

Alabama Legislative Report
April 18, 2025

Alabama Senate Republicans Expedite Passage of Conservative Bills, Curbing Democratic Debate Aimed at Bill to Restructure Birmingham Water Works Board

Alabama Senate Republicans utilized a rarely invoked procedural tactic, the cloture petition, on Thursday to curtail Democratic debate and accelerate the passage of several conservative bills.

The five bills, now advancing to the House, encompass measures mandating pre-installed pornography filters on minors' electronic devices and altering the appointment process for the Alabama Department of Archives and History board.

However, the Democratic filibuster, initiated by Senator Rodger Smitherman (D-Birmingham), was not aimed at these specific bills. Instead, his opposition centered on newly introduced Senate Bill 330, sponsored by Senator Dan Roberts (R-Mountain Brook), which proposes a reorganization of the Birmingham Water Works board.

The Birmingham Water Works Board (BWVB) has faced scrutiny in recent years due to alleged management deficiencies and rate hikes. Senator Smitherman previously contested a similar bill to restructure the board in 2023.

Senator Roberts' current legislation seeks to terminate the terms of the existing board members and establish a smaller, five-member regional board that would include an appointment by the lieutenant governor. The bill also stipulates financial expertise for certain board members. Senator Roberts argued that a more compact board would be "more nimble and responsive."

While Senate Bill 330 does not explicitly name the Birmingham Water Works, its language would apply to municipal water boards that "serve customers or have assets in four or more counties other than the county where the authorizing municipality is located."

The bill is scheduled for a public hearing before the County and Municipal Government Committee on Tuesday.

Alabama Senate Passes Bills Mandating Phone Filters and Parental Consent for App Downloads

Two bills focused on protecting minors online, sponsored by Senator Clyde Chambliss, have passed the Senate and will now be considered by the House.

- **SB186 (Phone Filter):** This bill, which passed 28-5, would require smartphones and tablets sold to minors to have a filter activated to block sexually explicit material starting in 2027.

- **SB187 (App Protection):** Passed with a vote of 26-6, this bill would require app stores to verify user ages and link minors' accounts to their parents, thus necessitating parental consent for app downloads.

Hemp Regulation Bill Advances in Senate

Representative Andy Whitt's HB445, a broad bill seeking to regulate the sale of hemp products legalized under federal "Farm Bill" provisions, has passed the Senate Committee on Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development on Wednesday.

Senators are now working to consolidate various existing Senate bills concerning hemp products – ranging from a complete ban to similar testing and regulatory requirements – into a comprehensive compromise bill, with HB445 serving as the primary legislative vehicle.

Any amendments to HB445 will require a Senate vote before the bill is sent back to the House for either concurrence or a request to convene a conference committee to resolve any differences.

Alabama Version of Federal “Laken Riley Act” Passes House, Heads to Senate

The Alabama House of Representatives has passed HB7, sponsored by Representative Ernie Yarbrough, by a vote of 74-26, sending the bill to the Senate. Named after a University of Georgia student killed by an undocumented immigrant in Athens last year, HB7 includes the following key provisions:

- **Enforcement Agreements:** State and local law enforcement agencies would be authorized to enter into memorandums of understanding and agreements with federal agencies to enforce federal immigration laws.
- **Immigration Status Checks:** Local law enforcement would be required to make efforts to determine the immigration status of individuals upon arrest.
- **Immigration Detainers:** County and municipal jails would be mandated to comply with and fulfill any request from a federal immigration agency for an immigration detainer on an arrested individual.
- **Foreign National Inmate Reporting:** State, county, and local jails would be permitted to prepare reports detailing the total number of foreign national inmates housed in their facilities.

Alabama Senate Approves Two Voting Integrity Bills, Sent to House

The Alabama Senate passed two bills on Thursday, aimed at bolstering the integrity of the state's elections, according to their sponsors.

- **SB142 (Senator Wes Kitchens):** This bill removes the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) as a database for identifying registered voters with potential address changes. It mandates that county boards of registrars utilize a National Voter Registration Act designated agency for this purpose.
- **SB158 (Senator Will Barfoot):** This bill prohibits the use of foreign driver's licenses as acceptable forms of identification for voting. The bill passed with a vote of 25-6.

Alabama House Passes "Conservative Red Meat" Bills, Heads to Senate

During a day focused on bringing bills to a vote, the Alabama House of Representatives passed the following notable pieces of legislation, sending them to the Senate for consideration:

- **HB67 (Representative Scott Stadthagen):** This bill prohibits public schools and libraries from knowingly presenting or hosting drag performances in the presence of a minor without parental or legal guardian consent. It also restricts certain state entities from allowing minors to share specific facilities with individuals of the opposite sex during overnight programs operated or sponsored by the state. The bill passed by a vote of 76-9 with 9 abstentions.
- **HB178 (Representative Mark Gidley):** This bill mandates that public K-12 schools display the Ten Commandments and other foundational U.S. historical documents, such as the Mayflower Compact and the Declaration of Independence. The displays are to be funded through donations to mitigate potential legal challenges. The bill passed by a vote of 81-11 with 7 abstentions.
- **HB244 (Representative Mack Butler):** This bill prohibits instruction on "general ideology" or sexual orientation in public schools, bans teachers from displaying pride flags or similar symbols, and restricts teachers from using pronouns that do not align with a student's biological sex. The bill passed by a vote of 74-15 with 7 abstentions.
- **HB247 (Representative David Standridge):** This bill proposes renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America and requires all state and local entities to adopt this new name in their materials and communications. The bill passed by a vote of 72-26 with 1 abstention.

