

ELECTION DESK • SPECIAL EDITION TUESDAY • OCTOBER 27, 2026



2026 ELECTION

## WHAT ALABAMA'S NEXT GOVERNOR COULD MEAN FOR YOUR LIFE

*From hospital care and public schools to electric bills and wages, the decisions made in Montgomery can determine how securely Alabamians live.*

BY NATHAN P. HUNTER



The decisions made in Montgomery don't stay in Montgomery. They show up in our bills, our schools, our hospitals and our neighborhoods. Artwork: chromatic black

In 2015, Alabama announced plans to close or sharply reduce services at 31 driver's license offices, many in rural counties where residents already traveled considerable distances to conduct essential business.

### THE POWER BEHIND THE OFFICE

For someone with reliable transportation, flexible working hours and money for gasoline, the changes might have amounted to an inconvenience. For an hourly worker in the Black Belt, a trip to the nearest available office could mean losing a day's wages to obtain identification needed to drive, open a bank account or vote. The U.S. Department of Transportation investigated. In

December 2016, it concluded that Alabama's distribution of driver's license services disproportionately underserved Black residents in the Black Belt, violating federal civil rights requirements. The state agreed to expand access and change its practices. The reductions occurred during the administration of Gov. Robert Bentley, amid budget cuts affecting state agencies. They offered a lesson in how political decisions reach ordinary people.

An appropriation determines whether an office stays open. A staffing decision determines how long residents wait for assistance. A policy that appears to apply equally to everyone can impose vastly different

### ELECTION DAY

## NOV 3

Alabama voters will choose a successor to Gov. Kay Ivey.

### ELECTION SPECIAL

Republican Tommy Tuberville, Democrat Doug Jones and independent write-in candidate Ronald Burnette Jr. are seeking the office.

GOVERNOR'S RACE • POWER •  
PUBLIC SERVICES •  
ACCOUNTABILITY

## ABOUT THE BUZZARD • PAGE 02

*Independent Black journalism rooted in Alabama and accountable to its communities.*

## THE PEOPLE. THE PURPOSE. THE PAPER.



## WHY THE BUZZARD

The buzzard is the South's cleanup crew.

It circles what others overlook. It finds what is decaying. It clears what has been left unattended before the rot spreads.

The buzzard does not create the decay. It reveals where the decay already exists.

That distinction matters. People often resent the creature that shows them something is wrong more than they resent the conditions that made it wrong.

Journalism knows something about that. The Black press certainly does.

For generations, Black newspapers have documented realities that institutions preferred not to acknowledge. They recorded births, deaths, businesses, movements, elections, violence, celebrations, organizing, injustice, achievement, ordinary life and extraordinary courage.

They kept receipts. They kept memory. They kept watch.

The Buzzard belongs to that tradition.

Political cartoon: chromatic black

“The Buzzard supports public policies that improve people's material conditions, expand democratic participation, protect civil rights, and make institutions accountable to the communities they serve. We oppose changes that concentrate power, weaken public oversight, or offer symbolic political victories without addressing demonstrable public needs.”

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ARTICLE 01 • ACCOUNTABILITY

# LIAR, LIAR. THE PAPER TRAIL LIT THE FIRE.

Senator Katie Britt's public support and private requests for tariff relief.

BY PARALEE BROUGHTON



## THE PAPER TRAIL

A collage about scrutiny, consequence and what power leaves behind.

ARTWORK: CHROMATIC BLACK

**S**enator Katie Britt, let me walk this in slowly to you without a walking cane. I do not have to light your pants on fire. Your own paper trail already struck the match.

After the Supreme Court rejected Trump's use of emergency powers for the tariffs, you publicly praised President Trump's tariffs as though they were America's economic salvation.

On February 20, 2026, on X, you said, "What the media won't tell you is that President Trump's tariffs work, and that's why even the Biden Administration left them in place."

