
PROTECTIVE LIFE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA[®] | Division of
Student Life
Blackburn Institute

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Online via Zoom

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Meeting Itinerary

Thursday, January 14

- 3:00pm Session I: Economic and Budget Overview with Greg Barker (President, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama), State Rep. Steve Clouse (Chair, Alabama House Ways and Means – General Fund Committee) and Robyn Hyden (Executive Director, Alabama Arise)
- 4:30pm Session II: Conversation with the Hon. Bradley Byrne (Former U.S. Representative – Alabama 1st Congressional District)
- 6:00pm Session III: Conversation with the Hon. Doug Jones (Former U.S. Senator – Alabama)
- 7:00pm One-on-one reflections and overview of Friday

Friday, January 15

- 8:00am Session IV: Law Enforcement Reform with State Rep. Anthony Daniels (Alabama House Minority Leader), Officer Johnny Hollingsworth (Community Resource Officer, Huntsville Police Department), Dr. Ransey O’Daniel (President, 10-4 Corporation), and State Rep. Rex Reynolds (Member, Alabama House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee)
- 9:30am Session V: State of Public Education with Superintendent Eric Mackey (Alabama State Department of Education) and Terry Roller (Assistant State Superintendent)
- 10:45am Session VI: COVID-19 and Public Health with Commissioner Kim Boswell (Alabama Department of Mental Health), Dr. Henna Budhwani (Assistant Professor of Public Health, UAB), Dr. Scott Harris (State Health Officer, Alabama Department of Public Health), and Ryan Kelly (Executive Director, Alabama Rural Hospital Association)
- 12:00pm Small Groups
- 12:30pm Lunch Break (Offline)
- 1:30pm Session VII: Alabama Broadband with Trey Hayes (Connectivity Team Leader, Alabama Power), Chris Murphy (Energy Division Program Manager, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs), and Michelle Roth (Executive Director, Alabama Cable and Broadband Association)
- 3:00pm Session VIII: Prisons with Dena Dickerson (Program Director, Offender Alumni Network), Katie Glenn (Policy Associate, Southern Poverty Law Center), Director Cam Ward (Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles), State Rep. Mike Ball (Member, Alabama House Judiciary Committee)
- 4:30pm Evening Reflections

Session I

Below are biographies of the speakers for Session I, exploring the state of Alabama's economy.

Greg Barker

Greg Barker is president for the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama.

Rep. Steve Clouse

Rep. Steve Clouse was first elected to the Alabama House of Representatives 1994. He is currently serves as chairman of the House Ways and Means General Fund Committee and is a member of the Military and Veteran Affairs Committee. Steve is Vice-President of the Clouse Marketing Company and is a member of the First United Methodist Church. He has served as past president of the Ozark Rotary Club and is a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International. Steve is former chairman of the Dale County United Way and and graduate of Wiregrass Leadership. He is married with two children and four grandchildren.



Representative Clouse is an alumnus of The University of Alabama.

Robyn Hyden

Robyn Hyden returned to Arise as executive director in 2018, having previously worked as one of Arise's north Alabama organizers. In her most recent role as director of grants management at the United Way of Central Alabama, she was responsible for fund development and evaluation for numerous poverty alleviation programs. Robyn is a Pelham native and a graduate of Vanderbilt University, where she edited the Orbis student newspaper. She also worked as an Americorps VISTA volunteer with Alabama Possible and directed development and communications at Urban Ministry in Birmingham. She lives with her husband, Zac, in Montgomery.



MONTGOMERY, Ala. - Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law the state's two budgets Monday after a unique and at some points tense final weeks of the 2020 regular legislative session.

"I appreciate the hard work of the Legislature during an unprecedented regular session," Ivey said in an emailed statement.

"While we have yet to know the full impact of COVID-19 on our state, these budgets will ensure continuity of government, while being fiscally responsible. There is more work to be done, and I look forward to working with the Legislature in the days ahead."

A record-breaking \$7.2 billion Education Trust Fund budget was approved, as well as a \$2.3 billion General Fund budget, both for fiscal year 2021, which begins in October.

Both budgets have increases from the current fiscal year, but are considerably less than what was proposed before the coronavirus pandemic hit Alabama and impacted state revenues. Budget writers said they do not expect proration, or automatic spending cuts, on this fiscal year's budget.

The education budget has an increase of \$91 million over this year, which is about \$300 million less from what was proposed at the beginning of the session.

"We're pleased with where we are, we're making progress and supporting valuable programs, but we certainly haven't reached our goal yet," Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, told Alabama Daily News. He's chairman of the Senate education budget committee.

The 2021 budget funds the Alabama Literacy Act, which Orr said is key to improving reading comprehension and overall education in the state.

It all doubles the amount spent on English language learners, which is particularly key to several north Alabama school systems with a significant percentage of students from Central America. Improving those students' English skills is critical to their success and also the systems that are graded on educational achievement.

Ivey also signed Monday a bill authorizing a \$1.25 billion bond issue for K-12 and higher education capital improvement projects.

"It will pay dividends for schools to upgrade their facilities," Orr said.

The General Fund saw an overall increase of \$167.3 million from the current year's budget.

The biggest expenses in the General Fund budget are for Medicaid at \$820 million; the Alabama Department of Corrections at \$544 million; the Alabama Department of Public Health at \$106 million with a significant portion of that paying for health insurance for low-income children; and the Alabama Department of Mental Health at \$154 million.

Rep. Steve Clouse, R-Ozark, called the 2021 General Fund an “adequate” budget, but not what lawmakers thought in February they’d have for getting some state agencies above pre-recession spending levels.

“It gives us three to six months to see where things are going with the pandemic, the economy,” Clouse told Alabama Daily News.

Lawmakers cut nearly \$20 million in proposed 2021 funding increases for early childhood development and the state’s pre-K program, one of Ivey’s priority projects. The program still got a \$5 million increase to expand access to the award-winning program.

One of the items struck from the originally proposed budget was a 3% raise for educators. State employees aren’t getting 2021 raises either.

Lawmakers also allocated schools about \$260 million for immediate use from the Advancement and Technology Fund. State law normally says schools and colleges can use that money for specific one-time uses, like maintenance, technology and security upgrades. This year, Orr said, restrictions were lifted to give schools more flexibility in the spending.

House Speaker Mac McCutcheon said he was proud that the Legislature was able to pass two “healthy” budgets within the time and physical constraints they were under because of COVID-19 concerns.

“I think we did a very good job in very difficult circumstances, and we ended up with two very good budgets,” McCutcheon said on Monday.

<https://www.wbrc.com/2020/05/18/ivey-signs-state-budgets-into-law/>

Monday, June 8, 2020

To members of the Alabama Legislature,

Alabama is struggling. Even after Governor Ivey issued an emergency stay-at-home order, the average number of new coronavirus cases continues to rise. And despite those climbing case numbers, Alabama is moving forward with reopening its economy. To accomplish a successful recovery, residents must have confidence that it is safe to be in public and workers must be able to work in safe environments without fear for their health or the health and safety of their families. **We are asking that you support the following recommendations so that Alabama will use the \$1.9 billion under the Coronavirus Relief Fund to heal and protect the communities who have and will continue to shoulder the high costs of this crisis.**

The Alabama Legislature, in consultation with Governor Ivey, has divided these federal funds into large categories of spending. Governor Ivey now has provided a method by which you and your colleagues may request release of the funds for coronavirus-related expenditures.

We recognize that \$1.9 billion is inadequate to address the long-term needs of Alabamians as the present economic crisis continues to unfold. Consequently, you and your colleagues will need to find additional revenue sources to ensure that Alabama's economy does not weaken further and that its residents are sufficiently protected from future spikes in infections. We look forward to working with you on those longer discussions.

Our recommendations aim to provide support where it is most needed, reflecting the disparate impact of the crisis. Highly educated workers have largely been able to work from home. Low-wage and many essential workers have not. Unemployment rates are highest for workers who have less than a bachelor's degree and are higher in our Latinx and Black communities. We have also seen the largest gender gap in unemployment, where women experience unemployment at a nearly 3% higher rate than men. Our response to the pandemic and our use of the Coronavirus Relief Funds need to heal this harm, not exacerbate the disparities that already exist.

However the taxpayer-funded payments are distributed, they must be openly accounted with reasonable but sufficient detail. In addition to public reporting of expenditures, the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts must be authorized to audit receipts and expenditures of all agencies within its purview and to request accounting from other CARES Act funding recipients.

Ensuring Safe Workplaces and Families

As Florida and Georgia have shown, merely reopening the economy does not bring back customers or jobs. Both states have seen ongoing unemployment claims at rates higher than other states in the nation. Alabama must ensure that workplaces are safe, that workers' families are cared for, and that state and local services are ready for people to come back before the more than 500,000 newly unemployed can return to work. These recommendations focus mostly on needs that can be met with the \$300 million earmarked for supporting businesses, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations.

Working

Working outside the home brings with it the very real risk that you will become infected. The primary concern of many workers is that they will become infected on the job and, in turn, infect their family.

To make work safe, we must fund testing and contact tracing, provide protective and sanitary equipment, and create new workspaces that minimize the possibility of transmission.

High-risk and essential workplaces, such as poultry plants, warehouses, grocery stores, child care centers, nursing homes and hospitals, require repeated and random testing for workers who do not appear ill, immediate testing of anyone who has symptoms of the novel coronavirus, and contact tracing for employees, their families, and the public who have come in contact with an employee who has tested positive.

Alabama should use a portion of the \$300 million earmarked for the support of citizens, businesses, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations directly impacted by the pandemic or providing assistance to those affected to provide:

- The tests necessary for business and government agencies that have reopened;
- Contact tracing of positive test results;
- Personal protective equipment for employees of those business and government agencies; and
- Increased sanitary stations within essential workplaces.

Alabama also needs to develop or adopt technical assistance on workplace safety detailing how employers test for COVID-19, use PPE, and create safer workspaces.

In exchange for providing these supplies and equipment, Alabama must require businesses to adopt paid sick leave requirements for all employees to protect other employees and the public from transmission of the virus and allow employees to get tested without fear of losing their jobs.

When allocating these funds, Alabama should **prioritize supporting minority-owned and woman-owned local businesses** and provide small business loans or grants to these businesses to retain employees or make workplaces safer. Minority-owned businesses received fewer Small Business Administration loans under the CARES Act, and because the business owners have less access to credit, they rely on personal funds more than white-owned businesses to finance their work.¹

In addition, Alabama should follow Congress's example and provide a one-time tax rebate to low-income households to assist families who are unemployed and underemployed.

¹ The SBA Inspector General found that the SBA failed to instruct lenders to prioritize underserved and rural markets. [cite – found at https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/SBA_OIG_Report_20-14_508.pdf on May 27, 2020]. Disparities in lending between minority-owned and white businesses already existed as documented by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's December 2019 Small Business Credit Survey. [cite – found at <https://www.fedsmba.org/media/library/fedsmba/files/2019/20191211-ced-minority-owned-firms-report.pdf> on May 27, 2020]

Families

One of the largest hurdles for families who are prepared to go to work is finding affordable and safe child care. Approximately one in four working adults has a child under age 18 and in two-thirds of two-parent families with children, both parents work. However, not every family can afford child care. Low-income families who pay for child care spend around 35% of their income on that care. To ensure parents are able to return to work, Alabama needs to provide child care for low-income families. This includes supporting low-income families by making child care affordable and supporting child care centers that are at risk of closing.

Stable families need stable homes. While Governor Ivey's April 3 proclamation alleviated the immediate threat of eviction and foreclosure, it does not solve the long-term problem for Alabamians unable to pay rent or mortgages now that the emergency order has expired. Many families will not be able to pay the back rent that has accumulated. About a third of low-income and nearly two-thirds of extremely low-income households in Alabama pay more than half of their income on rent and utilities every month. The total cost of rent support needed in Alabama for the duration of this crisis is estimated at a little over \$1 billion.²

These families and their landlords urgently need rent relief. To meet this significant need, Alabama must:

- Allocate and leverage Coronavirus Relief Fund money in coordination with other sources of federal and private housing assistance funds; and
- Provide emergency relief, through homeless and other nonprofit agencies, for families at risk of eviction, foreclosure or loss of utility service.

Other states have already taken this important step. Montana used \$50 million of the Coronavirus Relief Funds it received to provide tenant and homeowner relief. The Pennsylvania Legislature reserved \$150 million for emergency rental assistance from its federal funding. Likewise, Illinois allocated \$396 million of its funds for housing assistance. It reserved \$100 million specifically to meet the needs of people in disproportionately impacted areas based on COVID-19 cases and \$79 million for counties that did not receive direct allotments from the federal Coronavirus Relief Funds. Alabama needs to take similar steps to protect its families who rent.

These solutions do not address the overwhelming need for more affordable housing in Alabama. To address this long-term goal, Alabama needs to increase its stock of affordable housing by funding the Housing Trust Fund administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

As more Alabama families lose jobs or work hours, hunger is growing in the state. In the last week of May, the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey found that over 10% of Alabama households are experiencing food insecurity--a significant increase from the first week of the

² Estimate from the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

crisis. Therefore, we must greatly increase our support to Alabama-based food banks that provide emergency food to hungry families.

Improving Alabama's Health

COVID-19 is exposing chronic and deadly inequities in Alabama's health care system. The virus's disproportionately high mortality rate for African Americans reflects deep structural barriers to health care, economic opportunity, transportation, and other assets of the common good. These same barriers have impeded the state's response to the pandemic by limiting the delivery system for mitigation, testing, and treatment in historically underserved communities. In light of these challenges borne of both active exclusion and passive neglect, Alabama's COVID-19 response should prioritize interventions that explicitly address health disparities.

Allocation of federal COVID-19 relief funds does not occur in a vacuum. These funds will have their biggest impact when they flow through or alongside state programs designed to provide basic protections for all Alabamians. The single biggest action Alabama can take to maximize the impact of current and future federal COVID-19 relief funding on historic health disparities in our state is to expand Medicaid. Lack of health coverage for low-income adults creates an "outsider class," distancing many of our most vulnerable neighbors from emergency resources that could buffer the pandemic's toll. We recognize that the state cannot use COVID-19 relief funding for the state share of expansion costs.

Thus far, Alabama has set aside \$5 million to support the Department of Health and an additional \$250 million to support delivery of health care and related services related to the pandemic. Alabama should use these funds to:

- Ensure that there is adequate testing for new infections, including funding for testing supplies;
- Provide contact tracing after new infections are discovered;
- Supply PPE to areas that have been most impacted by COVID-19; and
- Strengthen public health surveillance systems to facilitate rapid response to local infection upsurges as economic activity increases.

Adequate testing for the virus is the most urgent tactical need. A primary tool for targeting finite (and admittedly inadequate) resources is accurate information. The state must evaluate the extent and adequacy of testing in each Public Health District in order to prioritize additional resources for underserved districts and facilitate partnerships between local health departments, private testing providers and local community and faith groups to ensure assistance for all who need it.

Another barrier to both testing and treatment is lack of transportation, especially in rural areas. To address this concern, Alabama should appropriate a portion of COVID-19 relief funds to the Public Transportation Trust Fund to mitigate coronavirus-related drops in local agencies' farebox recovery rates.

Safely Reopening State and Local Services

Reopening Our Courts

The Alabama Supreme Court has authorized the presiding circuit judge in each circuit to continue court closures until August 15 for all courts within the circuit, including municipal courts, to preserve the safety and welfare of court personnel and the public. We would encourage delaying non-essential hearings for as long as possible, so long as the delays do not affect the rights of litigants. However, when courts reopen, they will need to take special precautions to protect people with disabilities or with family members who are vulnerable to infection. Funding to courts should require that they develop, and make accessible, a comprehensive reasonable accommodation policy for civil and criminal cases that addresses the individual needs of lawyers, litigants, defendants, and witnesses who cannot physically come to court due to disability.

These accommodations could be as simple as continuances or remote video proceedings for people who have access to technology necessary to participate in the proceedings remotely. If remote proceedings are used, funding should be used to allow for technology that permits video to enhance credibility determinations by fact finders, that allows the introduction and viewing of documentary evidence by remote participants, and that provides access, or education about the requisite technology for participants prior to their hearing.

Alabama also should increase funding to support ADA coordinators within courts that individuals with disabilities can contact in the event that an accommodation is needed.

