



ALABAMA HOUSE MAJORITY CAUCUS

ALABAMA STATE HOUSE

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

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MAJORITY LEADER**

To: Alabama House Republican Caucus Members

From: Majority Leader Nathaniel Ledbetter

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HOUSE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS TALKING POINTS MEMO FOR REDISTRICTING SPECIAL SESSION

PRODUCING RESULTS AND SAVING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

- In just five legislative days, the minimum number necessary to pass a bill through both chambers, Alabama House Republicans and their Senate colleagues successfully implemented redistricting maps for legislative seats, congressional seats, and state school board posts; passed an \$80 million supplemental appropriation for hospitals and nursing homes that were hard hit by the COVID pandemic; and approved two measures designed to provide employers, employees, minors, and parents with protections from intrusive federal vaccine mandates.
- By working efficiently in the minimum time possible, Republicans were able to produce impressive results while avoiding a prolonged session and saving taxpayer dollars.

REDISTRICTING

- Following the U.S. census that is conducted every 10 years, states are required to reapportion districts based upon population changes and current demographic data, but because the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the 2020 census from being conducted in a timely manner, detailed data that is usually available by mid-February was not released until just prior to the special session.
- As a result, Alabama, like all other states, got a much later start than usual in redrawing districts, especially when you consider that party primaries are scheduled to occur on May 24, 2022.
- The Permanent Reapportionment Committee of the House and Senate, which held a series of 28 public hearings across the state over the last few months, approved redistricting maps before sending them to the full Legislature for consideration.

- Several changes were made to the state's 105 House districts and 35 Senate districts because of large population gains in areas like Baldwin County, Madison County, and Lee County and population losses in other regions.
 - Widespread changes also result because when one district line shifts, it produces changes in an adjoining district, which then produces changes in another adjoining district, and so on. It is a bit like setting up dominoes and watching them fall in a cascade.
- The Legislature successfully approved new lines for state House and Senate seats, congressional seats, and state school board posts, and the newly-drawn districts meet guidelines that were set by the Reapportionment Committee and standards that have resulted from federal court decisions.
 - The population in each of the legislative districts, for example, precisely meet the set standards and requirements with little to no deviation.

HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOME SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

- The special session call issued by Gov. Kay Ivey also included legislation authorizing \$80 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funding to be distributed to hospitals and nursing homes across the state.
- Under the provisions of the measure, the state Department of Finance is tasked with disbursing the funds under memorandums of understanding with the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Nursing Homes Association.
- The additional funding is expected to help the facilities cope with unexpected staffing, drug, and equipment costs, among other expenses, that have resulted from the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Many hospitals, nursing homes, and other medical facilities across the state, particularly in the rural areas of Alabama, were already experiencing varying degrees of financial distress even before the pandemic erupted.
- The funding was approved by both chambers with little controversy.

VACCINE MANDATE LEGISLATION

- Though not included in the governor’s session call, the Legislature approved two bills designed to provide a measure of relief to unvaccinated workers whose jobs are threatened by Joe Biden’s unconstitutional and ill-advised executive order mandates.
 - The Legislature may consider bills not included in the special session call as long as two-thirds of the members present and voting in both chambers approve them.
- One of the bills approved by the Legislature provides exemptions to COVID vaccination mandates for individuals who possess religious or medical objections and complete a standardized form.
 - Such exemptions already exist on the federal level, but the legislation streamlines, expedites, and eases the approval process for employees filing for exemptions.
 - The bill requires employers to presume in favor of employees who complete and submit the exemption forms, but any dispute or denial would be reviewed by the administrative law judge of the Alabama Department of Labor.
 - There is no cost to the employee for requesting, completing, or submitting the exemption form, and if an employer denies an exemption request, the employee will continue to be paid during the appeals process with the administrative law judge.
 - A review by a court is also available as a final appeal.
 - By providing additional guidance, a streamlined process, and a uniform manner of handling such exemptions, the legislation provides protections for BOTH employees and employers.
- Another bill approved by the Legislature builds upon the “Vaccine Passport Ban” previously approved in the regular session by preventing minors from receiving vaccinations without parental consent and prohibiting inquiries about the vaccination status of minors without the written permission of the parent or guardian.
 - The bill also allows the attorney general to seek injunctive relief from the courts as a remedy for violations of the “Vaccine Passport Ban.”