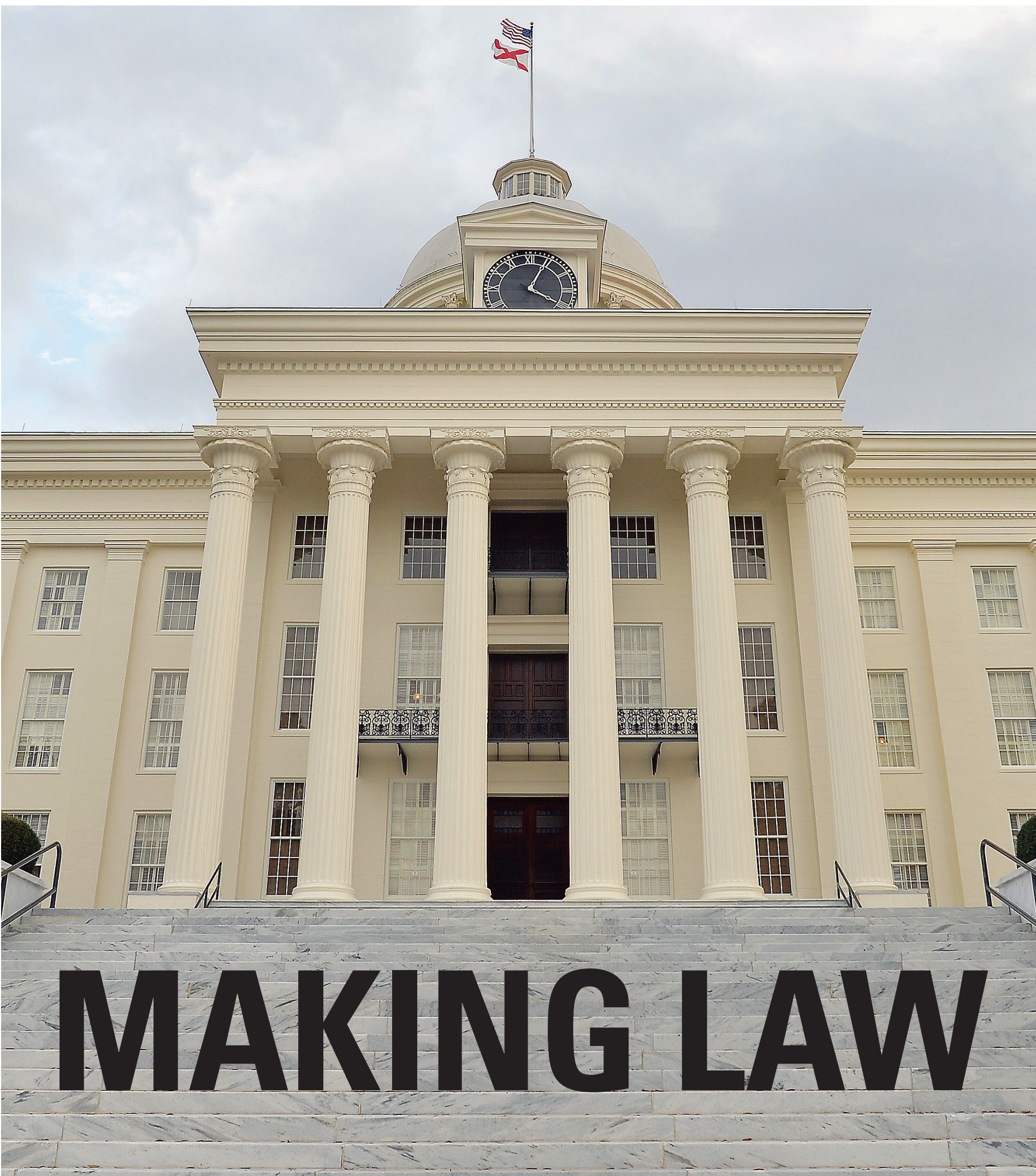


LEGISLATURE

Editor: Ben Cunningham, bcunningham@annistonstar.com • Sunday, February 5, 2017 • Page 1F



Bill Willson/TheAnniston Star

All eyes are on Washington these days, but there's something happening closer to home that may affect you even more.