In addition to delaying court reopenings and taking necessary steps to protect people with disabilities, a portion of the \$10 million set aside for court services should fund personal protective equipment for all people required to attend court functions, including court personnel, attorneys, witnesses, victims, and litigants. Additionally, a portion of those same funds should be used to promptly notify individuals with court dates of delays, cancellations, and rescheduled hearings. Not only should these notices be sent to individuals, but as the hours and operating conditions of the courts evolve and change, the court should ensure that the public is aware of current court policies and how people seeking emergency relief may access the courts. These notices should be prominently posted at the courthouse, online, and in any other location likely to inform the public.

Improving State Services

The pandemic caused a groundswell of need for services administered by Alabama, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Unemployment Insurance benefits, and subsidized housing programs (which are primarily run at a local level). As more residents need these supports to make it through the pandemic, Alabama should prioritize the \$300 million it has set aside for state agencies to increase the numbers of case handlers they employ to respond to the increased demand, provide those workers with resources they need to work from home or with the same testing and PPE that

we recommend for all essential workers when they engage with the public, and collectively improve access to their services using mobile technology.

When an individual is going through a crisis or the entire state is in a pandemic, these disparate services need to be accessible in one place with minimal barriers to applying for benefits, receiving important correspondence about deadlines or reporting obligations, and communicating with case workers about the services. Applying and maintaining these services comes at a high opportunity cost to families. Currently, to apply for and communicate about each service takes hours, often at different agencies and with different case workers. That is time that people need to take care of their children, their elderly parents or neighbors, or to look for employment. Improving capacity and access now both responds to the current crisis and inoculates these agencies for future crises.

Voting

In addition to improving access to state services, Alabama must protect our citizens' health and fundamental right to vote. A portion of the \$300 million set aside for state services should be used to provide absentee ballot applications to every registered voter or, at a minimum, allow every registered voter to request and vote by absentee ballot during the pandemic. In addition, because many voters require or prefer in-person voting, the state must work to improve the safety and accessibility of in-person voting and permit curbside voting. To ensure voters know how to vote safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, Alabama will need to increase its spending to educate voters in coordination with local election officials.

Taking Responsibility for People in Our Custody

Alabama has both a legal and a moral responsibility for the safety and well-being of the people it incarcerates. There are tens of thousands of individuals housed in state prisons, local jails, and ICE detention facilities -- all places where it is impossible to practice social distancing. To date, less than 1% of those incarcerated in Alabama's prisons have been tested for COVID-19.

Governor Ivey with approval from the Legislature has set aside \$200 million for the Department of Corrections to help meet Alabama's moral and legal obligations during this pandemic. We recommend that Alabama prioritize its use of the funds to:

- Release all incarcerated people who do not pose a threat to public safety, who are pregnant, and people who are at a higher risk if infected with COVID-19;
- Assist with reentry services to enable successful reintegration for returning persons;
- Test people in Alabama jails and prisons prior to release and while incarcerated; and
- Provide PPE, soap, sanitizer, and other supplies necessary to maintain a safe and hygienic environment for the remaining incarcerated people and correctional staff.

The fastest way to reduce the threat of infection in jails and prisons is to test and release as many people as possible to reduce the number of people within the facilities. However, decarceration requires more than releasing someone from jail or prison. We also must prioritize a successful

reentry into communities to prevent recidivism. A portion of the funds allocated for the Department of Corrections must go to increasing reentry services to ensure successful and safe transitions into the community. Particularly important to this transition are ensuring that people are tested for the coronavirus before reentering and that they are provided with the housing, employment, and medical services necessary once they are in the community. Some states have reduced their populations by nearly 20%. Alabama must do more.

In addition to expediting reentry and funding reentry services, Alabama needs to ensure that people are not set up to fail with onerous fines and fees used to fund the criminal justice system and reentry monitoring. Unemployment is already at record highs, and we know that the effects of racial bias in the hiring process increase the already negative effects of criminal records for people of color. Studies have shown that Black applicants with a criminal record had only a 5% chance of receiving a call back, less than one-third of white applicants with a criminal record. Reentering into this economy will be tough. Having paid for reentry with federal funds, Alabama should waive the fines and fees for people who are struggling to reintegrate into our communities, giving them a clean start and a better chance for success.

Even with fewer people in facilities, we will still need to dramatically increase testing of employees who work in prisons and jails and for the people who are incarcerated therein. Only four in every 100 residents in Alabama have been tested for COVID-19. Alabama has tested fewer than 1% of people incarcerated in its prisons. This is wholly inadequate to slow, let alone stop, the spread of COVID-19 within Alabama's facilities.

Securing our Children's Futures

The pandemic radically impacted education and threatens to worsen future education outcomes in Alabama for the many students who already did not have the benefit of an equitable opportunity to learn before it began. Alabama must focus its attention on addressing the inequities exacerbated by access to technology, space to learn, and caretakers to support their learning and those for whom specialized services are not available, including for students with disabilities. If it does not, the opportunity gap will widen with significant economic impacts for students and their families far into the future.

The opportunity gap experienced by low-income children and children of color begins early in life. We must intervene and use a portion of the dedicated \$300 million for expenditures related to technology and infrastructure for remote instruction and learning to provide support to organizations offering early intervention programs for at-risk children so that these services can be provided safely and, as necessary, remotely.

Alabama also should prioritize the use of the \$300 million to fund public schools with the highest proportion of students who are low-income children, children of color, children with disabilities, English-language learner children, children in immigrant families, children in foster care, migrant children, children experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ children, and children in the juvenile justice system. Public schools likely will need to hire additional staff, including

counselors, to provide necessary education, social and emotional, and health and safety services and increase salaries to remain competitive for educators who now take greater risks to their own health and are required to master more technological skills to teach their kids.

We recognize that the \$300 million allocated by the Legislature will not be enough. Additional funding could also be taken from the \$250 million fund for local government expenditures directly related to the pandemic to provide these disproportionately affected school systems and their local communities with funding for after-school, summer school, and community programs for youth.

Finally, where there are competing priorities for funding, the Legislature has set aside an additional \$118 million that can be used to supplement the funds required for these recommendations. If you have any questions or concerns about any of these recommendations, please contact Robyn Hyden (Robyn@alarise.org or 334-832-9060) or Katie Glenn (katie.glenn@splcenter.org or 334-531-7638).

Sincerely,

90 Alabama organizations

ACLU of Alabama	Birmingham AIDS Outreach (BAO)
Adelante Alabama Worker Center	Children First Foundation, Inc.
AIDS Alabama	Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest
AL CURE	Florida
Alabama Appleseed	Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Alabama Arise	Church of the Reconciler UMC
Alabama Black Women's Roundtable	(Birmingham)
Alabama Civic Engagement Coalition	Church Women United Montgomery
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice	Citizens' Climate Lobby - Baldwin County,
Alabama Coalition on Black Civic	Alabama Chapter
Participation	Collaborative Solutions, Inc.
Alabama Faith Council	Etowah Visitation Project
Alabama Institute for Social Justice	Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship
Alabama Justice Initiative	Faith and Works Statewide Civic
Alabama NAACP	Engagement Collective
Alabama Poor People's Campaign	Faith in Action Alabama
Alabama Rivers Alliance	Fall Injury Prevention And Rehabilitation
Alabama Solutions, A Grassroots Movement	Center
Alabama Youth and College NAACP	First Christian Church – Disciples of Christ
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 770	(Montgomery)
Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship	First Congregational Church UCC
Baptist Church of the Covenant	(Birmingham)
Bay Area Women Coalition, Inc.	Five Horizons Health Services
Beloved Community Church	GASP

Letter to
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Greater Birmingham Ministries
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
Holiday Transitional Center
Holy Rosary Catholic Church
Human Rights Campaign Alabama
Humanists of North Alabama
Immanuel Presbyterian Church PCUSA
(Montgomery)
Interfaith Montgomery
Jesuit Social Research Institute
Jobs to Move America
Just Faith, Prince of Peace Catholic Church
(Birmingham)
Just Faith, Our Lady of the Valley Catholic
Church (Birmingham)
League of Women Voters of Alabama
Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama
Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church
(Daphne)
March of Dimes
Mary's House Catholic Worker
Medical Advocacy & Outreach
Mission Possible Community Services, Inc.
Monte Sano United Methodist Church
Montevallo Progressive Alliance
Montgomery Pride United
National Action Network- Birmingham
Chapter
National Lawyers Guild
National MS Society

Nightingale Clinic
North Alabama Conference United
Methodist Women
North Alabama Peace Network
Open Table United Church of Christ
People First of Alabama
Planned Parenthood Southeast
Progressive Women of Northeast Alabama
Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty
Restorative Strategies, LLC
Saint Junia United Methodist Church
Shelby Roden, Attorneys at Law
Sierra Club, Alabama Chapter
Sisters of Mercy Alabama
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Southern AIDS Coalition
SPLC Action Fund
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
(Birmingham)
The Empowerment Alliance
The Green Kitchen
The Right Place, Inc
The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mobile
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender
Equity
Yellowhammer Fund
Youth Towers
YWCA Central Alabama

cc: Governor Kay Ivey and policy staff

The Alabama Legislature today approved Gov. Kay Ivey's plan for using \$1.8 billion the federal government sent to the state for some of the enormous costs of the coronavirus pandemic. The Senate voted 30-1 to approve Ivey's amendment. That sent it to the House, which gave it final approval by a vote of 73-1. The money comes from the CARES Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Trump.

The Republican governor's plan prevailed despite some disagreement between her and GOP leaders in the Senate. The plan does not list specific expenditures but directs the money into categories, such as reimbursements to state and local governments for coronavirus expenses, delivery of health care and related services to citizens, and support for citizens, businesses, non-profit and faith-based organizations directly affected by the pandemic.

The amendment says reallocation of funds between the categories would require unanimous consent of the House speaker, president pro tempore of the Senate, and the chairs of the Legislature's four budget committees. Ivey issued a statement commending lawmakers on approving the amendment, which she said would direct the money where it was intended.

"Our cities, counties and state, as well as places like our nursing homes, hospitals, schools and colleges have incurred many legitimate expenses because of COVID-19," the governor said. "I thank the members of the Alabama Legislature for supporting this amendment and for ensuring this money helps the people of Alabama who have been harmed by this disease.

"While no one could have predicted COVID-19, it is easy to conclude this pandemic has touched every aspect of our daily lives. I assure the people of Alabama that we will be with them at every step moving forward. Together, we will recover, and we will get Alabama back on her feet."

Ivey also announced that she had signed into law the education and General Fund budgets for next fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1. Lawmakers passed the budgets earlier this month, salvaging the final weeks of a legislative session that was interrupted for almost eight weeks because of the pandemic.

Today was the final day of the session. Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, said the Senate was left out of developing the spending plan in the CARES Act amendment approved today, but urged his colleagues to pass it and send it on to the House.

"We've got a lot of work to do to get some 450,000 people back to work," Marsh said before the vote.

"We've got businesses that may or may not make it. We've got a lot of obstacles in front of us and we've got to deal with that." Marsh later told reporters that senators didn't get a chance to participate in meetings between the House and the governor's office to develop the plan.

“The Senate was excluded from that process and that was unfortunate,” Marsh told reporters. “But we have to look at the big picture here. We’ve got to get these dollars to the people that need them in the state. We want to expedite that as quickly as possible. So, it’s time just to move on.” Marsh and GOP leaders in the Senate have worked closely with Ivey the last three years. But he said the relationship is now “strained.”

Sen. Rodger Smitherman, D-Birmingham, said Senate Democrats were left out of the discussions but said he would be a “squeaky wheel” in making sure the money goes to where it can protect citizens from the spread of the virus. Senate Minority Leader Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro, said he would ask the governor for an executive order adding Democrats to the list of legislators with some input over allocation of the funds.

“I know that there’s no better voice at the table for me but me,” Singleton said. “And we will be the squeaky wheel that screams out in the public the loudest because it is our people in the African-American community that are dying disproportionately more than anyone else from this COVID disease. We want to make sure that money is spent in the places that it’s going to help, not just our people but all Alabamians.”

House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, R-Monrovia, was asked about Marsh’s statements that the Senate was excluded from talks between House leaders and the governor’s office on the amendment. McCutcheon said he and other House leaders reached out to the governor to keep discussions going on the COVID-19 money and because of concerns that the governor might veto the state budgets. “The House was willing to step up and bring suggestions to the governor,” McCutcheon said. “We were not working against the Senate. We were not working in secret. We were just doing our job as a House body.”

Ivey announced the plan Thursday in a proposed amendment to a bill passed by the Legislature on the COVID-19 funding. That came after days of friction between the governor and some legislative leaders about use of the money. Lawmakers had the option of accepting Ivey’s plan or passing the bill again without her amendment. Without the Ivey amendment, the bill would have put \$200 million of the \$1.8 billion under the governor’s control. Legislative leaders said their intent was to return in a special session called by Ivey to allocate the rest of the money.

Federal guidelines say the money can be used for expenses caused by the pandemic. But officials have said there is some uncertainty over how that is interpreted.

Disagreement between the governor and legislative leaders surfaced May 7 when Ivey criticized what she called a “wish list” that included \$200 million for a new State House, as well as 15 other proposals. Marsh said he helped develop the list at the governor’s request. The State House idea was dropped from consideration, a spokesman for Marsh said last week.

The CARES Act money goes back to the federal government if the state does not spend it this year.

Ivey's plan that was approved today:

- Up to \$300 million to reimburse state agencies for expenses directly related to the pandemic.
- Up to \$250 million to reimburse local governments for expenses directly related to the pandemic.
- Up to \$250 million to support delivery of health care and related services to citizens because of the pandemic.
- Up to \$300 million to support citizens, businesses, and nonprofit and faith-based organizations directly impacted by the pandemic.
- Up to \$53 million for reimbursement of equipment and infrastructure necessary for remote work and public access to functions of state government directly impacted by the pandemic, including the Legislature.
- Up to \$300 million for expenses related to technology and infrastructure for remote instruction and distance learning.
- Up to \$200 million for reimbursement of costs necessary to address the pandemic by the Department of Corrections.
- Up to \$10 million for reimbursement of costs necessary to ensure access to courts during the pandemic.
- \$5 million to reimburse the General Fund for supplemental appropriations to the Alabama Department of Public health during the pandemic.
- Up to \$118 million for any other lawful purpose approved by the federal government.

Today was the final day of a legislative session that was put on hold from March 12 until May 4 because of the pandemic. The State House was essentially closed to the public during the final days of the session because of COVID-19.

House members wore masks and some moved to the gallery normally used by spectators to allow for social distancing. Most of the 28 members of the House Democratic caucus chose not to attend because of the health risks and because of concerns that it was too soon to pass the budgets because of uncertainty over state revenues.

Sen. Vivian Davis Figures, D-Mobile, had not attended since the session resumed until today. She had written an open letter to Marsh explaining that she thought it was a mistake to meet in May because of the health risks and because it was too early to pass the budgets because of the uncertainty of revenues.

Figures said she came today partly because Ivey asked for her support on the amendment. Figures wore a cloth mask over an N-95 mask, goggles, and gloves. She said she was surprised to find many senators not wearing masks and talking face-to-face without observing six-foot social distancing. "I was totally amazed," Figures said. "And I felt that no wonder the people of Alabama are not taking this seriously. Because we as leaders, some of us in these leadership positions, are not leading by example."

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/05/alabama-legislature-to-consider-iveys-plan-for-18-billion-in-cares-act-funds.html>

The Alabama Tax & Budget Handbook

Alabama Arise

May 1, 2015

<https://www.alarise.org/resources/the-alabama-tax-budget-handbook/>

Medicaid Matters: Charting the Course to a Healthier Alabama

Alabama Arise

June 17, 2020

<https://www.alarise.org/resources/medicaid-matters-charting-the-course-to-a-healthier-alabama/>

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As economy falters, Alabama Gov. Ivey creates innovation commission

Colin Wood | STATESCOOP

July 16, 2020

<https://statescoop.com/as-economy-falters-alabama-gov-ivey-creates-innovation-commission/>

Ivey's study group says Alabama could raise up to \$700 million with lottery, casinos

Mike Cason | AL.com

December 18, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/12/iveys-study-group-says-alabama-could-raise-up-to-700-million-with-lottery-casinos.html>

What will Alabama's economy look like in 2021?

William Thornton | AL.com

December 30, 2020

<https://www.al.com/business/2020/12/what-will-alabamas-economy-look-like-in-2021.html>

Alabama collected record \$12.2B revenues in 2020

Chuck Chandler | Alabama NewsCenter

January 8, 2021

<https://alabamanewscenter.com/2021/01/08/alabama-collected-record-12-2b-revenues-in-2020/>

Sessions II & III

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Sessions II and III, former Alabama congressmen providing insight and reflecting on their experiences as lawmakers at the federal level.

