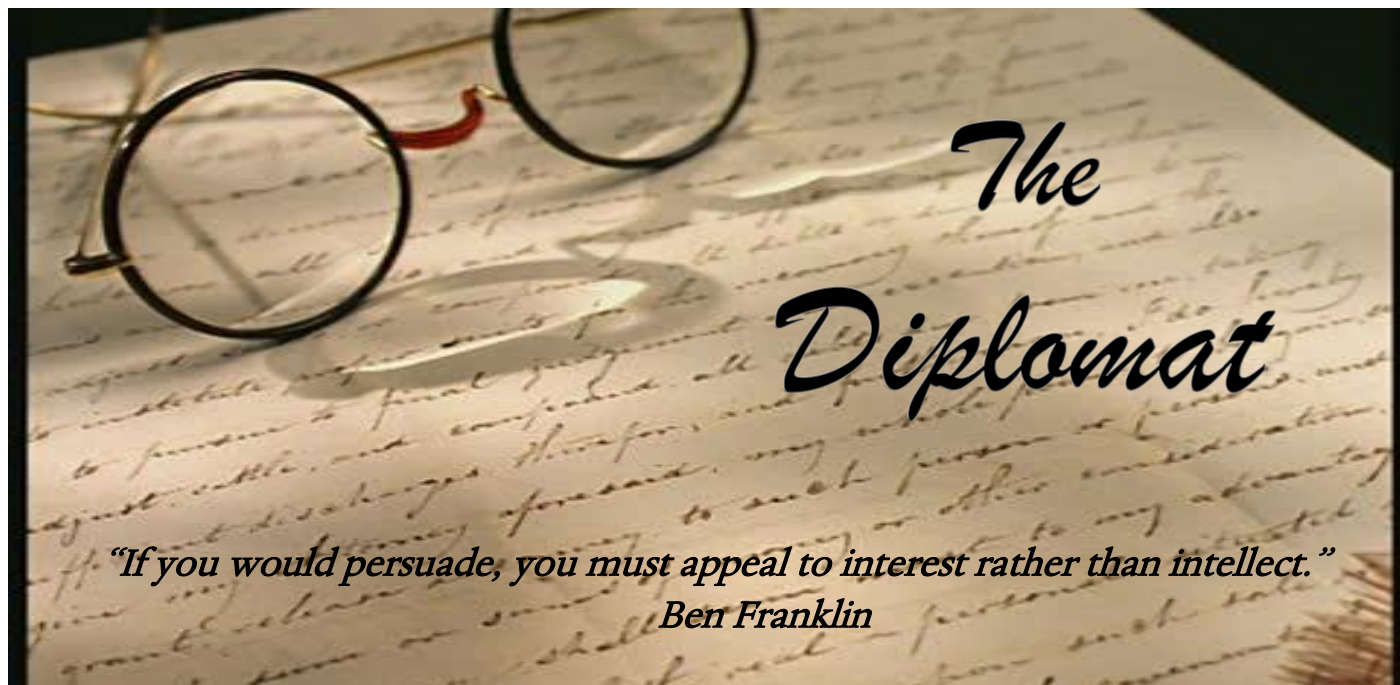


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"If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect."
Ben Franklin

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THE LEGISLATURE

Budget Hearings

LEGISLATORS IN THE NEWS

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Ryan deGraffenried III • Susan Hansen • David Rogers
529 South Perry Street, Suite 10, Montgomery, Alabama 36104 • Email: deg@deGlobby.com

THE LEGISLATURE

Budget hearings

Three months ago, when the coronavirus first shut down the 2020 Regular Session, it was all but guaranteed lawmakers would return for at least one special session later in the year, maybe even two or three. But that was then. With budgets passed, many lawmakers say a special session is unnecessary, and any other issues can wait until February 2021 when the Legislature reconvenes.

But others say there is business left to handle, including extending a job creation tax credit. The Alabama Jobs Act, the state's primary industrial recruitment statute, is expiring at the end of the year. Another popular economic development tool, the Growing Alabama Tax Credit, expires in September.

There has also been some urgency to pass a coronavirus civil immunity bill to protect businesses from frivolous lawsuits. Not to mention prison reform and a bucket list of items that did not survive the abbreviated legislative session.

With the coronavirus still impacting state budgets, Alabama Senate's leadership held some very rare summer hearings to get a better feel for the state's current revenue situation. The Senate Finance and Taxation General Fund Committee held hearings on July 9th with budget writers and some agency leaders present to see where the state stands amid COVID-19. The good news is that the General Fund remains healthy, and while the Education Trust Fund remains uncertain, all things considered, Alabama is fairing much better than most states.

Given the news that the pandemic has not been detrimental to the budgets and the likelihood the virus will still not be contained, it is unlikely the Legislature will return to Montgomery this year, but the final decision rests with Governor Ivey.

LEGISLATORS IN THE NEWS

State Representative Ronald Johnson, R-Sylacauga, the Dean of the Alabama House of Representatives, died earlier this month of liver cancer complications. He was 76. Johnson held the District 33 seat that includes portions of Clay, Coosa, and Talladega counties for more than 40 years, making him the longest continuously serving member of the House.

State Sen. Randy Price (R-Opelika) was placed on a ventilator last week in his fight to beat COVID-19, but has since been taken off the ventilator and continues to improve.

State Rep. Will Dismukes (R-Prattville), who over the weekend participated in a birthday celebration of Nathan Bedford Forest, a Confederate General and late Ku Klux Klan leader, has resigned from his position as a pastor at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Prattville over the controversy. Dismukes has said he will not resign from the Legislature, despite calls to do so from Sen. Clyde Chambliss (R-Prattville) and others.

The GOP primary for the special election House District 49 to replace Rep. April Weaver will be Tuesday, August 4th.