According to The Wall Street Journal's reporting, your legislative director had emailed the United States Trade Representative in April 2025, seeking help for "specific Alabama manufacturers" affected by those tariffs.

That is not principled leadership. That is political double-dealing: cheer for the fire while the cameras are rolling, then quietly search for an extinguisher when the flames reach Alabama businesses.

Tariffs are collected from American importers. Companies either absorb those additional costs or pass some of them along through higher prices.

New York Federal Reserve researchers found that nearly 90 percent of the economic burden from the 2025 tariffs fell on American businesses and consumers.

Translation: China does not simply receive the bill. The cost lands at American loading docks, travels through American businesses, and frequently arrives at the checkout counter with American families.

This is why people must learn to distinguish political propaganda from economic truth. Propaganda repeats, "Tariffs work." Truth asks, "For whom, at what cost, and why

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## POWER, HEALTH CARE AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

*The complete article continues without edits or omissions.*

BY NATHAN P. HUNTER



ARTWORK: CHROMATIC BLACK

**T**he consequences are not always intended. They are nonetheless real.

On Nov. 3, Alabama voters will choose a successor to Gov. Kay Ivey, who is barred by term limits from seeking re-election. The major-party nominees are Senator Tommy Tuberville, a Republican, and Doug Jones, a Democrat and former senator whom Tuberville defeated in 2020. Ronald Burnette Jr. is running as an independent write-in candidate.

Tuberville promises lower taxes, expanded school choice, economic development and a closer working relationship with President Trump. Jones proposes expanding health coverage, raising wages, reducing

household costs and giving residents greater influence over government decisions.

The differences are substantial. But understanding what the election means requires looking beyond campaign promises to the powers the next governor will actually possess.

Those powers extend into nearly every part of life in Alabama. They help determine whether a hospital survives, what resources a school receives, how much a family pays for essential services and whether a community has any meaningful say in decisions about its future.

### THE POWER BEHIND THE OFFICE

Alabama's governor does more than propose legislation and sign bills.

The governor helps set spending priorities, directs much of the executive branch, appoints agency leaders, can call special legislative sessions and can sign or veto legislation. The office also exercises influence through appointments to boards and commissions whose decisions seldom receive the attention given to elections.

The people selected to run Medicaid, corrections, transportation, mental health services, economic development and emergency management determine how state policy works in practice.

Consider Medicaid.

One administrator may regard complicated enrollment procedures primarily as safeguards against improper spending. Another may consider those same procedures obstacles preventing eligible families from receiving care. Both must follow federal and state law, but their decisions about staffing, communication, processing and oversight can produce different experiences for residents.

The same principle applies to transportation officials deciding where to invest, corrections administrators responsible for prison conditions and emergency managers determining how to reach vulnerable communities before a storm.

A governor cannot act without limits. The Legislature controls appropriations and passes laws. Courts can invalidate unlawful policies. Federal rules constrain many state programs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 →

2026 ELECTION SPECIAL EDITION

## HEALTH, SCHOOLS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

*The decisions that determine whether families can build secure lives.*

BY NATHAN P. HUNTER



POLITICAL CARTOON: CHROMATIC BLACK

A family in Birmingham may have several schools within commuting distance. In a rural county, there may be only one practical option. Even when public assistance is available, transportation costs, tuition exceeding the state benefit, admissions requirements and access to special education services can determine whether a family can use it.

Tuberville supports expanding school choice.

Jones has proposed phasing out the private-school portion of the CHOOSE Act while allowing children already receiving assistance to continue through graduation. He has said he would preserve assistance for homeschooling and redirect other resources toward public education. Changing the program would require action by the Legislature.

The dispute concerns more than parental preference. It raises a fundamental question about the state's responsibility to children whose families cannot leave their neighborhood schools.

Will those schools have qualified teachers, effective reading instruction, adequate facilities and services for students with disabilities. For most children, the consequences of education policy appear not in a campaign advertisement but in a classroom, every morning.