Hon. Bradley Byrne

Hon. Bradley Byrne represented Alabama's First Congressional District in the U. S. House of Representatives from 2013 to 2021. Born in Mobile, Mobile he earned a B.A. from Duke University and J.D. from The University of Alabama School of Law. Bradley served as member of the Alabama State Board of Education (1994-2002) and the Alabama State Senate (2002-2007). He was chancellor of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (2007-2009) and following his gubernatorial candidacy in 2010, he was elected as a Republican, by special election, to the One Hundred Thirteenth Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Rep. Jo Bonner, Jr., and to the three succeeding Congresses.



Hon. Doug Jones (Advisory Board Member)

Hon. Doug Jones represented Alabama in the U. S. Senate from 2018 to 2021. Prior to serving in the Senate, Doug was a lawyer at Haskell, Slaughter, Young and Rediker, LLC in Birmingham, representing individual, institutional and corporate clients in complex civil and criminal litigation, with particular concentrations in class actions, securities litigation, white-collar criminal defense, False Claims Act and whistleblower litigation, environmental litigation and employment discrimination matters. Prior to joining Haskell Slaughter, Doug served as United States Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama from 1997 until 2001. As United States Attorney, Mr. Jones personally led the team of prosecutors and investigators in the re-opened case of the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Mr. Jones served as lead trial attorney in the successful prosecutions of two former Ku Klux Klansmen for the murder of four young girls killed in the bombing. He also coordinated the federal and state task force that led to the indictment of notorious fugitive Eric Robert Rudolph, who ultimately pled guilty to four terrorist bombings and is serving a life sentence. In addition, Doug was appointed General Special Master in *Tolbert v. Monsanto and Pharmacia Corp.*, a massive environmental clean-up action involving PCBs in the Anniston, Alabama area. He is an alumnus of Leadership Birmingham and was named in 2009 by the Alabama Supreme Court to the Advisory Committee on the Alabama Rules of Evidence.



The new year will mean a new congressman for south Alabama. Jerry Carl will be sworn in next month to serve the 1st Congressional District of Alabama. NBC 15 News spoke with outgoing Rep. Bradley Byrne about his time in office and what's next for him. "It's been very rewarding to help people," Byrne said. Byrne, who's nearing the end of his fourth term in Congress, decided not to seek re-election and instead opted for a run at a Senate seat, which ultimately went to Tommy Tuberville. Sitting down with him at his Fairhope home, Byrne reflected about his time in Congress, saying this year was by far the hardest.

It started with the shutdowns at the start of the pandemic. "And then we had this flood of business people calling me and saying, 'My business is about to shut down. Can you all do something?'" Byrne said. "And then to throw on top of that not one, but two hurricanes. It's been a hard year." But there have been plenty of bright spots along the way. Byrne is proud of his work with veterans. A new outpatient VA Clinic was constructed in Mobile during his tenure. "It's made an enormous difference in the lives of our veterans," Byrne said.

Another point of pride: as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, Byrne advocated for a stronger Navy and for Austal Shipyard in Mobile. "When I got to Congress, I didn't realize how tenuous Austal's position was. Literally, my first year in Congress they told me they were going to authorize no ships. We were able to turn that around that year and kept the Austal ships being produced. And over that time, Austal has built up this great relationship with the Navy," Byrne said.

Byrne has served as a state school board member, state senator, chancellor of the two-year college system, and has made runs for governor and Senate in the last ten years. So what's next for the outgoing Congressman? "Won't be running for Senate. Won't be running for governor. May not be running for anything. Might be done with politics," Byrne said. "I've had some of my best friends tell me they don't believe me. I have nothing in my head right now about that. It's sort of a liberating experience for me."

Byrne also added, "I don't have to have a political office. I do it because I think it's public service. And if there was a position I thought I could truly render public service, I would consider it. But I don't know what that would be right now." One matter of unfinished business in Congress for Byrne is the underwater forest bill Byrne introduced earlier this year that protects an area off Alabama's coast. Congress won't pass that bill while he's in office, but he's very hopeful the next Congress will.

<https://myNBC15.com/news/local/outgoing-rep-bradley-byrne-reflects-on-time-in-office-considers-what-to-do-next>

What awaits Bradley Byrne after Congress? He's mulling ideas

John Sharp | WPMI NBC 15

December 21, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/12/what-awaits-bradley-byrne-after-congress-hes-mulling-ideas.html>

Sen. Doug Jones, D-Alabama, in his final speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate, talked about what is possible through hard work and a willingness to believe, and stressed, as he's done by example during his three years as a senator, the need to work with one another and not against. Jones said not long after he won, he was speaking to a friend and "dreaming big about the things that we could accomplish. Make a difference in the lives of the people of Alabama and the people of America."

"We talked about the possibility that we could work on a bill as important as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Voting Rights Act of 1965," Jones said. "But I knew, I knew though, such opportunities were not likely, especially in what I knew to be a three-year window, and not knowing what the future would hold."

"Although, I gotta be honest. I had a pretty doggone good idea when I got here," Jones said. "If there's one thing my mom always taught me, it was to be realistic about things." By clicking subscribe, you agree to our privacy policy. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Jones said he knew it would be unlikely to get the opportunity to work on such important legislation, likening doing so to the "legislative equipment equivalent of a perfect game in baseball."

"You're lucky if you get to be part of that in your career, but you always have to hope. You have to strive for the possible, not just the likely," Jones said. Jones explained that to accomplish a perfect game in baseball everyone must be working together as a team. "As it turned out, I didn't get a chance to be part of a perfect game," Jones said, adding that sometimes he worries, as many of the senators on the floor do, that those perfect games can never be had in the Senate again.

He almost got that chance, Jones said, when he joined a bipartisan group of 20 other senators in 2018 who were working on immigration reform, which failed by just a handful of votes. "For a long time, probably still to this day, when I'm asked what is your most disappointing day in the senate, I will always talk about that vote that failed so close, which was so important," Jones said. "But what it did demonstrate is through that effort, anything is possible. You've got to come close sometimes before you get across the finish line."

But Jones said not every game has to be a perfect game, and that "we did hit a home run or two, and more than our share of singles and doubles."

"I'm really proud of the 20 plus bills that I led or co-led — bipartisan bills that have been signed into law over the last three years," Jones said, "none would have been possible without bipartisan work." Jones said one of his first such early bills was the Civil Rights Cold Case Collection Act. That would never have become law without the commitment of Sen. Ted Cruz to help bring long-overdue closure to the victims of those terrible crimes, Jones said.

“None of those bills have meant more to me though than the bipartisan effort that I led with Senator Collins to eliminate the military widows’ tax that for almost two decades had deprived widows of full survivor benefits that they deserve,” Jones said.

“You know, even back in 2017, people said it was just not possible to elect a Democrat from Alabama to the U.S. Senate, and here I’ve been,” Jones said. “It’s possible to make affordable, quality health care a reality for all Americans. The ACA right now is the best hope, and the only plan that is out there.”

“As President Barack Obama himself said, and everybody should do this, if there is a better plan you can come up with, put it out there. Let’s do it. Publicly support it,” Jones said.

Jones called on the Senate to work together to provide remote access to health care for those living in rural areas during the pandemic and to provide quality education to every child and extend broadband to everyone. “Just like the Congress did with Franklin Roosevelt and the Rural Electrification Act back in the 30s. Broadband is the new power. It’s possible to do that,” he said.

“It’s possible for law enforcement to serve and protect all Americans, not just some. To root out the systemic racism that exists within law enforcement by enlisting the support of both law enforcement and the communities. It is possible,” Jones said. “I will candidly tell you another great disappointment was when we let that moment pass this summer, hoping that with a new president, maybe a new Senate, maybe a new Congress, we could get something accomplished.”

“And I hope that that still happens, but I was disappointed we let that moment pass this summer,” Jones said, “when all of the country and all of the world was behind us, to say, please do something. Please do something that we’ve known about for decades — for centuries.”

“It’s never too late to do the right thing,” Jones said. “It’s never too late for justice.” Jones thanked Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Alabama, for his advice and counsel, and said while he and Shelby may disagree on many policies “we’ve shared a commitment to the people of Alabama, to make sure that we do all we can to give people in Alabama the quality of life that they deserve.”

“And of course I want to thank the minority leader for all of his work, for me, on behalf of me, and as I think you guys know, not always the people of Alabama, Senator Schumer never tried to put puppet strings on me,” Jones said. “I know I got accused of that but he never, ever tried, and for that, I’m very grateful.”

“To the people of Alabama. I promised to do my best to represent each of you, whether or not you voted for me, and I’m proud of the work that we did on your behalf, that I’ve accomplished on your behalf. Thank you for giving me the honor of serving you as your senator,” Jones said. Jones is considered a likely candidate to be nominated as U.S. attorney general by President-elect Joe Biden.

<https://www.alreporter.com/2020/12/10/in-farewell-speech-jones-calls-on-senators-to-work-together-for-the-country/>

Session IV

Below is the biography of the panelists for Session IV, discussing law enforcement reform measures taking place at the local and state levels, including pre-filed bills for the upcoming legislative session.

Rep. Anthony Daniels

Representative Anthony Daniels represents House District 53 in Madison County. He was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2014 and has served as Minority Leader since February 2017, leading the House Democratic Caucus. Daniels is both the youngest person and first African American to hold this position in modern state history. Within the legislature, he serves on the Education Policy, Rules, Insurance, Internal Affairs and Madison County Legislation committees. At 23, he became the first black man elected chairman of the National Education Association Student Program and was later appointed chairman of the legislative committee for the Huntsville Education Association in 2009. In 2010, Daniels was elected to the State Board of Directors for the Alabama Education Association and later served as corporate and foundations relations officer for Alabama A&M University. A native of Bartow, FL, he was raised in Midway, AL (Bullock County) and is currently an elementary school teacher in Huntsville.



Rep. Daniels is an alumnus of Alabama A&M University.

Officer Johnny Hollingsworth

Officer Johnny Hollingsworth has been a police officer with the City of Huntsville for 34 years. He is currently assigned as the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) & Mental Health Officer Training Coordinator for the Huntsville Police Department. Johnny has been a certified mental health officer for Madison County for the last three years with 16 years' experience as a hostage negotiator. He is a certified CIT Trainer recognized by CIT International, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), International Association of Police Chiefs and BJA (Bureau of Justice Assistance of the U. S. Department of Justice). Johnny holds a certification currently serves on the NAMI Alabama Board of Directors.



Officer Hollingsworth holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration.

Dr. Ransey O'Daniel

A native of Dyer, TN, Dr. Ransey O'Daniel is the Senior Pastor of Christ Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa. He is a Board Certified Chaplain through the Association of Professional Chaplains. Ransey is the Founder and President of the 10-4 corporation which advocates for civil rights of Black and all people. He has been a volunteer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, NAACP, and Rainbow Coalition. An advocate for civil rights, human rights, and economic development, Ransey believes in working across denominational and racial lines to help all communities. He is a father, mason, member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and author of *Racial Reconciliation*.



Dr. O'Daniel holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Lane College, a Master of Divinity with a concentration in Christian Education from Interdenominational Theological Center (Morehouse School of Religion), and a Doctor of Ministry from Howard University School of Divinity.

Rep. Rex Reynolds

Rep. Rex Reynolds is a Huntsville native, who began his career in 1980 with the Huntsville Police Department. He was promoted through the ranks serving in numerous Special Operation Units, with a focus on Major Crimes and Narcotics Enforcement. In 2004, Rex was named Police Chief, and in 2007 he was appointed to serve as Huntsville's first Public Safety Director. In 2008, under a restructure by Mayor Tommy Battle, he served as City Administrator until he retired from the City of Huntsville in 2013. Rex was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 2018, representing District 21 and serves on Ways and Means General Fund, Ethics, Public Safety, Sunset, School Safety, and 5G Small Cell Infrastructure Committee.



His community leadership includes service on the United Way, National Children's Advocacy Board, the Alabama Narcotic Officers Association, and the Huntsville Sports Commission Board. Rex is currently serving on the boards of the Partnership for a Drug Free Community, Crime Stoppers, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Madison County Alternative Sentencing. In 2013, he was appointed by the Alabama Legislature, to the Madison County Judicial Selection Committee. Rex currently is serving a 3 year board member term with the Alabama Retired State Employees Association. His notable recognitions include the Whitney Young Jr. Community Service Award, Hall of Fame Inductee to the Boys and Girls Clubs of North Alabama, Spirit of Partnership, and the 2013 Commanders award for Public Service by the Department of the Army.

Rep. Reynolds holds a Master's Degree in Public Safety and Justice Administration from Auburn University, Montgomery.

In a classroom at the Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport, a couple dozen police officer trainees stand and read the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics in unison. “They’ll get better, they’re still new,” said Captain Randy Vaughn, Director, APOSTC Law Enforcement Training Academy – Tuscaloosa. At the end of their 13-week, 520-hour course, the trainees will be expected to memorize the code in words and actions, said Captain Vaughn. “When you read over that code, everything those protestors are talking about, the rules are already there, the code is already there,” explained Captain Vaughn.

Following the killing of George Floyd, who died when a now-former Minneapolis Police Officer held his knee to his neck for nearly nine minutes, protestors are calling for, among several things, more training for police officers. “This is one of those moments that takes a disjointed group of people that have all different interests and brings them into singular focus to accomplish a set of goals,” said Representative Chris England, D – Tuscaloosa. State Representative England has seen similar protests before but calls the current movement, “a watershed moment,” where calls for police reform “must be answered.”

“As you see across the country, people are not taking no for an answer.” He added, “Our officers, regardless of where they go [in the state], have to be trained to deal with each person individually without carrying a bias with them that could ultimately turn into a tragic situation.”

Every law enforcement officer in Alabama must be certified by the Alabama Peace Officers’ Standards and Training Commission, or APOSTC. There are ten training academies in Alabama, including the one in Tuscaloosa led by Captain Vaughn. “They come here for their basic training, in other words, how to become a police officer,” said Captain Vaughn.

To become and remain a law enforcement officer in Alabama, APOSTC requires 520-hours of basic training, at least 12-hours of in-service training each year, and annual firearms re-qualification. Over 13-weeks of basic training, trainees have nearly 80 different courses, including Patrol Techniques, Human Trafficking, Mental Health Awareness and History of Law Enforcement. The longest class, SSGT Vanguard (Level I & II), is 48 hours and is part of the “Offensive and Defensive Tactics” block of courses. Emergency Vehicle Operations is a 27-hour class, while Officer Survival, Firearms Qualification and the NHTSA Standardized Field Sobriety Testing Course are each 24 hours.

Currently, APOSTC does not require an implicit or unconscious bias course, but according to APOSTC, courses that specifically address bias and sensitivity include, Interpersonal Communications, Mental Health Awareness, Law Enforcement Ethics & Professionalism, and Officer/Violator Contact. “A majority of our classes, even though they may not speak straight to personal biases, they are talking about equality, how are you doing this in a legal way, how are you doing this in a fair way, in an impartial way?,” said Captain Vaughn. He added, “The law applies to everyone equally and what we try to understand is you cannot bring your personal biases to this job. Any mistakes that you make, it not only impacts you and your agency, it impacts me and my job, it impacts other officers.”

“What happened in Minnesota, impacts agencies throughout Alabama.”

While implicit or unconscious bias training is not required by APOSTC, several agencies have been teaching the course for years, including the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, and the Birmingham, Homewood and Oxford Police Departments. These departments also require additional training beyond the 12-hour APOSTC requirements.

Birmingham Police requires officers complete 60 hours of in-service training per year. Most Homewood Police Officers averaged 95 hours of training in 2019, according to a department spokesman. Mountain Brook Police do not require more than APOSTC, but Chief Ted Cook said most officers average more than 40 hours of training per year. Oxford Police Chief Bill Partridge, who is the Vice Chairman of APOSTC, said he tries to make between 40-120 hours of training available to his officers each year. Shelby County Sheriff deputies average at least 40 hours of in-service training per year, and each year, officers retrain on de-escalation.

Requiring mandatory de-escalation training is one of the changes #8CANTWAIT is advocating for nationwide. #8CANTWAIT is a campaign focused on police reform lead by Campaign Zero. De-escalation is not its own class in APOSTC required curriculum, but the concept is taught in "several" courses, said Captain Vaughn.

"We have a use of force continuum, it starts with officer present, verbal commands and goes all the way up to firearms. So, wherever [the officer is] once the subject starts submitting, or cooperating, then they stop there and start working back down," said Tommie Black, Deputy Director, Jefferson County Law Enforcement Academy (JCLEA), Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. "There's no way to look at every scenario and say it's the same, because the officer's size, the subject's size, there are so many things that come into play. The people around, who else is subject to get hurt or harmed."

