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# Idea

a day

# 51

**IDEAS FOR A  
PROSPEROUS  
TENNESSEE**

In an effort to promote freedom & prosperity in our state, the Beacon Center of Tennessee (founded as the Tennessee Center for Policy Research) presents our second “Idea a Day” pamphlet. This publication offers 51 ideas—one for each remaining legislative day in the 107th General Assembly—that seek to protect & advance individual liberty in our state. For the sake of brevity, each idea is offered in a single sentence and is accompanied by a link to original work published by the Beacon Center or contact information for more details about that particular topic. Many of the ideas will also lead to job creation and/or put money back in the pockets of Tennesseans. Those that are “job creators” and “tax savers” are marked with a special emblem notating their added benefit



## REGULATION

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### JOB CREATOR

Enact an economic liberty act that would limit all new occupational regulations to those that directly impact the health, safety, & welfare of Tennesseans. Read: "Testimony in Support of an Economic Liberty Act" <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=407>

2



### JOB CREATOR

Lower the number of occupations that require a license, currently at 111, which makes Tennessee one of the most heavily regulated states in the nation. Read: "Testimony in Support of an Economic Liberty Act" <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=407>

3



### JOB CREATOR

Eliminate titling acts that give the state a monopoly on certain occupational titles. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

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### JOB CREATOR

Allow grocery stores to sell wine, thus creating net job growth & giving consumers more choice. Read: "Drunk with Power" <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=220>

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### TAX SAVER

Prohibit professional regulatory boards from increasing occupational fees without the legislature's approval. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

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### JOB CREATOR

Eliminate the state minimum wage & prohibit local "living wages" that make it more difficult for many Tennesseans to find gainful employment. Read: "Minimum Wage Hike Means Maximum Harm for Working Poor" <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=267>

## TAXES

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Pass a constitutional amendment to clarify that an income tax on labor is unconstitutional. Read: "Income Tax Ban Will Keep Tennessee Competitive" <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2015>

**8****JOB  
CREATOR****TAX  
SAVER**

Repeal the state death tax, which will result in more retirees & wealthy individuals moving into & investing in Tennessee, thus spurring job growth.  
Contact: Ryan Turbeville, [ryan@beacontn.org](mailto:ryan@beacontn.org)

**9****JOB  
CREATOR****TAX  
SAVER**

Repeal the state gift tax, one of only two in the nation, which deters wealthy & retired individuals from moving into & investing in Tennessee.  
Contact: Ryan Turbeville, [ryan@beacontn.org](mailto:ryan@beacontn.org)

**10****JOB  
CREATOR****TAX  
SAVER**

Repeal the state income tax on stocks & bonds, boosting state & local economic growth. Contact: Ryan Turbeville, [ryan@beacontn.org](mailto:ryan@beacontn.org)

**11****TAX  
SAVER**

Place a limitation on the growth of local property taxes unless voters approve the tax increases via referendum. Watch: “Lawmakers Seek to Require Voter Approval of Tax Hikes” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2444>

## SPENDING

**12****TAX  
SAVER**

Make the state Copeland Cap more stringent by requiring a supermajority to “bust” the cap, allowing Tennesseans to keep more money in their pockets. Read: “Solving Tennessee’s Spending Problem” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=350>

**13****TAX  
SAVER**

Revise the calculation for the Copeland Cap from one based on personal income growth to a more limited population plus inflation growth. Read: “2011 Tennessee Pork Report” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2174>

**14**

For any bill that will significantly impact the state budget, require a 72-hour waiting period between the time the bill is filed & the time of the first hearing on the bill.  
Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

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**TAX  
SAVER**

Enact a provision that will automatically return surplus revenue to taxpayers after topping off the rainy day fund. Read: “2011 Tennessee Pork Report” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2174>

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**TAX  
SAVER**

Establish an independent state spending commission to recommend spending cuts. Read: “2011 Tennessee Pork Report” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2174>

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**TAX  
SAVER**

Get the government out of the golf course business by selling state-owned golf courses or leasing courses that operate at a loss. Watch: “State-Owned Greens Wind Up in the Red” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1262>

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**TAX  
SAVER**

End multi-million dollar subsidies to public television stations & instead require them to compete with private television stations. Read: “2011 Tennessee Pork Report” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2174>

## GOV'T REFORM

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Reform asset forfeiture laws to eliminate any financial incentives for law enforcement activity. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

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**JOB  
CREATOR**

Build upon the newly enacted measures to curb lawsuit abuse, bringing additional job growth to Tennessee. Read: “Lawsuit Abuse Reform in the Volunteer State” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1914>

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**JOB  
CREATOR**



**TAX  
SAVER**

Create a level playing field by ending corporate welfare that gives tax breaks or handouts to favored businesses. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

**22** Prohibit local governments from using taxpayer money to lobby the state or federal government. Read: “The Dangerous Cycle of Taxpayer-Funded Lobbying” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=224>