### 3. WHETHER A FULL-TIME JOB PROVIDES ECONOMIC SECURITY

Alabama governors have long celebrated industrial recruitment as evidence of economic progress.

New factories can bring jobs, expand the tax base and create opportunities in communities that have struggled to attract investment.

But the announcement of a factory does not establish whether its employees will earn enough to afford housing, child care, transportation and medical expenses.

In 2024, Ivey signed legislation restricting economic incentives for employers that voluntarily recognize unions through signed authorization cards rather than secret-ballot elections. Covered employers can be required to repay incentives if they violate the law.

Supporters said the measure protected workers' right to a private vote. Opponents argued that it discouraged voluntary union recognition and strengthened employers' position in organizing disputes.

The law illustrates how public spending can influence relationships between employers and workers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 →

## TAXES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE COST OF WORK

*What families pay and what public investment provides in return.*

BY NATHAN P. HUNTER

Those decisions determine which roads receive attention, which bridges are repaired and whether rural communities share in public investment. Residents should be able to see a connection between what they pay and the improvements they receive. They should also be able to determine whether transportation dollars are allocated according to public need or political influence.

### 6. WHETHER PARENTS CAN AFFORD TO WORK

A parent may receive a promising job offer and still be unable to accept it.

The shift may begin before child care opens. Reliable care may be unavailable nearby. Or the cost may consume so much of the paycheck that employment offers little financial benefit.

In 2024, Ivey signed the bipartisan Working for Alabama package, which included tax credits intended to expand child care and workforce housing.

The legislation recognized that attracting employers is only one part of economic development.

Workers also need the practical conditions that make employment possible. When child care is unavailable, parents lose income, employers struggle to fill positions and families rely on arrangements that may be difficult to sustain.

The governor can influence the supply and affordability of care through budget priorities, agency administration, employer incentives and partnerships with local organizations.

But the existence of a tax credit does not guarantee that a parent can find a suitable child care provider within a reasonable distance of home or work. The question is whether the state's policies produce care that families can actually use.

### 7. WHETHER ELECTRICITY BECOMES MORE AFFORDABLE

For Alabama households, electricity is an essential expense.

Air conditioning during extreme summer heat can be a matter of health. So can refrigeration for

food and medication, or power for medical equipment.

Yet few residents have a clear view of how utility rates are established or who has the authority to challenge them.

Alabama's Public Service Commission regulates Alabama Power and other utilities. Its decisions affect what customers pay and the conditions under which utilities operate.

In 2026, lawmakers approved a substantial restructuring of the commission, expanding it from three members to seven and moving toward representation based on congressional districts.

The legislation also established a freeze on retail electric rate increases through 2028 and created a cabinet-level secretary of energy, who will be appointed by the incoming governor.

That appointment is particularly consequential.

The secretary will have broad authority to direct commission activities, establish meeting agendas and oversee administrative functions. Under

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 →

## CARE, ELECTRICITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

*Essential systems become visible when people need them most.*

BY NATHAN P. HUNTER

**B**ut their benefits do not necessarily reach renters, households in substandard housing or homeowners unable to meet program requirements.

The governor cannot independently control housing prices. The office can, however, influence infrastructure investment, housing incentives, economic development and the state's support for local governments.

Those choices affect where housing is built, what kinds of developments receive public assistance and whether existing communities can share in economic growth.

For families, housing security means more than obtaining a mortgage or paying rent. It means being able to remain near work, schools, relatives and the institutions that make community life possible.

### 10. WHETHER ALABAMA'S PRISONS BECOME SAFER

Prison conditions may appear distant from everyday life until a relative is incarcerated, a family

member works in corrections or someone returns home after serving a sentence.

Alabama's prison system has faced longstanding concerns involving violence, inadequate staffing, health care and unconstitutional conditions.

In 2021, Ivey and state lawmakers approved a roughly \$1.3 billion prison construction and renovation plan that included \$400 million in federal pandemic relief funding.