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office recruits are trained at the JCLEA, as are deputies from other departments in the area. "[Basic training] is a minimum 600 hours and the additional training includes things that are specific to a sheriff's office. Serving civil papers, jail management," explained Black.

"So, when an officer leaves here, they have training in roughly 16 qualification areas." Like Captain Vaughn, Black said equal enforcement of the law is the basis of every course but training specific to bias and sensitivity is taught in Interpersonal Communication. "[Trainees] are taught to learn to, hopefully hold their tempers, even if someone is yelling and screaming at them, and be able calmly find out what the problem is, paraphrasing is taught so that they can say, 'I understand this is the way you feel, is there anything else I need to know?' and these type things to help them in their careers," said Black.

Black is currently working with her team to develop unconscious bias training after Sheriff Mark Pettway decided to make the course mandatory for recruits and officers. "Sheriff Pettway's plan in what we are implementing out here is trying to be proactive for everything," explained Black. She added, "We all have biases, the biggest thing is we have to recognize and admit them so they do not affect us." The unconscious bias class will begin in July and will also include a review of use-of-force, de-escalation, duty to intervene and criminal and civil liabilities curriculum, said Black.

Representative England supports the additional training and said he is working on legislation that would make it mandatory statewide. “More specific and explicit training to help identify some of the problems that we see on the street,” said Representative England.

He added, “We want to make sure as lawmakers, when we spend money, it’s not just on new and shiny weapons and all other sorts of military style weaponry. We also want to spend money on programming that deals with the root of the problem and not the symptoms of the problems. We also want to spend money on de-escalates, teaches officers to de-escalate and understand different people based on their life experiences respond to situations differently, so they’re not necessarily divisive or combative, they just may be how they naturally express themselves and if you continue the conversation, you can get to a peaceful resolution without having to use force.”

Captain Vaughn added, “Officers have to be accountable for their actions. The public expects [that] and they should. They give us an amazing power to be able to help regulate and keep the peace, being able to protect their rights, even giving us the power where we have to restrict people’s rights in certain situations. The officers have to understand that that type of power, you have to be accountable for the way you use that power anyway.”

<https://www.wbrc.com/2020/06/14/over-hours-basic-training-required-alabama-protect-serve/>

Most police video is never made public

Ken Curtis | WTVY

June 18, 2020

It seems everyday there are new police dash and body camera videos made public, though most law enforcement agencies still keep them private. In Alabama and many other states, those videos are rarely released and efforts to change that procedure have gone nowhere. In 2019 State Representative Juandalynn Givan (D-Jefferson County) introduced a bill in the legislature that would make police video in Alabama public. It immediately bogged down. “They should be public record, they are paid for by public dollars,” Givan told WTVY.

She may have tried again this year had it not been for the coronavirus pandemic that shortened the legislative session. Body and dash cam videos sometimes depict police negatively. The deaths George Floyd in Minnesota and Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta, both made public, resulted in murder and other charges against officers. In Alabama, the 2018 deadly shooting of E.J. Bradford, Jr. by police in the Birmingham area wasn't released until months later and, only then, after Bradford's family filed a lawsuit seeking that release. Police video doesn't always embarrass officers. There have been several incidents where officers saved lives.

Even in those cases, departments are often reluctant to release videos believing, to do so, would set a precedent for other videos to be made public. Generally, it is the decision of each law enforcement agencies to decide whether to make videos public.

<https://www.wtv.com/content/news/Most-police-video-is-never-made-public--571351441.html>

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - As Congress appears deadlocked on advancing federal police reforms in response to outrage over recent killings of African Americans during law enforcement encounters, state lawmakers in Alabama are beginning conversations about police policies, training and funding.

Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa, said he and other Democratic Caucus members are working on multiple pieces of police reform legislation. "Things like qualified immunity to more extensive background checks, more extensive training and dealing with things like mandatory body cameras and making sure the videos and the footage remains public record," England said. "Just an exhaustive list and different reforms aimed towards making sure the use of force is regulated and only used in the most extreme and necessary circumstances."

England said he would like to bring up the legislation in a special session if one is called by Gov. Kay Ivey later this summer or fall. If that's not possible, he'll file the bills in the 2021 regular session that begins in February.

While calls for "defunding the police" have been made nationally, some lawmakers and law enforcement officials say that decreasing funding won't be helpful in bringing about the kind of change people want. "That's a discussion we've got to have, but I can tell you that most police departments, and I've been in law enforcement for over 30 years, are on a shoestring budget as it is," said Rep. Alan Treadaway, R-Birmingham, who in addition to his role in the Legislature serves as assistant chief of the Birmingham Police Department.

Treadaway agrees that the conversation over funding should be happening, especially when it concerns mental health services, but wants to be careful so as to not hurt departments' current capabilities. "Taking funds away from the police departments will have a detrimental effect to the services that we provide. There is no way around that discussion," Treadaway said. "But at the same token I agree that we have to find funding for these much-needed services that have to be out there for folks that have issues that need to be addressed that are not addressed in our courts and our prisons."

Police Training Curriculum

One reform England wants to push is training police in de-escalation and crisis intervention tactics. To become an Alabama law enforcement officer, candidates are required to complete 520 hours, or 13 weeks, of Alabama Peace Officer Standards and Training curriculum. The most recent curriculum approved by the APOST Commission in January doesn't include de-escalation or crisis intervention training, or any training on recognizing personal-bias or sensitivity training. It does include a mandatory eight hours of mental health awareness training and trainees are required to do 109 hour of "offensive and defensive tactics" and 55 hours of firearm training. Every year, officers are also required to undergo additional training for new skills or as a refresher.

Larger police departments like Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile and Montgomery each have their own police academies that can include additional training. In their recently released Accountability Report, the Birmingham Police Department says it includes de-escalation and “use of force” in its additional 60 hours of training every year.

Montgomery’s police academy says on its website that training includes, “cultural sensitivity training, sexual harassment issues, media relations, stress management, disability awareness, community relations, tactical communications, hate crimes, missing persons and domestic violence,” but does not state how long each training is.

The Huntsville police academy teaches a 16-hour course on de-escalation, a 4 hour cultural diversity course and a 1-hour tactical disengagement course, which also focuses on de-escalation, according to Eddie Blair, an attorney for the city of Huntsville.

Mobile’s Police Department provided Alabama Daily News a breakdown of its 20-week long police academy curriculum. It did not mention any de-escalation training but they do teach two hours on “biased based policing.” Lawmakers have already been working towards changing Alabama’s police curriculum.

Sen. Rodger Smitherman, D-Birmingham, has sponsored a bill for multiple years to require sensitivity training to be included and actively recruit social workers to be officers. That bill passed the Senate in 2019 but did not pass the House.

During the 2020 regular session, Sen. Andrew Jones, R-Centre, introduced a bill that requires crisis-intervention training to be taught in the APOST curriculum, but the bill did not advance in the coronavirus-shortened session.

Commission executive secretary Chief R. Alan Benefield told Alabama Daily News that the training curriculum is reviewed annually and modifications are made “for a variety of reasons, such as court decisions, changes to civil/criminal code (legislative action), and trends or best practices in law enforcement.”

“The commission is committed to providing the citizens of Alabama qualified, professionally trained, ethical, and competent peace officers,” Benefield said.

Treadaway says officers would never turn down more training but thinks Birmingham’s academy does a great job already. He said one issue with increased training is that smaller departments don’t have large budgets and don’t get as many training opportunities.

Barbour County Sheriff Tyron Smith said a lack of staff is also a barrier to additional training. “We have to make sure we have enough personnel to make sure we can take care of all the calls we get to satisfy the citizens’ needs,” Smith said.

Smith's department does not teach de-escalation training but said they were planning on coordinating with the county probate judge to do more sensitivity and diversity training.

Rep. Connie Rowe, R-Jasper, is the former chief of police of Jasper and trained with APOST for more than 20 years, specializing in domestic violence and sex crimes. Although she's not as familiar with APSOTC's current curriculum, she has confidence in its ability to adapt to the needed changes of the times. Rowe also said that citizens need to keep in mind the various tasks officers are being asked to do and how complex that makes their training.

"Think about how they are trained to deal with people who are mentally ill, people who are domestic violence victims, people who are different from them," Rowe said. "...it is a really highly faceted profession. It's so much more than just enforcing the laws. It's the best way to do it, it's how to deal with all these different circumstances."

Treadaway shares this sentiment and says officers now are given much more responsibility to handle than they ever were before. "Police have been called on to do more and more and more over the last several decades because we used to have services out there for the mentally ill that are not there. So those issues have fallen on police officers and police departments across the state," Treadaway said.

Smith said he has noticed an increase in dealing with the mentally ill over the years and will continue handling those cases but doesn't mean they wouldn't welcome outside help. "Would it help if a law enforcement agency is on a scene with someone who has mental health issues and has someone from another agency that is trained to deal with people who have mental capacities, yes, that would be awesome, but it doesn't always work that way," Smith said.

England believes that law enforcement's skill sets do not lend themselves best to situations dealing with a mental health crisis and should not necessarily be the first point of contact in that kind of situation. "It makes them safer and the public safer if we can start identifying things that are more appropriate for someone whose profession requires they have a gun on them," England said.

Tracking 'bad actors'

In addition to crafting the police curriculum, the APOST Commission also tracks officers whose certifications are revoked due to being convicted of a felony, certain misdemeanors or willfully providing false information to the commission. Based on data provided to ADN, 110 officers have lost their certification since 2015. There are currently eight certification revocations pending commission action and 96 officers are under investigation.

When a law enforcement officer is arrested, APOST regulations require the employing agency, the arresting agency and the officer each to report the arrest to the commission. When APOST receives notice of a termination due to misconduct, the officer's profile record is locked. If an agency wants to

obtain that officer's record, it must contact APOST to learn the reason for the lock and contact the agency that reported the misconduct.

Rowe, who was in charge of hiring and firing during her time as chief, said this kind of record is particularly important from stopping "bad actors" from jumping around from department to department. "If you have an officer who is a bad actor and displays a series of very negative characteristics that rise to the level of disciplinary action or termination, particularly if it deals in with how they treat people, then absolutely I think it would be the due diligence of someone in administration in a law enforcement agency to report that and document that," Rowe said.

She said officers who work in smaller departments are more likely to move to similar size departments throughout their careers than officers in larger metropolitan forces. Alabama does not have a database or a central record of police misconduct reports. That information is available at individual departments.

As of this year, law enforcement agencies can submit use-of-force reports to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, which creates a report for the Legislature at the end of each year. Robyn Bryan, the media relations manager for ALEA, said that as of now, no agency had submitted those reports.

A centralized database of police misconduct records is something that England would like to see, but Rowe said isn't sure if that kind of information should be just open to anyone. "I think that responsibility should absolutely fall into the lap of police administrators," Rowe said. "I think you are responsible for who you employ and who you put in that position to where they interact with the public."

England also wants to make sure that officers who report on misconduct or abuse of power by other officers are protected from backlash or prosecution by their own department. "Requiring officers to intervene and also report if they see that use of excessive force may help stop one of these tragic events, like the case with George Floyd, from ever happening again," he said.

<https://www.wbrc.com/2020/06/26/conversations-begin-alabamas-police-policies-training/>

HB6 (Law enforcement, recordings, procedure to determine to whom and what portion of a recording to disclose or release established)

Representatives Givan and Daniels | AL House Prefiled Bills

July 17, 2020

<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/ALISON/SearchableInstruments/2021RS/PrintFiles/HB6-int.pdf>

HB16 (Law enforcement officers, requiring officers to have not less than 16 hours of crisis intervention training)

Representatives Reynolds, Whitt, Robertson and Stringer | AL House Prefiled Bills

October 29, 2020

<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/ALISON/SearchableInstruments/2021RS/PrintFiles/HB16-int.pdf>

The worst-case scenario

Hannah Dreier | The Washington Post

July 24, 2020

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/07/24/police-huntsville-alabama-mental-health-call/?arc404=true>

Tuscaloosa Police Receiving Diversity Training From Local Nonprofit

Joshua Ragsdale | WVUA 23

July 30, 2020

<https://wvua23.com/tuscaloosa-police-receiving-diversity-training-from-local-nonprofit/>

Alabama cities embrace police citizen advisory committees. But do they have anyteeth?

John Sharp and Ashley Remkus | AL.com

September 13, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/09/alabama-cities-embrace-police-citizen-advisory-committees-but-do-they-have-any-teeth.html>

UAPD participates in racial intelligence training

Monica Nakashima | The Crimson White

September 16, 2020

<https://cw.ua.edu/65758/news/uapd-participates-in-racial-intelligence-training/>

Birmingham task force releases recommendations for police reforms

Eddie Burkhalter | Alabama Political Reporter

December 10, 2020

<https://www.alreporter.com/2020/12/10/birmingham-task-force-releases-recommendations-for-police-reform/>

Session V

Below is the speaker biography for Session IV, the Superintendent of Education for the State of Alabama.

Dr. Eric Mackey

Dr. Eric G. Mackey currently serves as the State Superintendent of Education. Prior to serving as State Superintendent, he served as Executive Director of the School Superintendents of Alabama, the professional association for local school system executives in our state, for eight years. Eric began his career as a high school science teacher and then taught middle school science, where he discovered a passion for middle-level education that continues to inform and influence his perspectives to this day. He went on to serve as principal of Kitty Stone Elementary School and then Superintendent of Jacksonville City School System.



As State Superintendent, he is committed to focusing on issues that he has championed throughout his career, including a focus on numeracy and literacy in elementary grades; rigorous coursework and multiple opportunities for all students in middle grades; and varied pathways for student success, including strong career and technical education and college-level work in high school. Eric also believes that it is our obligation to make sure that students not only graduate, but are prepared for their next steps in life. This requires schools to help students develop good character, healthy lifestyles, and responsible citizenship. Eric is past president of the Montgomery Rotary Club, volunteers with Meals on Wheels, Boy Scouts, and teaches high school youth in Sunday School.

Dr. Mackey holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and Master's, Education Specialist, and Doctoral degrees from The University of Alabama.

Terry Roller

Terry Roller is Assistant Superintendent for the State of Alabama.

About 9,800 fewer Alabama students enrolled in public schools this year, according to state officials, and Alabama isn't sure where they went. In the face of the pandemic, about 15,000 students did not return to their local public schools this year, said State Superintendent Eric Mackey. Of those, he said, about 5,000 shifted from a local school to one of the state's standalone virtual schools. That leaves nearly 10,000 unaccounted for.

"The final number is about 9,800 students fewer are enrolled in fall 2020 than in 2019," Mackey said, nearly twice the number of students initially reported. The number of missing students nearly doubled from initial projections of 5,000 students shared during the Nov. 12 state school board meeting. School officials have now verified enrollment, something that wasn't yet finished before November's meeting, he said.

Mackey is directing local superintendents to redouble efforts to try to find the missing students. "Ninety-nine percent of our kids, we know where they are, but about 1%, we're not certain." Last year's K-12 enrollment was around 727,000 according to state enrollment data. This year's number is just under 718,000, down 1.3 percent. The number, known as average daily membership, or ADM, is the average student enrollment in the 20 school days following Labor Day. It is what lawmakers use to allocate state education funding.

The biggest drop in enrollment is in kindergarten. "We know we have 3,000 fewer kindergarteners in 2020 than in 2019," he said. Whether that's due to COVID-19 fears or the state's declining youth population is unclear, he added. Last year, there were 55,946 kindergarteners enrolled and this year there are 52,921. Beyond the large drop in kindergarten, he said, "That leaves us with about 7,000 kids or 1% that have left school and they've either gone to a private school, they're homeschooling, they've moved and didn't notify their school district, or they are simply just not in school this year."

Tracking students down has been difficult for local school officials, he said. "We know from experience that many of these kids are undocumented immigrants, they're homeless students. Many of these kids are transient," he said. "They change addresses a lot, so the address they have on file is not necessarily the address where they're living now." Alabama's enrollment loss of 1.3% mirrors declines across the country, though it appears to be smaller than neighboring states like Mississippi, which has 22,000 fewer public school students this year, a 4.8% decline in enrollment.

Georgia public schools reported a 2.2% decline in enrollment across all grades according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Both Mississippi and Georgia saw large declines in kindergarten enrollment, too. Those missing students could create a financial crisis for schools for the 2021-22 school year, Mackey said, because the state provides funding based on the number of students enrolled the previous year.

