

2025

TO BE A GREAT YEAR FOR AMERICA!



VOL. 25 - ISSUE 4&5 - January/February 2025

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16 Pages - 2 Sections ©2025

334-356-6700

THE GAZETTE IS "THE VOICE OF REASON"!



PROMISES

Make America Powerful Again
 Make American Wealthy Again
 Make American Proud Again
 Make American Healthy Again
 Make American Strong Again
 Make American Safe Again
 Make America GREAT AGAIN

TRUMP PROMISES KEPT:

- 1) Deport criminal illegals
- 2) Withdraw from the Paris Climate Accords
- 3) Restore members of the armed services drummed out over the COVID-19 shot
- 4) Stop federal funding of abortions
- 5) Release all information of the JFK, RFK, and MLK assassinations
- 6) Protect children from medical mutilations
- 7) Pardon the January 6 protestors
- 8) End DEI indoctrination in the military
- 9) Withdraw the U.S. from the World Health Organization
- 10) Bring the federal workforce back to the office

President Donald J. Trump (R) has hit the ground running in his first 10 days in office. Trump has honored his campaign promises maximizing his executive authority.

Trump has ordered Border Czar Tom Homan, to begin deporting illegal aliens. He has also signed orders freeing the U.S. from the economically crippling Paris climate accords, restoring the careers of the vaccine dissenters in the military, pardoned over 1,500 people involved in the Jan. 6 protests, released that assassination files, banned DEI in the military training, ordered federal workers back, restored the Hyde amendment and Reagan's Mexico doctrine, banned federal funding for child gender transitions, and federal workers to return.

Visited California
 WILD FIRE DESTRUCTION
 Visted Norrth Carolina
 HURRICAN DESTRUCTION



As for President Trump, he hit the ground running like Sonic the Hedgehog! On his first day, he took the oath, did the mandatory inauguration party circuit, then signed 26 Executive Orders, 12 Memos and 4 Proclamations. His first Executive Order wiped out 78 of Biden's "harmful executive orders and actions," and gave the Directors of the Domestic Policy Council and National Economic Council and the National Security Advisor 45 days to review all the rest of Biden's executive actions and make recommendations for others to "rescind, replace or amend."

THE HITS JUST KEPT ON COMING!

Declared a National Emergency	Foreign aid? Paused for 90 days.
DEI? Gone.	Biden's energy production lockouts? Reversed.
Federal censorship? Gone.	DOGE? Established.
Out. TikTok ban? On hold for 75 days.	Merit-based hiring and promotions? Back.
Federal hiring freeze? In place.	Renamed the Gulf of Mexico - Now the Gulf of America
America First foreign policy?	Renamed Mt. McKinley
Green New Deal?	
Directed the SecDef to develop a plan to secure the southern border.	

See additional coverage on pages 2-4.




GOD BLESS AMERICA!

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M-F-: 9-5 Sat: 9-5
Sunday: Closed

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Prattville, AL 36067



A Message from the Chairman

Republican Friend,

This past week marked an incredible moment in our nation's history as Donald J. Trump was inaugurated as President of the United States. The excitement and energy surrounding the inauguration were truly inspiring, with more than 400 Alabamians traveling to Washington, D.C., to proudly join in the celebrations. Their presence demonstrated unwavering commitment to conservative values and the leadership of

President Trump.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Alabama GOP staff, interns, and volunteers who worked diligently to make sure Alabama's delegation had the best experience possible.

As we look ahead, let us continue to stand firm in our principles and work together to advance the conservative vision that strengthens our state and our nation. Together, we can ensure that this moment marks the beginning of a brighter future for all Americans.

In your service,
John Wahl, Chairman
Alabama Republican Party



Southern States Ball: Celebrating Southern Hospitality and Conservative Values

January 19, 2025 – WASHINGTON, D.C. - Alabama Republicans were in the nation's capital in force to celebrate the triumphal return of President Donald J. Trump (R) to the White House. While there are three official inauguration balls on Monday night celebrating Trump's return, Alabama Republicans joined their southern Republican allies in their own celebration – the Southern States Ball at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center on Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Alabama Gazette was represented at the \$250 per ticket event by lead reporter and content manager Brandon Moseley and GOP columnist former state Representative Perry O. Hooper Jr (R-Montgomery).

U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville (R-Alabama) told the crowd, "Our national nightmare is almost over," – referring to the Biden administration, which even many Democrats admit was in many ways a failed presidency.

U.S. Senator Katie Britt (R-Alabama) said that she is eager to get to work for the American people.

With Republicans in control of the White House, the U.S. Senate, and a majority (albeit a tiny one) in the U.S. House of Representatives the GOP is optimistic that they can burst out of this legislative stalemate that has characterized the last two years with Republicans controlling the House, Democrats in control of the Senate, and an increasingly incapable Joseph Biden occupying the White House.

Britt said that she is the only Republican mother of school age children in the Senate; but that she would soon be joined by Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody who Florida Governor Ron DeSantis will appoint to the Senate once Senator Marco Rubio is confirmed as Trump's Secretary of State.

Britt said that her and Moody would be "double trouble" for Democrats in the Senate.

Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders (R) told the crowd that she believes in President Trump as much as she did eight years ago when she went to work for him during his first administration.

Sanders is the youngest governor in the country.

Virginia Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears (R) who is the running for Governor told the crowd that her candidacy exposes the lie that Republicans don't like Blacks and don't like women.

Virginia is the only southern state that supported Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris; but Trump only lost by 224,221 votes (51.8% to 46.6%) and Republican governor Glenn Youngkin has been very popular.

Miss America Abbie Stockard (an Auburn nursing student and former Miss Alabama) said that she has made \$89,000 in scholarship money off her win. Stockard said that she wants to focus the year on cystic fibrosis – a fatal genetic disorder that afflicts

40,000 Americans. Stockard lives in Vestavia Hills.

An all-star group of performers entertained the crowd all night. The event ended with "God Bless the USA" performed by iconic country music superstar Lee Greenwood.

Alabama Republican Party Chairman John Wahl said that the event was a great success.

Wahl was recently re-elected as Republican Party National Vice-Chair representing the Southern Region.

The event was sponsored by the Poarch band of Creek Indians (PCI), Alabama Power, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Lockheed Martin, and Norfolk-Southern.

PCI Tribal Chair and CEO Stephanie Bryan told the crowd that it was great to be in Washington to celebrate victory.

President Trump will begin his second term on January 20. The event which was to have been outside and attended by tens of thousands has moved inside the Capitol Building due to anticipated cold temperatures. Trump supporters will be able to watch the events live at a nearby arena. President Trump will attend that event in person following his swearing in.

To connect with the author of this story, or to comment, email brandonmreporter@gmail.com



Memories



Memories



Memories



Memories



Governor Kay Ivey Prayer Brunch

Governor Kay Ivey hosted a prayer brunch Sunday morning at the Hyatt Capitol Hill. This special gathering, which drew an overflow crowd, brought people together to seek God's blessings for the State of Alabama, our Great Nation, and President Trump's administration. It was a poignant reminder of our faith in God and the unity that define us as a people.

Praying that our elected officials have the wisdom to lead, and safety for President Trump were at the forefront of those taking part.

Governor Ivey emphasized the vital role of prayer in guiding leaders and uniting communities. The program featured an inspiring testimony from Chad and Tonya Prewett of UniteUS and uplifting musical performances by Kelly Crabb and the Bowling Sisters.



COACH TOMMY TUBERVILLE

Tuberville Gets Gavel to Key Armed Services Subcommittee



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) was announced as Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel. As the leader of this subcommittee, Sen. Tuberville will lead the charge on staffing key Department of Defense (DOD) military and civilian personnel, policies, compensation and benefits, and military nominations. He will provide oversight on a wide range of military budget accounts and various DOD offices and

agencies. His work will ensure servicemembers are taken care of both while in service and in the years following.

Alabama is home to over 13,000 active-duty military members, over 25,000 National Guard and reserve members, nearly 400,000 veterans, and five military bases. As Chairman, he will be an advocate for these servicemembers by ensuring they have the best resources and care possible.

Sen. Tuberville made the following statement about his appointment as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Personnel:

“As Alabama’s voice on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I’m honored to be the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Personnel. As the son of a World War II veteran, I know firsthand the sacrifices that our men and women in uniform make for our country. I will see to it that military personnel are well-compensated and get the benefits they deserve—it’s the least we can do. As Pete Hegseth assembles his team at the Pentagon, we will work tirelessly to make sure they have the support and personnel they need to implement President Trump’s America First agenda and restore peace through strength. As Chairman, I will be laser-focused on enhancing the quality of life for our brave military personnel both during and after their time in service so we can ensure our military remains the most lethal fighting force in the world.”

Subcommittee on Sea Power:

As a member of the Subcommittee on Seapower, Sen. Tuberville will continue his work to restore America’s naval superiority and promote Alabama’s shipbuilding and maritime industries. The United States Constitution charges Congress with providing and maintaining a Navy, which our founders saw as critical to the nation’s economic power and the freedoms we enjoy.

Sen. Tuberville’s position on these subcommittees will enable him to work on these Alabama-related issues:

- Bolstering Alabama’s maritime investment in the Port of Mobile.
- Advancing his work to build our Navy fleet to compete with foreign adversaries.
- Utilizing key shipbuilding industries like Austal in Mobile.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces:

Since the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces has jurisdiction over U.S. Space Command (SPACECOM), retaining his role on this subcommittee was one of Sen. Tuberville’s top priorities. Sen. Tuberville has led calls for the U.S. Air Force to act on its recommendation to place SPACECOM at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, and he is well-positioned to lead the entire Alabama delegation in supporting a smooth transition. This subcommittee also oversees America’s Missile Defense Agency, a responsibility Sen. Tuberville will leverage to protect every American.

Responsibilities:

Nuclear and strategic forces; arms control and non-proliferation programs; space programs; Department of Energy defense nuclear and defense environmental management programs; and ballistic missile defense.

Oversight of budget accounts:

Procurement and RDT&E for DOD nuclear and strategic forces, missile defense, space systems, Department of Energy defense and non-proliferation programs.

Oversight of DOD and DOE officials: Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs; National Nuclear Security Administration; and Assistant Secretary of Energy (Environmental Management).

Oversight of agencies, commands, and activities: U.S. Strategic Command; U.S. Space Command, U.S. Space Force as well as other components of the military departments; Space Development Agency; Missile Defense Agency; National Nuclear Security Administration; Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board; and Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Sen. Tuberville’s service on all three subcommittees will be crucial in empowering Alabama’s military installations across the state.

Senator Tommy Tuberville represents Alabama in the United States Senate and is a member of the Senate Armed Services, Agriculture, Veterans’ Affairs, HELP, and Aging Committees.



Dr. Bill Chitwood

is irrevocably besmirched, and he now joins the pantheon of traitors alongside Benedict Arnold. He will be remembered only as an example of what NOT to do.

Someone in Biden’s inner circle obviously felt it necessary to pardon five members of the Crime Family, but their pardons painted large targets on their backs. Now state and local prosecutors have confirmation that there’s something there. As more information comes out about the family dealings, it’s likely none of the family will have a good time of it for years to come.

And Fauci? Oh, Tony! You claim you did nothing wrong, but then you accepted the pardon. FYI: guilty men don’t need pardons.

Like the members of the Biden Crime Family, old Joe’s pardon has just slapped a massive target on Fauci’s back. Biden didn’t do Fauci any favors with his pardon, but he did inspire a lot of people to begin listing Fauci’s crimes. The term “mass murderer” has been tossed about, and not lightly. There’s even an Internet rumor that Vladimir Putin wants to extradite him to Russia for trial for crimes against humanity, as a condition for stopping the war in Ukraine. I don’t think it’s true, and I really don’t care. What I do know is that Anthony Fauci will never be able to walk down the street, go to a movie, dine out or anything else without looking over his shoulder. For the rest of his life, he will live in fear of the next Luigi, or an angry mob administering street justice to him. No, Tony Fauci had a great run while it lasted, but his karma is coming back to bite him, hard.

Another FYI, Tony: Presidential pardons don’t shield you from civil damages or liabilities. Have fun with all those Wrongful Death and Injury cases.

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And the hits just kept on coming. DEI? Gone. Federal censorship? Gone. Birthright citizenship? No more. WHO? Out. TikTok ban? On hold for 75 days. Federal hiring freeze? In place. Federal employees? Back in the office, at work. America First foreign policy? Of course. Green New Deal? Buh bye. Border Security? Declared a National Emergency, and directed the SecDef to develop a plan to secure the southern border. Foreign aid? Paused for 90 days. Biden’s energy production lockouts? Reversed. DOGE? Established. Merit-based hiring and promotions? Back. Records on JFK, RFK and MLK? Released.

As of late Thursday night, the White House website listed 57 Executive Actions, and more are expected to come in the days ahead.

I can’t remember any President doing so much so quickly to effect such a drastic change in national policy. It’s been glorious to watch...but of course, La Resistance is only getting started.

A federal judge has already blocked the President’s birthright citizenship order, and at least six lawsuits have been filed against it. Oregon is mandating training for 11,000 state employees on how to not cooperate with ICE. California authorized \$50 million to “Trump-proof” the state (while LA continues to burn).

The First Five Days

Jake Sullivan, the outgoing National Security Advisor, told NSA staffers to “hold over” to spy, leak and sabotage the new administration. Project Veritas’ report on the EPA “throwing gold bars off the Titanic” was just followed by a James O’Keefe report of a Biden White House advisor acknowledging that the Deep State is real, and that the bureaucracy will “crush” RFK Jr at HHS. And, the usual RINOs in the Senate are going to vote against Hegseth for SecDef.

Winning the election was only the first step. Now the real work has begun, and we all need to gird our loins for the long slog ahead.

To be brutally honest, we have about a year to get things done. The Republican margin in Congress is razor thin, and this time next year people will be looking to the midterms. Our “make the world safe for re-election” Congress won’t want to make any significant moves or rock the boat—that would require them to take a stand, and that’s the last thing they want to do in an election year.

Congress needs to act quickly to legislate the President’s Executive Orders into law. What one President can do, the next can undo, but changing the law is harder.

Will this be easy? Not at all. Is it necessary? Absolutely—and any alleged Republican who doesn’t get behind this effort needs to be recalled or de-elected.

La Resistance is tired, dispirited and demoralized, but as the President’s policies start to revitalize the country, their efforts will grow stronger. The wokies, DEI fanatics, climate cultists and the intelligentsia and lumpenproletariat of the Left want nothing more than to see America undone—and they don’t care that the country just rejected their ideas, and them as well.

Nothing fights more viciously than a cornered animal, and this week has well and truly back them into a corner. We forget that at our peril in the days and weeks to come.