Supporters said deteriorating facilities needed replacement. Critics questioned both the use of pandemic funds and whether construction would address the conditions that had drawn federal scrutiny.

A governor appoints corrections leadership and plays a major role in shaping prison policy, funding and administration.

Those decisions affect incarcerated people, corrections workers and the families and communities connected to them.

New facilities may address serious infrastructure deficiencies. They cannot, by themselves, guarantee adequate staffing, medical treatment, safety or rehabilitation.

Jones has called for greater independent oversight and prison reforms. Tuberville has emphasized stronger law enforcement and public safety.

For either administration, the relevant test will be what changes inside Alabama's correctional institutions, not merely how many facilities are constructed.

### 11. WHETHER THE STATE RESTRICTS REPRODUCTIVE DECISIONS

In May 2019, Ivey signed the Human Life Protection Act, one of the nation's most restrictive abortion laws.

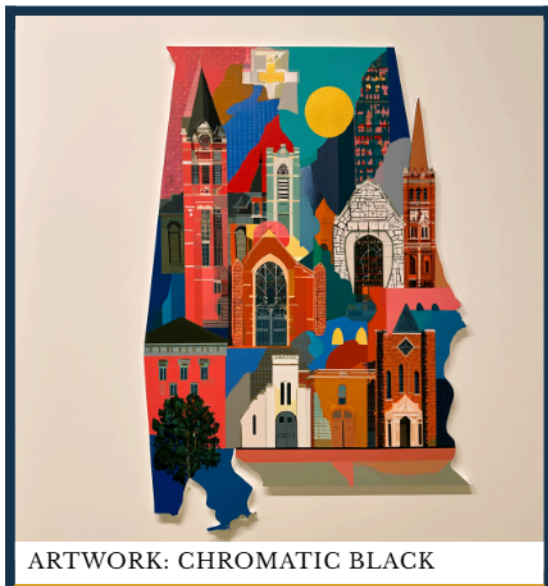
The measure was initially blocked under federal constitutional protections. After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, Alabama's restrictions became enforceable.

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# HOUSING, RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*The enduring test is how power changes conditions for people.*

BY NATHAN P. HUNTER



For Malone and Hood, the dispute was not an abstraction about competing constitutional principles. It concerned whether they could attend a public university in their own state.

The exercise of executive power is seldom as dramatic.

More often, its consequences appear in a closed public office, a hospital facing financial distress, a school without adequate resources or an infrastructure project that bypasses a community.

The governing question is not only what officials intended. It is what their decisions did to the people affected.

That distinction carries particular significance for Black Alabamians.

A policy does not need an explicitly racial purpose to have unequal racial effects. When communities begin with different levels of wealth, transportation access, health care, political influence and public investment, seemingly uniform decisions can deepen existing disparities.

The governor does not single-handedly create or resolve those conditions. But the office has considerable power either to perpetuate them or to challenge them.

## WHAT THE CANDIDATES' RECORDS REVEAL

Tuberville and Jones have spent years exercising public authority, although neither has previously served as governor.

Jones served as U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Alabama and later as a U.S. senator. As a federal prosecutor, he helped secure convictions in the 1963 bombing of Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.

His Senate tenure required navigating a Democratic legislative agenda while representing a state that had become overwhelmingly Republican in statewide elections.

His campaign for governor emphasizes Medicaid expansion, higher wages, ethics reforms, stronger public schools, greater local authority and a one-year moratorium on new data center development while the state establishes safeguards.

The proposals invite difficult questions about implementation.

How would Jones negotiate with a Republican-controlled Legislature that has resisted Medicaid expansion? How would he finance his priorities? Which changes could be accomplished administratively, and which would depend on lawmakers willing to support them?

Tuberville, a former college football coach, defeated Jones in the 2020 Senate election and has built his political identity around conservative priorities and alignment with Trump.

His Senate record also provides evidence of how he uses institutional authority.