With the missing students and the students who transferred to a standalone public virtual school, the 9,800-student drop in enrollment at local schools could cost as many as 1,200 teaching jobs, said

Mackey. That is unless, he said, lawmakers hold school districts harmless for the loss of students when setting funding during the legislative session, which starts in February. “I truly believe those students will come back to us next year,” Mackey said. “Most of those 5,000 students going standalone virtual will go back to their local school and enroll.”

If schools are funded based on this year’s enrollment, schools could end up not having enough teachers to welcome back the returning students next school year. The largest drop overall was in the elementary grades, Mackey said. The number of high school students increased from last year’s count.

The drop in kindergarten enrollment creates a unique instructional crisis for next year, he said, as important skills are taught in reading and math in kindergarten. “When they come back, will they enroll in kindergarten as a 6-year-old or will they want to skip kindergarten—which is allowed under Alabama law—and go straight to first grade?” asked Mackey. School officials cannot require a child be placed in kindergarten, he said, and parents can choose to place their child into the first grade without ever enrolling them in kindergarten.

Mackey said they don’t have demographic data on the missing students but are looking at that next. Though Alabama has a state law requiring all children between the ages of six and 17 be enrolled in school, enforcement of that law is up to the juvenile courts, he said. “It’s the responsibility of the parents to make sure their children are enrolled in school,” he added.

District officials have told Mackey that students are still showing up to school for the first time, even in late October and early November, after the official count was taken during the 20 days following Labor Day. “When they would ask ‘Where have you been?’” he said, “the answer was ‘We’ve just been home.’”

Mackey believes more could still come back during the current school year. “If there’s a vaccine,” he said, “and we see kind of an end to the fear about COVID, then we think the numbers will pick up pretty significantly.”

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/11/alabama-public-schools-missing-9800-students-this-year.html>

Alabama Legislature passes COVID-reduced education budget

Mike Cason | AL.com

May 9, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/05/alabama-legislature-could-finish-covid-reduced-budgets-today.html>

AL Superintendent Eric Mackey: “Maybe for the first time... people really do understand” educators

Trisha Powell Crain | AL.com

December 30, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/12/al-superintendent-eric-mackey-maybe-for-the-first-time-people-really-do-understand-educators.html>

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic changed everything about how we did school this year, impacting everyone from little ones in pre-K to elementary, middle, high school and college students, too. While coronavirus dominated the education landscape, there were other notable happenings, too. Here's our list of Alabama's top 10 education stories of 2020.

COVID shuts down schools

Learning was unexpectedly upended when Alabama [health officials shut down all schools](#), public and private, on March 13, the [same day the first coronavirus case in the state was reported](#). School buildings were shuttered, college students were sent home. With no idea what was next, everybody took a couple of weeks off. Proms were canceled, high school graduations postponed or appropriately socially distanced.

Learning resumed in April. Students connected to classwork remotely, where internet access existed or could be hastily added. Teachers learned how to teach through a computer screen and [schools became grab-and-go curbside meal pickup sites](#) all across the state.

[Alabama closes all K-12 schools](#)

Remote learning takes root, many return to classrooms in August

With the pandemic still raging, [local school officials made their own decisions about how to do school when the new year started](#). Between [30% and 50% of Alabama's K-12 public school students](#) would [learn from home](#), while many [others returned to face-to-face instruction](#), a couple of days each week to start with.

College campuses tested returning students, [isolating those who tested positive in COVID-dedicated dorms](#).

[Most Alabama schools to reopen, but doors stay closed for nearly a third of kids](#)

[‘You don’t exist’: Inside UA’s COVID-19 isolation dorms](#)

[What it’s really like on the Alabama campus during COVID-19](#)

Thousands of kids missing from classrooms

Official [enrollment numbers showed 9,800 fewer students on the rolls than in fall 2019](#). About 3,000 were kindergarteners—their parents presumably red-shirting them till next year—but many just hadn't registered for school, a trend seen nationwide. Some students were eventually located, registering late, but school officials worry about the impact lower enrollment will have on school funding for next year.

[College undergraduate enrollment was down, too](#), with the two-year community college system taking the biggest hit, losing nearly 13% of its enrollment.

[Alabama public schools missing 9,800 students this year](#)

[Rural schools in Alabama hit hardest by enrollment losses during pandemic](#)

[More Alabama graduate students, fewer undergraduates, enrollment numbers show](#)

Alabama's first LGBTQ charter school was approved

After four tries, the [state's first LGBTQ-focused charter school was approved](#) by the Alabama Public Charter School Commission in early November. Magic City Acceptance Academy plans to open in fall 2021 with 250 to 300 students in grades six through 12 in Homewood, a suburb south of Birmingham.

MCAA initially stood out because of its plan to focus on creating a safe space for LGBTQ youth to be educated but [placed emphasis](#) on their plan to use trauma-informed instruction to help students who are facing challenges beyond the classroom.

[*Birmingham LGBTQ safe space charter school approved for 2021 opening*](#)

Voters reject Gov. Ivey, Sen. Marsh's call for appointed state board of education

Alabama voters in March [soundly defeated a state constitutional amendment](#) that would have [changed the state board of education from an elected to an appointed board](#). Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and then-Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh said Alabama needed to [try something different to improve K-12 education](#), but voters disagreed with their solution.

[*Alabama voters reject plan to fire state school board*](#)

Hurricane Zeta wreaks havoc on south Alabama school districts

Hurricane Zeta struck south Alabama on Oct. 28, snapping power poles and flooding roads, leaving some schools without power. Some [schools had to remain closed for more than a week](#), adding insult to injury during an already-difficult school year. Statewide, Zeta caused an [estimated \\$30 million in damage](#) according to state officials.

[*Hurricane Zeta power outages cancelling classes*](#)

Huntsville schools get hacked

Huntsville City Schools were hit with a ransomware attack on Nov. 29, forcing officials to suspend all remote learning and [keep computers turned off for at least a week](#). Cyberattacks on school districts are happening more frequently nationwide, officials say, as schools use virtual learning during the pandemic.

School officials said the 23,000-student system's financial information was "not affected" by the hack. But some faculty and staff's Social Security numbers were believed to be exposed to hackers.

In a [video posted Dec. 21](#), the superintendent said the system had not been contacted to pay any ransom and it had made no payments.

[*Huntsville schools recovering from cyberattack, but probe 'has a long way to go'*](#)

[*Huntsville students out all week after computer system attack*](#)

Colleges drop admissions test requirements

When schools closed in March because of the coronavirus pandemic, ACT and SAT test centers closed, too, and at that time there was no at-home option for either test. As a result, many colleges dropped the requirement for fall 2020 enrollment, and most have dropped it for fall 2021 admissions, too.

Many colleges use ACT and SAT scores to award merit scholarships, and each university has created their own policy about how to award scholarships. Without an ACT or SAT score, officials say, they'll look at high school GPAs and other criteria for admissions.

[Alabama colleges back away from using ACT/SAT scores for admission](#)
[Many believed college admissions would never change. Then COVID-19 hit.](#)

Alabama issues \$1.5 billion in bonds for school construction

In October, the Alabama Public School and College Authority issued nearly \$1.5 billion in bonds for capital projects. It is the state's first major bond issue for public school buildings, repairs, and renovations since 2007.

The legislation approved by lawmakers in May allocated [\\$912 million to K-12 education, with most of that to be divided among local school districts](#), \$218 million to state universities, and \$120 million to Alabama community colleges, according to [the fiscal note](#).

[Ivey cites students, teachers as Alabama issues \\$1.5 billion in bonds for school capital projects](#)

Teacher retirements up during 2020-21 school year

Alabama is already struggling with a teacher shortage in K-12 schools, and some are worried that teacher retirements will rise due to concerns teachers have about getting the coronavirus inside schools. Early indicators show there is some cause for worry.

[September saw roughly twice as many retirements as the last two Septembers](#). Retirements were also up in August compared to the same month in past years. And the number who applied to retire in October is also higher than in previous year. It's unclear whether the uptick will turn into a trend. The numbers showed school employees apparently waited out the summer months, though, as retirement numbers in June and July were a lower than in previous years. When teachers retire after the school year starts can make it difficult for school officials to replace them.

The number of retirements for December--traditionally a big month for retirements--should be available soon.

[Teacher retirements rise in Alabama since school started](#)

[For all of AL.com's education coverage, click here.](#)

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/12/alabamas-top-10-education-stories-of-2020.html>

Session VI

Below are the biographies for panelists, examining public health in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Kimberly Boswell

Kimberly G. Boswell was sworn in as was appointed Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) by Governor Kay Ivey on December 16, 2020. Her goals include furthering an accessible, interconnected, effective and just system of care for individuals served by ADMH. Kimberly has more than 36 years of experience working with individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities. She served as Chief of Staff for former Commissioner Lynn T. Beshear (2017-2020) and previously as both Associate Commissioner for Administration and Director of Human Resources for the ADMH. Over the course of her career, she worked as a planner to improve human service delivery systems, a program evaluator, a School to

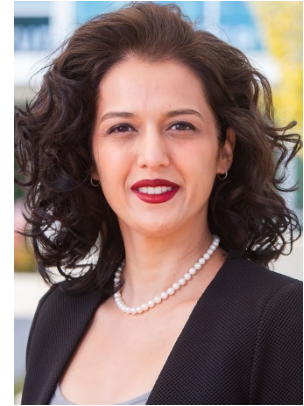


Work transition coordinator, and also served as the state office administrator for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Since November 2019, Kimberly has served as a member of the Milbank Memorial Fund Reforming States Group. She is currently a member of the National Academy for State Health Policy and the Long Term and Chronic Care Committee. She is a member of the Friendship Mission Board - a long-term shelter for men, women and children who are homeless in the River Region and Mescal's Children Center for Hope, which is a Christian ministry serving children in Kenya, South Africa.

Commissioner Boswell holds a Bachelor of Social Work from The University of Alabama at Birmingham and a Master of Social Work from Florida State University with a specialization in planning and program evaluation.

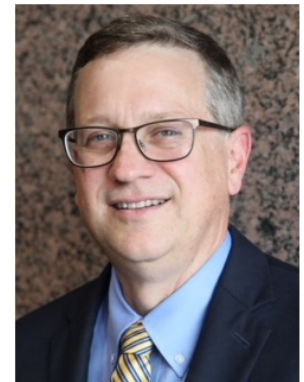
Dr. Henna Budhwani (Advisory Board Member)

Dr. Henna Budhwani is a social scientist who conducts studies to better understand and address the causes and consequences of health disparities among underserved - often stigmatized - populations that are at high-risk for experiencing adverse health outcomes in resource-constrained global and domestic settings. Her research is intersectional, informed by sociological constructs, guided by human rights frameworks, and adopting a multidimensional view of how to address public health and clinical care gaps. Henna has active intervention studies with adolescents and young adults, sexual and gender minorities, clinical providers, pregnant women, and youth living with HIV. In addition to being a co-recipient of the international Robert Carr Research Award from Johns Hopkins, Human Rights Watch, and the International AIDS Society in 2020, she has received the Vulcan Award from the Mayor of Birmingham, was named one of Birmingham's Top 40 Under 40, and was honored by The Women's Fund as part of their "Smart Party." Relevant to today's panel discussion, Henna was recently awarded a grant from Merck to study and address HPV and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in rural Alabama.



Dr. Scott Harris

Scott Harris, MD, MPH, was appointed Acting State Health Officer for the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) in September 2017 and formally designated as Alabama's 12th State Health Officer in February 2018. A graduate of Harding University in Arkansas, Scott attended medical school at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Medicine and served an internal medicine internship and residency at Carraway Methodist Medical Center in Birmingham before returning to UAB to complete a fellowship in adult infectious diseases. He earned his MPH from the UAB School of Public Health. In 1996, Scott began his practice in general infectious diseases and HIV medicine in Decatur, Alabama, and began serving as tuberculosis consultant with ADPH. In 2004, he helped to establish the Decatur-Morgan Community Free Clinic, serving thirteen years as the medical director, as well as a board member and board chair. The non-profit clinic offers health care and dental care at no charge to low income, medically uninsured residents, and relies heavily on community volunteers. As a volunteer physician, Scott served on many international medical missions to Central America, South America, and Africa. In addition to his board certification in internal medicine and infectious disease, he has additional certificates of qualification in tropical medicine from the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, and in travel medicine from the International Society of Travel Medicine. Scott left private practice to join ADPH in 2015 as Area Health Officer for seven North Alabama counties, before assuming his current role as State Health Officer. He and his wife Sandy have four children and reside in Montgomery.



Ryan Kelly

Ryan Kelly, MS, serves as the executive director of the Alabama Rural Health Association. He also is the CEO Horizon Professional Services, in which he leads 20 different healthcare organizations across the nation. Ryan previously served as Chief Advancement Office for William Carey University and Director of External Relations for The University of Southern Mississippi College of Health. He is a graduate of the Area Development Partnership's Leadership Pinebelt, received the Mississippi Top 50 under 40 award in 2016, received the Mississippi's Top Entrepreneur award in 2019, and the South Central Telehealth Resource Center's 'Telehealth Champion' award in 2019. In addition to professional activities, Ryan also serves as a deacon at Temple Baptist Church, member of The Gideon's International, board member for Pi Kappa Phi Alumni Association and the United Way of Southeast Mississippi, and many others. His areas of professional interest and expertise include healthcare, education, business, technology, economic development, and politics.



Kelly holds a bachelor's of science with honors from The University of Southern Mississippi in 2005 and a master's of science with honors from Mississippi College in 2007.

As cases of the novel coronavirus increase in Alabama, the state will need all the hospital beds it can get. There are nearly 15,000 hospital beds in Alabama, but they aren't evenly distributed across the state. Several parts of the state, especially rural areas, don't have any hospitals at all, and others have a relatively small number of beds compared to their populations.

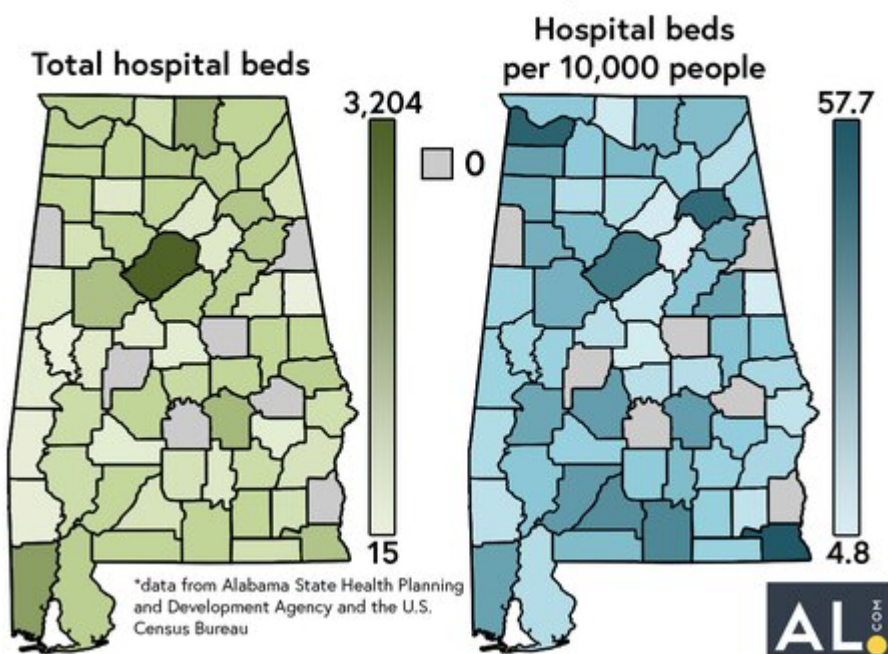
As AL.com's Anna Claire Vollers reported earlier this week, 75% of Alabama's 14,790 hospital beds are full on any given day. Any surge caused by the coronavirus could easily overwhelm the healthcare system.

Related: [‘It would not take large numbers’ to overwhelm Alabama hospitals; officials look at adding beds](#)

Seven Alabama counties don't have any hospital beds to speak of, according to data from the Alabama State Health Planning and Development Agency. More than half of the state's 67 counties have fewer than 100 total hospital beds. Twelve counties have fewer than 10 beds per 10,000 people, including a handful of counties in the Birmingham metropolitan area. Of the counties with at least some hospital beds, St. Clair, just northeast of Birmingham, has the smallest number of beds per person. St. Clair has just 4.8 beds per 10,000 people.

Where are Alabama's hospital beds?

Where are the hospital beds?