I expect to see the Left shift emphasis from national to local battlefields. Of course, the fight in DC against the President will be hot and heavy, but as Tip O’Neil said, “all politics is local.” Oregon and California are examples of La Resistance at the state level. We’ll see even more efforts to promote woke, DEI-CRT-Marxist ideology (rebranded and renamed, naturally) in our counties, cities and school boards. The Left is relying on us thinking Trump will save us, and us becoming complacent. Pity (for them) we know that he won’t. He truly can’t, because he’ll be busy doing President things like tackling the Deep State and keeping us out of WW III. Even more’s the pity—we’re not going to be complacent. We’re not ready to slow down, much less stop.

We’re just getting started. The tide of history has turned, and we can feel it. Things are grim, but there are signs of hope everywhere. Bernie Sanders has come out in support of a very MAGA-like position on H1B visas. New York Mayor Adams has been honest that the Democratic Party left him, not the other way around. And Senator Elizabeth Warren sent Elon Musk a list of 30 things for DOGE to consider to cut spending.

Warren’s still a progressive loon, but when you’re \$36 trillion in debt, you have to take the cuts where you can find them.

So, Trump 47–Week One is done. The worst policies of the Biden regime have been reversed. The Trump Effect is already being seen here and across the globe.

Now the real work of restoring the Republic can begin.

As per usual, the reference links in the above will be added when I post this on my Substack at [DocContrarian.Substack.com](https://www.doccontrarian.com).

Dr. Bill Chitwood is a retired Child, Adolescent and Family Psychiatrist who does political consulting and media relations. He is the author of *Beyond Maga*, available on Amazon under his pen name, Doc Contrarian. He can be found on Substack and social media as @DocContrarian.

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JUSTICE WILL SELLERS SWORN IN FOR ANOTHER TERM

January 22, 2025 – Montgomery, AL - Alabama Supreme Court Associate Justice Will Sellers was recently sworn into his second term on the Alabama Supreme Court.

Governor Kay Ivey appointed Sellers in 2017. He was elected in 2018 and was re-elected in 2024. His current term will conclude in 2031.

At the simple ceremony, Justice Sellers said, "I'm thankful to Gov. Ivey who initially appointed me to this position and I'm grateful to the people of Alabama who re-elected me for another 6 years.

Serving on Alabama's Supreme Court is a high honor. Rest assured I will continue to work hard and make certain that our laws provide the stability and continuity necessary for our State to thrive."

Sellers is a graduate of Hillsdale College. He has a law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law. Sellers also has earned a Masters' degree in law and letters in taxation from New York University.

Sellers spent 28 years working at a private law practice in Montgomery.

Sellers is a member of the Alabama State Bar Association, the District of Columbia Bar Association, and has been admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, the United States Tax Court, and the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sellers is involved in many civic and community organizations in the Montgomery area, including the United Way, the Business Committee for the Arts, and the YMCA. He has been elected to the Electoral College.

Sellers previously served as a partner in the Montgomery office of Balch & Bingham, LLP. A major part of Sellers' practice has involved litigation against the Internal Revenue Service and the Alabama Department of Revenue.

Sellers chaired Governor Kay Ivey's 2010 and 2014 campaigns for lieutenant governor. Sellers formerly was counsel for the House GOP Caucus. He has held a number of positions within the Alabama Republican Party.

Will is married to the former Lee Grant, and they have three adult children. They are active members of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montgomery.



Montgomery, AL -With his family surrounding him, Justice Will Sellers was sworn in for a third term as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of Alabama..

To connect with the author of this story, or to comment, email: brandonmreporter@gmail.com

ST. CLAIR COUNTY MAN APPOINTED TO ASSIST PRESIDENT TRUMP ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS



January 17, 2025 – WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Donald J. Trump (R) announced the appointment of St. Clair County native Emory to serve in the administration as the Special Assistant to the President for International Economics. Cox has spent the last four years as a policy advisor to U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville (R-Alabama).

Cox told the Alabama Gazette, "I am honored to serve, and I will work hard to make Alabama proud."

Senator Tuberville congratulated Cox on the appointment.

"I am proud to announce that Emory Cox, who has been my Senior Economic Advisor for the past four years, has been hired by President Trump to serve as Special Assistant to the President for International Economic Relations," Tuberville said in a statement. "Originally from Pell City, Emory has managed my financial services, tax, budget, appropriations, and international economics portfolios. Our nation will benefit from this Alabama patriot and I'm grateful for his service. While I am sad to see him go, I know he will be a great asset to Dr. Kevin Hassett, Scott Bessent, and President Trump's entire team as they work to get the American economy booming again."

Cox has represented St. Clair County on the Alabama Republican Party Executive Committee. Fellow executive committee member former state Representative Perry O. Hooper Jr. (R-Montgomery)

"Emory Cox's appointment as special assistant for international economic relations in the White House is a massive win for those who believe in putting America first," said Rep. Hooper. "Cox, a Pell City native, came straight from the office of Senator Tommy Tuberville. Cox is a rock-solid conservative fighter. Emory brings the kind of no-nonsense, pro-American approach that's been missing in the D.C. swamp for too long. Cox's transition into this senior role is a testament to his expertise, his commitment to conservative values, and his readiness to take on the establishment to ensure that international economic policies work for the American people—not against them. The career bureaucrats must get out of his way and let him do the job he was brought in to do!"

Hooper is a political columnist whose columns appear in the Alabama Gazette and other publications.

Emory is a member of the St. Clair Young Republicans which are chaired by Logan Glass.

"Emory truly represents the very best of St. Clair County!" said Chairman Glass. "We know that he will continue to make our people proud each and every day in Washington, D.C., as a member of the Trump Administration."

Emory Cox has a bachelor's degree in history from Washington and Lee University – where he graduated summa cum laude in 2018. Cox is a 2014 graduate of the Altamont School in Birmingham.

Prior to his service with Tuberville, Cox was a Financial Policy Adviser for the National Economic Council from June 2018 to Jan. 2021. He worked in the first Trump administration as an Associate Director in the White House from May 2017 to Aug. 2017. He served internships with Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Alabama) in 2016, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee in 2016, and with Congressman Mike Rogers (R-AL03) in 2013.

He is the son of Annette Cox who owns Metro Bank in St. Clair County.



Governor Ivey Announces Alabama's Rank in 4th Grade Math Moves from 52nd to 32nd Rank in 4th Grade Reading Moves from 49th to 34th During Her Term

January 29, 2025 - MONTGOMERY, AL – Results just released from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as America's Report Card, show Alabama students are leading the charge in post-covid academic recovery. In 4th grade math, Alabama climbed to 32nd in 2024, from a low point of 52nd in 2019, the last NAEP administered pre-covid. Alabama's 6-point scale score increase was the largest increase in the nation when it comes to 4th grade math. Notably, Alabama's gains in covid recovery comparisons surpass those of every other state. This places Alabama among a small group of five states to show recovery to pre-covid levels in 4th grade math.

During the press briefing today, Governor Kay Ivey stated, "Today we celebrate students, teachers and parents, because we are making significant progress in education in our state. Alabama is an education state. Our students' education is everything, and clearly, it was one of our state's most pressing areas to address when I took office. Strong students will lead to a strong Alabama. And while there is more work ahead, I am confident our forward momentum will continue."

State Superintendent, Dr. Eric Mackey, said he was very pleased with elementary math progress in the state and looks forward to pushing forward with even more reforms and improvements in upcoming years. "From day one - actually, when I interviewed for this position - I have said that math improvement has to become a priority for our state. With the backing of our State School Board and Governor Kay Ivey to initiate new, higher academic standards and a more rigorous state test to go along with those standards, we set in motion the foundation for growth. But it is our teachers who make - and have made the difference. They have gone above and beyond to get us to the next level, even amid the unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic. Our teachers and school leaders deserve all the praise for a job well done."

Alabama's place in 4th grade reading has moved dramatically over the past five years, moving up to 34th in 2024. This comes after ranking 49th in 2019. Alabama is one of only two states (along with Louisiana) to exceed pre-covid levels in 4th grade reading.

The state's ranking in 8th grade reading rose from 49th in 2019 to 47th in 2024. Similarly, in 8th grade math, Alabama improved from 52nd in 2019 to 49th in 2024.

However, scale scores remained relatively flat over this period, prompting a reaction from State Superintendent Mackey: "Absolutely, there is still a lot of work to do. Focusing on middle school progress is a major concern. Just this year, the Legislature responded to our request to fund a new middle grades initiative focused on our struggling readers. We have asked for increased funding to expand that effort in 2025-2026, and we will also be reviewing middle-level math to see what we need to adjust. However, we are incrementally heading in the right direction in many areas," said Mackey. "Our State School Board has set new, higher expectations for everyone from kindergarten through graduate education; our Legislature has invested more in education than ever before; and Governor Ivey, a former educator herself, values the importance of strong state leadership and effective instructional programs. With that kind of support and the outstanding efforts made by our teachers and school leaders, we expect to see continued progress."

Efforts to incorporate the NAEP framework into Alabama's Course of Study and laws like the Alabama Literacy and Numeracy Acts place Alabama on good footing for continued academic success.

Subgroup successes:

Alabama students with special needs saw substantial growth in 4th grade math and reading. These students have seen consistent growth in math since 2019, with scale scores increasing from 196 in 2019, to 212 in 2024 (exceeding the national average). In reading, our students with disabilities moved up 12 points on their scale score, from 164 in 2019 to 176 in 2024.

Other Context:

Nationally, students continue to struggle to get back to pre-covid levels on scale scores in 4th and 8th grade reading, and 4th and 8th grade math. In 4th grade reading, the nation is down five points from 219 in 2019 to 214 in 2024. In 8th grade reading, the nation is down from 262 in 2019 to 257 in 2024.

Nationally 8th grade math is down from 281 in 2019 to 272 in 2024. Nationally, 4th grade math went from 240 in 2019 to 237 in 2024.



INSIDE THE STATEHOUSE With Steve Flowers

Steve Flowers is Alabama's leading political columnist. His weekly column appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. Steve served 16 years in the state legislature. He may be reached at: <https://steveflowers.us/>

Alabama Has a Premier Prison Education Program



It is no secret that Alabama's Correctional system is a nightmare, especially when it comes to our disregard for civil and human rights of the incarcerated felons in our state prisons. That is why we have been under the wrath of the federal court system. A new mega prison is being currently constructed, which will help to comply with the federal mandates.

What many Alabamians do not realize is how successful our Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has become over the last decade under the guidance and leadership of Chancellor Jimmy Baker. Most state colleges and junior colleges have seen the numbers of enrollees decline in recent years; however, not in Alabama. Our Alabama Community College system has seen an almost double digit increase in enrollment. This is primarily because the Chancellor and system have adopted a modern-day approach to teaching Alabamians skills and crafts that lead to their graduates attaining high paying jobs in Alabama, which are in demand in today's workforce. Ninety-seven percent of all Alabama Community College attendees and graduates are from Alabama and almost all graduates have jobs awaiting them in our state. The much-heralded Working for Alabama program, advanced by the legislature last year, would not have been possible without the Community College system. It was the integral ingredient. There is no question that the funds appropriated by the legislature to the Community College system are the most valuable investment made with higher education dollars in our state.

These education trust fund dollars are not only the best and most valuable funds for Alabamian's future and job growth in our state, these education expenditures are helping the state general fund extensively. The best example is in the area of prison education. Alabama had one of the first prison education programs in the country. Today, Alabama's prison education program is one of the most premier and successful in the nation.

J.F. Ingram State Technical College and Skills Training Center is the ACCS affiliate that provides prison education in Alabama. Ingram State is headquartered in Deatsville but has locations all over Alabama where there is a prison. Annette Funderburk is President of Ingram State, and she is doing an outstanding job. She is devoted and passionate about her role spearheading prison education.

J.F. Ingram State Technical College offers 21 different programs. The highest demand and most degrees are forklift operator, cabinet making, carpentry, horticulture, HVAC, masonry, plumbing, tree trimming, automotive repair, automotive and diesel mechanics, welding, and barbering and cosmetology. Twenty-

seven hundred students are served, annually, with six hundred and sixty-six graduates last year. The highest enrollment is welding with the highest retention being barbering. It is estimated that for every dollar spent on correctional education, there is a four-to-five-dollar savings in correctional costs. The most impressive statistic and most important for Alabamians is that offenders, who participate in correctional education, are 48% less likely to return to prison.

The Community College system has recently initiated a correctional officer training school. It is documented in all of the federal court intervention decrees that the lack of correctional officers or prison guards is the reason for rampant crime in the system. Chancellor Baker and Adult Education Vice Chancellor David Walters have joined with Prison Commissioner John Hamm to create a program to train and educate correctional officers.

ACTIVATE is a joint initiative between the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) that offers a no-cost pathway to a career as a correctional officer. This program helps individuals meet the physical and educational standards necessary to join the profession.

The program is part of ADOC's larger recruitment efforts which has bolstered starting salaries for correctional officers from \$52,000 to \$58,200 annually plus benefits. The program is based out of Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham and Reid State Technical College in Evergreen. Twenty-three Alabama residents took advantage and graduated from the first classes last year.

John Hamm is doing a good job as ADOC Commissioner. He is a lifelong Alabamian and former Sheriff of Barbour County. He understands Alabama law enforcement and the Alabama Penal System.

The ACCS-ADOC prison education partnership is paying dividends for Alabamians.



The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.



John Martin

INTO THE SCRAP HEAP

Now that our Department Of Government Efficiency is getting started, we must immediately work on its two top priorities—to save money, and more importantly, to release the people from the grip of bureaucracy—**TO GET GOVERNMENT OUT OF THE WAY AND LEAVE PEOPLE ALONE.** To do this, we must focus on the departments and programs we must eliminate first. Here is a short list:

1. **The invasive and abusive.**
2. **The counter-productive.**
3. **The non-productive.**
4. **The poor producers.**

Obviously the top priorities would be items 1 and 2. These are the shackles that not only waste tons of revenue, but also hold back the private sector's ability to produce revenue. These are double-edged swords that destroy productivity and create debt.

We must stamp out the abuse and needless enforcement that stand in the way so America can go about its business without the needless regulations, mandates, permits, licensure, paperwork, and other hurdles that government at all levels place in the way of our means to earn our livings.

One big example is transportation—an item absolutely essential for civilization to even exist. China, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico, Australia, and other nations are free to build and use automobiles and trucks that are cheaper and easier to produce than anything our government will allow. That gives them a hand up in the production of every consumer product we could imagine. But our government, instead of giving our people the freedom to do likewise, holds us back with regulations and mandates, and also imposes insane tariffs and bans on the importation of these essentials.