On Tuesday, the Alabama Legislature meets for its 2017 session. State lawmakers will decide how much money schools and colleges get, whether to build new prisons. when and how you can carry a gun, whether you need a license to get married and a host of other issues, from multimillion-dollar statewide policies to regulations that can change your daily life.

Historians long ago dubbed the states "laboratories of democracy," where new policy ideas get a try long before they're considered at the national level. Alabama's Legislature has also been jokingly described as "the world's largest county commission." More than a century ago, lawmakers gave control over many local decisions to the Legislature, which means the House and Senate get a say in whether bars are open on Sunday in your town, how much sales tax your county can charge or what local fees you pay for a traffic ticket.

Lawmakers proposed 1,005 bills in 2016's regular session alone — and passed 277 of them.

On the next two pages, you'll find a guide to the 2017 session: the top issues, who your representatives are and how to find them.

—Tim Lockette

TIMING

{ BEGINS }
Feb. 7

• 30 days spread
over multiple weeks

{ ENDING }
in May or June

A typical week has both houses in session on Tuesday and Thursday with committee meetings on Wednesdays. Sometimes lawmakers step up the pace with in-session days on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Lawmakers typically take a week-long spring break in March and a second break before the last week of the session. They do meet on Mardi Gras (Feb. 28 this year) even though some lawmakers travel home to appear in parades.

The session could end in May or early June, depending on the pace of meetings.

THE TWO BUDGETS

• THE EDUCATION TRUST FUND



• THE GENERAL FUND

Alabama's government runs on two budgets — one for schools (K-12 and college) and one for other state functions such as courts, prisons and Medicaid.

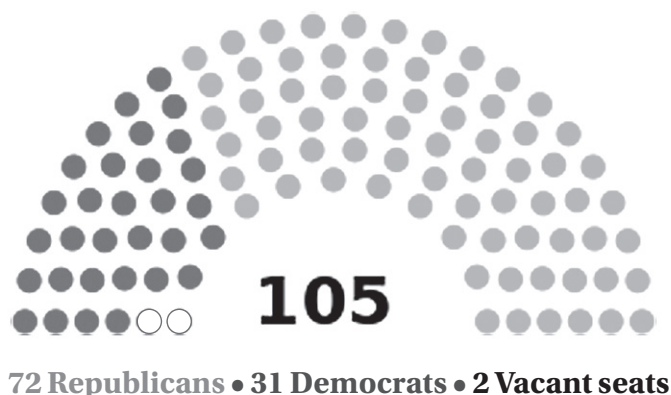
• The Education Trust Fund (schools and colleges) got \$6.3 billion last year.

• The General Fund (other state functions) got \$1.85 billion.

The biggest battles typically involve the General Fund, which gets its revenue from various taxes that don't grow very fast and is chronically low on funds.

House of Representatives

HOUSE DISTRICTS



LOCAL MEMBERS



Rep. Barbara Boyd,
D-Anniston, District 32.

Longtime K-12 teacher and education professor. Has been the ranking Democrat on the Children and Senior Advocacy Committee and State Government Committee and a member of the County and Municipal Government Committee and Rules Committee.
barbara.boyd@alhouse.gov

334-242-7692



Rep. Koven L. Brown,
R-Jacksonville, District 40.

Owner of K.L. Brown Funeral Home. Has served on the Children and Senior Advocacy Committee and as a member of the Agriculture and Forestry Committee and the Economic Development and Tourism Committee.
klbrown@cableone.net

334-353-1778



Rep. Steve Hurst,
R-Munford, District 35.

Pawn shop owner in Talladega County; parts of Oxford are in his district. Has served on the Boards Agencies and Commissions Committee and the County and Municipal Government Committee.
steve.hurst@alhouse.gov

334-353-9215



Rep. Richard Lindsey,
D-Centre, District 39.