Alabama's nearly 15,000 hospital beds aren't evenly distributed across the state, and they likely won't be enough during a widespread COVID-19 outbreak. | Graphic by Ramsey Archibald

In general, Alabama's largest cities tend to have the most hospital beds. Jefferson County, the most populous in the state, has by far the most, with more than 3,200 beds. Mobile is second with around 1,600, followed by Madison County, home of Huntsville, with just over 1,100. Those three are the only counties with more than 1,000 beds.

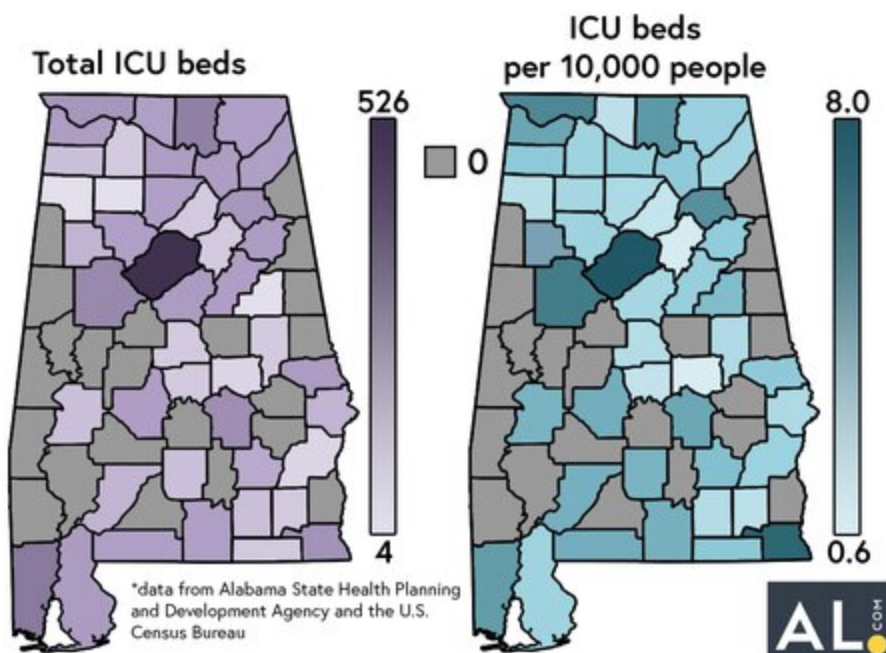
On a per capita basis, Houston County in the deep southeast corner of the state has the most beds, at 57.8 beds per 10,000 people. On the opposite end of the state, Colbert County has 55.3 beds per 10,000 residents. Etowah County, home of Gadsden, is the only other county with more than 50 beds per 10,000 people, with 52.9.

Related: [Alabama's changing hospital landscape](#)

The number of beds in intensive care units here is even smaller. There are just fewer than 1,700 ICU beds in Alabama, and a lot of counties don't have any. There are 22 counties with no ICU beds at all, and 44 counties have fewer than two ICU beds per 10,000 people. Jefferson County has the most ICU beds at 526, and the most per capita at 8 beds per 10,000 people. Mobile, Madison and Tuscaloosa are the only other counties with more than 100 ICU beds.

Where are Alabama's ICU beds?

Alabama Intensive Care Beds



22 Alabama counties don't have any ICU beds at all. | Graphic by Ramsey Archibald

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/03/where-are-alabamas-hospital-beds.html>

Overcoming distrust of a covid-19 vaccine is about “survival instincts” for Shane Lee, a family physician in Perry County, Ala., a rural, mostly African American community of about 9,000 where more than a third of people live in poverty. When the outbreak erupted in Alabama’s Black Belt in the summer and “swept through hospitals and nursing homes like a grass fire,” the 59-year-old doctor, a retired Army general, became infected. His heart muscle grew inflamed. Months later, he is still short of breath.

The lone doctor at his clinic in Marion, the county seat, Lee watched his two nurse practitioners leave during the pandemic in search of less grueling work. An X-ray technician also quit. “I will take the first vaccine that hits the street,” he said. Lee is among the Americans expected to have priority access to a coronavirus vaccine that could become available as soon as next month. But as for when the vaccine will reach Perry County — and whether the rest of the community will agree to take it — the doctor would not hazard a guess.

Under its Operation Warp Speed initiative, the Trump administration has promised simultaneous distribution of vaccines to “all of America.” The soaring ambition, however, is set to run headlong into the barriers to health care and mistrust of speedily developed vaccines that mark Perry County and other rural, impoverished parts of America. Residents of these places are especially vulnerable to the virus because of their poor health status and often precarious employment in low-wage service industries. Responsibility for their inoculation, meanwhile, will fall to a public health system maimed by budget cuts and riven by racial and other inequities. The day-to-day delivery of shots, without reinforcements, will play out at understaffed clinics, overwhelmed pharmacies and beleaguered long-term care facilities.

“Administering a vaccine in rural Alabama is not about pulling up to a Walmart parking lot,” said John McGuinness, a member of the committee advising the state on vaccine distribution and a former state surgeon for the Alabama National Guard. “This amounts to a military campaign, moving from town to town and gathering demographics, relying on local leaders and being comprehensive in that way.

“Some of the steepest obstacles involve doubt about scientific advances championed in Washington. Distrust of the medical establishment permeates the state’s Black community, nearly a half-century after the revelation that syphilis patients in Tuskegee, Ala., were deceived and had treatment withheld to study the natural course of the disease. The so-called Tuskegee experiment casts a long shadow. “That still haunts us today,” said Bernard Simpleton, president of the Alabama State Conference of the NAACP.

Also threatening participation is the “unprecedented head wind of disinformation about the virus itself,” said Jim Carnes, policy director for Alabama Arise, an advocacy group for low-income residents. The swirl of falsehoods, Carnes said, has led many of President Trump’s backers to disregard medical guidance. “How are you going to get people to take a vaccine to fight a virus they don’t

believe in?” he said. Lee shares these worries. Herd immunity is a long way off in Perry County, he said, explaining, “I have to browbeat people just to take the flu vaccine.

“The logistical hurdles are just as concerning to the doctor. Shots that require ultra-cold storage, specification of the Pfizer vaccine, are “not practical” in rural areas without big hospitals, he said. Drive-up vaccination sites are also not realistic, he noted, because more than 16 percent of households in his county have no vehicle.[Now comes the hardest part: Getting a coronavirus vaccine from loading dock to upper arm]“There are so many logistical issues that they, in total, are mind-blowing,” said Scott Harris, Alabama’s top health officer, who is overseeing the state’s immunization effort and who has won plaudits for his management of a crisis pitting political loyalties against adherence to health guidelines.

Many of Alabama’s obstacles, from rural access to racial disparities, are mirrored across the country, said David Kimberlin, a pediatric infectious-disease specialist at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. That makes the planning underway in Alabama a window into the problems also vexing other states. “Our challenges are not unique to us — we are a relatively rural state, and we are in a part of the country where, generally speaking, people don’t like to be told what to do,” said Kimberlin, who is the American Academy of Pediatrics’ liaison to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the body charged with making recommendations on who should get the vaccine first.

The first allotment is unlikely to be sufficient to cover all health-care workers in the highest priority group, said Burnestine P. Taylor, the state medical officer leading Alabama’s vaccine-related planning. Who should be included in that group is still being worked out. Even within a hospital, there may be different degrees of risk, officials said, a recognition that ICU nurses or respiratory therapists involved in intubating patients face more direct and extended exposure than do other staff, who may nonetheless be at risk in common settings. A CDC team was in Alabama this month helping the health department refine its criteria.

To make the most of the limited resources, the state is relying on software developed by a California company to map anticipated demand in each county and compare the location of health-care workers with the layout of facilities equipped to handle the shots. “Strike teams” set up by the health department may help with delivery in locations where medical infrastructure is limited, Taylor said.

Drawing up that battle plan has been difficult. Information technology challenges delayed the state’s efforts to enroll medical providers capable of receiving and storing the vaccine, Harris said. The federal government asked each state to identify five locations where shots will be propositioned, pending final go-ahead from authorities. These are mostly large hospitals, such as the University of Alabama at Birmingham’s flagship facility. The primary locations put forward by Alabama officials are among a larger set of 68 facilities equipped to store ultra-cold vaccines, said Jamey Durham, the health department’s logistics lead for vaccine implementation. These are the facilities poised to become vaccination sites following the initial allotment, he said.

“In more rural areas, this means bringing the vials to a central location and having the public come to the vaccine as much as possible,” Durham said. After the initial rollout, staff at smaller clinics will have their crack at the vaccine, said Ryan Kelly, executive director of the Alabama Rural Health Association. When distribution expands beyond health-care workers, the onus will shift from hospitals and other organizations largely inoculating their own staff to a wider range of sites, from sports arenas to school parking lots, for community immunization.

Minority groups are among the “critical populations” the CDC is directing states to consider in the planned allotment of vaccines when they’re still in short supply, later this year or in early 2021. The timing gives added salience to efforts aimed at addressing vaccine hesitancy among people of color.

Focus groups across Alabama, set to begin next month, will probe deeper into concerns about the vaccine, particularly among Black residents, who remain disproportionately affected by infections, said Mona Fouad, director of the University of Alabama at Birmingham’s Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center. The results will inform promotional messaging and are likely to highlight the need to involve Black community leaders in the endorsement of the vaccine, in addition to White physicians like Lee.

The most important factor is that Trump stays away from the vaccine rollout, said the NAACP’s Simelton. “If he comes out and says, ‘It’s approved; it’s a good drug,’ no one’s going to take it,” Simelton said, noting that Black Alabamians are so distrustful of the president that many refused to believe he had actually contracted the coronavirus. If the Food and Drug Administration, “without his interference,” gives the go-ahead, Simelton said, “they would be a lot less skeptical.

“For Lee’s patients, advice will come from a more local authority — what he refers to wryly as the “Perry County medical association” on which he is joined by the town’s pharmacist and veterinarian. Lee has questions about the monitoring of side effects, but such considerations are not delaying his preparations for the day he can begin inoculating his community. “We can’t say for this or that reason that we don’t want to fool with it,” he said. “We’ve got to fool with it.”

https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/vaccine-distribution-alabama/2020/11/28/bc66459a-2dab-11eb-96c2-aac3f162215d_story.html

Alabama Lt. Gov. butts heads with governor over coronavirus response

John Sharp | AL.com

March 28, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/mobile/2020/03/alabama-lieutenant-governor-sounds-alarm-on-coronavirus-response-butting-heads-with-the-governor.html>

Alabama healthcare providers getting \$449.5 million in early federal relief

John Sharp | AL.com

April 10, 2020

<https://www.wsfa.com/2019/12/05/family-members-urge-policy-makers-implement-prison-reforms/>

Over 30 percent of Americans have witnessed COVID-19 bias against Asians, poll says

Alex Ellerbeck | NBC News

April 28, 2020

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/over-30-americans-have-witnessed-covid-19-bias-against-asians-n1193901>

Alabama mayors, hospital officials call for statewide mask requirement

Paul Gattis | AL.com

July 10, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/07/alabama-mayors-hospital-officials-call-for-statewide-mask-requirement.html>

Local Health Officials Worry CDC Has 'Lost Its Soul'

Andrew Harnik | The Associated Press

September 25, 2020

<https://origin.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/09/25/local-health-officials-worry-cdc-has-lost-its-soul>

Opinion: In Alabama, Poverty and the Coronavirus Are a Double Blow

Catherine Coleman Flowers | The New York Times

November 14, 2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/14/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-poverty-us.html>

As COVID-19 spike grows, Alabama hospitals ask for retired nurses, students for help

Melissa Brown | Montgomery Advertiser

December 8, 2020

<https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2020/12/08/some-alabama-hospitals-look-retired-nurses-fight-covid-19-strain/6479887002/>

Dr. Scott Harris brings quiet stability to Alabama's fight to contain COVID-19

Mike Cason | AL.com

December 21, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/12/dr-scott-harris-brings-quiet-stability-to-alabamas-fight-to-contain-covid-19.html>

Telemedicine usage spikes in pandemic, leaders look to post-COVID applications

Mary Sell | Alabama Daily News

December 22, 2020

<https://www.wbrc.com/2020/12/22/telemedicine-usage-spikes-pandemic-leaders-look-post-covid-applications/>

Session VII

Below are the biographies for panelists, exploring broadband internet particularly in rural Alabama.

Trey Hayes (Fellow)

Trey Hayes joined Alabama Power's Connectivity and Innovation Team in 2019 and currently leads connectivity efforts across the state. Having previously worked as a project manager on APC's Economic Development team, Trey knows how important connectivity is to the new economy and its ever-increasing role in how we work, learn, and maintain our health. He and his team are passionate about leading and partnering to help close the digital divide in Alabama. Trey has a strong background in industrial engineering, graduating magna cum laude from the University of Alabama and having previously served as distribution engineer in the cities of Trussville and Montgomery. On the business side, he completed his MBA at Auburn University at Montgomery with summa cum laude distinction. This landed him other pivotal roles in the company, including commercial account manager, commercial development manager, and industrial account manager. Outside of work, Trey is an active leader in the community. He serves on the University of Alabama's Honors College Council and is an adjunct professor. He also is a Blackburn Fellow and works as a deacon at the Landmark Church in Montgomery. Trey is a native of Brilliant, Alabama, and the proud husband of Amanda and father of Sam and John. His hobbies include reading, running, and becoming increasingly frustrated with the game of golf.



Chris Murphy

For over ten years, Chris Murphy has been working for the State of Alabama at the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) in various capacities and roles. Currently, he is the Program Manager for the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund program, which provides state grants to non-governmental entities that provide broadband service throughout the state. This program was created by Governor Kay Ivey in an effort to ensure that all Alabamians have access to affordable, reliable internet. While not at work, Chris enjoys spending time with his wife, Bethany, and newborn little girl, Paisley Anne.



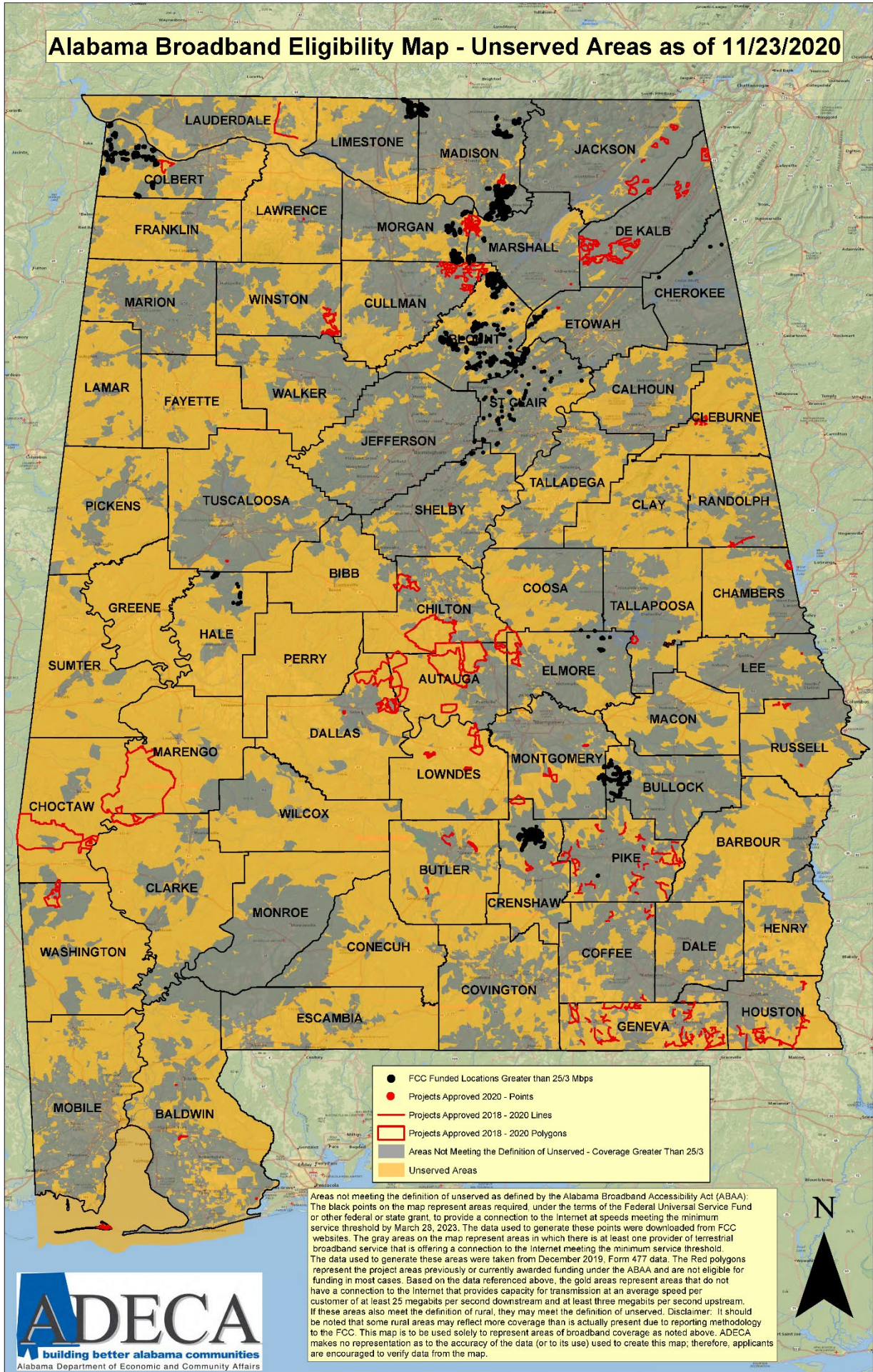
Michelle Roth

As Executive Director of the Alabama Cable and Broadband Association, Michelle Roth is responsible for Legislative Affairs, Public and Community Relations and Statewide Advocacy efforts supporting Alabama's cable industry. Recognizing connectivity is vital for Alabama's education, economic development and quality of life, Michelle works closely with ACBA members and Alabama leadership in this goal. Prior to joining ACBA in 2015, Michelle was Leadership Alabama's Program Manager, where she had the opportunity to coordinate 7 outstanding classes of Alabama leaders from 2008-2015. Her responsibilities included program management, leadership and event planning as well as coordination of the statewide nomination, selection and recruitment process. From 2003-2008, Michelle led MSR Consulting, and assisted small businesses and non-profit organizations in all phases of Human Resources, including recruiting, selection, personnel development and evaluations, team building and conflict resolution to create better work environments for employees, managers and Board of Directors. Roth previously served as HR Manager and other related positions with a Southeastern bank in Montgomery and Birmingham.



