

Senator Lamar Alexander

2015 Accomplishments



Fixing No Child Left Behind

As chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Alexander spearheaded the new law fixing No Child Left Behind and restoring decisions to governors, teachers, school boards and parents. The [*Wall Street Journal*](#) said the legislation represented “the largest devolution of federal control to states in a quarter century.”

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Press Highlights

AP

[New tune for piano-playing Senator Alexander: Revised education policy](#)

“The son of a school teacher and principal, this former federal education secretary and onetime university president will be shepherding a bill he's been working on for seven years: a rewrite of the contentious No Child Left Behind law. ...[T]he bill's success would punctuate a legislative career fueled by pragmatism and the drive for results...”



[Senate passes NCLB revision, handing Alexander significant legislative victory](#)

“Congress moved closer to fixing problems with the Bush-era No Child Left Behind school-reform law when the U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly Thursday to rewrite the landmark legislation and jettison parts that critics say are no longer working.

*“For **Alexander**, the Senate’s passage of the No Child Left Behind revision is his most significant achievement since he became the committee chairman in January. Past attempts to update the law have unraveled even as Republicans and Democrats have long conceded that many of its provisions are untenable.”*



[Opinion: Credit Alexander for passage of Every Student Succeeds](#)

“It took a while — 13 years — but the nation’s education law finally has a fix. The Every Student Succeeds Act is signed and sealed....

*This would not have happened without the determination of U.S. Sen. **Lamar Alexander** to unlock bureaucratic shackles on teachers, allowing them to focus on their students, not their bookkeeping.*

“The change made it through Congress with a strong bipartisan effort. Leading that effort was a man with more than a passing interest in education....

*“Yes, you can say there was more than interest that drove **Alexander** to lead the way to reforming the failed reform of the U.S. education system. Experience had a lot to do with it. So did a love of learning.”*



Alexander prevails in long fight against virtual ‘national school board’

*“Seventeen months ago, an eternity in politics, U.S. Sen. **Lamar Alexander** (R-Maryville) was under sharp attack in Tennessee’s Republican primary for not pledging to abolish Common Core. In the same election, Alexander likewise refused to defend Common Core. Instead, he took the position that the selection of state education standards should be up to the states and Washington should ‘keep its sticky fingers’ off the topic.*

*“Wednesday, **Alexander**, who chairs the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, achieved what he told voters in 2014 he intended to do.*

“The Senate passed 85-12 a No Child Left Behind Law revision that he sponsored along with the HELP Committee’s Democratic vice chairman, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington. It explicitly prohibits the U.S. Department of Education from either mandating or encouraging through incentives the adoption of Common Core or any particular set of academic standards. President Obama signed it into law Thursday.”



The President Just Signed a Bill That Will Transform Education

“President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act into law Thursday morning, [a day after the Senate voted to pass the bill.](#)

“The Every Student Succeeds Act replaces the oft-criticized Bush-era No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The NCLB programs expired in 2007, but for years Congress struggled to compromise on a replacement.

“Obama hailed the new law as a true bipartisan effort, calling the bill signing a ‘Christmas miracle.’

*“‘I was telling **Lamar** we should do this more often,’ he said, referring to Sen. **Lamar Alexander** (R-Tenn.), who was one of the chief architects of the bill.”*

The Washington Post

Opinion: Distinguished pol of the week

“This past week, the GOP achieved something extraordinary — it reversed centralization of power in Washington, D.C....

The overhaul will have a profound impact on public education policy in much of the country by giving state leaders control over evaluating teachers, testing students and improving failing schools.

“Wednesday’s vote was a defining moment for Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the lead Republican negotiator on the bill in the Senate and a former governor and U.S. education secretary... The vote also represented a rare case of cordial bipartisanship in Congress. Top negotiators ironed out their differences quietly and won over critics throughout the political spectrum.

“For Alexander, chairman of the Senate education committee, the victory was in shrinking the federal government’s role in education....

For all that we can say, well done, Senator Alexander.”

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Editorial: No Child Left Behind’s Successor

*“A bipartisan compromise has emerged from the Senate and House ... [that] **would represent the largest devolution of federal control to the states in a quarter-century.**”*

Action During 2015

Fixed No Child Left Behind

As lead Republican on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Alexander fixed No Child Left Behind. This new law helps 50 million children and three million teachers in our country's 100,000 public schools.