His Cherokee and Cleburne County district was redrawn in 2012 to include Piedmont. Has served on Agriculture and Forestry; Constitution, Campaigns and Elections; Economic Development and Tourism; and Internal Affairs committees.
richard.lindsey@alhouse.gov

334-242-7713



Rep. Becky Nordgren,
R-Gadsden, District 29.

A medical company sales representative from Etowah County. Some of rural northern Calhoun County is in her district. Has served on Economic Development and Tourism, Health and State Government committees.
rebeccasnordgren@gmail.com

334-353-9032



Rep. Randy Wood, R-Saks,
District 36.

Owns Wood's Auto Body Shop. Has served on Public Safety and Homeland Security, State Government and Rules committees.
rwoodsr36@cableone.net

334-242-7700

LEADERSHIP



SPEAKER: Rep. Mac McCutcheon, R-Monrovia,
District 25.

A retired police officer from Madison County, McCutcheon took over as House speaker after Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn, was convicted on felony corruption charges in June.
mac.mccutcheon@speaker.alhouse.gov

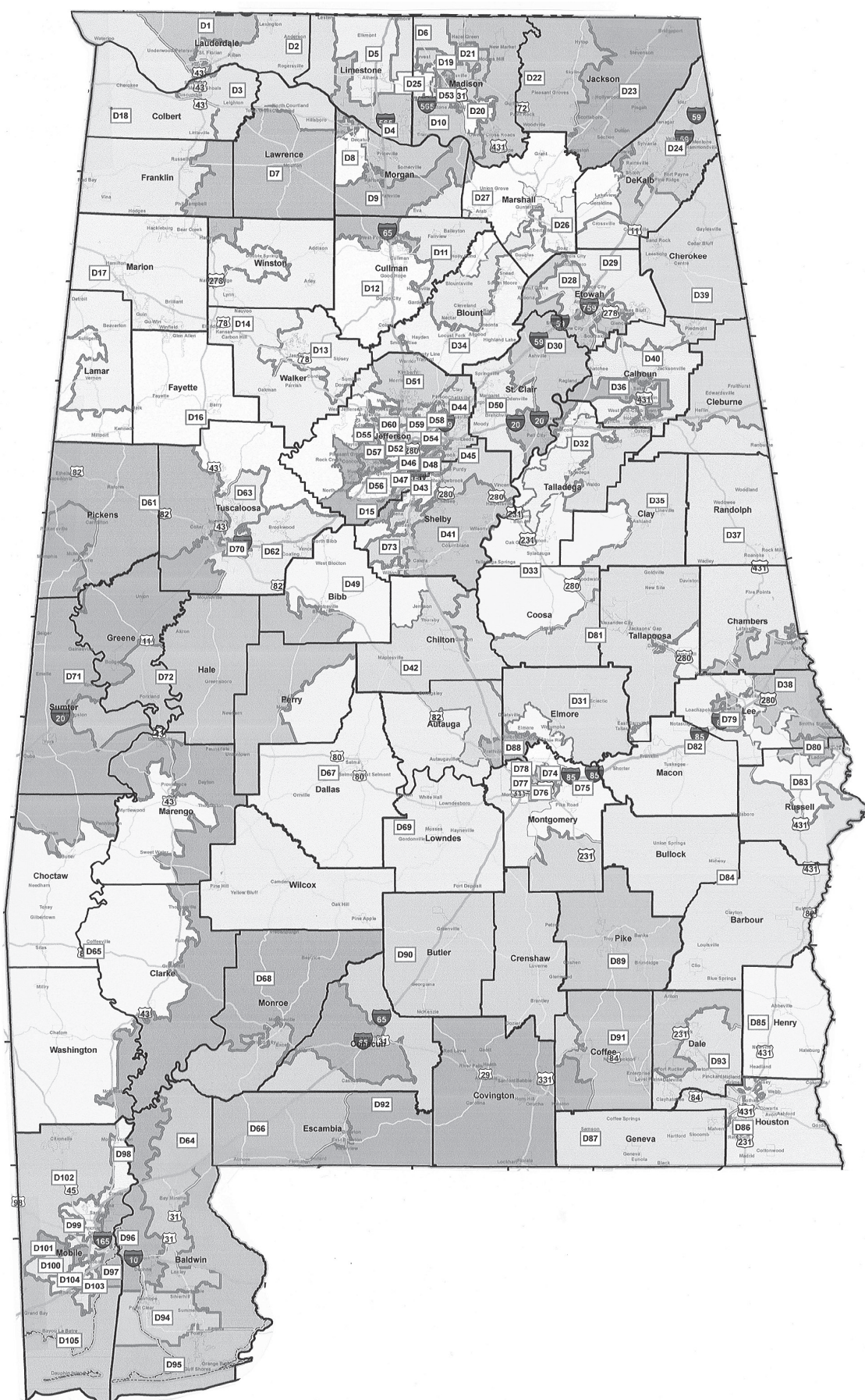
334-242-7668



Minority Leader Craig Ford,
D-Gadsden, District 28.

Ford is still leader of House Democrats, but he has already announced he won't run for re-election to the leadership position when the House reconvenes. District 53's Rep. Anthony Daniels, D-Huntsville, has announced that he'll seek the leadership role.
craig.ford@alhouse.gov

334-242-7690



THE HOUSE WILL ...

• Consider a lottery.

Lottery proposals have failed many times in the Legislature and at the ballot box, but some House members seem eager to take up the issue again.

• Weigh in (one way or another) on impeachment.

An impeachment investigation into Gov. Robert Bentley — accused of improprieties in a phone-sex scandal — is stalled for now. The House will decide (by action or inaction) if it wants to move that investigation forward.

• Draft a General Fund budget.

The House will be the first to take up the General Fund budget this year.

SOME HOUSE BILLS ALREADY FILED

HB6, HB10 and HB11 There are already three bills in the works that would create a state lottery. More may be coming.