A native of Lakeland, Florida, Michelle is a graduate of the University of Alabama, with a B.S. in Marketing. She has served on the Board and Executive Committee of several charitable and community organizations, including the Blackburn Institute, Alabama Council of Association Executives, The Governor's Broadband Advisory Council, First United Methodist Church Board of Trustees, Staff Parrish Relations, Mary Ellen's Hearth, 100 Women Strong (Ambassador for the Family Sunshine Center), The Montgomery Education Foundation, VOICES for Alabama's Children, the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the Alabama Dance Theatre and various community and social organizations. Michelle and her husband, Toby Roth, have three daughters (Lillian, Madeline and Annabel).

Alabama Broadband Eligibility Map - Unserved Areas as of 11/23/2020



Gov. Kay Ivey awarded nearly \$5.1 million in grants to provide high-speed internet access to more than 6,000 households, businesses and community facilities in rural Alabama, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs said Tuesday.

The grants were awarded in 14 areas throughout the state, ranging from Madison County in north Alabama to Baldwin County in the southern part of the state.

“Broadband has always been a priority of my administration, but the COVID-19 pandemic compounded just how necessary these services are to residents in rural and underserved areas of Alabama,” Ivey said in a statement. “Along with the help of broadband providers, we are making more steady progress in ensuring that Alabamians will have the option to receive these services.”

The grants were awarded through the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund, which was created by the Alabama Legislature and signed into law by Ivey. The fund assists internet providers with extending high-speed service to areas lacking the service.

ADECA administers the grants.

“Seeing the progress made in supplying high-speed internet availability is certainly gratifying and rewarding for Gov. Ivey and for ADECA,” ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell said. “ADECA is honored to be a part of this program that is having life-changing and life-improving impacts in rural Alabama.”

Telecommunications provider Mediacom Southeast LLC was awarded more than \$120,000 to make broadband access available in Bay Minette, Loxley and Cypress Bay West in Baldwin County.

In Butler County, Hayneville Fiber Transport Inc. was given a \$47,876 grant to provide broadband to 40 households, a business and a community facility along Ebenezer Road.

In north Alabama, Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative Inc. was awarded nearly \$1.4 million to provide high-speed internet access to more than 1,000 households in Dekalb and Jackson counties, while Mediacom Southeast and New Hope Telephone Cooperative Inc. were given a combined \$122,000 to provide high-speed internet in Berkley and Beth Drive in Madison County. In Morgan County, OTELCO Inc. was awarded a \$619,500 grant to provide high-speed access to 1,579 households, 66 businesses and four community facilities in the Morgan City community.

Here are other areas that were awarded grants:

TALLAPOOSA COUNTY

Windstream Alabama LLC- \$19,475 to provide broadband access to 61 households and three businesses south of Camp Hill

MARENGO COUNTY

Pine Belt Telephone Co. Inc. - \$1.5 million to provide service access to parts of Sweet Water and Myrtlewood including nearly 1,500 households, 75 businesses and 10 anchor services including a school, four fire department and a medical clinic.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Mon-Cre Telephone Cooperative Inc. - \$341,078 to provide broadband availability to 150 households along Hobbie Road in the LeGrand community.

WINSTON COUNTY

Cyber Broadband Inc. - \$824,862 to provide access to about 800 households and 15 anchor establishments on and near Smith Lake from Arley to the Cullman County boundary.

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/05/ivey-awards-51-million-to-expand-high-speed-internet-in-rural-alabama.htm>

Executive Order 704

Governor Kay Ivey

April 26, 2017

<https://adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/energy/broadband/Broadband%20Docs/Broadband%20Executive%20Order.pdf>

Alabama Broadband Accessibility Act

Senators Scofield, Marsh, Ward, Reed, Allen, Livingston, Jones, Whatley, Price, Holley, Waggoner,

Williams, Sessions, Chesteen, Beasley, Albritton, Chambliss, Smitherman and Singleton *March 28, 2018*

<https://adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/energy/broadband/Documents/Alabama%20Broadband%20Accessibility%20Act.pdf>

Governor Kay Ivey on Monday announced that she has extended the successful Alabama Broadband Connectivity for Students program into 2021 thanks to a provision in the latest COVID-19 relief package passed by Congress last week and signed by President Trump on Sunday evening.

Governor Ivey's goal is to ensure that the families currently benefiting from ABC for Students have continuity of service through the program, which has provided access to high-speed internet for about 200,000 Alabama students throughout the fall and was slated to end on the original CARES Act spending deadline of December 30, 2020. The relief package included an extension into 2021 of the federal deadline for states to spend CARES Act funds allocated earlier in 2020. The current funding is anticipated to cover the costs for current participants through the spring semester of 2021.

"Alabama has led nationally with this innovative program via CARES Act funding to ensure that students can participate in distance-learning during the pandemic," Governor Ivey said. "I am extremely grateful to President Trump and Congress for including the funding extension, and most of all, I am pleased that we will continue to offer this assistance to the families who are signed up for the program. My hope is that this extension is welcome news for both parents and students during an unusual and difficult school year."

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is managing the ABC for Students program for the state and is working with its partner CTC Technology & Energy to notify participating internet service providers of the extension for current program participants with the goal of minimal disruption in service. Updated information for current participants will be posted in the near future to the program website at www.abcstudents.org or they may call the toll-free hotline at (888) 212-4998.

ADECA partnered with CTC to develop the ABC for Students program to implement the first-of-its-kind program statewide in a very short and accelerated timeframe in July and August. Back in the fall, families that qualified for the National School Lunch Program received vouchers to cover the cost of equipment, installation and internet service through 42 providers that partnered with the state for the program. ADECA also administers the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund, which provides grant funding to expand broadband service in the state.

<https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2020/12/governor-ivey-extends-alabama-broadband-connectivity-for-students-program-into-2021/>

Session VIII

Below are the biographies for panelists, examining the work of the Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy and discussing the response of the legislature, courts, and counties to the current crisis.

Rep. Mike Ball

Rep. Mike Ball has served in the Alabama House of Representatives since 2002. He represents Redstone Arsenal and the surrounding area of Madison County. He Ball serves as the Chairman of the House Ethics and Campaign Finance and Madison County Legislation committees and a member of the House Judiciary and State Government committees. Prior to his election to the Alabama Legislature, Mike served 4 years in the Marine Corps, 8 years as an Alabama State Trooper, and 17 years as an Agent assigned to the Major Crimes Unit of the Alabama Bureau of Investigation. Mike and his wife Karen live in Madison. They have four children and five grandchildren.



Dena Dickerson

Dena is a positive example of successfulness after incarceration. Previously serving as a case manager for a men's homeless shelter, she acquired greater insight for the need of assistance for former offenders. She believes that others, through their lived experiences, are uniquely purposed to provide support, assistance and encouragement to newly released offenders in becoming successful and productive citizens. Dena's analogy of the role of Offender Alumni Association (OAA) helping former offenders: It's almost like coming to the edge of the forest and the person wants to come to the other side because everything is so beautiful...and they just can't make that step...and you just reach your hand in and say "I got you."



Katie Glenn

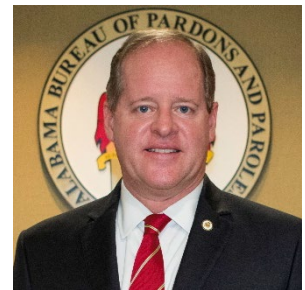
Katie Glenn is a native Alabamian and Policy Associate at the Southern Poverty Law Center. There she helps lead the Center's Alabama policy work, focusing on legislative advocacy, direct lobbying, coalition building, and community engagement. In a non-COVID world, she spends her days (and far too many of her nights) at the Alabama State House, working on issues related to the Center's main focus areas– criminal justice reform, children's rights, economic justice, immigrant justice, LGBTQ rights, and voting rights. Prior to her time at SPLC, Katie worked at Planned Parenthood Southeast, VOICES for Alabama's Children, Birmingham-Southern College, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She and her husband, Wes, live in Montgomery with their two cats, Ida and Perry.



Glenn is an alumna of Birmingham-Southern College.

Cam Ward

Cam Ward proudly serves as Director of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles. He was sworn in on December 7, 2020. In this role, he is responsible for all agency operations in support of the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. Prior to the Bureau, Cam was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 2002 where he served for two terms. In 2010, he was elected to the Alabama Senate representing parts of Shelby, Bibb, and Chilton Counties. He was re-elected in 2012 and served as Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, a role he held for the last nine years. Additionally, Cam served as President of the Alabama Law Institute. He has served as Deputy Attorney General, Assistant Secretary of State, and a District Director for Congressman Spencer Bachus. As a community leader, he has participated in numerous civic activities and memberships. He also volunteered countless hours on various community boards of directors. Some of these causes have included the Glenwood Autism Center, the YMCA of Alabaster, Leadership Shelby County and other non-profit organizations. In 2017, Cam took on a role with national Prison Fellowship and their Faith and Justice Fellowship. In 2015, he was recognized nationally for his work on reforming Alabama's criminal justice system, an issue he continues to champion. In late 2017, he was named one of Autism Speaks National Legislators of the Year for his work on securing insurance coverage for those on the autism spectrum. Cam is married to the former Lindsey Clements and he has two daughters, Riley and Clements.



Ward is alumnus of Troy University, where he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity and served two terms as president of the student government association, and Cumberland School of Law at Samford University.

Dena Dickerson is worried that Alabama officials won't make the hard decisions needed to fix the state's broken prison system, and that the people who can help inform those decisions aren't being listened to. People like herself.

In 2002 at the age of 23 Dickerson was sentenced to serve 114 years in Alabama prisons, convicted of conspiring to sell drugs, a nonviolent offense. She was turned down at parole hearings countless times, she said, until the system that locked her up started slowly churning her toward her 2012 release. Dickerson is the executive director of the Offender Alumni Association, a Birmingham-based nonprofit that puts former inmate volunteers with recently released persons to help them navigate life after prison.

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Dickerson attended a meeting Friday in Montgomery of the Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy, created in July after the U.S. Department of Justice released a report on an investigation into Alabama's deadly prisons.

The DOJ in April wrote a letter to the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) informing leaders that there was reason to believe Alabama was violating prisoners' Constitutional rights to protection from physical violence and sexual assault while incarcerated by housing them in understaffed, unsafe prisons. According to Gov. Kay Ivey's order creating the study group, it is required to make policy recommendations before the Alabama Legislature's next session begins Feb. 4.

At the study group meeting on Friday members heard from representatives from Community Corrections and Mental Health departments, and from ADOC staff, but Dickerson worries that members aren't hearing from the people who have lived through the system. At previous walk-throughs of state prisons study group members saw inmates on lockdown, prisons cleaned and made ready for visitors, Dickerson said, but members did not "actually engage individuals that are there."

Carla Crowder is executive director for Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit legal advocacy group that's also a member of the recently-formed Alabamians for Fair Justice, a coalition of 12 groups of individuals impacted by the criminal justice system and advocacy groups.

Crowder also attended Friday's study group meeting and expressed concern over what she says is the group's focus on the small fraction of the system that's working well, while "overlooking the catastrophic failures that have resulted in long term federal intervention in Alabama's prison system." "Other than a brief discussion of some really dire shortcomings with state mental health care, there was little serious examination of statewide systemic failures, which is how we got to have the most violent, overcrowded, dangerous, and corrupt prison system in the nation," Crowder said. "Until the study group is willing to look honestly at those failures, they won't be able to fix them."

Crowder noted a presentation at Friday's meeting by the Alabama Office of Prosecution (OPS) Services in which the department handed out a document about diversion programs, drug courts, mental health courts, and other specialty courts.

According to the OPS report handed out Friday over 34,000 people were admitted into those fee-based programs since 2014, Crowder said. Figures showed that 18,731 people completed those programs, while 5,208 were terminated from the programs and 227 dropped out.

"That leaves over 10,000 cases totally unaccounted for," Crowder said. "These kinds of programs are the kinds of alternatives to incarceration that can work well when they are well run. But how can anyone gauge their effectiveness if there is no data on almost one third of the cases? You can't have data-driven reforms if there's no data."

Crowder noted that the OPS report states that "Complete statistics are not maintained in a consistent manner."

Attempts to reach Barry Matson, executive director of OPS on Tuesday were unsuccessful.

Attempts to reach several members of the Governor's Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy on Tuesday were also unsuccessful.

The Alabamians for Fair Justice coalition's policy recommendations released Oct. 31 provide a roadmap that advocates for reform hope state officials will consider.

"The nationally publicized DOJ report found "[t]he combination of ADOC's overcrowding and understaffing results in prisons that are inadequately supervised, with inappropriate and unsafe housing designations, creating an environment rife with violence, extortion, drugs, and weapons." the coalition's proposal states.

Dickerson talked with a reporter Monday afternoon while spending time with someone released from prison a week before.

Even more than helping them navigate probation services, which can be costly and difficult to get to without adequate transportation, Dickerson said it's important to "be able to sit in a space with an individual, so we give emotional and mental support."

"Those people feel hopeless," Dickerson. "They've gotten themselves in a serious pickle that is going to cost them for the rest of their lives...if we truly want safer communities, then we're going to have to invest in people."

<https://www.alreporter.com/2019/11/06/criminal-justice-reform-advocates-urge-state-officials-to-act/>

Alabama's governor announced plans Thursday to move forward with state leasing of three privately built mega prisons that would begin construction next year, in what she described as a step toward overhauling an understaffed and violence-plagued prison system beset by years of federal criticism.

Gov. Kay Ivey announced the Alabama Department of Corrections would enter into negotiations with two development teams including Nashville, Tennessee-based private prison giant CoreCivic and Alabama Prison Transformation Partners, a group including state-based construction firm BLHarbert, on developing the three new prisons. The state would lease the facilities and staff them with state officers.

The governor's office did not disclose the estimated cost but said "final financial terms" will become publicly available later this year and construction would begin in 2021. Spokeswoman Gina Maiola said the developers are aware of an "affordability limit" of \$88 million per year. She said the three mega prisons would collectively house a total of 10,000 male inmates— more than 3,000 per prison. The state would close, or repurpose, 11 existing prisons.

The Ivey administration has pitched the plan as a smart solution to Alabama's longstanding prison woes.

"The Alabama Prison Program is vital for the long-term success of our state and communities ... we must rebuild Alabama's correctional system from the ground up to improve safety for our state's correctional staff and inmate population, and we must do it immediately," Ivey said.

The governor said the arrangement would end expensive maintenance costs on aging prisons while providing modern security systems and safer facilities allowing more room for treatment and education programs. But the plan has run into criticism from advocacy groups and a mixed reception from state lawmakers, with some saying the leases will be costly without addressing systemic problems.