All over the world, even in third world countries, people are allowed to build, buy and use really practical and inexpensive vehicles that are forbidden here in America, like the tough Toyota HiLux pickup truck (the most widely used truck in the world) and the economical IMV Zero and HiLux Champ with MSRPs of about \$8000 in US dollars. In our country, these essential vehicles are prohibited with abusive safety and environmental (CAFE) restrictions that are impossible to meet. STOP this nonsense! Let the PEOPLE decide what is safe for them to drive.

How do we fix it? We all know the answer: ELIMINATE these regulations and the departments that created them. Sooooo simple. SAVE the tax money that funds them, and let us build and buy what we really need.

That's just one example. We are hamstrung by multitudes of abusive departments that need to be dropped from our backs. Save trillions of dollars and enhance our God-given natural gifts.

Our military is OBESE from reckless overspending. Do we really need the tons and tons of super high tech equipment to defend our country? Look at Switzerland. It hasn't been invaded for over 400 years. Its military budget is very small. But its defense is very effective. WHY can't we follow Switzerland's example? Stay out of other nations' wars. For example, let Netanyahu take care of Israel.

We are in desperate need for prison reform. Why does America have to suffer the world's highest incarceration rate? Are our people really that bad, or is it because the prison industrial complex can't give up its cash cow of keeping hundreds of thousands of people behind bars? What we should do is abolish extreme prison sentences like life without parole which is needlessly cruel and also needlessly expensive. STOP spending millions of dollars to keep dangerous people like El Chapo in super secure prisons for years and years when we could just eliminate them with nitrogen asphyxiation, the simplest and most humane method known. After speedy trials, execute them promptly and be done with it. Don't impose stupid anti-suicide policies. If an inmate can't stand the trauma of prison life, grant him a quick execution and spare us the cost of feeding,

housing and guarding him. STOP wasting the taxpayers' money by filling up our prisons. Follow the examples of Europe and Scandinavia.

Nearly all regulatory agencies, like the **EPA, OSHA, FEMA, MSHA, EEOC, FAA,** and numerous others should be scrapped, or at least severely downsized. Everything created since the year 2000 should be GONE—including George W. Bush's abominations—Homeland Security, Patriot Act, TSA, and all others. Jimmy Carter's Department of Energy and especially the Department of Education MUST GO. To be honest, just about everything created since 1960 should be scrapped, and also many others created well before that time.

Even though it is the world's greatest Ponzi scheme, Social Security is too popular with the majority of people to be scrapped without violent repercussions. For the foreseeable future, we are stuck with it as it stands. Medicare, which is newer, might have some wiggle room for some reform. Before 1965, when Medicare began, health care expenses were much more reasonable, and emergency treatments for traumatic illnesses and accidents were more affordable. But just like everything else that gets corrupted by government, healthcare costs have skyrocketed once bureaucrats began meddling with them. Practical solutions are going to be tough to implement.

Welfare programs are counterproductive. They train people to be dependent parasites instead of productive workers. The largest and most wasteful portions arose with LBJ—"Why work for a living when you can vote for one?" From his time until the present, poor families with two parents have plummeted. Today, one parent families with numerous children prevail. Contraceptions are largely ignored. Never forget, welfare, especially government-run welfare, creates dependency AND poverty.

Foreign aid is something we must STOP. Are you aware of what happens when we send food and supplies to poor African countries to feed starving children? Much of the time, their dictators seize these goods and sell them on the black market. But even when they don't, feeding them disincentivizes responsible parenting and encourages reckless childbearing, which therefore creates even MORE starving children. Have you checked out their exploding birthrates and the ways they strip-mine their forests for every last tidbit of wood they can find? These people need CONTRACEPTIVES, not more food.

And under the Biden administration, we have spent millions providing aid to Gaza. Did you know that Gaza has been training 90% of their 5 year old children to make bombs and use fully automatic weapons to become TERRORISTS? Biden has been AIDING AND ABETTING THE ENEMY. That must be stopped.

Elon Musk has even suggested eliminating the IRS. That may not be feasible, but it does need serious reform. For many years it has imposed draconian practices to pursue "tax cheats," often spending large sums and abusing people to collect small amounts for innocent, honest mistakes and/or incomplete paperwork.

INSTEAD, the IRS would be more effective and collect more revenue IF it switched from enforcement to SERVICE. Simplify the minimize the paperwork and make it easy for everybody to comply. Provide ample people to answer questions by telephone. Don't ask for needless tidbits of information. Make the forms simple and short. DON'T ask for inputs FROM such and such a form or schedule that the filer does not have or can't get, or doesn't even know what it is. AND go back to PROVIDING COMPLETE forms, schedules and instructions to every taxpayer like it did before 2010. And also, make ALL forms and schedules readily available in public places, like post offices. And yes, provide post-paid preaddressed envelopes to send them in.

Online tax filing must also be simplified. Ambiguous questions must be avoided. The system should NEVER choke down if a filer misses a question or input he can't answer.

NEVER FORGET. Our founding fathers created the United States to be a FREE COUNTRY—where the people rule and the government serves, not the other way around.

The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.



Ronald A. Holtsford

Is it good to think about any legal issues for the New Year?

Without specifics about yourself I'll make this answer generic in a personal and in a business sense.

I presume you looked at your financial estate planning (401k, mutual funds, stocks and bonds, life insurance, etc) which is important as there may be some changes such as to an inherited IRA. Ask your investment professional. You should also think about your legal estate planning. After all you are a year older; you may have gotten married, had a new child, had a child reach the age of majority (19 years), gotten divorced or suffered the death of a spouse or even a child. You may have a child graduate, enter the workforce and be off your payroll. Even if the child is off your payroll you may keep them on your health insurance until they reach age twenty-six (26) as a buffer or necessity if you still have a family plan but it may be that you decide not to continue to carry the young adult child if the plan has changed and the cost can drop significantly. Your financial estate planning goes hand in hand with your legal estate planning and you should discuss that with your lawyer, not that he or she will try to advise you on whether your investment advisor is steering you correctly but rather the impact of your financial worth on your legal estate.

For 2025 the gift tax exclusion moves up one thousand dollars from last year to \$19,000.00 a person, as a gift (child, grandchild, etc.) not requiring the filing of a Gift Tax return or up to \$38,000 to a person if both you and your spouse gift to the same person once per year. There is a unified lifetime basic exclusion and generation skipping tax (GST) limit of \$13.99 million in 2025 per individual. There may be a tax advantage for the wealthy in that and if this seems to be something that might be helpful to your financial planning you should seek the advice of an accountant or other tax/ financial professional (may include a tax attorney). For 2024, there was a \$13.61 million total unified estate tax exemption per individual; 2025 will provide a \$13.99 million unified tax exemption as stated above. The total GST and total estate tax exemption are unified in total in that they cannot exceed \$13.99 million The portable portion mentioned above may be available to a surviving spouse who may be able to combine through election their unused estate credit amounts up to a total of \$27.98 million. See your tax professional after the death of the first spouse if your assets are in the millions. Remember that life insurance is considered for estate tax purposes if you have control over the policy (i.e. ability to change the beneficiaries, cancel the policy, etc). Some individuals have large insurance policies and in the past not inconceivable for high middle class people to have an estate over prior limits but the possibility could even exist with some wealthier individuals. If you die in 2025 with an estate of greater than \$13.99 million (or \$27.98 million for a second to die spouse if entirely portable) then that amount over \$13.99 million will be taxed at 40%.

With Donald Trump succeeding to the Presidency and a Republican congress it will be interesting to see what happens with taxes. I had last understood that the 2026 unified lifetime exclusion was to roll back to around \$7 million so we will have to see what happens in that regard, but I really don't expect it to lower that much if any at all.



With that said you need to pull out your **Last Will and Testament** and review it. If you have had any life changes (marriage, divorce, death, large inheritance, new child, etc.) a new Will may be in order. If you don't have a Last Will and Testament you need to have a lawyer prepare one as soon as possible. Why do you need one? Because if you don't then the State of Alabama has one for you. Some of the spousal examples under the rules of intestacy (dying without a Will); (1) first \$100,000 to spouse and then 1/2 of the remaining estate to the living parent(s) when there are no children, (2) if children then the spouse gets \$50,000 and 1/2 of the rest, (3) if one or more of the children are not yours then the surviving spouse only gets half of everything, period. This is probably not the estate plan you have in mind. There are internet sites and software programs that can also assist with a Last Will and Testament but there is no guarantee that it will pass muster regarding state rules on probate nor a guarantee that it will do what you want upon your death. The best chance of meeting estate goals is through a lawyer and if you are of moderate means, you may be surprised that it is less expensive than you think. In the long run a Will may save money since an intestate estate when probated requires the bonding of the Personal Representative and an inventory of the decedent's estate. I run into too many old or non-attorney prepared defective Wills when it really counts and there is an attempt to probate the estate. Obviously such probate is not without issue. If you have an out of state prepared Will it should be acceptable for probate since under the Full Faith and Credit Clause (Section 1, Article 4) of the United States Constitution a valid Will prepared in one state is valid in Alabama. There can be issues so a review with an Alabama attorney is always a good thing to do. If you have a Will and you prepared it yourself or got something off of the internet I would highly suggest you see an Alabama licensed attorney and talk about your current document and estate plan. I have seen some really bad Wills that people put together that ended up costing more time and money than necessary because of flaws in the document. It is much better to pay a few hundred dollars plus rather than having flawed estate planning documents that cannot meet your goals, cost several hundred dollars more to correct flaws or delay the administration of your estate.

Aside from the Last Will and Testament you may want to have a **Power of Attorney** prepared, both one for financial reasons and health. Most prepared these days are durable which require wording that the power of attorney is effective even in your disability or incapacity. Financial Powers of Attorney became a statutory form as of 1 January 2012. Most attorneys have concerns about the filling in the blank and initialing choices format and most now insert tried and true language used in their practices for their many years. A financial Power of Attorney is now by default a Durable power; however I insert the needed language anyway to make sure that there are no questions about it's durability. A Power of Attorney (POA) can be very powerful and placed in the wrong hands can be damaging such as a daughter that is named AGENT and decides to sell your lake house and push you towards moving to an assisted living facility. On the other hand, naming a trusted AGENT and retaining the POA for future needs can be extremely beneficial. The POA can be used so that someone can write your bills for you during incapacity, file your taxes and with health/ Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act (HIPAA) provisions monitor your care with the doctors and hospital as well as handle medical insurance billing. The POA may also be used to nominate whom you would want as a conservator or guardian should one need to be named for you through a Court proceeding. A health care power of attorney can be used to coincide with the Advance Directive mentioned below should you have need to name another or others to help with health care decisions.



The final personal document would be an **Advance Directive for Health Care**, which is composed of a Living Will and Health Care Proxy nomination. It will allow you to make certain decisions about end of life issues should you later become unable to speak for yourself and two doctors have determined that you will likely die in the near future. This is the document that Terri Schiavo DID NOT have and for that reason the court found the testimony of the "husband" who was then living with another woman to be credible as to Terri's final wishes. Hmmmmm. Naming a Health Care Proxy is the same as naming a health care power-of-attorney such as under a POA. The proxy is given limited rights under which situations that they can make decisions. And by the way, the ex-spouse automatically loses that job as proxy upon divorce. That's dodging a bullet!

If retirement is nearing and you will also receive **Social Security** consider that the 2023 Medicare Part B will move from the 2023, \$174.70 to \$185.00 per month dependent on whether the senior is subject to the statutory "hold harmless" provision. With higher income brackets so does the cost for Part B increase. If you need nursing home (skilled nursing) care under Part A, days 1-20 are fully covered provided you continue to meet Medicare's requirements for those days; the co-payment for days 21-100 (if you qualify) will be \$209.50 per day (was \$204.00 per day in 2024). After day 100 you are 100% on your own unless you have some other means of long term care payment. If you have not already checked on long term health care insurance you should do so now. It not only will cover nursing home care but can also cover assisted living or in home care. If you consider this insurance also look carefully at the options since they may be equally as important as the policy itself. This includes inflation increases which are very important or even the option of continued coverage for a certain amount of time when one with "forgetfulness" forgets to pay the premium.

With the exception of a few states and the District of Columbia, the individual mandate under the Affordable Care act (Obamacare) was changed in 2019 to zero. That of course continues to be contentious in that without the mandate it is argued that the ACA is null. Four states and the District of Columbia have state mandate penalties though Vermont has no penalty attached to their mandate. The time to make health care changes under the ACA open enrollment ended 07 December 2023 and unless you have a qualifying event or become eligible under Medicaid/CHIP after the open enrollment period passes this will be the last opportunity until the 2024 period begins in October. Older Americans may be eligible both for Medicare and Medicaid and impoverished Americans may be Medicaid eligible when they cannot afford premiums under Obamacare and some Americans are eligible for insurance from the market place with subsidized premiums.

If you are currently in business or considering a business what about entity? A sole proprietorship offers pass through taxation but no limited liability. Your personal and business assets are at risk in a lawsuit. A **Limited Liability Company (LLC)** or a **Registered Limited Liability Partnership (RLLP or LLP)** offers the same pass through tax advantages as well as limited liability. A "C" corporation offers the same limited liability but there is taxation on the corporation and taxation on the shareholders. If you are in one of these entities and about \$80,000.00 plus salary talk to your accountant about the possibility of an "S" corporation election. Current tax considerations suggest that pass through entities not involved as professional service businesses (accountants, attorneys, etc) such as sole proprietorships, LLC's, LLP's and S corporations may take an additional significant percentage off their income. Because pass through entities are taxed at the owner's tax rate this will give an additional percentage decrease in taxable income.

In addition to the advantages of pass through taxation and limited liability there may also be some self-employment tax advantages since some of the income can be paid to a shareholder-employee as a profit distribution. The Internal Revenue Service however looks for Shareholder-Employees that pay themselves substandard salaries for their position in order that they can take more from the company as a distribution and save more on Self Employment taxes. The IRS will consider a reasonable income based on IRS summarized factors considered by a Court case from the Eighth Circuit, which advised shareholders to give them careful consideration in establishing their compensation.

The factors are:

- (1) Employee qualifications;
- (2) The nature, extent, and scope of the employee's work;
- (3) The size and complexity of the business;
- (4) Prevailing general economic conditions;
- (5) The employee's compensation as a percentage of gross and net income;
- (6) The employee-shareholder's compensation compared with distributions to shareholders;
- (7) The employee-shareholder's compensation compared with that to non-shareholder employees or paid in prior years;
- (8) Prevailing rates of compensation for comparable positions in comparable concerns; and
- (9) Comparison of compensation paid to a particular shareholder-employee in previous years where the corporation has a limited number of officers.

An "S" Corporation election only exists through the IRS and has specific requirements. So you can be an existing LLC, C Corporation, etc. but elect via the IRS as an "S" Corporation. Ask your accountant about whether it is right for your business.

