

FINE GEDDIE

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

THE FINE GEDDIE REPORT

2022 REGULAR SESSION · WEEK ONE

JANUARY 14, 2022

QUIET BEGINNING IN MONTGOMERY WITH SPECIAL SESSION BREWING ON COVID-19 RELIEF

The 2022 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature began quietly on Tuesday, an early start date due to this year's elections for statewide officials and legislators. Routine work on healthy state budgets got underway but will likely slide to the backburner for the rest of January so lawmakers can focus on federal COVID-19 relief dollars. Gov. Kay Ivey is expected to call a special session for that purpose early next week. What is generally a very busy week of committee hearings was quiet with only two bills in committee, as the focus turned to the Covid-19 funds.

There has been general consensus in favor of steering **American Rescue Plan (ARP) dollars** to broadband expansion, healthcare and water and sewer infrastructure. The state's total ARP allocation comes to approximately \$2.1 billion, and there will be many funding requests. Alabama, which has received half the money, previously appropriated \$480 million of it to prisons, hospitals and nursing homes. That leaves \$580 million of the first tranche available to appropriate this month. A second tranche of more than \$1 billion is coming in May and is expected to be appropriated in a special session sometime this fall.

The Legislature is constitutionally required to adopt annual state operating budgets based on forecasted revenue growth for the upcoming year and carryforwards from last year. Revenues greatly exceeded projections last year, which is believed to be a one-time effect from profligate federal spending, but resulted in excess funds at year end. Leaders cautioned against creating recurring obligations based on one-time revenues that would make it more difficult to navigate the next economic downturn. As introduced this week, the governor's **proposed \$2.718 billion General Fund budget** for 2022-2023 represents a 1.52% increase over the current year's appropriations. Also introduced this week was the governor's **proposed \$8.3 billion Education Trust Fund budget**, an increase of 8.17%. As Ivey mentioned in her State of the State address this week, these budgets include 4% raises for state employees and teachers.

As noted previously, this is a big election year in Alabama. Party primaries are set for May 24, and candidates have two more weeks to qualify. The convening of the regular session puts a hold on any campaign fundraising, and this blackout period still applies if the regular session is in recess, such as for a special session. Candidates for

the Legislature and for statewide office are prohibited from soliciting or accepting contributions during the blackout period that extends from January 11 through January 24. Fundraising may resume 120 days in advance of the primaries on January 25.

OTHER ISSUES TO WATCH

Surveying the nearly 250 bills introduced this week indicates three particular issues are top-of-mind for legislators this year: **elections, firearms and vaccinations**.

Nationwide, the debates about **election law** have been extremely active, and more than a dozen bills addressing the issue were introduced this first week. Republicans have said they would block attempts to loosen voting rules, so Democrat-sponsored bills to authorize early voting and expand restoration of voting rights could face uphill battles. GOP legislators are sponsoring bills to block outside funding for elections and related activities and to increase security of voter registration documents, ballots and vote-counting technology. In Alabama much of the voter registration process is administered at the local level, and Republicans are seeking to expand the days of operation for the boards of registrars in several counties.

Regarding **vaccinations**, the bills introduced so far seek expanded options and protections for people who prefer to avoid vaccination. Some measures would block or discourage employers from requiring employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, another would expand exceptions to required immunizations in schools and colleges, and another would prohibit discrimination based on immunization status and create a cause of action.

With **firearms**, the two main areas of interest are expanding permitless carry in the state and pushing back against federal laws and regulations relating to firearms.

*The Alabama Legislature will reconvene on Tuesday, January 18.
There are 28 meeting days left in the 2022 Regular Session.*

Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants - 2022 Regular Session Bill Tracking List
Friday, January 14, 2022

Bill #	Title	Sponsor	Comm	Status	Subs/Amds	Like Similar	Act #
HB1	Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, to provide workplace protections against pregnancy discrimination and related medical conditions, Secs. 25-15-1 to 25-15-7, inclusive, added; Secs. 25-2-2, 25-2-7 am'd.	Rafferty	JUDY	H 1st R			
HB4	Education, prohibit public institutions of higher education from providing support for organizations affiliated with China government	Hanes	EP	H 1st R			
HB6	Firearms, permitless carry, process for seized pistols amended, Secs. 13A-11-50, 13A-11-52, 13A-11-74 repealed; Secs. 13A-11-71, 13A-11-73, 13A-11-84 am'd.	Stringer	PS&HS	H 1st R			
HB7	Firearms, Second Amendment Preservation Act, right to keep and bear arms, provided	Hanes	PS&HS	H 1st R			
HB9	Labor, prohibits state and political subdivisions from teaching divisive concepts relating to race or sex in training, prohibits same for state contractors, Dept. of Labor to review state agency training programs	Oliver	SG	H 1st R		SB7	
HB13	Firearms, prohibitions on state enforcement of certain federal firearm laws, provided	Lipscomb	JUDY	H 1st R		HB14, SB2	
HB14	Firearms, prohibitions on state enforcement of certain federal firearm laws, provided	Moore, P	JUDY	H 1st R		HB13, SB2	
HB16	Vaccines, employer-mandated COVID-19 vaccination, private right of action against employer for certain injuries or death resulting from	Hanes	JUDY	H 1st R			
HB19	Medical services, consent for health services, prohibit consent by minors to vaccines, Sec. 22-8-4 am'd.	Brown, C	HLTH	H 1st R			
HB27	Discrimination, to make it unlawful to deny an individual full and equal employment of public accommodations based on certain protected classes, to make it unlawful for a local school board to discriminate against an individual based on certain protected classes, and to make it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against an applicant or employee based on certain protected classes	Hollis	JUDY	C/O in H			
HB29	Vaccines, employer-mandated COVID-19 vaccination, private right of action against employer for certain injuries or death resulting from	Hanes	JUDY	H 1st R			