Last year, campaigning for reelection, Alexander said to Tennessee voters, "Give us a Republican majority in the United States Senate and we'll repeal the federal Common Core mandate and reverse the trend toward a national school board."

In December, the United States Congress did just that. The Wall Street Journal called Senator Alexander's legislation fixing the 2001 No Child Left Behind law "the largest devolution of federal control to states in a quarter of a century."

Supported a Balanced Budget

Alexander supported a budget to help bring the nation's \$18 trillion federal debt under control. Republicans put forth a budget that balanced in 10 years without raising taxes and took initial steps at slowing the growth of out-of-control mandatory entitlement spending.

Alexander said, "Passing a balanced budget is a good first step, but we still have more work to do. The federal debt is not the result of overspending on the military, highways or cancer research. We must continue to fund these priorities and pass a plan like the Fiscal Sustainability Act Sen. Corker and I introduced last Congress to slow the growth of entitlement spending by nearly \$1 trillion over 10 years."

Permanently Ended the Threat of Medicare Payment Cuts to Doctors

In April, Alexander voted for the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act that will permanently put an end to the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR), which capped Medicare payments to physicians.

Alexander worked alongside members of the Tennessee delegation to ensure that the legislation also included funding for Tennessee's Medicaid disproportionate share hospital (DSH) program. The bill includes 10 years of funding for the Tennessee DSH program, which will help Tennessee hospitals cover the costs of caring for low-income patients.

Opposed Obama's "Bad Deal" with Iran

In September, Alexander voted against President Obama's deal with Iran. Alexander called the nuclear agreement with Iran a "bad deal" for the United States – one that will legitimize Iran's nuclear program and encourage an arms race in the most unstable part of the world. The agreement takes pressure off Iran at a time when pressure is likely to succeed.

Alexander said the United States should negotiate with Iran from a position of strength, with a program of increased pressure on Iran devised to force Iran to accept established norms of international conduct.

Supported Energy Research, Waterways and National Security

Alexander drafted Energy and Water appropriations legislation that increased funding for basic energy research – which supports facilities in Oak Ridge – removed major obstacles to nuclear power, cleaned up hazardous materials at Cold War facilities and helped solve critical problems facing Tennessee and our country. The bill also provided funding to allow construction of Chickamauga Lock to restart in 2016.

Stood up for Tennessee Anglers

In May, Alexander announced a permanent agreement to keep the Erwin National Fish Hatchery in Erwin and the Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery in Celina open beyond 2016. TVA agreed to support the hatcheries in the same way that the Army Corps of Engineers does when it replaces fish killed by dams on the Cumberland River and the same way the Bonneville Power Administration supports replacing fish on the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

Nearly 900,000 Tennesseans and visitors buy fishing and hunting licenses each year, and this agreement meant that the federal fish

hatcheries in Erwin, Dale Hollow and Georgia will continue to provide the more than 1 million fish each year that make Tennessee's trout fishing some of the best in the country.

Made Higher Education Reform a Priority

In January, Alexander introduced bipartisan legislation that would make it easier for more than 40,000 Tennesseans to get financial aid to go to college. The bill simplifies the process to apply for and receive federal financial aid by reducing the federal student aid form, or the FAFSA, from 108 questions to two. The bill also allows year-round use of Pell Grants, discourages over-borrowing and simplifies repayments.

Alexander also led a series of Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing to examine the state of higher education in our country. The committee discussed a report, entitled "Recalibrating Regulation of Colleges and Universities," that outlined 59 specific regulations, requirements and areas for Congress and the Department of Education to consider—listing 10 especially problematic regulations to help "weed the garden" of unnecessary and duplicative regulations and allow colleges to spend more of their time and money educating students.

Proposed the "Oak Ridge Corridor"

In September, Alexander proposed calling the highway from Knoxville airport to Oak Ridge the "Oak Ridge Corridor," because this area is in the middle of one of our country's most formidable concentrations of brainpower. In Anderson, Roane and Knox counties, more than 40,000 people have graduate or professional degrees. This includes 1,600 scientists and engineers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, more than 1,000 PhDs at the University of Tennessee and hundreds of engineers at TVA and at Y-12.