**23**  **JOB  
CREATOR**

 **TAX  
SAVER**

Require fiscal notes to include the cost that new legislation would impose on small businesses. Read: “Accurately Calculating the Cost of Tennessee Legislation” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2230>

**24** Require oversight of the Department of Revenue’s ability to issue tax variances, which can significantly raise or lower a company’s tax bill. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

**25** Limit the number of bills each legislator may file, thus reducing the number of laws enacted & shortening legislative sessions. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

**26** Implement oversight of the state’s Families First program, which is ripe for abuse & potentially allows recipients to purchase non-qualified products, including alcohol. Watch: “Tax Dollars Spent on Porn & Booze” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2367>

**27** Revise the method of placing Supreme Court & appellate judges on the bench so that it complies with the state Constitution. Read: “The Current Plan on Judges is Ridiculous” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=148>

**28** Prohibit the use of unsafe & potentially unconstitutional red light camera operations by local governments. Read: “Red Light Cameras in the Volunteer State” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=413>

**29**  **TAX  
SAVER**

Turn various services over to the private sector that could easily be handled outside of state government. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)


## EDUCATION

**30** Allow parents across Tennessee to take a portion of the funding already spent on their child & send him or her to the school of their choice. Read: “Parents Should Have Choice in Education” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1931>

**31** Make the extensive value-added assessment data on student achievement publicly available to parents. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

- 32** End social promotion that leads to the graduation of children to the next grade level without the core skillset needed for success. Read: “Lessons for Tennessee from Florida’s Education Revolution” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1893>
- 33** Grade all public & charter schools based on overall academic performance & learning gains with easy-to-interpret A, B, C, D, or F grades. Read: “Lessons for Tennessee from Florida’s Education Revolution” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1893>
- 34** Create alternative teacher certification paths, providing teachers with options & additional opportunities to obtain a license. Read: “Lessons for Tennessee from Florida’s Education Revolution” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1893>
- 35** Give principals & local administrators more decision-making authority over personnel matters within their schools. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

## HEALTHCARE

- 36** Allow Tennesseans to purchase health insurance from any state in the country. Read: “Implementing State-Based Healthcare Reform” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=384>
- 37** Permit Tennesseans between ages 19 & 24 to purchase less costly “mandate light” health insurance plans. Read: “Implementing State-Based Healthcare Reform” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=384>
- 38** Ease restrictions on cash, minute, & walk-in clinics to enhance quality medical services to low-income Tennesseans. Read: “Implementing State-Based Healthcare Reform” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=384>
- 39**  **TAX SAVER**  
Provide state employees with a consumer-driven health insurance plan option with a health savings account in lieu of their current plan. Read: “Implementing State-Based Healthcare Reform” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=384>
- 40** Allow doctors in other states to practice in Tennessee & permit non-physician medical professionals to provide minor services currently prohibited by law. Read: “Implementing State-Based Healthcare Reform” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=384>

## PROPERTY RIGHTS

- 41** Prohibit public-to-private transfers of property seized via eminent domain. Contact: Ryan Turbeville, [ryan@beacontn.org](mailto:ryan@beacontn.org)

**42** Require approval by local legislative bodies before unaccountable agencies can take private property using eminent domain. Contact: Ryan Turbeville, [ryan@beacontn.org](mailto:ryan@beacontn.org)

**43** Treat regulations on private property as “takings” & provide property owners with compensation when regulations diminish the value of their property. Contact: Ryan Turbeville, [ryan@beacontn.org](mailto:ryan@beacontn.org)

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

**44**  **TAX SAVER**

End the failed switchgrass-to-ethanol program that has cost taxpayers more than \$60 million, yet has failed to become commercially viable. Watch: “Field of Dreams” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1372>

**45**  **TAX SAVER**

End the continuous taxpayer handouts to solar energy, thus allowing the sector to perform on its own accord in the free market. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

**46**  **TAX SAVER**

Cut the real estate transfer tax by 21 percent by simply ending the unnecessary purchase of wetlands and forests. Read: “2011 Tennessee Pork Report” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=2174>

## TECHNOLOGY

**47**  **TAX SAVER**

Prevent taxes or fees on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

**48** Prohibit state & local governments from using tax dollars to fund failed experiments to provide high-speed Internet to the general public. Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

# TRANSPORTATION

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**TAX  
SAVER**

Increase transportation funding & reduce the burden on taxpayers by permitting private investments in infrastructure through public-private partnerships.

Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

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Convert existing HOV lanes to high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, allowing unaccompanied drivers to pay a fee to drive in the under-utilized lanes.

Contact: Justin Owen, [justin@beacontn.org](mailto:justin@beacontn.org)

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**TAX  
SAVER**

Reject “build it & they will come” proposals to fund mass transit projects that lack consumer demand. Listen: “Justin Owen on Mass Transit” <http://www.beacontn.org/?p=1689>



The Beacon Center’s mission is to change lives through public policy by advancing the principles of free markets, individual liberty, and limited government. The Center advances a long-term vision of policy solutions, and nothing in this publication is to be construed as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any particular legislation pending before any legislative body.

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