for the right. Black Americans were kept from the ballot through poll taxes, literacy tests, violence, and intimidation. That fight was not waged so that the right could go unused. Every uncast vote in a close election is a policy that could have been different. Every uncontested seat is a decision made without community input. Every low-turnout local election is a school board, a city council; a district attorney's race decided by a fraction of the people who will live with the consequences.

You do not have to be a policy expert to vote. You do not have to understand every bill in this report. What you need to understand is this: the people who wrote these bills, passed these laws, and signed these executive orders were chosen – by voters. And they can be replaced, retained, or held accountable by voters.

Your life, your family's life, your community's future are all on the ballot; and in the upcoming local, state, and federal elections, we will 'Vote like it!'



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