Alexander said "more than ever before, the Oak Ridge-Knoxville area is finally solving the mystery that has stymied so many for the last 40 years – and that is: How do you turn all this brainpower into jobs for East Tennesseans? I can think of no better calling card for a job recruiter than to be able to go anywhere in the world and say, 'I'm from the Oak Ridge Corridor.'"

Fought the National Labor Relations Board “Ambush Elections” and “Joint Employer” Rules

In December 2014, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a new regulation that shortened the length of time in which a union election is held to as few as 11 days. This forces a union election before employers have a chance to figure out what is going on and doesn't give employees enough time to get both sides of the story about what unionization will mean for them and their workplace. It jeopardizes employees' privacy by requiring employers to turn over employees' private information, such as phone numbers, email addresses, and work hours, to union leaders.

Alexander led the fight against this rule, and also took on the NLRB's "joint employer" decision, which steals the American dream from owners of the nation's 780,000 franchise businesses and millions of contractors. The NLRB's new standard makes big businesses bigger and the middle class smaller by discouraging companies from franchising and contracting work to small businesses.

Led the Fight Against Wasteful Federal Wind Subsidies

Alexander continued to lead the fight in the Senate to end the wind production tax credit (wind PTC) arguing in speeches from the Senate floor, op-eds in major national publications that Washington cannot afford to pay billions of taxpayer dollars in subsidies that deliver expensive, unreliable electricity and the tax credit should be eliminated.

Encouraged Use of Nuclear Power and Proposed Ways to Solve the Nuclear Waste Stalemate

Alexander, as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development, worked to help unleash the abundance of clean, cheap, reliable energy that nuclear power can provide to power our 21st-century economy. This is important because nuclear power provides 60 percent of our reliable, air-pollution-free electricity.

Alexander held hearings on nuclear waste, energy research, nuclear energy vs. renewable energy, and energy reliability. Alexander also introduced legislation to begin consolidating spent nuclear fuel and finding a permanent repository for the nation's nuclear waste.

Offered Help for Tennessee's Songwriters

Senator Alexander led efforts to remove government restrictions to ensure songwriters receive compensation based on the fair market value of their songs.

Songwriter compensation is dictated by the federal government, and has increased only 7 cents over 100 years and is currently 9.1 cents per song.

The Songwriter Equity Act would direct the federal government to set compensation according to the fair market value when songs are sold, such as through music downloads and CD purchases, replacing the current below-market standard.

Supported Legislation to End Human Trafficking

Alexander supported the Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking Act, bipartisan legislation to help end human trafficking in the United States by improving law enforcement's ability to target criminals engaged in human trafficking and hold them responsible under the law. The bill adds a \$5,000 penalty for convicted sex offenders, traffickers and smugglers, which will be used to pay for block grants to support victims of trafficking. Alexander also cosponsored Senator Corker's End Slavery Act, which would help eliminate slavery and human trafficking around the globe.

Focused on Vaccines to Help Save More Lives

Last September, Alexander's committee held a hearing about Ebola, which was spreading rapidly and had produced a near panic in the U.S. In response, Congress appropriated more than \$5 billion to fight the spread of the virus.

Alexander held a hearing in February to discuss the re-emergence of vaccine-preventable diseases and talk about what is causing outbreaks in our country for diseases for which we have a vaccine and why some parents are choosing not to vaccinate their children. Sound science is this: Vaccines save lives.

Legislation

Authored or cosponsored 6 pieces of legislation that became law:

- **Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95)** – A law to fix No Child Left Behind by reversing the trend toward a national school board and restoring to states, communities and teachers the responsibility for improving student achievement.
- **WIOA Technical Amendments Act (P.L. 114-18)** – A law to provide bipartisan updates to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passed last Congress.
- **Protecting Our Infants Act (P.L. 114-91)** – A law to improve the prevention and treatment of opioid use disorders among pregnant women and care for newborns exposed during pregnancy.
- **Improving Regulatory Transparency for New Medical Therapies Act (P.L. 114-89)** – A law to streamline Drug Enforcement Administration regulation of new drugs, so patients can access safe and effective drugs that contain controlled substances more quickly.
- **Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act (P.L. 114-104)** – A law to reauthorize the National Cord Blood Inventory Program and the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program. These programs help match patients in need of a transplant with unrelated bone marrow and cord blood donors.
- **Federal Perkins Loan Program Extension Act (P.L. 114-105)** – A law to extend the Perkins Loan Program two years for eligible undergraduate students and one year for graduate students who already received a Perkins Loan.