Additionally, the Corporate Transparency Act is in effect but has been bouncing around in the Courts. There are twenty-three exceptions to inclusion in the Corporate Transparency Act. It seems that the exclusions relate to businesses that are already for one reason or another highly regulated. Many of the exclusions deal with companies that deal with money in the sense of banking, investment and insurance. As well there is a large corporate exclusion. There are items not yet in place that are needed for compliance so it's difficult to follow the regulated time frames. Most lawyers that assist in business are trying to navigate the rules without everything being in place. At time of writing I would suggest anyone that has a beneficial interest in a business as an owner look into this quickly as to whether you need to file this or not, which can be done electronically.

I hope that this has helped with your question. If you need a lawyer you can contact the Alabama State Bar Lawyer Referral service or ask a trusted friend about a lawyer that they might recommend.

This article is informative only and not meant to be all inclusive. Additionally this article does not serve as legal advice to the reader and does not constitute an attorney-client relationship. The reader should seek counsel from their attorney should any questions exist.

"No representation is made that the quality of legal services performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers."

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ALABAMA HOUSE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS ANNOUNCES ITS "ALABAMA VALUES" LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR 2025 REGULAR SESSION

January 27, 2025 - MONTGOMERY, AL - The Alabama House Republican Caucus announced on Monday its 2025 "Alabama Values" legislative agenda and statement of principles, a list of conservative issues and initiatives that the body's supermajority will prioritize for passage when the Legislature convenes in Montgomery for its regular session on February 4.

"The 'Alabama Values' name represents the conservative beliefs and values that most Alabamians embrace, but, at the same time, it also represents the morals and principles that we 'value' as a people," House Majority Leader Scott Stadhagen said. "Our caucus members stand unanimous in support of this agenda, and we look forward to promoting these conservative ideas and beliefs throughout the upcoming session and beyond."

The agenda was crafted by an ad hoc platform committee of Republican House members that was co-chaired by State Rep. Kerry "Bubba" Underwood (R - Tusculumbia) and State Rep. James Lomax (R - Huntsville), and the group's recommendations were ratified by the full caucus.

"Because our Republican members came forward with so many quality bills, measures, and proposals that deserved inclusion, the agenda committee decided to outline broad principles in our agenda rather than individual pieces of legislation," Underwood and Lomax said in a joint statement. "At the end of the session, we will detail a list of the Republican-sponsored bills passed by the House that fit within the framework of each category of our agenda."

Other state representatives serving on the agenda committee were Cynthia Almond (R - Tuscaloosa), Susan DuBose (R - Hoover), Steve Hurst (R - Munford), Jamie Kiel (R - Russellville), Paul Lee (R - Dothan), Rhett Marques (R - Enterprise), Marcus Paramore (R - Troy), Kenneth Paschal (R - Pelham), Shane Stringer (R - Citronelle), and Randall Shedd (R - Fairview).

The items in the 2025 House Republican Caucus "Alabama Values" agenda are:

Alabama Values Work Ethic and Job Creation - Alabama remains among the nation's leaders in job creation, economic development, and low unemployment, but too many able-bodied residents still refuse to enter the work-

force and contribute economically. Alabama House Republicans will redouble their ongoing initiative to increase labor force participation and push more Alabamians off of the sidelines and into the job market.

Alabama Values Border Protection - During the past four years, every state has become a border state as those who break our laws with their simple presence have flooded into our nation. With Donald Trump in the White House, Alabama House Republicans will once again promote policies that discourage illegal immigrants from locating here, and we will work to repair the economic and societal damage resulting from the irresponsible open border policies pushed by those on the left.

Alabama Values Honest Elections - While our state has more election protections than most, Alabamians must be assured that the votes they cast are counted honestly, and our system is shielded from those who seek to manipulate it. We must also be confident that only qualified voters are allowed and encouraged to participate. Alabama House Republicans will block any effort to repeal existing honest election protections and continue to add additional fail-safe measures to keep our system honest.

Alabama Values Public Safety - Alabamians deserve to feel safe in their homes, jobs, schools, shopping places, and other areas, but violent crime and other offenses have affected too many of our cities, streets, and neighborhoods. Alabama House Republicans will work with law enforcement officials on the state and local levels to provide needed resources and supplement efforts to combat crime while preserving the fundamental gun rights that allow our citizens to protect themselves from harm.

Alabama Values Public Education - Record ETF budgets and an expansion of school choice options have already demonstrated the commitment of Alabama House Republicans to provide every child - regardless of their circumstances, income level, or zip code - the opportunity to obtain a quality, 21st Century education. Accountability efforts like the Literacy Act and the Numeracy Act are ensuring that students perform at expected levels, and available training programs are preparing many for lucrative careers. The Alabama House Republican Caucus remains committed to funding and expanding public education programs that produce desired results, ad-



ressing programs that fall short, and continuing to provide teachers and administrators with the classroom resources they need to do their jobs effectively. **Alabama Values Active Military and Veterans** - Alabama House Republicans pass bills each year to ensure that our state remains the nation's most welcoming for active duty military personnel, their dependents, and veterans. Occupational license reciprocity, flexibility in education options, and access to needed resources are among the many initiatives that have been implemented in recent years. We will continue to enact programs that ease the transition of military families locating in Alabama, provide them support while living here, and encourage them to remain once their service ends.

Alabama Values Innocent Life and Families - Alabama is a proud pro-life state, and we recognize that our commitment to protecting and encouraging innocent life continues even after it is born. The Alabama House Republican Caucus is committed to supporting non-profit agencies that provide services to infants, children, and families, and we will continue working to create an atmosphere in which every child feels protected, loved, and wanted.

Alabama Values Common Sense - Most Alabamians embrace conservative common sense, but in recent years, liberal groups with fringe agendas, activist judges, and federal agencies operating far outside their mandates have attempted to implement rulings, regulations, and requirements that run counter to the beliefs we hold. Alabama House Republicans will continue pushing back against "woke" policies and radical efforts that attack our morals and work to change the fundamental beliefs that make our state such a special place to live, work, worship, and raise families.

Public Safety Legislation Looks to be on Agenda for Upcoming Legislative Session



Paul DeMarco

January 21, 2025 - The year 2024 was a violent one in Alabama. With the high amount of crime across the state, particularly in the large metropolitan areas, local officials could not solve the problems alone. It is now up to Alabama leaders to tackle public safety issues that have not been solved at the local level.

There are a multitude of reasons for the violence in this country, including what has happened across the country with new no bail laws and the release of prisoners across the country during the pandemic. However, another problem has been the recruitment of police officers. Morale is down which has lead to fewer men and women patrolling the streets because of the constant criticism of law enforcement. The city of Birmingham alone has been down hundreds of officers, which has been part of the equation leading to

record homicides in the city that had not been reached in almost 100 years.

The good news is that there is already talk of lawmakers taking up legislation to address the crime problem in Alabama. Bills that would expand the use of metro area crime suppression units, which would include both state and local officers to put more law enforcement on the street looks to be introduced early in the session. One such unit, the Montgomery task force, has been successful in removing criminals from the streets. The effective partnership between these law enforcement officers from all levels of government in the state will be an important part of creating more public safety in the state.

In addition to looking at putting more police on the streets, the state representatives and senators need to also look at the felons who are repeat offenders. Over and over again, those with long rap sheets are committing the most violent of crimes. The reason is that we see too many short sentences by judges or weak plea deals by

some prosecutors that put them back on the streets. Thus, state legislators have to tackle what is going on in the courthouses and not just policing. When sentences are handed down at the federal level, felons have to serve the majority of their sentences. Alabama needs to reform its sentencing laws to mirror what is happening at the federal courts to require truth in sentencing. We have to put a halt to the same felons who are committing so much havoc in Alabama.

There has to be a comprehensive look at the Alabama criminal justice system to really solve the violence in our state.

Paul DeMarco is a former member of the Alabama House of Representatives and Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. He can be found on X, formerly Twitter, at @Paul_DeMarco

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John Sophocleus

Reducing 'Auburn Greed'

Public servants and their sycophants in various forms of modern media often mourn passages of fellow kleptocrats, frequently spamming us with white-washed 'Pravda on the Plains' histories, apropos for this 'Lee County Beat' article to address. Well paid political prostitute columnists, Matrix spin machine, Birmingham 'Downtowner' cronies and politburo members will overwhelmingly shape the narrative most digested in Lee County.

Many were saddened by recent news of former Auburn University Provost Tim Boosinger's passing after a valiant battle with cancer. Invariably this loss was tragic for his family and loved ones, whom we certainly wish the best and pray former provost Boosinger found Repentance and the Grace of our Lord. As with the recent passing of President Carter, this is not an excuse for eulogies concerning public service which fail to provide honest histories.

Boosinger's time as the Auburn University Provost (supposedly the chief academic officer) began as an interim Provost at a time when being a candidate for the **interim** position meant one isn't a candidate for the permanent position. This was made clear in the announcement to AU administrators, faculty and staff. In modern 'This is Auburn' fashion, Boosinger was installed as permanent Provost despite having accepted the interim position (a corrupt pattern which continues with the current interim-turned-permanent Auburn "Provost" Nathan). This shameful obtainment of his Provost position was immediately followed by acts from Boosinger which provided fodder for multiple scandalous headlines in major national publications-e.g., *Wall Street Journal* and *Chronicle of Higher Education* as well as *Alabama Gazette*. These articles exposed how administration of academic curricula at AU was being distorted to keep athletes eligible. Boosinger and athletic officials such as AD Jay Jacobs (another master at trumping up RSA payouts: <https://www.alabamagazette.com/story/2018/03/01/opinion/the-auburn-greed/1301.html>) were directly implicated in the articles, highlighting schemes to keep the troubled Public Administration program in the College of Liberal Arts open for an enormous 'cluster' of male African-American athletes. The following quote from *Chronicle of Higher Education* article entitled, "Unrivaled Power: Inside Auburn's secret effort to advance an athlete-friendly curriculum" conveyed Boosinger's attitude:

"The provost assured the president that those other programs were in the works, and that he had met with Jay Jacobs, who was then the athletic director, "to discuss the new offerings that are in the pipeline."

The distortion of academic decisions to facilitate athletic corruption cannot persist without a compliant faculty, requiring benefits for those who "play ball" and costs imposed on those who resist. The whistleblower on Boosinger's scandal and the main *Wall Street Journal* and *Chronicle of Higher Education* source, Prof. Michael Stern, was vindicated by a federal court jury to have been subjected to multiple acts of retaliation by a university official highered by Boosinger and who assisted him with the Public Administration scandal. This official has continued in AU's employ with the RSA busting administrative pay and appointed to an Auburn City politburo position as one known to have no shame for being found guilty of this sort of malice and costly corruption.

Indeed, AU President Jay Gogue acted to protect Prof. Stern upon his initial retirement in 2017, but within weeks of President Gogue leaving office, Dr. Boosinger acted to reverse Gogue's protections and return Prof. Stern to a position where further acts of retaliation would likely (and did in fact) occur. Issues with administering academic curricula to expressly benefit athletics and associated retaliation provide reason to

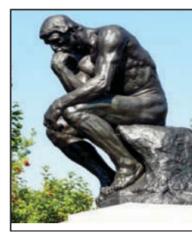
question Boosinger's legacy as AU Provost. There are unfortunately other serious and yet to be resolved issues associated with Boosinger's time as Auburn's Provost. I'll not address how this pollutant went to my Alma Mater [Clemson] to suffer interrogatories w.r.t. why I didn't provide Clemson colleagues these facts on this AU public servant before CU hired Boosinger.

Upon passing, former provost Boosinger was a major defendant in Prof. Joe Majdalani's federal lawsuit concerning first amendment right violations and defamation. As a Lee County Court Watcher, it is indelible in my mind's eye how smug this former provost was in the courtroom. It appeared Boosinger couldn't imagine a jury being wise and just enough to even try to discipline Auburn Greed. While provost, Boosinger's office brought dismissal proceedings against highly distinguished Prof. Majdalani in relation to his voluntary associational speech with AIAA, the world's largest aerospace technical society. Those outrageous dismissal proceedings were eventually ended by then President Steven "Crash" Leath with no discipline being imposed upon Prof. Majdalani. Subsequent legal action against Boosinger and others such as current President Chris Roberts is currently ongoing in federal court. Some hope another just verdict against AU corruption will further reduce Auburn Greed and shepherd AU toward a less hostile, more productive workplace.

The 'Auburn Mafia' Felon Hubbard machine is still feared in Lee County so I couldn't get anyone to go on record (even anonymously) about Vet School corruption decades ago. I'll paraphrase the sentiments of some who would talk... Let's be honest, Boosinger wasn't some great football coach who refused any income more than AU's top Professor; there were faculty who could earn much more than Boosinger in the real world that worked at AU for \$20/yr. because they wanted lower costs for students and taxpayers, not to aid and abet more pay to Boosinger types and malicious administrators he rewarded.

The *Lafayette Sun* was the media outlet closest to Auburn that specifically reported on the malice Boosinger enabled (wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars to discipline in federal court) recently reposted in the *East Alabama Examiner* [<https://www.eaexaminer.com/post/lafayette-sun-auburn-professor-wins-first-amendment-lawsuit>] reaffirming ongoing fears of retribution on the Plains of Dixie. Considering legacies of long time public servants at times of this sort, some found illustration of an administrator responsible for the modern 'This is Auburn' corruption entrenched under administrators more interested in themselves and what they could extract from this once noble institution enshrined in the Auburn Creed. What some cited to cement this legacy is how an administrator uses their discretion - i.e., how small righteous stands can amplify and keep AU on the path set forth by George Petrie, a professor and administrator at AU for 53 years better known as author of The Auburn Creed. Sadly, we've witnessed far too many AU administrators (from the lowest accountant to the Board of Trustees) show how poor discretion amplified the corrupt, cancerous growth at AU.

While there assuredly exist positive elements related to Boosinger's public "service" as AU's Provost (such as adopting a more revenue-centered budget model), it is nonetheless important to keep in mind the very serious and negative elements of that public service legacy when digesting the various eulogies sure to circulate. I have little doubt our Lee County 'Pravda on the Plains' media will offer a glowing pro-government propaganda narrative, failing to provide facts on this public servant's corruption in Lee County. Perhaps students and taxpayers may enjoy a little less Auburn Greed and witness return of some of the righteous outcomes espoused in the Auburn Creed... *Deo Volente*.



THINK

The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.

HISTORY BITS AND PIECES

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



Rob Tate

Robservations...