HB15 Would bar police from arresting someone solely on a charge of resisting arrest. By Barbara Boyd, D-Anniston.

HB16 Would allow the governor to enter into a compact with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to regulate and tax gambling. Also by Boyd.

HB26 Would set the minimum wage at

\$10/hour.

HB30 Would open the polls before Election Day for early in-person voting.

HB36 Would provide limited legal immunity to armed security guards in churches.

HB50 Would limit conditions under which police can use deadly force. By Boyd.

HB51 Would set up a statewide database of pistol permits for use by police. By Boyd.

HB52 Would limit a high school coach's pay to 75 percent of the principal's pay.

HOW A BILL ...

After its first reading on the House or Senate floor, a bill is assigned to a committee which will decide whether the bill will move forward.

Committees can amend a bill before moving it on to the House or Senate floor. Members can also add amendments while the bill is being debated on the floor.

When a bill passes its house of origin, it moves to the other house, where the process starts again — and more amendments can be added.

If the House and Senate pass different versions of a bill, it may go to conference committee, where members from both houses iron out the differences. The "conference version" of the bill heads back to both houses for approval.

The governor can sign the bill, veto it or send it back with "executive amend-

ments," which are changes both houses must approve to get his signature. A simple majority vote can override the governor's veto.

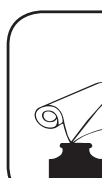
If the governor doesn't sign or veto a bill within 10 days of the end of the session, it dies by pocket veto.

With a hard limit of 30 legislative days, lawmakers use the ticking clock as part of their strategy. Lawmakers can filibuster, talking for hours to slow a bill's progress. Sometimes a lengthy debate on one bill is actually an effort to stall another bill further down the agenda. If debate runs past midnight, both houses have to declare a new legislative day, which is typically a waste of time for at least one house.

A cloture vote can limit debate and set a specific time to vote a bill up or down.