Was the principal sponsor (or author) of 25 other pieces of legislation, including:

- **Financial Aid Simplification and Transparency Act (S. 108)** – A bill to eliminate the FAFSA by reducing the 10-page application to two questions about family size and household income.
- **Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act (S. 192)** – A bill to support social and nutrition services—from home-delivered meals to senior centers—for nearly 12 million U.S. seniors.
- **Strengthening Education through Research Act (S. 227)** – A bill to support education research activities at the Department of Education while increasing privacy protections and increasing independence for the National Assessment Governing Board overseeing the National Assessment of Educational Progress.
- **National Labor Relations Board Reform Act (S. 288)** – A bill to end partisan advocacy, rein in the general counsel, and encourage timely decision-making at the National Labor Relations Board.
- **Exascale Computing for Science, Competitiveness, Advanced Manufacturing, Leadership, and the Economy Act (S. 454)** – A bill to authorize funding to develop at least two different types of exascale supercomputers capable of a billion calculations per second, which is a thousand-fold increase over the supercomputers in use today.
- **Preserving Employee Wellness Programs Act (S. 620)** – A bill to reaffirm existing law and overturn the EEOC’s “Wellness” rule which makes it harder for employees to choose healthy lifestyles and save money.
- **Tennessee Wilderness Act (S. 755)** – A bill to designate nearly 20,000 acres in six areas of the Cherokee National Forest as wilderness areas.

- **Nuclear Waste Administration Act (S. 854)** – A bill to safeguard and permanently dispose of the nation’s stockpiles of spent nuclear fuel, which are currently accumulating at separate sites across the country.
- **Stop Sexual Abuse by School Personnel Act (S. 856)** – A bill that requires schools to have policies and procedures in effect that require a criminal background check for each school employee in public elementary and secondary schools.
- **Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act (S. 933)** – A bill to adopt long-standing National Labor Relations Board election procedures and prevent the Board from implementing sweeping changes on the workplace.
- **Energy Efficiency Regulations (S. 1047)** – A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to review rulemaking proceedings of other Federal agencies to avoid adverse effects on the cost, time, or difficulty of complying with energy efficiency regulations, guidelines, or standards.
- **Ceiling Fan Regulations (S.1048)** – A bill to remove the authority of the Secretary of Energy to amend or issue new energy efficiency standards for ceiling fans.
- **Horse Protection Amendments Act (S.1161)** – A bill to end the contemptible and illegal practice of horse soring.
- **Energy Title of America COMPETES Reauthorization Act (S. 1398)** – A bill to authorize a 4 percent increase in funding each year for basic energy research and reauthorizes the Department of Energy’s Office of Science and ARPA-E, an agency that supports research in energy technology.
- **James K. Polk Presidential Home Study Act (S. 1483)** – A bill to require the Secretary of Interior to conduct a special resource study and evaluate the suitability and feasibility of designating the site as a unit of the National Park System.

- **Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act (S. 1893)** – A bill to extend programs to help prevent suicide among youths, ensure the nation’s health care system is better prepared to provide support to children and families in the wake of traumatic events, and equip teachers and others to recognize and understand mental illness.
- **Shiloh National Military Park Boundary Adjustment and Parker’s Crossroads Battlefield Designation Act (S.1943)** – A bill to expand the boundaries of Shiloh National Military Park to include three Civil War battlefields in Tennessee and Mississippi and designate Parker’s Crossroads as an affiliated area of the National Park System.
- **Protecting Local Business Opportunity Act (S.2015)** – A bill to roll back the National Labor Relations Board’s “joint employer” decision, which “threatens to steal the American dream from owners of the nation’s 780,000 franchise businesses and millions of contractors.”
- **A resolution to stop the NLRB from implementing its “ambush election” rule, which shortens union elections to as little as 11 days, and prevents the NLRB from issuing “substantially similar” rulemaking in the future. The resolution was vetoed by the president (S.J.Res.8)**
- **A resolution to amend the Standing Rules of the Senate to revise the number of votes required to end debate on nominations (S.Res. 67)**
- **A resolution congratulating the students, parents, teachers, and administrators of charter schools across the United States for making ongoing contributions to education, and supporting the ideals and goals of the 16th annual National Charter Schools Week (S.Res. 171)**
- **A resolution designating June 20, 2015, as "American Eagle Day" and celebrating the recovery and restoration of the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States (S.Res.203)**

