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**House Democratic Members Will Remain Focused on
Overwhelming Challenges Facing Home Districts
*'We Currently Have More Questions Than Answers'***

(Montgomery, AL) – Members of the Alabama House Democratic Caucus announced today that they will remain focused on the overwhelming challenges facing their home districts rather than joining the effort to ram through uninformed state budgets next week. Earlier this week, [Gov. Ivey expressed surprise](#) the legislature would move forward without a clear picture of the state's revenue while members are also concerned it would not address the unprecedented challenges the state faces in recovering from this global pandemic.

"This year's budgets may be the most important ever to the future of our state and there is absolutely no way we could pass responsible ones at this point," said Minority Leader Anthony Daniels (D-Huntsville). "We are still in the middle of this healthcare crisis which is both ravaging our communities and our local and state economies. Rather than rushing back to Montgomery to pass budgets blindly, we will remain in our Districts, where the fight currently is."

While there are so many unanswered questions, some of the most important are:

- How can we responsibly prepare budgets without knowing what we have to spend and where we need to spend it?
- What's the impact on businesses and revenue? How many businesses that delayed their sales tax payments last year will be able to pay them this year?
- How can we begin to craft budgets when we've still yet to fully grasp the impact of this pandemic on our citizens, small business owners, major employers, schools, healthcare system, city budgets, state agencies and more?

- How can we craft budgets that meets the needs of the more than 330,000 unemployment claims since March 16th– residents and their families who may face long-term unemployment during the fallout of this crisis?
- How can we know what the needs of schools, students, teachers, and families are with the possibility of extended closures amid a potential second wave?
- How can we make accurate projections to manage an economic crisis when we still don't know the scope of the current healthcare emergency?

Since the crisis began, members of the House Democratic Caucus have been working tirelessly in their districts to address the local impact. Members have hosted webinars to arm small business owners with information key to their survival and have been working to ensure students have the tools they need to continue their remote education and frontline workers have the protective gear they need. They have also been working to be sure no child or family goes hungry during this unprecedented time.

Next week, House Democrats will host virtual hearings for the public on Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the state's budgets and economy.

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on every aspect of the state and state economy - including on individuals who lost their jobs, small business owners forced to temporarily shutter their businesses, local municipalities that have lost millions in tax revenue and more. In addition, it has wreaked havoc on the state's education and health care systems with additional repercussions across nearly every agency and institution.

As the state's COVID-19 cases continue to grow, the Alabama Department of Public Health and Gov. Ivey announced continued restrictions on gatherings and continued efforts to keep citizens home to try to curb the spread.

“Reconvening would also be completely irresponsible and puts the Legislature in jeopardy of violating local and state health orders if social distancing isn't maintained, which would be extremely difficult to do with 105 members and staff gathered in one room,” said Daniels. “While there is still much unknown about this terrible disease, we do know the best way to prevent it is by limiting exposure. Not only would we be exposing ourselves but we would also be forcing countless state workers and other staff to unnecessarily expose themselves. All while we have been doing all we can to urge others not to gather. It simply doesn't make sense.”

The Alabama House of Representatives adjourned on March 12 for the legislative spring break, and has only convened twice (on March 31 and April 28) to postpone the session amidst COVID-19, and the session will resume on May 4.

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