BIDEN/ NERO/ HITLER

In a brutal nine days in July 64 AD, 71% of Rome was burned to the ground. I have not been able to locate an exact death total but estimates are that hundreds of people died and thousands more were made homeless. Since then, it has been argued and debated about whether emperor Nero himself started the fire, had the city torched or even possibly it was the work of the Christian minority living in the city. Regardless, one iconic image is one of Nero playing the violin while Rome burns in the background. Even Bugs Bunny made reference to this. "Be it ever so crumbly, there is no place like home. Nero, he was the emperor and he fiddled while it burned." (If my memory serves me correctly) We will likely never know the truth behind all the theories and conspiracies. What we do know, however, is what transpired in March of 1945.

With the Third Reich teetering on the edge of defeat, Adolf Hitler published what has been called the "Nero Decree." Of course, this relates to Rome's 64 AD burning and the intended destruction of Germany on the orders of Uncle Adolf. He wrote:

RE: Destruction Measures within Reich Territory

Our nation's struggle for existence forces us to utilize all means, even within Reich territory, to weaken the fighting power of our enemy and to prevent further advances. Any opportunity to inflict lasting damage on the striking power of the enemy must be taken advantage of. It is a mistake to believe that undestroyed or only temporarily paralyzed traffic, communications, industrial, and supply installations will be useful to us again after the recapture of lost territories. During his retreat, the enemy will leave behind only scorched earth and will abandon all concern for the population.

I therefore command –

1. All military traffic, communications, industrial and supply installations as well as objects within Reich territory that might be used by the enemy in the continuation of his fight, either now or later, are to be destroyed.

2. It is the responsibility of the military command posts to execute this order to destroy all military objects, including traffic and communications installations. The Gauleiters and Commissioners for Reich Defense are responsible for destroying the industrial and supply installations, as well as of other objects of valuable; the troops must give the Gauleiters and Commissioners for Reich Defense the assistance they need to carry out this task.

3. This command is to be transmitted to all troop commanders as promptly as possible; orders to the contrary are null and void.
Adolf Hitler.

In response, even ardent Nazis like Armaments Minister Albert Speer weren't too enthusiastic about this order. Ten days after this order was published, Speer responded to Hitler. Among other things, he said, "On hearing these words I was deeply shocked." Apparently, in closed conversation, true to form, Hitler rambled on about that since Germany showed itself to be the weaker nation, that the future belonged exclusively to the stronger nation of Russia. Of course, it was total insanity that Hitler was willing to sacrifice the survival of the German people because they lost a war Hitler should not have started in the first place.

The point here is that it takes a special kind of megalomaniac to decide that he/she would rather see their country fail and suffer than to see it succeed with new leadership. Enter President Joe Biden. Many times in the past, I have written that I do not particularly like Hitler comparisons. Mainly because they are completely wrong or inaccurate. The only other Hitler comparison I made in the past was that Biden and Hitler were similar in that after the bombings of so many German cities, Hitler refused to go to those cities and talk with the survivors. He was not man enough to face the consequences of his actions and the effects they had on the German people. Out of sight and out of mind was an

unofficial mantra. Similarly, when we look at the debacle that is our southern border, Biden, much like Hitler, refused to go and see the turmoil he created. All the crime committed by illegals similarly is ignored by the President. So, in this way, my comparison is spot on.

Now as we look at Hitler's Nero decree and his sick desire to punish the German people for his own foibles, we can look at the last several months of President Biden's presidency and look at his own, indeed significantly smaller in scope, Nero Decree. When Trump secured funding for the border wall, he had thousands of pieces of the wall constructed and waiting to be installed. In an effort to foil Trump's border wall plan in his second term, President Biden recently decided to start selling those pieces of the border wall at pennies on the dollar. His hope is apparently to cause disruption and delay in Trump's plan and of course to force him to spend even more money to purchase material that was purchased once already.

Biden has commuted the sentences of 1500 people, some obviously very questionable, he has commuted the sentences of 37 people on death row at the federal level and just yesterday (as of this writing), by executive order, has ended future offshore oil and gas drilling along most of the nation's coastline. The purpose of this is clearly to make it more difficult for Trump to, as he says, "Drill baby, drill." At stake is close to 625 million acres of coastline being prevented from future oil and gas drilling. If that sounds like a lot, it is. This land covers all of the Atlantic Coast and eastern Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific coast from Washington to California and parts of Alaska's Northern Bering Sea. Fox News reported that Trump's incoming White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt wrote, "This is a disgraceful decision designed to exact political revenge on the American people who gave President Trump a mandate to increase drilling and lower gas prices. Rest assured, Joe Biden will fail."

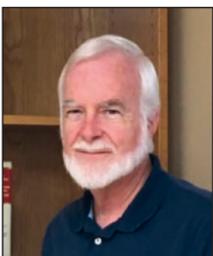
It was also reported just this morning that the Biden administration has transferred 11 GITMO detainees to Oman. And you guessed it, each of them has ties to Al Qaeda. At least one of the men transferred was a bodyguard for Osama bin Laden. According to one news report, a lawyer for the men transferred said, "They want to live their lives. They want to get married. They want to have kids. They want to get a job and have normal lives." Pretty sickening stuff. Just like the millions of people that have poured across the border under Biden only want a better life. This transfer will only leave 15 detainees at GITMO. Another report stated that the US government is in negotiations to swap Americans detained in Afghanistan with one or more GITMO prisoners. Unfortunately, Biden's list goes on.

To me, it is sad that on his way out, it seems as though President Biden is hell-bent on making life as miserable as he can for the new tenants of Pennsylvania Avenue. What is lost in the process is his destructive behavior and how his choices affect all Americans. I do not believe he has our best interests at heart. Or more likely the case, whoever is really in charge at the White House does not have our best interests at heart. Yeah, I get it. Biden has certainly become that crotchety old "get off my lawn guy." He is angry and unforgiving that he was unceremoniously thrown out of the race by his own people. This much is clear. He did not go willingly. But his actions at the end of his term, this 11th hour as they say, raise serious questions and issues the next administration will have no choice but to contend with.

Now here is just one question I have. It is clear that President Biden is working under diminished capacity. This cannot be denied. He forgot a kid's name while singing him happy birthday the other day for crying out loud. My question is this. If it can be shown that Biden is indeed diminished, can any of his "11th hour" actions be considered legitimate and/ or legal?

www.politico.com/news/2025/01/04/biden-block-offshore-drilling-00196484

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John Taylor

The Principles of 98

Recent elections have been laden with controversy. Results of the 2024 election appeared to reflect the backlash against the policies of the present administration. As traumatic and unsettling as recent times have been, intense divisions between American political factions are nothing new.

In 1798, under the John Adams administration, the 5th U.S. Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts. Part of the reasoning for passage was a fear in some circles that a war with France was imminent. This legislation consisted of the Naturalization Act, the Alien Friends Act, the Alien Enemies Act and the Sedition Act. Some of the "features" included: raising U.S. residency requirements to naturalize aliens from five to fourteen years; allowing the U.S. President to deport or have imprisoned aliens deemed "dangerous"; restricting speech if it involved criticism of the government or government officials; and limiting free speech and freedom of the press. This draconian legislation reflected the political schism between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans and was an impetus for Thomas Jefferson's 1800 defeat of President Adams.

The Alien and Sedition Acts were seen as direct attacks on the Bill of Rights and as a Federalist breach in constitutional interpretation concerning the relationship between the States and Federal government. In response, James Madison wrote the Virginia Resolutions of 1798 and Thomas Jefferson wrote the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798/99—they are often referred to as The Principles of 98. The Principles of 98 were rooted in the philosophy of the American Revolution, and much of the logic came from prior episodes of government overreach, such as Patrick Henry and Virginia's resistance to the Stamp Act.

The resolutions "...declared alien and sedition acts unconstitutional." They made three basic points: (1) When the States formed the Constitution, by common agreement they created a federal or general government and delegated to it only specific and defined powers. (2) The general government was created as an agent of the States, "which were the real sovereigns, and to do only those things which were specifically granted to it in the compact of the Constitution." (3) Since the States created the general government, it was they who should decide if this government acted within its delegated authority. The federal government was not granted authority to determine the limits of its own power.

The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions are pivotal to understanding States' Rights, nullification, and the defined limits of the constitution. Madison explained that the powers granted to the federal government are "limited by the plain sense and intention of the instrument constituting the compact." He also noted: "In case of a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of other powers, not granted by the said compact, the states who are parties thereto, have the right, and are in duty bound, to interpose for arresting the progress of the evil, and for maintaining within their respective limits, the authorities, rights and liberties appertaining to them."

In the Kentucky Resolutions, Jefferson argued "whenever the general government assumes undelegated powers, its acts are unauthoritative, void, and of no force," and that "as in all other cases of compact among powers having no common judge, each party has an equal right to judge for itself, as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress."

The eighth resolution of Jefferson's draft spelled out the means of redressing constitutional violations: "that in cases of an abuse of the delegated powers, the members of the general government being chosen by the people, a change by the people would be the constitutional remedy; but where powers are assumed which have not been delegated a nullification of the act is the rightful remedy: that every state has a natural right, in cases not within the compact [casus non foederis] to nullify of their own authority all assumptions of power by others within their limits."

The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions were not particularly popular in the Northeastern States, which were largely controlled by the Federalist Party—a party that vigorously supported the centralization of power. Several States, including Massachusetts, passed resolutions condemning the "rhetoric" of Kentucky and Virginia. Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party later took up where the Federalists left off by centralizing power and undermining the entire basis of the American Revolution when they militarily denied the Southern States the right of self-government.

Many early Americans, e.g., the Anti-Federalists, understood the predictably disastrous results of centralized power. The Principles of 98 sought to rein in Federalists' efforts to repeat that unwise historical course. Although Lincoln and the Radical Republicans did immeasurable damage, later presidents, e.g., Wilson, Roosevelt, LBJ...followed in lockstep and we continue to pay the price for a federal government that has grown into the leviathan that the Anti-Federalists and, later, Robert E. Lee, predicted it would become.

Sources:

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Community Lifestyles



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Honoring Our Heroes



VETERAN NEWS

We hope all our readers and especially our **VETERANS ENJOY** reading the Alabama Gazette!



**Chief Warrant Officer
LaQuiesha Andrews**



**Commander
George Henry Teuton**



Dr. Martha P. Simmons

The Purple Heart

The Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) established the Purple Heart Trail in 1992 as a symbolic trail that commemorates and honors all men and women who have been wounded or killed in combat while serving the U.S. armed forces. In 1922, the Purple Heart Trail was established by the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) to be a symbolic trail that commemorates and honors all men and women who have been wounded or killed in combat while serving the U.S. armed forces. Mount Vernon, Virginia, which is the burial location of General George Washington, is the origin of the trail, and it traverses across the United States and overseas as far as Puerto Rico and Guam. The signage program consists of the designation of an extensive system of roads, highways, bridges and memorials that pay tribute to the recipients of the Purple Heart medal and act as a visual reminder to those travelers that others have paid a high price for their freedom and live in a free society. The tradition of the Purple Heart dates back to the Revolutionary War when General George Washington created the Badge of Military Merit to honor gallantry. This cloth badge fell into disuse after the war but on February 22, 1932 in honor of the bicentennial anniversary of George Washington's birth, General Douglas MacArthur restored it as the Purple Heart medal.



awarded the Purple Heart medal by a grateful nation for the wounds they suffered in combat in defense of their country.

The origin of the Purple Heart Trail is well defined on the monument dedicated on August 7, 1998 at Mount Vernon whereby it commemorates the establishment of the Purple Heart decoration by General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, on August 7, 1782, and the Purple Heart Trail memorializes those patriots who were awarded the Purple Heart medal in combat in defense of their nation. The idea of the Purple Heart Trail came from Frank J. Kuhn, Jr., and it was established at the national level by George Gallagher. The idea of the Heart Trail began as a resolution during the 1992 national convention of the MOPH held in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. The design of the tablet was created by Mickey Gallagher, the wife of George Gallagher. There are many such tablets erected across the U.S. including one that was fittingly placed at MacArthur Square, Norfolk, VA, and dedicated on February 22, 2003. This monument commemorates General Douglas MacArthur who as chief of staff of the Army revived the Badge of Military Merit and renamed it the Purple Heart Medal on February 22, 1932 in honor of the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth. This monument memorializes those patriots, living and departed, who were

In 1957, the Purple Heart Foundation was created as a non-profit organization to raise awareness, support and funds for American veterans and their families. The mission of the Purple Heart Foundation is to enhance the quality of life of Purple Heart recipients and other honorably discharged veterans and their families through:

- (1) Critical Assistance Grants
- (2) Providing Resources Related To TBI, PTS, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- (3) Academic Scholarships and Service Dogs.

In addition to accepting financial donations, it has a national vehicle donation program and a clothing donation program through Go Green Drop.

To donate to the Purple Heart Foundation, call 703-256-6139 or e-mail at: phfcontact@purpleheartfoundation.org

January 6, 2025, members of Chapter 607 Vietnam Veterans of America presented a plaque to Dr. Martha Poole Simmons recognizing her as the Citizen of the Year of 2024.



Since 2005, Dr. Simmons has served as a volunteer with the Central-East AL Chapter of the American Red Cross with emergency services and with the Armed Forces both active duty and veterans. Her service to our veterans is remarkable. **THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO!**

VETERANS JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Buddy Martin Wilson.....	January 3rd
Jerry Glen Wheat.....	January 4th
Geoff Allen Colt.....	January 6th
William Randall Ray.....	January 10th
Robert C. Cerha.....	January 14th
George Robert Partridge.....	January 16th
William A. Grinstead.....	January 21st
Rosa Scott.....	January 23rd
Billy Gene Bonner.....	January 28th
Denny Rea.....	January 28th
Willie James Rogers.....	January 31st

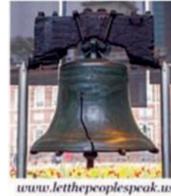
VETERANS FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Joe Panza.....	February 2nd
Dudley F. Christian.....	February 6th
Anthony (Tony) Baggiano.....	February 12th
James H. Coombs.....	February 15th
Eugene F. Crooks.....	February 16th
Karen S. Brantner.....	February 16th
William L. Carl.....	February 17th
James E. Klingler.....	February 19th
Stephen M. Davis.....	February 21st
Lee R. Knight.....	February 22nd
Andrew E. Lindsey.....	February 25th

God Bless the USA!



Alabama is incredibly fortunate to have U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville appointed to three crucial subcommittees on the Senate Armed Services Committee: Strategic Forces, Emerging Threats and Capabilities, and Personnel. These appointments reaffirm Alabama's critical role in our nation's defense and security infrastructure.



Perry O. Hooper Jr.

Founder Let the People Speak
Founder Patriots First
Former Alabama State Representative
Alabama State Republican Executive Committee



Senator Tuberville's appointment to these subcommittees provides a powerful voice for Alabama in shaping national defense policies, securing vital resources, and ensuring the continued success of our military personnel and defense industry. His dedication to strengthening America's security and supporting Alabama's military infrastructure is a testament to his leadership and commitment to our great state.