Considered one of the most violent and understaffed systems in the country, the Alabama prison system has faced a litany of federal criticism.

The U.S. Department of Justice said twice within 18 months that it believes Alabama houses male inmates in unconstitutional conditions for both a pattern of using excessive force by officers and excessive inmate-on-inmate violence. U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson, who ruled the state's treatment of mentally ill prisoners was "horrendously inadequate" on Wednesday, ordered outside experts to monitor the state's compliance with his orders to boost staffing and improve conditions.

"The U.S. Department of Justice has already told us twice that brick and mortar is not the answer to the conditions that the DOJ found 'routinely violate the constitutional rights of prisoners,'" said a statement from Alabamians for Fair Justice. The collection of advocacy groups and individuals added: "Data-

driven, humane policy solutions are needed now. It is time for the State of Alabama to put people over political interests and corporate profits.”

Ivey said Thursday that the plan calls for the local construction giant BLHarbert to build a prison in Bibb County in west Alabama and CoreCivic to build prisons in Escambia County in the southern part of the state and another in Elmore County in central Alabama.

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall praised Ivey for “tackling head-on the toughest issue facing our state, replacing Alabama’s aging prisons with modern facilities that will better serve to rehabilitate the inmate population while also protecting our communities.”

Rep. Chris England, a Tuscaloosa Democrat, said the leases do not make financial sense because they will plunge the state billions of dollars into debt. “We are going to spend well over two billion dollars and not own the land, or the facilities or have any control over the facilities,” England said.

State Sen. Cam Ward, a Republican from Alabaster, said he is comfortable with the cost estimates put forward by the administration but cautioned it is not the sole solution.

“This by itself will not solve our problems,” Ward said. He said the state will have to take over steps to ease federal concerns, including Thompson’s order to overhaul mental health care.

A federal judge in 2017 ruled state mental health care in prisons is “horrendously inadequate” and ordered improvements in staffing levels and care. The judge on Wednesday said expert monitors will track the state’s compliance.

The lease plan bypasses the typical route of securing legislative approval to borrow money to build state buildings. Prison construction bills failed in the legislature among political infighting over which districts would lose existing prisons and which ones would get the new facilities and the jobs that come with them.

“The legislature, we tried it twice, but we failed cause everybody got in a political food fight over which prison closed and who got a new one,” Ward said.

<https://www.aldailynews.com/ivey-seeks-3-private-built-mega-prisons-names-sites/>

The U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against the Alabama Department of Corrections today for failure to protect prisoners from inmate-on-inmate violence and sexual abuse, failure to protect them from excessive force by staff, and failure to provide safe conditions of confinement. The DOJ first made most of the allegations in April 2019 and said today the state has failed to address the problems since. The DOJ said some problems have gotten worse since it started an investigation four years ago.

“The United States Constitution requires Alabama to make sure that its prisons are safe and humane,” Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband for the Civil Rights Division said in a press release. “The Department of Justice conducted a thorough investigation of Alabama’s prisons for men and determined that Alabama violated and is continuing to violate the Constitution because its prisons are riddled with prisoner-on-prisoner and guard-on-prisoner violence. The violations have led to homicides, rapes, and serious injuries. The Department of Justice looks forward to proving its case in an Alabama federal courtroom.”

Today’s lawsuit follows the notification to Alabama by the DOJ in April 2019 that conditions in Alabama’s men’s prisons violated the Constitution because of the unsafe conditions. The state entered negotiations with the DOJ after that, and both state officials and the DOJ said then they hoped to address with issues without going to court. But in today’s lawsuit, the DOJ said that after multiple rounds of negotiations beginning in the spring of 2019, “the state has failed or refused to correct the unconstitutional conditions in Alabama’s prisons for men.”

In July, the DOJ notified the state of its allegations that correctional officers frequently used excessive force, a follow-up to the April 2019 notification. The DOJ says Alabama prisons are in violation of the 8th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Gov. Kay Ivey issued a statement saying she was disappointed in the lawsuit. “This is disappointing news, as the state has actively been negotiating in good faith with the Department of Justice following the release of its findings letters,” Ivey said. “Out of respect for the legal process, we unfortunately cannot provide additional comment at this time. We will, however, push forward with our plan to reimagine and rebuild Alabama’s correctional system from the ground up through the construction of three new regional men’s prisons. The comprehensive efforts underway will go a long way in addressing the long-standing challenges faced by the Alabama Department of Corrections.”

Alabama is in negotiations with developer teams to build three new prisons for men. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall issued a statement criticizing the decision to file the lawsuit and called it a “brazen federal overreach.”

“DOJ’s decision to file suit against the state—particularly at this time—is illogical, at best,” Marshall said. “This move both discounts the hundreds of hours that have gone into settlement negotiations thus far and disregards the immense progress that the State has made in improving our prisons since

DOJ first released its findings in early 2019. Much of what the DOJ is still demanding, as its lawyers well know, goes beyond what federal law requires—in other words, these demands are unenforceable. The State will not yield to this brazen federal overreach. We look forward to our day in court.”

But the DOJ said more than 20 months of negotiations with the state failed to achieve a settlement that would correct the problems. The DOJ said it seeks injunctive relief for the unconstitutional conditions, which the agency said must be proven in federal court. The lawsuit does not seek monetary damages.

The DOJ said it began its investigation in Alabama’s men’s prisons in 2016. Since that time, the prisons have gotten more crowded, prisoner-on-prisoner homicides have increased, violence and sexual abuse remains unabated, excessive force by staff is common, the physical facilities remain inadequate, and staffing levels are critically and dangerously low, the DOJ said.

“In the 20 months following the United States’ original notification to the State of Alabama of unconstitutional conditions of confinement, Alabama prisoners have continued daily to endure a high risk of death, physical violence, and sexual abuse at the hands of other prisoners,” the lawsuit says.

Alabama’s prisons became more overcrowded after the April 2019 report by the DOJ, partly because of the closing of some deteriorating facilities. Another factor was a sharp decline in the number of inmates granted parole by the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. The case was filed in U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama.

The DOJ’s Civil Right Division and the U.S. Attorney’s Offices for the Northern, Middle, and Southern Districts of Alabama conducted the multi-year investigation. The DOJ provided the state with written notice of the facts supporting the allegations and minimum steps to fix them as required by the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA), the DOJ said. CRIPA authorizes DOJ to take action when it has reasonable cause to believe there is a pattern or practice of depriving the constitutional rights of prisoners.

JaTaune Bosby, executive director of ACLU of Alabama, issued a statement about the DOJ lawsuit. “For years, currently and formerly incarcerated people have been sounding the alarm on the abuse and conditions that they experienced within Alabama Department of Corrections facilities, and they have been rallying, protesting, writing, and calling elected leaders at every level to demand change,” Bosby said. “The U.S. Department of Justice has issued two reports detailing excessive and unconstitutional treatment of incarcerated people, and yet ADOC Commissioner Jeff Dunn has been either unable or unwilling to address these issues in any meaningful way. It has been past time for reform, and it is shameful that our state leaders are once again being forced through litigation to do the right thing for the people of Alabama.”

Bosby also called on the Legislature to repeal the state’s sentencing laws to reduce the number of people in prison. “But while this lawsuit will hopefully bring relief to the thousands of people incarcerated in state facilities, we must continue holding our representatives accountable for their

role in Alabama's mass incarceration crisis," Bosby said. "When the Legislative Session begins in February, it is imperative that we see bold reforms supported by leaders across the board like repealing the outdated Habitual Felony Offender Act."

Ivey, Alabama Department of Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn, and other officials have said new prisons are an essential part of a larger plan to overhaul the state's troubled system. The plan for three new prisons calls for the developers to finance, build, and maintain the prisons, which the state would lease and operate. Proposed sites are in Bibb, Elmore, and Escambia counties. Some of the state's existing prisons would close. Ivey appointed a criminal justice reform study group last year. The group, led by former state Supreme Court Justice Champ Lyons, held public meetings, toured prisons, and issued a set of recommendations that stressed the need for programs to reduce recidivism.

State lawmakers introduced some bills earlier this year based on the study group's report, including measures to increase oversight of the Alabama Department of Corrections. The COVID-19 pandemic cut short the legislative session and the bills did not pass. Lawmakers have increased funding for prisons and approved more money for correctional officers pay in an effort to address a severe staffing shortage. The Legislature returns in February. In a separate lawsuit, U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson found in 2017 that mental health care in Alabama prisons was "horrendously inadequate" in violation of the Constitution. That case is ongoing, with the ADOC working on improvements that would fix the deficiencies.

Ebony Howard, senior supervising attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center, said today's lawsuit by the DOJ was overdue. The SPLC represents inmates in the lawsuit over mental health care. "The Department of Justice filing this lawsuit signals what incarcerated people, their families, and advocates have long been waiting for - a clear and unequivocal signal that the failures of the State and Alabama prison system are abhorrent," Howard said. "The inaction with regard to protecting the humanity of incarcerated people is illegal and immoral.

"The same questions arise again for Alabama leaders: What are you going to do? Now that the State is a defendant in another federal lawsuit and again linked to civil and human rights abuses, will leaders remain silent in the face of this crisis? "History will judge the actions of the people who were entrusted with leadership and whether or not they abide by true principles. Will Alabama finally do what it should have done in 2014, or will the state continue to ignore the crisis of conscience that threatens the state's moral fiber."

Former state Sen. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster, has been a leader in criminal justice reform efforts in the Legislature. Ward just left his Senate seat to accept Ivey's appointment as director of the Pardons and Paroles Bureau, a job he started Monday. Ward said the lawsuit did not come as a surprise. Ward said he believes state Attorney General Marshall worked hard to reach a settlement on behalf of the state, but said the Legislature has failed to act.

"At the end of the day, they have been saying for years we have to act," Ward said. "And we haven't done it. I don't think there's any one reason. I think General Marshall's done as good as he could do

for negotiating a settlement. But at the end of the day, the policy makers have to make a decision.” Ward said he believes Ivey understands the urgency of the situation, but said it’s a matter of the executive and legislative branches coming together on solutions.

“And it’s not one issue,” Ward said. “It’s not just construction. It’s not just pardons and paroles. It’s not just sentencing. It’s multiple factors. It’s not an easy solution.” Ward said he believes new prisons have to be part of the solution. He said the key to make things safer in the meantime is more oversight of correctional officers. “But that’s up to the Legislature,” Ward said. “They’ll figure it out. Legislature has to figure that out.”

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/12/us-department-of-justice-sues-alabama-over-unsafe-prison-conditions.html>

Governor’s Study Group on Criminal Justice Policy Recommendations and Research

Office of the Governor

January 30, 2020

<https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2020/01/governors-study-group-on-criminal-justice-policy-recommendations-and-research/>

Alabama lawmakers concerned about risk, cost of private prisons

Mike Cason | AL.com

September 6, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/09/alabama-lawmakers-concerned-about-risk-cost-of-private-prisons.html>

‘Don’t let me die’: Inside the Alabama prison system’s COVID-19 quarantine ward

Connor Sheets | AL.com

September 13, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/09/dont-let-me-die-inside-the-alabama-prison-systems-covid-19-ward.html>

Death Traps: An examination of the routine, violent deaths of people in the custody of the State of Alabama

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

November 2020

<https://www.alabamaappleseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Death-Traps-Report-2020-FINAL.pdf>

Retired judge proposes bill to create 2nd Alabama parole board

Mike Cason | AL.com

December 17, 2020

<https://www.al.com/news/2020/12/retired-judge-proposes-bill-to-create-2nd-alabama-parole-board.html>

Student Expectations

Each and every interaction with a Blackburn Student, Fellow, Advisory Board member, or friend of the institute provides you with a unique opportunity to build your personal brand through positive networking experiences. Be mindful that poor behavior reflects poorly not only on yourself, but your family, your region, your state, the Blackburn Institute, and The University of Alabama.

Broadening Horizons:

A primary mission of the Blackburn Institute is developing ethical, broad-thinking leaders. In order to become a leader of this caliber, individuals must be willing to entertain new ideas and expose themselves to new people and experiences.

- Have the courage to not only embrace, but to seek out, new experiences.
 - Show empathy and understanding for others in all that you do.
 - Tolerate and learn from differing viewpoints.
 - Develop a positive attitude towards interacting with people unfamiliar to you.
-

Professionalism:

As a leadership development organization, the Blackburn Institute places a heavy emphasis on professionalism. Ethical leaders should exemplify professional ideals and enact them in his or her daily life, but especially during Blackburn-sponsored events.

- Engage in meaningful dialogue aimed at increasing mutual understanding; never adversarial debate aimed at conquest or victory.
 - Respect every individual regardless of class, rank, title, or responsibilities.
 - Ask insightful questions in search of knowledge and understanding; never use questioning as a mechanism to trap or discredit someone.
-

General Decorum:

Ensure that you always use proper manners at Blackburn-sponsored events and please keep in mind the useful tips we learned from the Blackburn Essential Skills Workshops.

- Utilize appropriate dining etiquette.
 - Maximize networking opportunities.
 - Engage in civil discourse and dialogue.
 - Ask thoughtful and respectful questions.
 - Show respect and courtesy to members of the Blackburn Institute, speakers, invited guests, and all others.
-

Conduct:

As a member of the Blackburn Institute, you represent the Institute and The University of Alabama at all Blackburn events.

- Remember, you will be held accountable for all policies contained in the Code of Student Conduct when off campus representing The University and the Blackburn Institute.
- From The University of Alabama Alcohol and Other Drug Policy:
“The University of Alabama is an institution of higher education which seeks to create a community that promotes respect, responsibility for actions, civility, upholds state and federal laws, and fosters an environment conducive to learning for members of the academic community. The misuse of AOD can hinder the University’s mission and its role in preparing students for responsible citizenship through appropriately focused educational, environmental and enforcement activities related to student health, safety, and wellbeing.”
- Consuming and/or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are strictly prohibited for all students in all Blackburn student programs. A limited exception for alcohol is made for students age 21 and over during institute-designated events with Fellows and Advisory Board members. Expectations of appropriate conduct, decorum, and professionalism remain in place at all times.

I, _____ (print), as a student member of the Blackburn Institute have read, fully understand, and agree to the Student Expectations.

Signature

Date

Dress Classifications

The Blackburn Institute utilizes a standard dress classification system to help its community identify appropriate attire for a variety of events. Attire will be noted in all invitations for Blackburn Institute events. This system provides flexibility for personal style, while ensuring a consistent appearance and level of professionalism.

Business Formal

- Business-style dress
- Dress with a jacket
- Stockings (optional in summer)
- Heels, low or high
- Business suit
- Matching vest (optional)
- Dress shirt
- Conservative tie
- Dress shoes and dress socks

Business Casual

- Skirt, khakis, or pants
- Open-collar shirt, knit shirt, or sweater (no spaghetti straps or décolleté)
- Dress
- Flats or heels
- Seasonal sport coat or blazer with slacks or khakis
- Dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar or polo shirt
- Optional tie
- Loafers or loafer-style shoes with socks

Casual

- Anything in which you are comfortable!

If you want specific guidelines for this category, here are some suggestions:

- Sundress
- Long or short skirt
- Khakis or jeans (clean, no holes)
- Shorts (depending on occasion and climate)
- Plain t-shirt (no slogans), polo shirt, or turtleneck
- Casual button-down blouse or shirt and/or sweater
- Loafers, sneakers, or sandals

Post-Trip Self-Assessment

1. Name: _____

2. How would you rate your general level of knowledge of the following issues impacting the state of Alabama on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least knowledgeable and 10 being the most knowledgeable?

Economy & Budget

Federal Government

Law Enforcement

K-12 Education

Public Health

Broadband

Prisons

3. How would you rate your personal level of empathy and appreciation for other people's perspectives on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least empathetic and 10 being the most empathetic?

4. How would you rate your ability to engage in meaningful discussions among the following groups on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being unable to have meaningful discussions and 10 being fully able to have meaningful discussions?

Your Blackburn Class

Your Class Small Group

All Blackburn Students

Blackburn Fellows

Blackburn Advisory Board

Blackburn Staff

Those Outside of Blackburn

5. What do you think are the biggest issues currently facing the state?

6. What do you think are the state's greatest resources/advantages?

7. What did you learn from this travel experience?

8. What content did you enjoy most about this travel experience?

9. What content did you enjoy least about this travel experience?

10. What statewide issues would you like to see next year's spring travel experience explore?

11. Do you have any concerns about the content or format of the travel experience?
