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Assignment 4

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Governor Bob Riley gave his State of the State Address last night and introduced proposals in education, tax cuts, pay raises and child protection.

Riley proposed a \$1 billion increase on educational spending—the largest investment ever made. Riley will also add five days to the school calendar and raise teachers' wages five percent. He proposed a \$500 million building project to improve school conditions and house rising enrollment needs.

Riley proposed a tax cut that will apply to every taxpayer. Under his plan, he will increase the personal tax deduction for dependents, increase the personal tax exemption so taxpayers see tax relief and increase the threshold where income is taxed. Riley's tax cut plan will also ease tax burdens put on families for back-to-school expenses.

Riley stated that a pay raise for state employees and increased funding is necessary. The Department of Public Safety budget is expected to see a 19 percent increase. He also proposed alleviating prison and jail overcrowding to keep Alabama safe.

Riley took a stand against child pornography and crimes against children. "If you're caught with 500 computer images, I want you to get punished for committing 500 crimes against children—not just one," said Riley. His bill passed by Congress "set a zero tolerance policy at the federal level," according to Riley.

Recalling the last three years, Riley reviewed Alabama's progress in government ethics, child protection, prescription drugs, new jobs, and education.

In government ethics, Riley stated that he has brought “fundamental change to Montgomery.” Today, Alabama government is the most efficient, open and accountable than ever, according to Riley.

Riley claimed that Alabama would not allow sexual predators to prey on children. Over a loud applause, Riley stated that Alabama now has the toughest child protection laws in America.

Riley recalled the increased funding of prescription drugs that allows seniors to get free prescription drugs.

Unemployment in rural counties has been cut almost in half, according to Riley. More than 100,000 Alabamians have new jobs. “No part of Alabama is being left behind,” said Riley.

The Alabama Reading Initiative and Alabama’s Math, Science and Technology Initiative have seen record funding. “AMSTI has proven its success in dramatically improving math and science scores,” said Riley.

“Alabama is moving in a new direction,” said Riley. “We’re moving forward, stronger, prouder and better than ever.”