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Bill #	Title	Sponsor	Comm	Status	Subs/Amds	Like Similar	Act #
HB30	Education, vaccination of students, public PreK-12 schools, public institution of higher education, exempts parents from student vaccination requirements for religious grounds even during a pandemic, extends exemption on personal beliefs, requires Dept. of Examiners of Public Account to include information about violations in audit reports, penalties, Sec. 16-30-3 am'd.	Hanes	HLTH	H 1st R			
HB31	Health, prohibiting employers public accomodations and occupational licensing boards from discriminating based on immunization status	Whorton	JUDY	H 1st R			
HB32	Vaccines, prohibits employers from requiring employees to receive COVID-19 vaccinations in certain circumstances	Sells	HLTH	H 1st R			
HB44	Firearms, concealed pistols, concealed carry permit, criminal code, offenses against public order, constitutional carry, pistol permits, Secs. 9-11-304, 13A-11-52, 13A-11-73, 13A-11-74 repealed; Secs. 13A-11-7, 13A-11-50, 13A-11-55, 13A-11-61.2, 13A-11-62, 13A-11-71, 13A-11-85, 13A-11-90 am'd.	Sorrell	PS&HS	H 1st R			
HB66	Firearms, offenses against public order, concealed pistols, concealed carry permit, constitutional carry, pistol permits, Secs. 9-11-304, 13A-11-52, 13A-11-73, 13A-11-74 repealed; Secs. 13A-11-7, 13A-11-50, 13A-11-55, 13A-11-61.2, 13A-11-62	Stringer	PS&HS	H 1st R		SB12	
HB82	Small Business Relief and Revitalization Act of 2022, cancellation of indebtedness income exempt from income tax, financial institution excise tax and corporate income tax due date extension, certain business tangible personal property ad v	Garrett	W&ME	H 1st R			
HB147	Taxation, income tax, exclusion of enhanced federal child tax credits from American Rescue Plan Act from calculation of federal income tax deduction for tax year 2021, to provide an extension of the due date for certain taxpayers, Secs. 40-	Carns	W&ME	H 1st R			
Bill #	Title	Sponsor	Comm	Status	Subs/Amds	Like Similar	Act #
SB1	Firearms, possession and carrying of, certain requirements for, repealed or deleted, Secs. 9-11-304, 13A-11-50, 13A-11-51, 13A-11-52, 13A-11-59, 13A-11-71, 13A-11-73, 13A-11-74, repealed; Sec. 13A-11-61.2 am'd.	Allen	JUDY	S 1st R			
SB2	Firearms, prohibitions on state enforcement of certain federal firearm laws, provided	Allen	JUDY	S 1st R		SB3	

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Bill #	Title	Sponsor	Comm	Status	Subs/Amds	Like Similar	Act #
SB3	Crimes and offenses, assault against a first responder, created, riot and inciting to riot, further provided, aggravated riot, and unlawful traffic interference, created, holding period after arrest, provided, penalties for defunding police, provided, Secs. 13A-11-3.1, 13A-11-5.1 added; Secs. 13A-6-21, 13A-11-1, 13A-11-3, 13A-11-4, 15-10-3 am'd.	Shelnutt	JUDY	S 1st R			
SB7	Labor, prohibits state and political subdivisions from teaching divisive concepts relating to race or sex in training, prohibits same for state contractors, Dept. of Labor to review state agency training programs	Barfoot	GA	S 1st R			
SB8	Firearms, prohibitions on use of certain public resources to enforce certain presidential executive orders relating to firearms, const. amend.	Allen	JUDY	S 1st R			
SB12	Firearms, offenses against public order, concealed pistols, concealed carry permit, constitutional carry, pistol permits, Secs. 9-11-304, 13A-11-52, 13A-11-73, 13A-11-74 repealed; Secs. 13A-11-7, 13A-11-50, 13A-11-55, 13A-11-61.2, 13A-11-62, 13A-11-71, 13A-11-85, 13A-11-90 am'd.	Melson	JUDY	S 1st R			
SB14	Agricultural land ownership, restricted to U.S. citizens and resident aliens with limited exceptions, civil penalty for registration violation	Melson	A&F	S 1st R		HB13, SB2	
SB31	Family leave and adoption, to require certain employers to provide certain amounts of family leave to employees who adopt children, and to require employers who provide maternity benefits to female employees to offer equivalent benefits to	Jones	CY&HS	S 2nd R			
SB50	Discrimination, hair and ethnicity, relating to discrimination, to prohibit discrimination in employment, public accommodations, housing, and to create cause of action against employer who discriminates	Smitherman	JUDY	S 1st R			
SB80	Military, spouses, occupational licensing boards, date revised by which rules must be adopted, timeframe extended for which a temporary permit to practice is effective	Butler	V&MA	S 1st R			
SB100	Relating to employment; to establish procedures for seasonal employment; to provide further for unemployment benefits; and to provide definitions	Elliott	FRED	S 1st R			