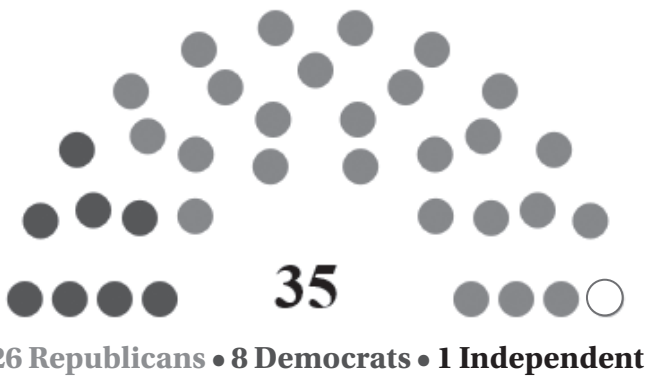
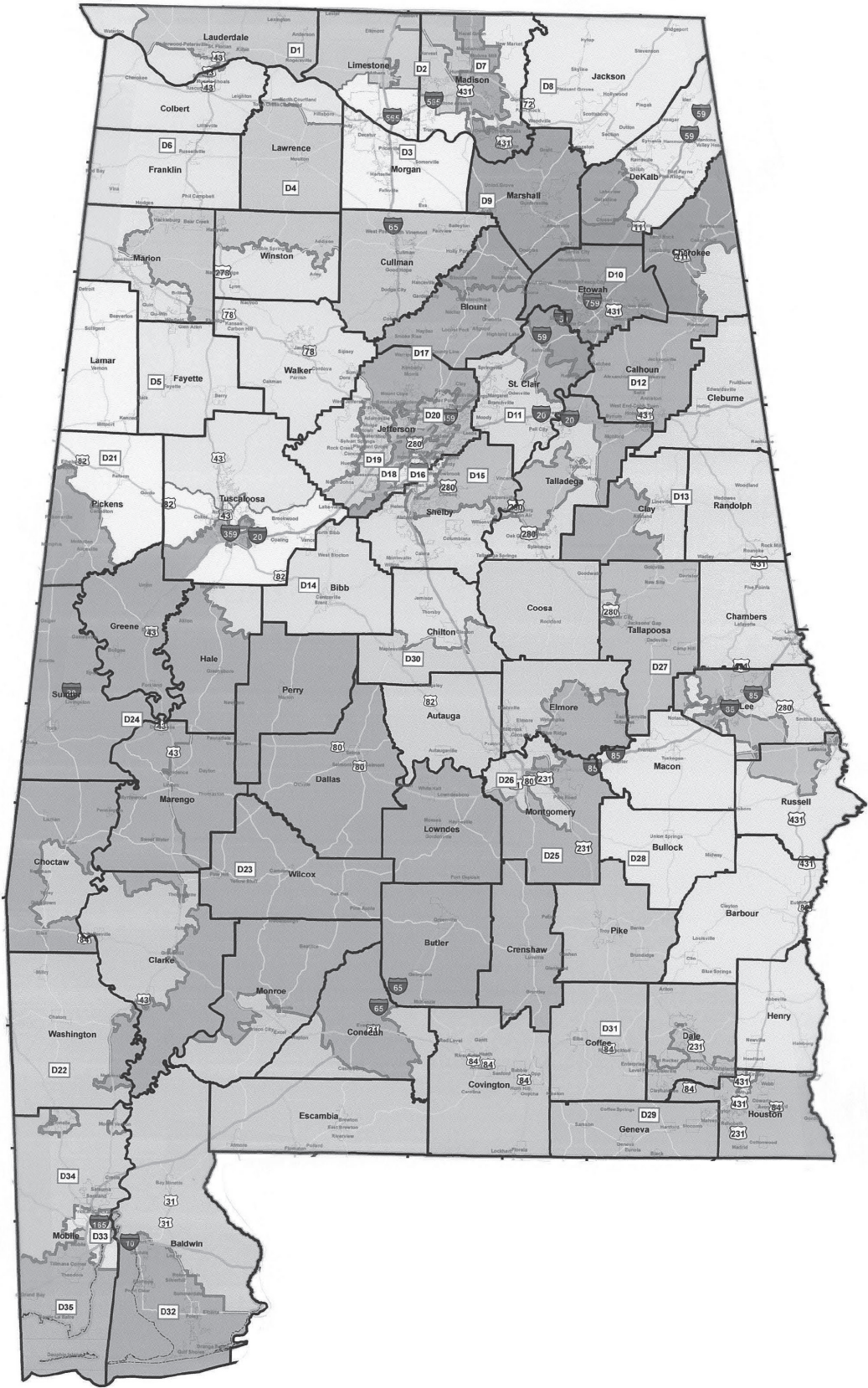
A bill is then re



