



2018 Legislative Report- Week 3

Opioid Council Releases Report

The Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council released its report Wednesday. Governor Ivey created the Council to formulate a plan to address the state's problem with opioid drug abuse. According to the report, opioid drug overdoses are responsible for most of the drug deaths in the state. Furthermore, in 2016, Alabama had the highest number of opioid prescriptions per capita in the country, with 121 prescriptions issued per 100 persons. Broadly, the plan focuses on four major objectives: prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery, and community response. More specific recommendations include improving and modernizing the Alabama Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, advocating legislation to prohibit trafficking of fentanyl, promoting adequate funding for treatment services and recovery support, and increasing access to naloxone for pharmacies, law enforcement, and first-responders.

CHIP Funded for Six Years

A feature of the funding bill that ended the federal government shutdown earlier this week was an extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The funding approved by the US Congress on Monday will provide \$124 billion to CHIP through 2023. Although funding could decrease beginning in 2020, Alabama will continue to receive 100 percent federal funding for the next two years.

Senate Votes to Adjust Unemployment Benefits

The Senate passed a bill Thursday that would reduce the amount of time people can receive unemployment benefits. Under current law, unemployed individuals can receive benefits for up to 26 weeks. The proposed legislation would cut that period to 14-20 weeks, depending on the unemployment rate. If the unemployment rate is 6.5 percent or lower, the duration would be set at 14 weeks, and one week would be added for each 0.5-percent increase in the rate. In the event the unemployment rate is 9 percent or more, the maximum 20-week period would then apply. The proposed bill would also increase the maximum weekly benefit from \$265 to \$275.

Senate Approves Low-Income Tax Break

Low-income families would see a tax break under a bill approved by the Senate Thursday. Under current law, the maximum standard deduction of \$7,500 on state income taxes is available to married couples filing jointly with adjusted gross incomes up to \$20,000. Under the proposed bill, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, those with adjusted gross incomes up to \$23,000 could claim the maximum standard deduction. The bill's fiscal note says it would reduce revenues to the Education Trust Fund by approximately \$4 million annually.

Committee Moves to "Ban the Box"

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved a bill that would “ban the box” from state or local government job applications. SB198 would remove the box asking whether the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime. While a state or local government employer would be able to ask a prospective employee about his or her criminal background, the employer may do so only after a conditional offer of employment is made. The public employer may subsequently withdraw the offer if the applicant has a criminal conviction that would be directly related to the job for which he or she is applying. The bill now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

Senate Approves Statewide Regulations for Transportation Network Companies

Legislation to establish a statewide regulations framework for transportation network companies (TNCs) was unanimously approved by the Senate on Thursday. Under the proposed bill, statewide regulations would replace city regulations and TNCs would be required to obtain a permit from the Public Service Commission (PSC). A one-percent fee from each fare would go to the PSC, and at least half of that fee would be distributed back to the locality in which the ride originated. Criminal and driving history background checks on prospective drivers would be required. The bill has bipartisan support and now moves to the House. Governor Ivey has also endorsed the bill.

House Passes Bill to End Special Elections for US Senate

The House passed a bill this week by a party-line vote that would eliminate special elections in the event a vacancy exists in the US Senate. Proponents of the bill cite fiscal concerns in the wake of December’s special election, which is reported to have cost roughly \$11 million. The proposed bill would effectively allow appointed senators to serve longer. Under the proposed legislation, the election for the vacated seat would be held at the next general election unless the qualifying period for that election has already begun; in such a case, the election for that seat would move to the next general election, two years later.

Legislative Tracking Report

AL - HB97 Transportation network companies, Public Service Commission permit required to operate, minimum requirements imposed

Primary Sponsor: [Representative David Faulkner \(R\)](#)

AL - HB173 Ad valorem taxes, co. commission authorized to reduce for projects under Ala. Jobs Act, Sec. 40-7-25.4 added

Primary Sponsor: [Representative Danny Crawford \(R\)](#)

Scheduled Hearing:

[Economic Development and Tourism \(House\)](#)

Date: January 31, 2018

Time: 1:00pm (CST)

Location: Room 410

AL - HB190 Transportation network companies, Public Service Commission permit required to operate, minimum requirements imposed

Primary Sponsor: [Representative David Faulkner \(R\)](#)

Actions:

January 25, 2018

- Read for the second time and placed on the calendar with 1 substitute and 1 amendment

AL - HB317 Economic Development, notification and confidentiality provisions revised for certain economic incentives, State Industrial Development Authority, bonds for industrial development and site preparation, auth., Alabama Jobs Enhancement Act, Secs. 41-29-501 to 41-29-507, inclusive, added; Sec. 41-29-3 am'd.

Primary Sponsor: [Representative Ken Johnson \(R\)](#)

Scheduled Hearing:

[Economic Development and Tourism \(House\)](#)

Date: January 31, 2018

Time: 1:00pm (CST)

Location: Room 410

Actions:

January 25, 2018

- Read for the first time and referred to the House of Representatives committee on Economic Development and Tourism

AL - SB65 Transportation network companies, Public Service Commission permit required to operate, minimum requirements imposed

Primary Sponsor: [Senator Bobby D. Singleton \(D\)](#)

AL - SB98 Ad valorem taxes, co. commission authorized to reduce for projects under Ala. Jobs Act, Sec. 40-7-25.4 added

Primary Sponsor: [Senator Arthur Orr \(R\)](#)

Actions:

January 25, 2018

- Read for the second time and placed on the calendar

AL - SB143 Transportation network companies, Public Service Commission permit required to operate, minimum requirements imposed

Primary Sponsor: [Senator Bobby D. Singleton \(D\)](#)

Actions:

January 25, 2018

- Engrossed
- Motion to Read a Third Time and Pass adopted Roll Call 128
- Singleton motion to Adopt adopted Roll Call 127
- Singleton Substitute

- Third Reading Passed
- Singleton motion to Carry Over to the Call of the Chair adopted Voice Vote
- Singleton first Substitute Offered
- Read for the first time and referred to the House of Representatives committee on Commerce and Small Business
- Third Reading Carried Over to Call of the Chair

AL - SB187 Tax credits, exemptions, deductions, enacted in 2019 Reg. Sess., or thereafter, expiration within seven years from effective date, const. amend.

Primary Sponsor: [Senator Bill Hightower \(R\)](#)

Scheduled Hearing:

[Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development \(Senate\)](#)

Date: January 31, 2018

Time: 2:30pm (CST)

Location: Room 727