- **A resolution designating October 30, 2015, as a national day of remembrance for nuclear weapons program workers (S.Res. 213)**
- **A resolution commemorating October 22, 2015, as the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 (S.Res. 288)**
- **A resolution designating the week beginning November 8, 2015, as "National Nurse-Managed Health Clinic Week" (S.Res. 303)**

Cosponsored more than 80 other pieces of legislation, including:

- **ObamaCare Repeal Act (S.336)** – A bill to repeal Obamacare.
- **Keystone XL Pipeline Approval Act (S. 1)** – A bill to support the approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline.
- **Forty Hours Is Full Time Act of 2015 (S.30)** – A bill to define a "full-time employee" under Obamacare as an employee who is employed on average at least 40 hours per week.
- **Medical Device Access and Innovation Protection Act (S.149)** – A bill to repeal the excise tax on medical device manufacturers and importers.
- **Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act (S. 150)** – A bill to require biennial budgeting for the federal government.
- **The CHOICE Act (S.265)** – A bill to expand school choice options though expanded school opportunities for military families, changes to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship, and make Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funds portable.

- **Marketplace and Internet Tax Fairness Act (S. 698)** – A bill to prohibit taxes on internet access and allow states and local government to enforce existing state and local sales taxes on the sale of goods over the internet.
- **Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage Family Caregivers Act of 2015 (S. 1719)** – A bill to direct the Department of Health and Human Services to develop, maintain, and periodically update a National Family Caregiving Strategy.
- **Songwriter Equity Act (S. 662)** – A bill to allow songwriters to receive compensation based on the fair market value of their songs.
- **A bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (S. 338)**
- **Quadrennial Energy Review Act of 2014 (S. 1033)** – A bill to replace the current biennial policy plan with a Quadrennial Energy Review.
- **Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act of 2014 (S. 283)** – A bill to delay for one year a proposed regulation by the IRS related to the tax exempt status of social welfare organizations.
- **Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (S. 524)** – A bill to authorize programs to help states, law enforcement agencies, and doctors address our country’s opioid epidemic.
- **National Park Access Act (S. 145)** – A bill to refund the States that opened their National Parks during the October 2013 Federal government shutdown.
- **Death Tax Repeal Act (S. 860)** – A bill to repeal the federal estate tax.
- **Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (S. 615)** – A bill to give Congress the ability to review the nuclear weapons agreement with Iran.

- **Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act (S. 697)** – A bill to amend and update the Toxic Substances Control Act.
- **Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act of 2014 (S. 405)** – A bill to expand access for hunting, fishing, and recreational activities as well as supports habitat conservation programs.
- **Pilot’s Bill of Rights 2 (S. 571)** – A bill to require the Federal Aviation Administration to revise medical certification requirements for certain pilots.
- **Davis-Bacon Repeal Act (S. 1785)** – A bill to repeal the wage requirement of the Davis-Bacon Act.
- **Employee Rights Act (S. 1874)** – A bill to prevent a labor organization or its agents from interfering with the rights of employees.