END

ELECTION ANALYSIS • PART 1 OF 2

## FOUR AMENDMENTS, 32 LOCAL DECISIONS

*Behind the constitutional language are decisions about who controls public schools, who benefits from tax relief, how officials exercise power and how much authority communities have over their futures.*

BY LESLIE JACKSON



NONPARTISAN ELECTION  
GUIDE  
SCAN TO OPEN

**O**n November 3, Alabama voters will choose a governor, lawmakers and other public officials. But farther down the ballot, beneath the candidates and campaign promises, they will encounter another set of decisions that may receive considerably less attention.

Four proposed amendments to the Alabama Constitution will appear on every ballot in the state. Another 32 proposed amendments concern individual counties.

Some deal with matters that seem straightforward: how to replace a lieutenant governor, whether neighboring school systems can merge, and whether public schools must play the national anthem. Others concern property taxes, sewer regulation, the authority of probate judges and the retirement benefits of public officials.

Read separately, they can appear to be a collection of unrelated administrative questions. Read

together, they reveal something more important about how Alabama is governed.

Who has the authority to make decisions? Who receives public benefits? Who bears the costs? And how much control do ordinary residents have over the institutions that shape their lives?

These are not abstract constitutional questions. For a retired homeowner in Mobile, a local amendment could affect property taxes on a house held for decades. For a rural parent, another could eventually determine whether the school board overseeing a child's education remains accountable to one county or becomes part of a regional system.

### THE CONSTITUTION BEHIND THE BALLOT

Alabama adopted its 1901 Constitution during an era when white political and economic elites sought to restrict Black political participation, protect concentrated economic interests and limit local autonomy. The document established voting

restrictions that disenfranchised Black residents and many poor white residents while limiting local taxation and governing authority.

Voters approved a reorganized Constitution in 2022 that removed racist language, eliminated obsolete provisions and arranged amendments more coherently. But it did not fundamentally restructure Alabama's taxation or local-government authority. The state still has the nation's longest constitution, according to PARCA.

### AMENDMENT 1: WHO CONTROLS THE OFFICE — AND WHO CONTROLS THE MONEY?

Statewide Amendment 1 addresses three matters: filling vacancies in the lieutenant governor's office, determining compensation of certain legislative leaders and approving legislators' travel expenses.

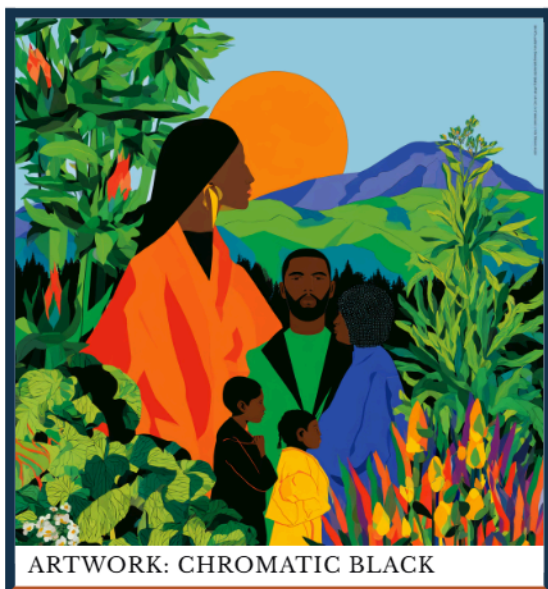
The proposal would establish an election process for certain vacancies occurring during the first two years of a term. It would

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ELECTION ANALYSIS • PART 2 OF 2

## WHAT ALABAMA VOTERS ARE REALLY BEING ASKED TO CHANGE

BY LESLIE JACKSON



ARTWORK: CHROMATIC BLACK

**S**chools are already free to play the anthem. The proposal would make a weekly observance constitutional law, harder to alter through ordinary legislation. Voters must weigh the value of regular patriotic observance against whether that operating instruction belongs in the state's highest legal document.