Goes to

Alabama Senate

SENATE DISTRICTS



LOCAL MEMBERS

Gerald Dial, R-Lineville, District 13.

A fixture in the Legislature since 1974, when he was first elected to the House as a Democrat, he later won election to the Senate. He returned as a Republican in 2010 after losing to a challenger in the 2006 Democratic primary. He's said this will be his last term. Has chaired the Health and Human Services Committee and served as a member of the committees on Finance and Taxation for Education; Rules, Transportation and Energy; and Veterans and Military Affairs.
gerald_dial@yahoo.com



334-242-7874

Jim McClendon, R-Springville, District 11.

An optometrist who served three terms in the House before winning election to the Senate in 2014. Has served as the vice chair on the Health and Human Services Committee and Education and Youth Affairs; Finance and Taxation for Education; Rules, and Transportation and Energy.
jimmcc@windstream.net



334-242-7898

Shay Shelnett, R-Trussville, District 17.

A real estate agent whose district was redrawn east in 2014 to take in central St. Clair County and the Lincoln and East-aboga areas of Talladega County. Has served on the committees on Banking and Insurance; Confirmations; Education and Youth Affairs, and Governmental Affairs.
shay.sd17@gmail.com



334-242-7794

Phil Williams, R-Gadsden, District 10.

A lawyer in his second term in the Senate whose district includes much of Cherokee County, including the Spring Garden area. Has chaired the Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development Committee and served on the Judiciary Committee. Also a member of the committees on the Constitution, Ethics and Elections; Governmental Affairs; Veterans and Military Affairs; and Rules.
phil@williamsstatesenate.com



334-242-7857

LEADERSHIP

Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey.

Former high school teacher, bank officer and assistant director of the Alabama Development Office from Camden. Elected state treasurer in 2002 and 2006, then elected lieutenant governor in 2010. That post is officially president of the Senate, a largely ceremonial role.



334 242-7900

President Pro Tempore Del Marsh, R-Anniston, District 12.

An Anniston business owner first elected to the Senate in 1998. In 2010 the Republicans' new majority in the Senate elected him president pro tem, giving him the power to set the body's agenda.



334-242-7877

Minority Leader Quinton Ross, D-Montgomery, District 26.

First elected to the Senate in 2002, he has led the small Democratic minority in that chamber since 2014. A former high school principal and director of an adult education program for a community college, he has worked as a consultant for the Alabama Education Association and the city of Montgomery.
quinton.ross@alsenate.gov



334-242-7880

HOW TO HAVE A SAY

While Facebook groups and online petitions can generate buzz about an issue, nothing works better than contacting lawmakers personally. Email is often easy to ignore (just look at the junk in your own inbox), and some activists say a phone call works better. Lawmakers often hold public hearings on bills, in which anyone can come to speak if they're willing to drive to Montgomery and sign up as a speaker. To find committee meetings with public hearings, go to <http://www.legislature.state.al.us> and click on "meetings and announcements."

THE SENATE WILL ...

- Draft an Education Trust Fund budget.**
The Senate this year gets first shot at passing the state's school budget.
- Settle Parole Board debate.**
Many of the governor's appointments require Senate approval. This year, the Senate's confirmation process will likely settle a dispute about who's actually on the state's Board of Pardons and Paroles.
- Consider Education overhaul bills?**
Sen. Del Marsh, R-Anniston, says he has convened a panel to create a comprehensive education plan for the state. It's unclear whether that project will yield any new bills before the end of the session.