For a complete list of legislation sponsored and cosponsored by Senator Alexander, please visit: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Energy & Water Appropriations

- In 2015, Senator Alexander served as the Senate's top Republican on energy and water appropriations.
- The Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittee is responsible for providing funding for the Department of Energy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and several other independent agencies including the Appalachian Regional Commission.
- Oak Ridge receives nearly \$3 billion each year from the Department of Energy. This year, Alexander oversaw funding for the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, cleanup activities, and continued construction of the Uranium Processing Facility, which processes enriched uranium for nuclear weapons systems. Alexander has pushed to keep costs under control, in part through the Red Team review led by Oak Ridge National Laboratory director Thom Mason.
- Alexander has conducted rigorous oversight of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. At a budget hearing, Alexander criticized the Obama Administration's failure to request any funds in the president's budget request to restart replacement of Chickamauga Lock.
- Working with his colleagues to get a result, Senator Alexander's subcommittee approved an appropriations bill that set funding priorities for the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Awards & Recognition

For his support of conservation:

- **“TNC Conservation Champion”** – From The Nature Conservancy of Tennessee for his efforts to preserve a healthy planet by advocating to protect and preserve the mountains of East Tennessee.
- **“Pugsley Award”** – From The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration for his stewardship in national parks conservation.
- **“National Park Heritage Award”** – From the National Parks Conservation Association for his support of the preservation of Manhattan Project sites, including sites at Oak Ridge, as national parks.

In addition Alexander received:

- **“Leadership Service Award”** – From the Waterways Council, Inc. for his "steadfast commitment to the modernization of our nation's inland waterways."
- **“James M. Ashbrook Award”** – From the Ashbrook Center for his work in championing American history and civics education.
- **“Promise of America Award”** – From America's Promise Alliance to recognize his "life-long and tireless efforts to see that all of our nation's children get the quality education they deserve."
- **“Goodwill Policymaker Award”** – From Goodwill "for his commitment to advancing Goodwill's mission of helping people build careers and gain employment."

Major Addresses

- **Remarks to the Nuclear Energy Industry – February 15 speech, Washington, D.C.** – “I’m here today to talk about something you wouldn’t think you’d talk about at the Nuclear Energy Institute – what would the United States be like without nuclear power? A day that I don’t want to see in our country’s future. That may seem like an unlikely scenario. In fact, it’s a real threat to our economy and our way of life. According to a 2013 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, up to 25 of our 99 reactors could be closed by the year 2020.”
- **Remarks to the Council of Chief State School Officers – March 24 speech, Washington, D.C.** – “There are well-meaning people here who believe that children in our country deserve a better education. In fact, we’ve created a “national school board.” There was one teacher that told me a national HR department. The problem with that is that it doesn’t work very well, any better than being a helicopter parent does. Better strategy if you want higher standards, if you want better teacher evaluation, if you want to fix low performing schools, is to put the spotlight on something, to enable states to help local school districts and let them figure out how to do it themselves.”
- **Honoring Chattanooga Shooting Victims – July 21 speech, Washington, D.C.** – “I am enormously impressed with the people of Chattanooga, with their current leaders – the mayor, the governor, their senator who is also their former mayor – and I believe that Chattanooga will be strong, but I think it’s important that we reflect here in the United States Senate how much we grieve with Chattanooga – not just with the families, not just with the people who knew the five. But as we honor the five, we honor the city and its response to this terrible tragedy...”
- **Speech to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, October 20, Washington, D.C.** – “So, my own view is that we need to invest more in research. Government is about setting priorities and that needs to be a priority. Ben Bernanke wrote a column in The Wall Street

Journal the other day and said the fed could be useful. But monetary policy was not enough to make the country grow; that we needed to train workers, we needed infrastructure, and we need research and development.”

Op-eds

- [Reduce questions to apply for Pell Grants](#) – **Op-Ed in the *Knoxville News Sentinel*** – “For the last 30 years, Tennessee's greatest need has been for better-trained workers to fill the jobs created by companies attracted to our business-friendly, centrally located state. Community colleges and technical institutes are our secret weapon for this kind of training, and too many Tennesseans don't take advantage of them. When the governor — and now the president — say that two years of advanced education are not only free but important, people listen. Last year, I held roundtable discussions at four of our two-year institutions and learned that applications for admission have doubled or tripled. The reason, obviously, is Tennessee Promise. But I also learned that there's a major obstacle to more students taking advantage of Tennessee Promise, and it's not more money — it's federal paperwork.”
- [Smart aid for collegians](#) – **Op-Ed in the *USA Today* with Sens. Roy Blunt and Ben Sasse**– “President Obama was in the right church but the wrong pew when he proposed providing free community college tuition for some students. The president was wrong to try to turn one state's good idea into a huge new federal program. This would put the federal government in charge of regulating the 13th and 14th grades of U.S. education. It would deny students the option to use this new federal aid at private 2-year or 4-year institutions or 4-year public universities, a choice that has been available since 1944 when Congress passed the first federal college access program — the GI Bill. It would spend as much as \$60 billion in federal dollars mostly to help students whose income is not low enough to qualify for existing federal aid.”
- [Change FAFSA form, eliminate college barrier](#) – **Op-Ed in the *Tennessean*** – “Now that Tennessee Promise guarantees every Tennessee high school graduate two years of tuition-free community college, the main obstacle standing between a Tennessee high school graduate and two years of free higher education is a ridiculously complex federal form. A solution,