### THE 32 LOCAL AMENDMENTS: WHERE HOUSEHOLD CONSEQUENCES BECOME CLEARER

According to PARCA, 18 of 32 local proposals concern property-tax relief for older homeowners in Blount, Chilton, Clarke, Colbert, Covington, Cullman, Fayette, Franklin, Henry, Lamar, Lawrence,

Limestone, Mobile, Monroe, Morgan, Perry, Walker and Wilcox counties.

Most would allow eligible homeowners age 65 or older to freeze the assessed value of a primary residence, subject to residency and other requirements. Freezing assessed value is not necessarily freezing the entire tax bill; taxes may still change because of rates or other provisions.

For a retiree on fixed income, limiting assessment increases could provide predictability and make it easier to remain at home. But renters and younger homeowners would not directly qualify. Mobile County would also raise an income threshold for certain existing senior homestead relief to \$50,000.

How many homeowners would benefit? What would average savings be? Would relief reach households most vulnerable to displacement? How much revenue growth might governments and schools forgo?

Those questions matter in the Black Belt, where public institutions face poverty, limited revenue and historic disinvestment. Relief can protect

household stability while school systems still require sustainable funding.

### IN HENRY COUNTY, A DIFFERENT TAX QUESTION

Henry County voters will consider an additional three-mill property tax in a specified area south of Sandy Creek, with proceeds dedicated to Headland public schools. Voters must consider how much it would generate, how funds would be spent, who bears the cost and what improvements could result.

### IN MADISON COUNTY, WHO REGULATES THE SEWER BILL?

A Madison County amendment would bring qualifying privately owned sewer systems using public roads under Alabama Public Service Commission jurisdiction. Customers generally cannot choose a competing sewer network, making rules governing rates, service and complaints consequential.

### PROBATE COURTS, LOCAL OFFICIALS AND MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES

Four proposals concern probate judges' jurisdiction or qualifications in Blount, Covington, Morgan and Pike

END

PROPOSED EDITORIAL • PART 1 OF 3

## WHAT WOULD THE BUZZARD DO? FOLLOW THE POWER.

*Alabama voters are being asked to change the Constitution 36 different ways. Before we start checking boxes, somebody ought to ask who gets the power, who gets the money and who gets stuck with the bill.*

BY THE BUZZARD EDITORIAL BOARD

**Y**ou have to appreciate Alabama.

We have schools struggling to teach children to read. Hospitals fighting to keep their doors open. Families looking at their electric bills like somebody has added a mortgage payment.

And what are we putting in the Constitution?

A requirement to play the national anthem.

Now, there's nothing wrong with the national anthem. Nothing at all. But if a child can't read the words, we might have our priorities a little backward.

That's the thing about Alabama politics. We can turn almost anything into a constitutional crisis except the conditions that are actually making people's lives miserable.

On November 3, voters will face four statewide constitutional amendments and 32 local proposals.

Thirty-six questions.

Some of them are legitimate attempts to solve problems. Some could improve people's lives. Others appear to be solutions looking for problems to solve.

And some are about something politicians don't particularly enjoy discussing in public.

Power.

Who has it. Who wants more of it. Who gets to exercise it. And, perhaps most important, who gets to tell them no.

That's where The Buzzard comes in.

We're not particularly interested in whether a proposal sounds patriotic, religious, fiscally responsible or politically fashionable.

We want to know what happens after everybody finishes congratulating themselves.

Does the child get a better education?

Does somebody's grandmother get to keep her house?

Does the sewer bill go down?

Can the community hold its elected officials accountable?

And when the people running things make a mess, can anybody do something about it?

Because government isn't a philosophy seminar. It's the water coming out of your faucet. It's the ambulance that shows up when your mother has a stroke. It's the school bus that takes your child across the county every morning.

Government is what happens to you long after the campaign signs come down.

And in Alabama, we've had quite enough of being asked to trust people who haven't explained what they intend to do with that trust.

Here's how we would approach the four statewide amendments.