Alabama Legislature to Focus on Budgets as Session Nears End

The Alabama Legislature adjourned its 23rd day this week, with only seven legislative days remaining in its 30-day session. Lawmakers will reconvene next Tuesday, April 22nd, for their 24th day, where budget discussions are anticipated to take center stage.

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Bill	Sponsors	Title	Last Action	Latest Version
AL 2025rs SB 313	Smitherman	Alabama 21st Century Authority, use of available funds further provided for Senate Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 191	Senate, Apr 17, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development)	Introduced
AL 2025rs SB 304	Orr	Powering Growth Act established, Alabama Energy Infrastructure Bank and the Strategic Energy Procurement Fund established under the State Industrial Development Authority to assist in obtaining equipment and providing financing for qualified energy infrastructure projects Senate Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 190	Senate, Apr 17, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development)	Introduced
AL 2025rs SB 22	Coleman (M)	Alabama Jobs Act, further provides for recapture of incentives House Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 114	House, Apr 17, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (Ways and Means Education)	Engrossed
AL 2025rs HB 526	Brown (C)	Alabama 21st Century Fund, further distribution of funds, one-time appropriation to the Department of Commerce (Finance and Taxation General Fund (Senate))	Senate, Apr 17, 2025: Pending Committee Action in Second House (Finance and Taxation General Fund)	Engrossed
AL 2025rs HB 407	Ingram	Local redevelopment authorities, transient occupancy taxes use as payment in lieu of tax authorized, reporting Senate Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 164	Senate, Apr 15, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (County and Municipal Government)	Introduced
AL 2025rs HB 435	Whitt	Economic development, references to outdated economic development plan and NAICS Codes updated House Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 79 Companion Bills: SB 243	House, Apr 9, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (Commerce and Small Business)	Introduced
AL 2025rs	Weaver	Economic development, references to outdated economic development plan and NAICS Codes updated	Senate, Apr 1, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on	Introduced

Bill	Sponsors	Title	Last Action	Latest Version
SB 243		Senate Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 81 Companion Bills: HB 435	the Calendar (Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development)	
AL 2025rs HB 253	Colvin	Taxation; certain aircraft and aircraft parts are exempt from sales, use, and lease taxes Senate Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 151 Companion Bills: SB 175	Senate, Apr 9, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development)	Engrossed
AL 2025rs SB 175	Kitchens	Taxation; certain aircraft and aircraft parts are exempt from sales, use, and lease taxes Senate Calendar: Regular Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 27 Companion Bills: HB 253	Senate, Feb 27, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (Finance and Taxation Education)	Introduced
AL 2025rs SB 311	Carnley	Public highways; procedure for issuance of permit for access to state rights-of-way on public highways, further provided (Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development (Senate))	Senate, Apr 8, 2025: Pending Committee Action in House of Origin (Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development)	Introduced
AL 2025rs SB 177	Bell	Alabama Film Office renamed, Entertainment Industry Incentive Act of 2009 amended, maximum expenditure threshold eligible for rebates increased, annual cap increased, unspent incentives carried forward (Ways and Means Education (House)) Companion Bills: HB 373	House, Apr 8, 2025: Re-referred to Committee in Second House (Ways and Means Education)	Engrossed
AL 2025rs HB 373	Kiel	Alabama Film Office renamed, Entertainment Industry Incentive Act of 2009 amended, maximum expenditure threshold eligible for rebates increased, annual cap increased, unspent incentives carried forward (Ways and Means Education (House)) Companion Bills: SB 177	House, Apr 3, 2025: Re-referred to Committee in House of Origin (Ways and Means Education)	Introduced
AL 2025rs HB 243	Whitt	To unabate a portion certain state ad valorem and construction related transaction taxes to deposit into the Alabama Development Fund.	House, Apr 3, 2025: Enacted	Act Number 2025-84

Bill	Sponsors	Title	Last Action	Latest Version
AL 2025rs HB 311	Wilcox	Alabama Improvement Districts; to streamline enforcement and collection of assessments; authorize revenue commissioner to collect reasonable compensation; provide additional rights and protections; eliminate certain remedies for failure to pay an assessment House Calendar: Special Order Calendar (April 22, 2025) Position: 12	House, Mar 19, 2025: Read for the Second Time and placed on the Calendar (Economic Development and Tourism)	Introduced
AL 2025rs HB 292	Rafferty	Economic development tax incentives; value of the repayment of awarded tax incentives required to be published. (Economic Development and Tourism (House))	House, Feb 18, 2025: Pending Committee Action in House of Origin (Economic Development and Tourism)	Introduced
AL 2025rs HB 259	Robbins	Establish income tax credit for recruited or remote workers (Ways and Means Education (House))	House, Feb 11, 2025: Pending Committee Action in House of Origin (Ways and Means Education)	Introduced