introduced by a bipartisan group of United States senators, would reduce the application to only what is necessary — as few as two questions.”

- **[We have a plan for fixing health care](#) – Op-Ed in the *Washington Post* with Sens. Orrin Hatch and John Barrasso – “Republicans have a plan to create a bridge away from Obamacare. We have had many discussions with our Senate and House Republican colleagues on this issue, and there is a great deal of consensus on how to proceed. Many of our colleagues have good ideas, and we look forward to working together.”**
- **[Human Faces Tell How Nissan Has Transformed Tennessee’s Economy](#) – Op-Ed in the *Tennessean* – “The story of how Nissan has transformed Tennessee’s economy is one that often is told in cars and trucks and dollars and cents. Those things are important – nearly one-third of Tennessee’s manufacturing jobs are auto related – but we also have to remember the human faces that help tell the story of Nissan’s success over the last 35 years.”**
- **[Sunset Symphony has been showcase for city’s contributions to music](#) – Op-Ed in the *Commercial Appeal* – “Memphis in May puts on three of the city’s largest events — the Beale Street Music Festival, the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest and the Sunset Symphony. This month long celebration is more than a rich tradition. It’s also a huge source of economic development for the community. The festival brings in more than \$70 million each year and promotes tourism like no other event in the city.”**
- **[Let’s Fix No Child Left Behind, End Common Core Mandate](#) – Op-Ed in the *Tennessean* – “I negotiated the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 with the Senate education committee’s Ranking Member Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. We found a consensus about the urgent need to fix this law as well as a remarkable consensus about how to fix it. That consensus was this: Continue the law’s important measurements of academic progress of students but restore to states, school districts, classroom teachers and parents the responsibility for deciding what to do about improving student achievement.”**

- **[College Too Expensive? That's a Myth](#) – Op-Ed in the *Wall Street Journal* – “Paying for college never is easy, but it’s easier than most people think. Yet some politicians and pundits say students can’t afford a college education. That’s wrong. Most of them can. Public two-year colleges, for example, are free or nearly free for low-income students. Nationally, community college tuition and fees average \$3,300 per year, according to the College Board. The annual federal Pell grant for these students—which does not have to be paid back—also averages \$3,300.”**
 - **[Naming highway ‘Oak Ridge Corridor’ good for region’s business](#) – Op-Ed in the *Knoxville News Sentinel* – “It’s time to name the four-lane highway from the Knoxville airport to Oak Ridge the ‘Oak Ridge Corridor.’ I can think of no better calling card for a job recruiter from the Knoxville area than to walk into an office of any corporation anywhere in the world and say, “I am from the ‘Oak Ridge Corridor.’ Let me tell you what we have in East Tennessee that can help your company make a profit, hire more employees and succeed.”**
 - **[Obama Should ‘Stop and Think’ On Over-Testing Problem](#) – Op-Ed in *Time Magazine* – “The president is right about students taking too many tests. But I hope he will stop and think before trying to cure over-testing by telling teachers exactly how much time to spend on testing or what the tests should be. Classroom teachers know better than Washington how to assess their students’ progress. They also know that the real reason we have too many tests is that there are too many federal mandates that put high stakes on student test results, and that one more Washington decree—even if it is only a recommendation for now—is not the way to solve the problem of too many federal mandates.”**
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For more information about Senator Alexander, please visit his website:

<http://alexander.senate.gov>