



ALABAMA HOUSE MAJORITY CAUCUS

ALABAMA STATE HOUSE

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

**NATHANIEL LEDBETTER
MAJORITY LEADER**

To: Alabama House Republican Caucus Members

From: Majority Leader Nathaniel Ledbetter

Date: April 16, 2021

HOUSE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS TALKING POINTS MEMO FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 12 - 16

TRANSGENDER SPORTS LEGISLATION

- The Alabama Legislature on Thursday awarded final passage to a measure by Rep. Scott Stadthagen (R - Hartselle) that prohibits biological males from competing against females in K-12 school-sponsored sports. Likewise, those born female may not compete against males.
 - House Bill 391 specifically prohibits public schools from competing in events conducted under the authority of any athletic association that allows students to compete in events as anything other than the sex "indicated on a birth certificate."
 - The prohibition applies only to sports, events, and competitions that are exclusively reserved for one sex or another, so participation in co-ed sports would be allowed.
 - Although the Alabama High School Sports Association already has a similar policy in place, passage of Stadthagen's measure would ensure the policy does not change in the future.
 - Among the first executive orders issued by Joe Biden after entering office was one that claims students should be allowed to compete in sports based upon their so-called "gender identity," but that order does not carry the authority of law and simply reflects a continuing culture war being waged by those on the left.
- The bill now goes to Gov. Kay Ivey's desk for her consideration.

STATE PARKS BOND ISSUE

- The Alabama House on Tuesday approved a constitutional amendment by State Rep. Nathaniel Ledbetter (R - Rainsville) that, if passed by the Legislature and ratified by voters, would allow Alabama to issue \$80 million in bonds for improvements in the state parks system.
 - Most of the bonds' proceeds will be used to expand and improve campground and recreational facilities at Alabama's 21 state parks.
 - Specific projects include expanding campgrounds, modernizing day-use areas, adding cabins or swimming pools and providing internet connectivity to overnight accommodations.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and extended lockdowns prompted an additional 1.2 million Alabamians to utilize the state parks and the outdoor activities they offer.
- In 1998, voters approved a \$110 million bond issue for improvements at state parks and historic sties, and those bonds have been essentially paid off, which allows the state to borrow these funds at no additional cost.
 - The fiscal note on the legislation indicates it would increase General Fund spending by roughly \$5 million annually, but because the new issue would replace the previous bonds, the costs is actually flat-lined.
- State parks are not funded by the State General Fund, but, instead, generate 80-90% of their revenue directly through entrance, rental, lodging, golf and other recreational fees.
- In 2016 Alabama voters approved a constitutional amendment that would prevent future reallocating of state park funds for other uses in the state's budgets.
 - It is estimated that state parks have a \$375 million economic impact on Alabama's economy.

HEALTH EMERGENCY VISITATION LEGISLATION

- The Senate Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development Committee on Wednesday gave a unanimous favorable report to legislation by State Rep. Debbie Wood (R - Valley) that requires hospitals and nursing homes to allow at least one family member or caregiver to visit patients or residents during public health emergencies.

- Wood offered her legislation, which previously passed the House by an 83 - 4 margin, because thousands of Alabamians died or suffered alone in hospitals and nursing homes because of COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines that were in place.
- Wood's own mother, Peggy Hamby, passed away from COVID-19 in January.
- House Bill 521 sets "minimum standards for visitation when visitation may be limited due to a public health emergency" and also provides civil immunity to hospitals and nursing homes that comply with the legislation.
 - A visitor would have to follow any rules that may be in place, such as social-distancing protocols or mask-wearing requirements.
 - A portion of the bill specifically states, "The Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of the residents of Alabama to continue to have access to their loved ones receiving acute care or residing in long-term care facilities during a public health emergency and that companionship with one's loved ones during that time can provide support and peace of mind that positively impacts the healing process."

ALABAMA MEMORIAL PRESERVATION ACT REINFORCEMENT

- The House State Government Committee on Wednesday held a public hearing regarding legislation by State Rep. Mike Holmes (R - Wetumpka) that addresses loopholes in the Alabama Historical Preservation Act and seeks to further protect long-standing monuments, markers, and other historical remembrances from removal, relocation, and destruction.
 - *[NOTE TO MEMBERS: Laws protecting statues, monuments, and other historical markers from the "cancel culture" consistently garner more than 70% approval in polls of Republican primary voters across Alabama.]*
 - Before national response prompted them to reverse direction, San Francisco city leaders recently voted to remove the names of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Paul Revere, Thomas Jefferson, Daniel Webster, and other important historical figures from its public buildings, which is among the reasons why strengthening Alabama's Memorial Preservation Act is both timely and important.

- Colleges and universities in Alabama have already begun the process of renaming campus buildings in order to comply with demands from politically-correct liberal activists, and some cities and towns across the state are continuing efforts to remove historic statues that have stood for more than a century.
- A historical monument to Confederate President Jefferson Davis values at roughly \$500,000 was recently stolen from Old Live Oak Cemetery in Selma, Alabama.
- Under the provisions of Holmes’s legislation, no historical monument or memorial located on public property may be “relocated, removed, altered, renamed, dishonored, disparaged, or reinterpreted with competing signage, wording, symbols, objects, or other types of communication.”
 - Likewise, public buildings, schools, or streets that have been named as memorials for at least 20 years would receive the same protections.
 - The bill would also strengthen the requirements that governments and other entities must meet in order to seek a waiver from the Committee on Alabama Monument Protection.
 - Each elected or appointed official who violates or votes in favor of violating provisions in the “Memorial Preservation Act of 2021” would be fined \$10,000 a day for each day the violation continues until restorative action is taken.
 - Constitutionally-created boards of trustees would be specifically required to comply with the Act, according to the bill’s text.