Beyond his work in national defense, Senator Tuberville has been a tireless advocate for Alabama's economic growth, job creation, and education initiatives. His efforts in Washington have led to increased investment in our state's industries, support for small businesses, and policies that put hardworking Alabamians first. His leadership has been instrumental in ensuring that Alabama continues to thrive both economically and militarily.

With these key appointments, Alabama stands at the forefront of national security, poised for continued growth and influence in safeguarding our nation. The future is bright for Alabama's military community, and with strong representation in Washington, our state will continue to be a leader in defending freedom, advancing military innovation, and fostering economic prosperity.

Alabama is home to some of the most significant military installations in the country, and Senator Tuberville's leadership in these subcommittees ensures that our state's contributions to national security remain strong. With Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville serving as a hub for Army missile defense and aerospace innovation, Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery leading Air Force education and training, and Fort Rucker in Dale County being the heart of Army aviation training, Alabama is a cornerstone of military excellence.

Additionally, Dannelly Field in Montgomery houses the esteemed 187th Fighter Wing, which is one of only two Air National Guard units in the country equipped with the cutting-edge F-35 aircraft. In Mobile, Austal USA continues to advance naval capabilities by constructing Independence-class Littoral Combat Ships, reinforcing Alabama's pivotal role in maritime defense.



Major John A. Brown: Age 69



Major John A. Brown served 20 years on active duty in the U.S. Air Force and 13 years teaching AF JROTC. His Air Force Service Code (AFSC) included Academic Program Manager, Command and Control Operations, and Missile Operations and ICBM Missile Combat Crew. He received the following medals, commendations, ribbons and awards: Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Overseas Tour, Longevity Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon and the Air Force Training Ribbon.

Major Brown was born July 11, 1955, to his parents, Mr. Heywood Holmes and Dr. Elizabeth Holmes, in Greenville, South

Carolina. He was reared in West Columbia, SC and graduated from Brookland-Cacye High School in 1973. He graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1977 with a B.S. Degree in Business Administration - Accounting. While in college, he was active in the Association of African American Students serving as its president. He started the organization, Student Christian Fellowship, participated in its choir, A Touch of Faith, and was selected for Who's Who at the University of South Carolina, and the National Social Register. Having participated in Air Force R.O.T.C. while in college, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force at the time of his university graduation. He received a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Golden Gate University in 1982.

Major Brown's military career encompassed his receiving assignments requiring his leadership skills and his ability to work with people. His first duty assignment was at Vandenberg Air Force Base, CA, for training in missile operations. He became a missileer, a highly trained member of the U.S. Air Force who operates underground missile systems and is responsible for running and managing missile operations. He then served for three years at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, where he worked with a missile combat crew as deputy commander and then as commander where he became the youngest commander of the wing. Next, he returned to Vandenberg AFB where he served for one year as an instructor in missile operations and then for four years as a Protocol Officer. Then he served for three years at Francis E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, working as Assistant Officer, Operations Officer, Assistant Chief of Training and Base Executive Officer. He successfully filled these positions because of his being a "people person" able to work well with others. Next, he was assigned to Keesler AFB, MS, for training in airfield management. He was stationed at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England where he served a year as the Chief of Airfield Management when Desert Storm,

the first Gulf War began. Planes were brought there in preparation for use in the war. He later worked as the Chief of Wing Inspections, Operations Officer and Squadron Commander. After RAF Mildenhall, Major Brown was stationed at Maxwell AFB, AL, where he served as an instructor at the Air Command and Staff College teaching concepts, warfare, etc. He retired from military service at Maxwell AFB July 1, 1998.

After his retirement from military service, Major Brown first worked in Montgomery, AL, for one year as the general manager of Race Trac, a family-owned corporation that operates convenience stores and gasoline stations. He then worked one year as a buyer for Knox Kershaw Corporation, a railroad equipment supplier. Next, he worked for Troy University at Montgomery, AL as the Veteran Affairs Coordinator for one year and then as the Financial Aid Director until 2005. He graduated from the Leadership Elmore County program. He was selected to the Alabama Board of Examiners for Marriage and Family Therapy from 2001-2005. Because of his personal background with participation in R.O.T.C. while a college student and his service in the military, he successfully worked as the Senior Instructor for the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (AFJROTC) at Wilcox Central High School in Camden, AL, for 13 years during the period of 2007-2020. He received the Golden Apple Award for excellence in the classroom in 2015 and was selected Wilcox County High School Teacher of the Year in 2019. He is currently employed in sales part time in central AL with Jostens, an American manufacturer of high school senior memorabilia of year-books, academic regalia, class rings for high schools and colleges and championship rings for sports.

Major Brown and his wife, Lela, have been married 46 years, and they have two children, LeQuana and Eric, and three grandchildren. They are members of the First Methodist Church of Millbrook, AL, where he has served as a member of the Senior Parish Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees, and he has served as an usher. He is a member of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) in Montgomery, AL.

Major Brown's conclusions about what his military service has meant to him are: **"It has meant that I have been able to meet people and fulfil the dream of serving my country. was all worthwhile."** He would like people to remember him as a man who loved the Lord and gave his all to helping others.



Captain James Robert Bossert: Age 81



James Robert Bossert served 27 years in the U.S. Military including six years enlisted in the U.S. Army, nine years enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and 12 years as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. His Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) included: (1) 4945C Communications Computer Systems Officer, (2) 4924 Plans and Programs and (3) 5135B Information Systems Plans and Programs Staff Officer. His military medals, awards, citations and ribbons were: Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award Ribbon, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with two oak leaf clusters,

National Defense Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with four oak leaf clusters, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, Non Commissioned Officer Professional Military Education Graduate Ribbon, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon and Air Force Training Ribbon.

Captain Bossert was born October 30, 1943 to his parents, Robert George and Julie Bossert, in Flushing Queens, New York. Three generations of the Bossert served in the U.S. Military. His father served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during WWII as an engineer disarming a bomb earning a Silver Star and completing his military service in the Army Reserve at the rank of Lt. Colonel. Captain Bossert's son, Warren, served in the U.S. Army for 2.5 years before passing away from cancer.

Because his father worked in the family construction business, the Bossert family moved to many locations while he was being reared. Captain Bossert graduated from Staples High School at Westport, Connecticut, in 1961, and he attended college at the University of Bridgeport for 1.5 years. He then volunteered for service in the U.S. Army and enlisted at Bridgeport, CT, February 25, 1963.

Captain Bossert completed 90 days of Boot Camp at Fort Dix, New Jersey. He first served at Ft. Rucker, AL, where he worked on engines for fixed wing aircraft and helicopters for one year. He then was transferred to Fliegerhorst Air

Base, Germany, where he worked as a mechanic, an office clerk and inventory clerk for two years and took courses at the University of Maryland. After this assignment, he remained out of the U.S. Military for a while until he joined the U.S. Air Force in 1971 at Bridgeport, CT. He completed a Disbursement Accounting course for two months at Sheppard Air Force Base, TX, and he then worked in accounting at McCoy Air Force Base, FL, at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, for 18 months where he also completed courses at the University of Alaska and then at Plattsburg State University while serving at Plattsburg Air Force Base, N.Y., for four years. He graduated with a B.A. Degree in Business Administration with a major in Accounting from Plattsburg State University in 1978. Captain Bossert completed Officer Candidate School at Lackland Air Force Base, TX. He then started out as a 2nd Lieutenant as a computer officer. He was then stationed at Langley Air Force Base, VA, for four years serving as head of the management team of Tactical Air Command taking care of the iterations which are new versions of a piece of computer hardware or software changes in programs. His final Air Force duty station was at the Computer Center at Maxwell Air Force Base Gunter Annex, AL. When he first arrived there, he worked with the computers for the Judge Advocate General. Then he worked with the plans and programs at the headquarters and also worked as the budget officer for the headquarters. Captain Bossert retired from military service in June 1990.

Captain Bossert and his wife, Jeanette Ann, were married 58 years before she passed away, and they had two children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Since his childhood at the age of 10, he has had a deep interest operating, designing and engineering model trains.

When reflecting on his military career, Captain Bossert says, **"The best thing about the military was that I was able to control where I was going and what I was doing, and my family and I were secure."** He would like people to remember him as being friendly and helpful.





Corporal Dale Richard Barnes: Age 75



Corporal (Cpl) Dale Richard Barnes served two years in the United States Marine Corps. His Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was rifleman/radio operator. He received the following medals, commendations, ribbons and awards: Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal "V", Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with three bronze stars, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960 Device, Rifle Marksman Badge, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon and Good Conduct Medal.

Cpl Barnes was born August 2, 1949 to his parents, Otis and Anna Barnes, at Ft. Fairfield, Maine. After graduating from Ft. Fairfield High School, he volunteered for service in the United States Marine Corps. Cpl Barnes enlisted in February 1967, and he had 120 days of deferment while he was still in high school. He then entered the U. S. Marine Corps June 10, 1967 and completed 12 weeks of Marine Boot Camp at Parris Island, S.C., followed by four weeks of infantry training at Camp LeJeune. When he had his 18th birthday, he reached the age when he could go to Vietnam, and he spent four weeks of Vietnamese indoctrination at Camp Pendleton preparing to go to Vietnam. Upon arrival at Vietnam, he was sent to his unit in the northern sector of Vietnam which is known as 1 Corp which included the district of Quang Tri and located five miles from the DMZ. When he arrived with his unit, the 3rd Marine Division 2nd Battalion 4th Marine Hotel Company at that time, there were not enough supplies to allow him to go on any action or patrol that the unit might be assigned. He had to wait two weeks before his equipment caught up with him and his Hotel Company. While he was waiting for his equipment to arrive, he was asked by the captain of Hotel Company if he would like to train on the radio until his equipment caught up with him within two weeks. When his equipment arrived, the captain asked him to stay at the headquarters of his H Company as the radio operator for the executive officer of the company. That was known as the Bravo Command within the unit. During his tour of duty with Hotel Company, he fought in three major operations which earned him three Bronze Stars which could be placed on his Vietnam Campaign Medal. He was wounded at a foothill near Khe Sanh Province, tried to call in an air strike and passed out. He was medevac'd via helicopter to the hospital ship, USS Sanctuary, remaining on it for four weeks. Then he was transferred to a medical facility at Tachikawa, Japan, for three months. Next, he was sent to the Chelsea Naval Hospital at Boston, MA, for treatment for 1.5 years. He then served as a guard on the U.S. Constitution for four weeks on active duty at Boston, MA. He was

discharged from military service August 5, 1969 with 100% service connected medical disability.

Cpl Barnes used the G.I. Bill and graduated with a B.A. Degree in Biblical Studies from Gordon College, MA, in 1972 and a Masters Degree in Religious Education from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1978. During this time, he served as an elder at the Community Church in East Gloucester, MA. After graduating from the Seminary, he served as the pastor of the Irasburg United Church in Irasburg, VT, for seven years. He then returned to the Community Church of East Gloucester, MA, serving as the pastor for 15 years. Next, he served as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Prattville, AL, for five years. He then served as the Interim Pastor at Beulah Baptist Church in Wetumpka, AL, followed by serving as pastor of Rock Springs Baptist Church in Elmore County, AL. For the past five years, he has served as the pastor of the Titus Baptist Church in Elmore County, AL. He has served in the ministry for 46 years since 1978.

Cpl Barnes and his wife, Janice, were married 42 years before she passed away, and they had two children and two grandchildren. He holds membership in the following military service organizations: Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, VFW, Purple Heart Association and the U.S. Marine Corps League.

Cpl Barnes' conclusions about what his military service means to him are: *"It prepared me psychologically so that I could go through the treatments at the hospitals for so long. I was prepared for counseling people who were sick or dying when I became a pastor. At my first church, a member was fatally injured in an accident with farming machinery. My experiences in the Marine Corps and in the hospital prepared me for helping others. I was making decisions calling in Naval guns, air strikes and medevacs while serving in combat. These experiences of making decisions prepared me for the ministry and for helping others counseling with Hospice with a program called Reach Out."* He would like people to remember him as being faithful to the calling of God to the church, sensitive to needs of others around him.



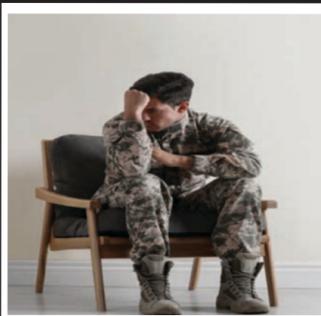
IN REMEMBRANCE

Lee Roy Knight



Lee Roy Knight was a Korean War veteran who served with the U.S. Navy on the USS Seal in the Pacific Theater. His work involved security at the Atsugi Naval Air Station (NAF), Japan. He passed away January 11, 2025.

His article was published in the February 2022 issue of the Alabama Gazette.



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Captain William Bibb Chapter DAR Honors Veterans with Wreaths at Graveside



On December 14, 2024, more than three million wreaths were laid at the graves of veterans in more than 4,200 cemeteries across the United States. One of those cemeteries was the Wetumpka City Cemetery in Wetumpka, AL, where members of the Captain William Bibb Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution and dozens of citizens gathered to do their part for Wreaths Across America. This year 311

wreaths were placed at Wetumpka City Cemetery, and 98 of those were sponsored through Captain William Bibb Chapter.

This marks the second year that Sentry Riders Motorcycle Group has partnered with Captain William Bibb DAR to sponsor the event in Wetumpka. Sentry Riders Motorcycle Group leader and event organizer, Paul Wolbeck, gave a touching tribute to our veterans while Captain William Bibb Daughter, Kathleen Tobias, sang the National Anthem. Daughter Alicia Chalker offered the invocation before a wreath was presented for each branch of service. Representatives were Chief Jerry Hargrave, .S. Air Force, Ricky Messick, U.S. Marine Corps, Chuck Wiese, U.S. Navy, Major Sallie Duncan, U.S. Space Force and Private Jeremiah Robinson, U.S. Army, Ward Wittington, U.S. Coast Guard, and finally representing the POW/MIA across all branches and divisions of the U.S. Armed Forces was Staff Sergeant Michael Rash.

In keeping with the 2024 national theme established by Wreaths Across America, guest speaker, Retired U.S. Air Force Major John A. (Jab) Brown, encouraged attendees to "Live with Purpose." He cited numerous examples of veterans in Wetumpka and surrounding areas who have lived with purpose. He challenged the audience to take it one step further that is to "live with purpose, on purpose" as many of our veterans have done.

Following the ceremony, volunteers picked up wreaths and placed them on veteran's graves. After placing each wreath, individuals were instructed to say the service member's name aloud and pause to reflect upon their service thus ensuring their memory lives on.