SOME SENATE BILLS ALREADY FILED

SB1 is a transgender bathroom regulation similar to the ordinance proposed in Oxford last year. It would require people using public restrooms to go to the bathroom for the gender identified on their birth certificate. By Williams.

SB6 would change the qualifications for state school superintendents, requiring applicants for the job to have at least five years of experience as an educator. By Dial.

SB11 would abolish the Court of the Judiciary, the disciplinary body that has twice disciplined Chief Justice Roy Moore for defying federal court orders.

SB12 would allow condemned inmates to choose execution by firing squad. Lethal

injection and the electric chair are now the only options.

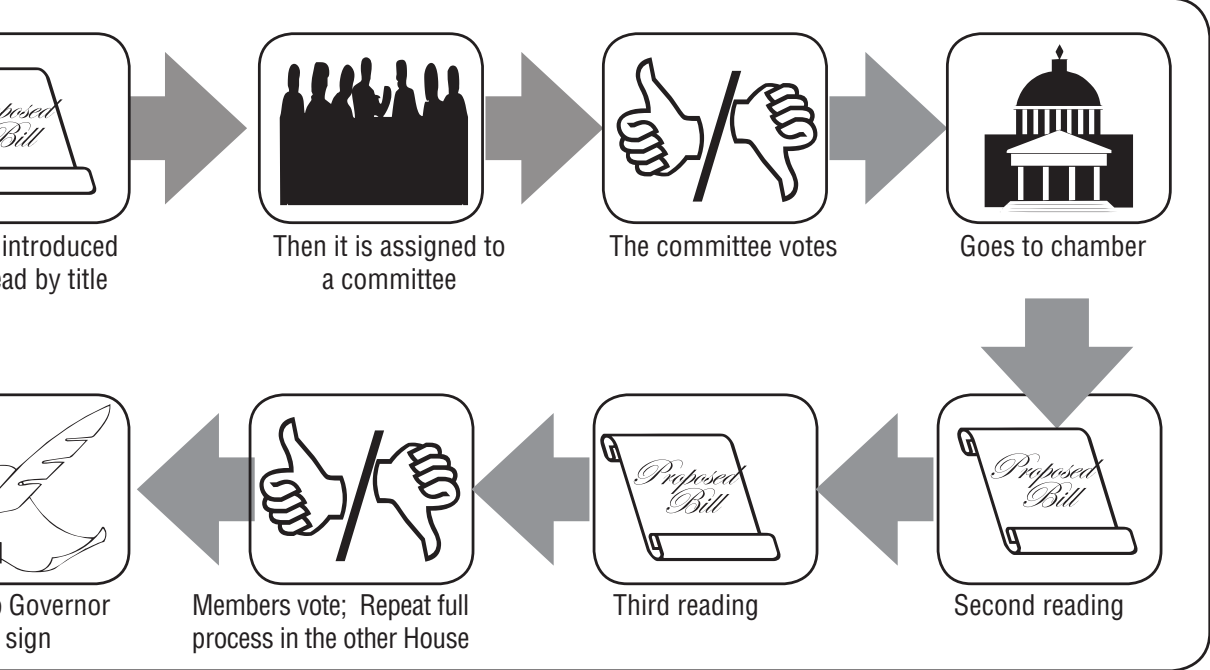
SB16 and **SB18** would prevent judges from sentencing a defendant to death unless a jury recommends it.

SB20 would abolish marriage licenses and instead allow people to record their marriages with the local probate judge. Judges in seven counties stopped issuing licenses when same-sex marriage became legal.

SB28 would allow and regulate fantasy sports contests.

SB32 would require students to pass the U.S. naturalized citizenship test, as a measure of civics knowledge, before graduating from high school.

BECOMES LAW





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Lonestar

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