The mission of Wreaths Across America is to remember fallen U.S. veterans, to honor those who serve and to teach children the value of freedom. Each fresh,



balsam veteran's wreath is a gift of respect and appreciation sponsored by an individual or organization and placed on a headstone by volunteers as a small gesture of gratitude for the freedoms that Americans enjoy. Wreaths Across America believes the tradition represents a living memorial that honors veterans, active-duty military and their families.

Preparations for next year's ceremony are already underway. Wreaths Across America Day will be Saturday, December 13, 2025. For those who would like to contribute, Wreaths Across America will match all wreaths sponsored through a registered WAA sponsorship group for placement of a wreath next year. Visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org/AL0116 for more information.

If anyone is interested in learning more about DAR membership, visit <https://www.facebook.com/captwmbibnsdar/> or contact captainwmbibb@gmail.com.

Alabama Republicans applaud confirmation of Pete Hegseth

BY: Brandon Moseley

January 24, 2025 - Washington, D.C. – Republicans in the U.S. Senate worked late into the night to get around Democrats procedural delay tactics in order to confirm Pete Hegseth as the Secretary of Defense.

Three Republican Senators broke ranks with President Donald J. Trump (R) to vote with Democrats in opposition to Hegseth. These were Sens. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Susan Collins (Maine) and Mitch McConnell (Kentucky). The tie forced newly sworn in Vice President John David "J.D." Vance to step in and break the 50-50 tie. That Murkowski and Collins were voting no had been already made public; but that McConnell's betrayal was a surprise to almost everyone. Ultimately, team Trump prevailed and Hegseth is now the Secretary of Defense.

Both Sens. Katie Britt (R-Alabama) and Tommy Tuberville (R-Alabama) voted in favor of Hegseth.

"Voting to confirm Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense reaffirms my steadfast commitment to advancing President Trump's doctrine of peace through strength," said Sen. Britt in a statement. "Secretary Hegseth will put our warfighters in the best position and return the Pentagon's focus to our force's lethality, providing a credible deterrent against our adversaries."

"After meeting with him during the confirmation process, I know Secretary Hegseth appreciates the importance of Alabama to our national defense," said Britt. "Whether it is Fort Novosel, Redstone Arsenal, Anniston Army Depot, Maxwell Air Force Base, or Sumpter Smith Joint National Guard Base, I look forward to working with Secretary Hegseth to maximize the roles our great state's installations, capabilities, and synergies play in supporting our men and women in uniform and protecting our nation long into the future."

Tuberville has been a strong backer of Hegseth.

"Our Pentagon needs someone with dust on his boots at the helm; someone who knows how to win because he's seen active combat. "That man is @PeteHegseth. And I PROUDLY will vote to confirm him as our next SecDef," said Sen. Tuberville on his X social media account.

U.S. Representative Mike Rogers (R-AL03), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, released a statement applauding the Senate confirmation of Hegseth.

"Congratulations to Pete Hegseth on his Senate confirmation to be the next Secretary of Defense. I look forward to working closely with him to strengthen our military and restore American deterrence."

Congressman Barry Moore (R-AL01) said on X, "Congratulations to Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, who will remove the cancer of wokeness from our military!"

Alabama Gazette political columnist former state Representative Perry O. Hooper Jr. (R-Montgomery) was enthusiastic about Hegseth's confirmation.

"America won with Pete's confirmation," Hooper said. "He is a strong man of God, Family, Country and our Troops. Pete will be a great Secretary of Defense."

Hegseth faces a lot of challenges, including modernizing the military to prepare



for an increasingly sophisticated battlefield with drones killing tanks, surface ships, and even aircraft; hypersonics, artificial intelligence, and anti-satellite weapon systems. During the Biden administration the military attempted to root out so-called "Christian nationalists" and tried to indoctrinate the armed forces in liberal ideologies including: gender fluidity, critical race theory, and female empowerment. The result was a force that too often failed to meet its recruiting and retention goals while lowering the standards (both physically and scholastically) to get in. Moving the military's focus off of DEI goals and back onto being the most lethal force possible will be a challenge that Hegseth will have to face. Another issue has been the inability of America's ship builders and aerospace companies to manufacture the ships, planes, missiles, and other equipment that the Pentagon needs on time, on budget, and without having to rely on China and other foreign nations where supply could become difficult in a time of war for parts.

The Senate has confirmed Marco Rubio to be Secretary of State, John Ratcliffe to be CIA Director, Pete Hegseth to be Defense Secretary, Kristi Noem to be Homeland Security Secretary, Scott Bessent to be Treasury Secretary, and Sean Duffy to be Secretary of Transportation. The Senate is expected to vote soon on Doug Collins to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs, Chris Wright to be the secretary of the Department of Energy, Doug Burgum to run the Interior Department and Lee Zeldin to be the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

To connect with the author of this story, or to comment, email brandonmreporter@gmail.com

REGIONAL JET CARRYING 64 COLLIDES WITH MILITARY HELICOPTER NEAR D.C. – THERE WERE NO SURVIVORS

BY BRANDON MOSELEY



UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter

approached Reagan National Airport. There are no survivors.

American Airlines announced that the commercial flight, American Eagle Flight 5432, was en route from Wichita, Kansas to Washington, D.C. The aircraft was a Bombardier CRJ700 regional jet operated by American Airlines subsidiary PSA Airlines.

The Army has confirmed that a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter out of Fort Belvoir, Virginia, was involved in the crash. The helicopter belonged to Bravo Company, 12th Aviation Battalion out of Davison Army Airfield at Fort Belvoir.

DC Mayor Muriel Bowser said that both aircraft went in the water, 3 were on board the military helicopter.

A large search-and-rescue operation is underway despite the cold windy conditions. The police are pulling bodies out of the Potomac River.

January 30, 2025
– WASHINGTON, D.C. - A regional jet flying into D.C. from Kansas with 64 on board had in in-air collision with a military helicopter on a training mission as it

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is conducting an investigation.

American Airlines CEO Rober Isom said that they are "cooperating fully" with authorities and the NTSB's investigation.

The Army helicopter was found broken up and upside down in the water.

Several members of the U.S. Figure Skating community were aboard the American Airlines jet. Athletes, coaches and family members were returning home from the National Development Camp held in conjunction with the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Wichita.

Among the victims were several former Russian skaters, including Vadim Naumov and Evgenia Shishkova, they were the 1994 World Figure Skating Championship pairs winners, and legendary Soviet Union figure skater Inna Volynskaya.

The incident has shocked and horrified President Donald J. Trump (R).

"The airplane was on a perfect and routine line of approach to the airport," said President Trump on Truth Social. "The helicopter was going straight at the airplane for an extended period of time. It is a CLEAR NIGHT, the lights on the plane were blazing, why didn't the helicopter go up or down, or turn. Why didn't the control tower tell the helicopter what to do instead of asking if they saw the plane. This is a bad situation that looks like it should have been prevented. NOT GOOD!!!"

"What a terrible night this has been, God bless you all" the President added.



Kristi Noem: The Perfect Choice for Homeland Security Secretary

America stands at a pivotal moment where strong leadership and decisive action are needed more than ever to secure our borders, protect our infrastructure, and address rising cyber and domestic security threats. The

increasing flow of illegal migrants, growing cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and geopolitical tensions demand firm leadership at the helm of the Department of Homeland Security. Kristi Noem embodies the kind of fearless leadership that can restore order and efficiency to the Department of Homeland Security. With a track record of unwavering commitment to national security and a deep understanding of policy implementation, Noem is uniquely equipped to take on this vital role. Her appointment is a testament to the necessity of leadership that prioritizes American interests, enforces the rule of law, and delivers results where others have failed.

As Governor of South Dakota, she deployed National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border on multiple occasions, demonstrating her willingness to step in where the federal government had failed. Noem understands that border security is national security, and her proactive measures as governor signal that she will not hesitate to enforce immigration laws and strengthen the enforcement capabilities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Her legislative background further reinforces her readiness for the role. During her four terms in Congress, Noem was an ardent supporter of fiscal conservatism, national security, and limited government. She served on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, where she helped craft policies that prioritized American economic interests—an invaluable perspective in protecting the nation from economic warfare and foreign threats.

The Biden administration's handling of the border crisis has been an unmitigated disaster. From rolling back Trump-era policies that kept illegal crossings at bay to allowing asylum seekers to remain in the U.S. indefinitely, Biden's DHS leadership has emboldened criminal cartels and human traffickers. Noem, by contrast, has made it clear that she will reinstate the "Remain in Mexico" policy, eliminate the use of asylum-processing apps like CBP One, and prioritize the deportation of illegal immigrants with criminal records. Her commitment to a zero-tolerance approach is precisely what the country needs to regain control of its sovereignty.

Her Senate confirmation vote—59–34—including support from Democrats such as Tim Kaine and Jeanne Shaheen, underscores bipartisan recognition of her ability to handle the job effectively. At a time when America's border is under siege, Noem's decisive, tough-on-crime leadership offers the nation a fighting chance to restore order.

Beyond the border, Noem has also voiced strong positions on cybersecurity and domestic terrorism. She has pledged to realign resources within the

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to ensure that it is focused on real threats rather than political censorship, a move that aligns with Republican concerns about government overreach in tech regulation.

Additionally, Noem's experience managing state-level emergency responses—from natural disasters to public safety crises—gives her a distinct advantage over her predecessors. She understands the importance of preparedness and rapid response, qualities that will be essential in strengthening FEMA's effectiveness under her leadership.

The appointment of Kristi Noem sends a clear message: The days of open borders, lax immigration enforcement, and prioritizing political correctness over national security are over. Her track record of unwavering leadership, her commitment to border security, and her proactive stance on domestic threats make her the ideal person to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

While many Democrats question Noem's tough policies, most Americans, especially those impacted by rising crime and border insecurity, see her decisive leadership as a necessary corrective to years of mismanagement. Kristi Noem is not just a good choice; she is the best choice for this critical role at this critical moment in history.



Perry O. Hooper Jr.

Founder Let the People Speak
Founder Patriots First
Former Alabama State Representative
Alabama State Republican Executive Committee



Kyle McKinney



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If you didn't enroll in Part B when you're first eligible, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B coverage. Your monthly premium will increase 10% for each 12-month period that you were eligible for Part B but did not sign up for it. Your coverage starts the first day of the month after you sign up.

To learn more about Medicare, please visit our Medicare Benefits page at www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare.

You may also read our Medicare publication at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10043.pdf.

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it.

SSA TALKS

Listen to our new episode:
Benefits for Children



SSA TALKS

Rebecca Rose, Senior Public Affairs Specialist in SSA's Office of Inspector General's Division of Communications, joined episode 5 of *SSA Talks* to discuss Social Security scams and how to recognize them. Recognizing the signs of a scam gives you the power to ignore criminals and report the scam.

In this episode Rebecca discusses the 4 basic signs of a scam. She reveals that scammers will usually:

1. Pretend to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust.
2. Claim that there is a problem or that they have a prize.
3. Pressure you to act immediately.
4. Tell you to pay in a specific way such as gift cards.

The episode also includes testimony from scam survivor, Kate Kleinert. She's a widow who shares her story of losing \$39,000 to a romance scam and offers advice on recognizing and reporting scams.

Our blog titled *What You Can Do To Protect Your Personal Information* at blog.ssa.gov/what-you-can-do-to-protect-your-personal-information covers ways you can safeguard your personal information from scammers. To learn more about scams and how to report scams to our Office of the Inspector General, visit our Scams webpage at www.ssa.gov/scam.

You can listen to this episode on our *SSA Talks* webpage at www.ssa.gov/news/audio-series.html and subscribe to receive alerts about future episodes. The *SSA Talks* webpage contains a transcript for each episode.

Please share this information with your loved ones.

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Retirement is not one-size-fits-all. It can mean different things to different people. Perhaps you have not applied for Social Security retirement benefits because you're still working or are delaying applying so you can get a higher benefit. If you're age 70 or older, you should apply now for the benefits you're owed. Your benefits will not increase if you continue to delay applying for them because you are 70 or older.

Did you know that you can receive benefits even if you still work? Your earnings can increase your monthly benefit amount – even after you start receiving benefits. Each year that you work, we check your earnings record. It's possible your latest year of earnings is one of your highest 35 years. If so, we will automatically recalculate your benefit amount and pay you any increase due.

The best and easiest way to apply for your benefits is with a personal **my Social Security** account. You can create your free account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Once you create your account, you can get an estimate of how much you might receive each month based on when you want to start receiving benefits and then apply.

In your account, you can also:

- Access publications – like our fact sheet for workers ages 70 and up at www.ssa.gov/myaccount/assets/materials/workers-70andup.pdf.
- Learn about benefits for your spouse and family members.
- Manage your benefits once you start receiving them.

We're here to help you secure today and tomorrow and we invite you to learn more about applying for retirement benefits at www.ssa.gov/apply. Please share this information with those who need it.

SOCIAL SECURITY HONORS OUR MILITARY HEROES

5 THINGS TO KNOW WHEN YOUR CHILD WITH DISABILITIES TURNS 18

When your child turns 18 years old, they legally become an adult. This is an important time to consider their financial future – especially if they need additional care into adulthood. Here are 5 things that may help you prepare for this milestone:

1. Health and Welfare Decision-making

When your child legally becomes an adult, you can no longer make certain decisions for them about their health and welfare. However, you can stay involved through our **Representative Payee program**. Social Security will determine who best serves as a representative payee for your child's benefits. To learn more about the **Representative Payee program**, read our webpage at www.ssa.gov/payee/index.htm. Please note Social Security does not recognize power of attorney.

2. Changes in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Eligibility

SSI provides monthly payments to adults and children with disabilities, as well as people 65 and older, who have little or no income and resources.

If your child receives SSI, when they turn 18 we will review their eligibility for continued SSI payments based on the disability rules for adults. For more information, please review the publication, *What You Need To Know About Your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) When You Turn 18* at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11005.pdf. Please be sure to review this with your child. We also encourage you to check out Social Security's Youth Toolkit webpage at www.ssa.gov/youth.

3. Education Transitions

If your child attends school, they have a few options to continue their education, such as pursuing:

A diploma: They may pursue further education in college or trade programs with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). More information on the IEP is available at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-64-118.pdf.

A certificate: They may have the opportunity to continue in a transitional program in their high school even after they complete their senior year. Most are permitted to remain until they turn 22.

Employment: Local Vocational Rehabilitation Services can assist with employment options during pre-graduation IEP meetings.

4. Support for Living Arrangements

Once your child turns 18, they may choose or qualify for different living arrangements depending on the services they already receive. If your child receives therapy services at school, how will they receive them once they leave? They could receive them through a Medicaid waiver or private insurance.

Qualification for respite services may also look different. Respite services allow family caregivers time to step away from their duties. It is essential you understand all the benefits and options available to your child after they complete high school and before deciding on living arrangements and services.

5. Financial Protections

Special Needs Trust: Update estate planning documents before your child turns 18. Otherwise, inheritance may terminate your child's governmental benefits.

ABLE Account: You can deposit funds into this account up to a certain limit each year. However, there are limits on what its funding covers. More information on ABLE accounts is available at www.ssa.gov/payee/able_accounts.htm.

The above is informational only and does not constitute financial advice or an endorsement of ABLE products or ABLE organizations by the Social Security Administration. There may be other financial options that could be a better fit for some individuals. You must use your best judgement to determine which option is best for your situation.

Children receiving benefits on a parent's record may continue to receive those benefits until age 19 if they're a full-time elementary or secondary school student. People who have a disability that began before age 22 may also be eligible to receive child's benefits at any age. For more information, please review the publication, *Benefits for Children* at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10085.pdf. As your child enters adulthood, consider these issues while you navigate their financial future.

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it.

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UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA RANKED 4TH



University of Alabama
Basketball Coach
Nate Oats

Alabama defeats Mississippi State
88 to 84

January 29, 2025 – STARKVILLE, MS – The University of men's basketball team out fought Mississippi State to secure win number 18 for the Tide. The Tide are the number 4 team in the nation in the latest AP poll. Last night's 88 to 84 win over number 14 Mississippi State improved the Tide to 7 and 1 in the Southeastern Conference.

Fifth year senior Guard Chris Youngblood was the Tide's leading scorer with 23 points – including 7 three-point shots made – both career highs. Senior Guard Mark Sears contributed 15 points, 6 rebounds, and 9 assists in the win. Fifth year senior Center/Forward Grant Nelson added 15 points and 7 rebounds. Sophomore transfer from Auburn, Guard Aden Holloway contributed 12 points to the Tide's win. Alabama won the game even though Mississippi State Sophomore Guard Josh Hubbard led all scorers with 38 points – a career high.

"That was quite the game if you like big shot-making, Coach Oats said. "This was a good game to be at. (Josh) Hubbard is pretty good and we didn't do a very good job on him, but he made some tough shots. I thought Chris (Youngblood) stepped up because he said let me take him and I thought he did the best job of anybody. He (Hubbard) went for 38 points so we have to do a better job, but we made some big plays elsewhere."

To connect with the author of this story, or to comment:
email brandonmreporter@gmail.com

AUBURN UNIVERSITY RANKED 1ST



Auburn Head Basketball
Coach Bruce Pearl

Auburn defeats LSU 87 to 74

January 29, 2025 - BATON ROUGE, LA. - Senior center/forward Johni Broome is back and Auburn is playing as good a brand of basketball as it has at any point in this season.

Auburn was led by Broome who scored 26 points - 20 of them in the second half – in Auburn's victory. Broome also 13 rebounds and 3 shot blocks.

The win improves Auburn to 19 and 1 overall and 7 and 0 in the Southeastern Conference – easily the USA's best basketball conference this season.

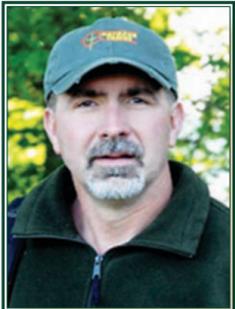
Senior Guard Kelly Miles scored 13 points and had 3 rebounds for Auburn. Senior Guard/forward Chad-Baker Mazara contributed 11 points, 7 assists, and 2 rebounds to the Auburn win. Freshman Guard Tahaad Petiford had 10 points and 3 rebounds for the Tigers.

Cam Carter led LSU with 24 points.

Auburn is coached by Bruce Pearl – the winningest Coach in Auburn basketball history.

"We went to him, and he finished everything," Pearl said. "Over time our physicality wore them down. Johni was dominant again, particularly in the second half. When everybody was fatigued, Johni's physicality took over."

To connect with the author of this story, or to comment, email:
brandonmreporter@gmail.com



Gary Miller

gary@outdoortruths.org



Deer season has been over for a few weeks now, and turkey season is right around the corner. I like how each of these are so different than the other. If hunting turkeys involved as much as hunting deer, I would have to give up one. In days past, they were. Let me explain.

Years ago, deer hunting hardly amounted to anything more than building a couple of fixed tree stands in well-traveled areas. They lasted for years and each season one would simply climb into one of those stands. There was not much preparation.

and for many hunters opening day was an event that quickly came and left. There might have even been a cabin or camping area where guys would come together for a few days to hang out and hunt, but after those few days, it was back to work with an occasional weekend giving it another try. There was not much land management, no trail cameras, and the trophy was any deer that fell to the ground. Today, serious deer hunters never stop pursuing their game. The year is made up of either hunting or getting ready to hunt. It's nearly February now, and if there is to be a summer crop that will keep deer close all year, the field needs to be turned and prepared for the seed that must be planted in the next few weeks.

And while we're at it, now is a good time to do some scouting since there are no leaves on the trees. One might even find some sheds to let him know what bucks may still be around. It never stops.

Turkey hunting on the other hand amounts to knowing where the turkeys are and being able to call them close enough to shoot. That's it! And thank God for it! Easier said than done; but simple. It's like taking something that is otherwise hard, and even pressure-filled, and making it easy. I like that, and I guess that's why I look forward to this season.

When I think about the Christian life, I have similar feelings. It seems while being a Christian can bring difficulty and persecution; that persecution and difficulty need not come from one's on hand – or rather from one's own false ideas. I find this to be the biggest problem among believers. We make it harder than it needs to be by taking on a responsibility that is not only not ours but is impossible for us to do. It's the responsibility for living out the Christian life. The power and responsibility for that comes from the Spirit of God. And as soon as we learn this, not only will the pursuit be more fun, but success will also come with a lot less effort.

Don't forget to join me for 5 more weeks at 6:30 am central time , on Zoom as we dig deeper into an Outdoor Truth.

Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 21 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations. gary@outdoortruths.org

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Judge Peggy Givhan

Southern Gardening Potpourri for February



In February, our thoughts first go Valentine's Day with Cupid firing off his arrows of love. I can remember as a child picking out boxes of small Valentine cards at Woolworth's Dime store to give to classmates. They were adorned with flowers, funny valentine greetings and were appreciated by all. I really have not noticed in today's world with Email, Tik-Tok, texts, Instagram, and Facebook whether these silly little valentine cards are still sold. February can certainly be named the red and white month with a little chocolate thrown in. In order to get in the Valentine mood, I made a wonderful flower arrangement with red roses, Baby's Breath (gypsophila paniculate) and white carnations. A fact I was not previously aware of is that Baby's Breath is toxic and should not adorn cakes or other food., so be careful.

If we had planted daffodils, and narcissi, earlier this year, these should be coming up and blooming their heads off--harbingers of spring. Other blooming bulbs would be: Snowdrops(galanthus), crocus, iris reticulata, Helleborus, and cyclamen. Shrubs which are in bloom are camellias, Kiss -me-at-Gate, and perhaps some Japanese Magnolias budding out. Pansies, violas, candytuft and dianthus round out the mix this month. If your garden has none of the above, start planning for next February's garden by purchasing these harbingers of spring through the year.

What to plant this month for a spectacular early spring and early summer garden. I have planted tulips in early February, after 6 weeks of chill in the refrigerator, to great success. If fact I have even staggered the planting, some in early January, some in early February for a longer tulip sequence of bloom.

My favorite look is to plant tulip bulbs amongst pansies and dianthus as it gives the pots or the garden a dramatic dynamic. Also experiment with different color combinations such as mixed colored tulips and mono chrome-colored flowers

or vice versa. You want to achieve a uniform contrast rather than a cluttered mess. It is not too late to plant pansies, and dianthus with geraniums and begonias later. We call this a spring garden in progress. Both pansies and dianthus will bloom until the heat of the early summer. Seed that has been sown in the fall, such as poppies, larkspur should be breaking the soil for blooms next month. Also, this is the month to sow the seed of cleome, nasturtiums, petunias and zinnias directly into the ground.

PLANT OF THE MONTH ROSEMARY



A commonly known herb is one of the best small to medium sized shrubs one can place in the garden, pots or herb bed. Plant this perennial shrub in the spring for one of the most aromatic herbs known. Rosemary has many uses from culinary, to medicinal, to insect repellent, to cosmetic. The leaves, fresh or dried, can be used as an antiseptic, as a tonic and diuretic. Mostly we use Rosemary as a pungent flavoring for fish dishes, soups, marinades, egg dishes, and lamb. It is easy to grow, non-invasive and grows to about 3-4 feet high and can get to 5 feet tall. It would need some protection if the winter temps fell well below freezing. I have used this shrub in herb beds, flower beds, and pots.



**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY AND
GOOD GARDENING**



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“Don’t Worry Be Happy”

In 1988, Bobby McFerrin released this famous song which is still enjoyed by millions around the world as a light hearted, fun , happy song! In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, maybe some would think it a bit shallow. But I would say there is some great truth backing up the song.

In fact, Jesus had some very pointed things to say about worry and teaches us that worry is a waste of time. Every time that song, Don’t Worry Be Happy, comes to my mind, I think of what Jesus had to say about worry.

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes. “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of it’s own.”
-Jesus, Mathew 6: 25 and 34

If I had to use one word that best describes what a lot of people are feeling during this COVID 19 crisis, it would be the word worry. Let me share a definition of the word worry: to give way to uncertainty, anxiety and unease. To allow your mind to dwell on trouble.

I have found that if you dwell too much on the past, it leads to regret. If you dwell too much on the possibilities of the future, it can lead to worry.

So, what are some quick take aways from what Jesus says about worry in Mathew chapter 6?

First, Don’t Worry- Focus On Today

Jesus says don’t worry about your life and what may happen in the future. I have heard that 90% of what we worry about happening in the future, never happens. Therefore, worry is a waste of time.

As a Pastor for 40 years, I have learned that people get worried about a great many things: worried about their health, worried about protecting themselves and their families, worried about their jobs, worried about the economy, worried about their finances or worried about their businesses. Many worry about their kids or their grand kids. Depending on which side of politics people land on, some are worried about the negative impact of a new President while others are worried that the new Presidents policies will not be implemented fast enough to correct the ship. And, of course, people are always worried about what the future may hold for them in a world that seems to grapple with one crisis after another.

We can worry ourselves sick about what the future may hold, but Jesus says focus on today. He says, *“Don’t worry about tomorrow... .”* He isn’t saying don’t plan ahead or prepare for tomorrow. He is just saying don’t worry about tomorrow.

Bobby McFerrin puts it this way in the first part of the song,
*“In every life we have some trouble
 But when you worry you make it double
 Don’t worry, be happy
 Don’t worry, be happy now”*

Secondly, Don’t Worry - Trust Your Heavenly Father

Don’t worry about what you are going to eat or drink or wear...
“These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your Heavenly Father already knows all your needs.” -Jesus, Mathew 6:32

If we are Christ followers and believers, then we don’t need to worry and act as people who have no hope. In verses 26-30, Jesus reminds us that God takes care of the birds and

flowers, therefore, surely our Heavenly Father will take care of us. If we are people of faith, we must act and behave as people who have faith, hope and peace in the midst of crisis. We must put our faith into action

It’s also important to remember that we have seen many major crises in the world over many centuries. COVID was a very dangerous pandemic to be sure, and most took it very seriously. But humanity has been through many other great crises. And, with God’s help and guidance, we will get through any future crises as well.

Here are a few examples of major crises we have seen: 1918 Spanish Flu swept the world and killed 100 million people; in WW2 we lost 75 million people in a global conflict; in the Korean War 37,000 US soldiers died; in Vietnam 56,220 US casualties and 3.8 million total were killed; in the 1980’s HIV AIDS pandemic cost 36 million lives; on 9/11 we lost 2,996 lives in a matter of hours. And, concerning the economy, there was the Great Depression of 1929-1933; the Stock Market Crash of 1987 and 2008; the Covid pandemic is now estimated to have taken 18.2 million lives; add on to that the shut down of our economy due to the pandemic cost us millions of jobs and had a huge impact on the Stock Market. And the list goes on and on....

My point is this. The world survived all of these crises. And I believe that if we will trust Jesus and stand firm in our faith, we can get through whatever crises we are going through now or may face us in the future. And this n is the key- we must learn to hold onto our faith, trust our Heavenly Father to provide for us and look for ways that we can serve others.

Through it all, as people of faith, we can trust the One who created us, provides for us and walks with us in our journey through life.

Three, Don’t Worry - Seek First

It is very interesting to me that Jesus inserts the following statement into his teaching on worry.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well.”
-Jesus, Mathew 6:33

This is one of the most memorized and often quoted verses in the Bible, but most people do not realize that Jesus said this in the midst of this diatribe on why we should not worry.

So, what is Jesus saying here? Instead of worrying, seek God first and His plan for you in the midst of your situation or crisis. He is challenging us to really put God first. Put our faith in action. In other words, do we really believe what we say we believe? Will we actually practice our faith?

John Maxwell says, *“Our choices define us. But a crisis reveals us.”* **A crisis will show what we are really made of, who we really are, how we will behave under stress!**

My prayer for you is this- that you will be a person of faith, that whatever current challenges you are facing will reveal that your faith is strong and that you will live out your faith in the way you love, live, grow and serve!

I want to close with one of my favorite prayers. Maybe you will make it your prayer too, especially during those challenging days when we are tempted to worry.

The Serenity Prayer (by Reinhold Niebuhr)

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15:13
 New Living Translation

HAVE A BLESSED VALENTINE DAY

“Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God: I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand.”
Isaiah 41:10

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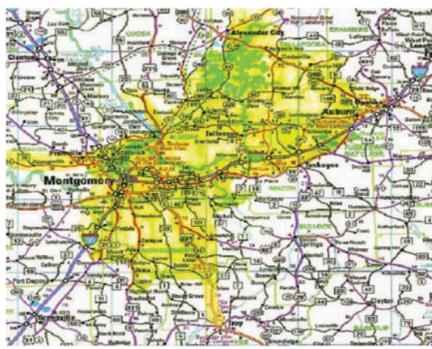
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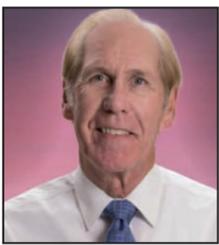
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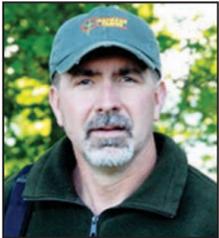
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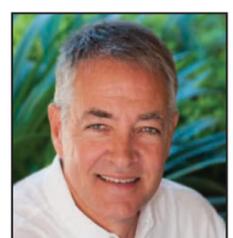
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