These are proposed editorial positions, not instructions to voters. Reasonable people can reach different conclusions.

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PROPOSED EDITORIAL • PART 2 OF 3

## FOLLOW THE POWER.

BY THE BUZZARD EDITORIAL BOARD

### THE BUZZARD'S BALLOT TEST

FOUR AMENDMENTS. FOUR PROPOSED POSITIONS.

| AMENDMENT                                                   | WHAT IT WOULD DO                                                                             | POSITION              | WHY                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Lieutenant governor and legislative administration</b> | Changes vacancy rules and legislative leadership compensation and travel.                    | <b>NO</b>             | A good election idea is bundled with reduced oversight. Separate the questions.          |
| <b>2 School consolidation</b>                               | Creates a process for neighboring county systems to merge after a substantial voter protest. | <b>NO, AS WRITTEN</b> | Changing who governs schools should require direct approval in every affected county.    |
| <b>3 Prayer and the Pledge</b>                              | Adds constitutional requirements for school policies on voluntary prayer and the Pledge.     | <b>NO</b>             | Students already possess protections. Government should identify the additional problem. |
| <b>4 National anthem</b>                                    | Requires a weekly anthem performance or broadcast in public schools.                         | <b>NO</b>             | Turning an ordinary school practice into constitutional law is unnecessary.              |

In the Black Belt, where communities have fought for generations to secure political representation, that is not a minor consideration.

Suppose a predominantly Black county merges its school system with a neighboring county.

Who sits on the new school board?

How are the districts drawn?

Where does the money go?

Which schools remain open?

Who decides?

Those questions should be answered before the merger, not after the buses start running new routes.

We're not against consolidation.

We're against treating community consent as an obstacle to administrative efficiency.

**OUR POSITION: NO, AS WRITTEN.**

Bring back a proposal requiring an affirmative vote in every affected county, along with a full

public accounting of the financial, educational and representational consequences.

If consolidation is such a good idea, make the case to the people whose children will live with it.

**AMENDMENT 3: EVERYBODY CAN PRAY. THAT'S NOT THE ARGUMENT.**

Let's talk about prayer.

Because in Alabama, the minute somebody mentions prayer in school, half the room starts

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 →

PROPOSED EDITORIAL • PART 3 OF 3

## FOLLOW THE POWER.

BY THE BUZZARD EDITORIAL BOARD



VOTER TOOL

**CHECK YOUR  
REGISTRATION &  
POLLING PLACE**

SCAN TO VERIFY

**B**ut she doesn't receive the same direct homeowner benefit.

That's why good intentions aren't enough.

We want to know who qualifies for relief, who does not and what the distribution of benefits looks like.

We also want to understand the fiscal consequences.

A property tax freeze may help residents remain in their homes. That's valuable.

But if local schools lose revenue growth they were counting on, we need to understand that consequence, too.

In Henry County, voters will consider an additional property tax for schools in Headland.

The question isn't simply whether people support education.

Most people do.

The question is how much revenue the proposal would produce, which taxpayers would pay and what improvements residents should expect.

In Madison County, voters will consider bringing certain private sewer systems under Public Service Commission oversight.

Now there's a topic that deserves attention.

Because when you're connected to a sewer system, you generally don't have the luxury of shopping around every time the bill goes up.

You can't exactly tell the company, "I don't like your prices, so I'm taking my sewage business across the street."

You're connected.

Which means the rules governing the service matter.

Regulation could provide additional oversight. But that doesn't automatically mean lower bills or better service.

We need to know how the regulator will use its authority.

And in Etowah County, voters will consider changing a requirement for voter approval of certain municipal annexations.

That may sound like a technical issue.

Until the boundary of your community changes and you discover that the decision-making process no longer requires your vote.

Details matter.

That's why The Buzzard would not endorse or reject all 32 local amendments as a group.

Each deserves its own examination.

### **ALABAMA HAS A CONSTITUTION WITH A CONTROL PROBLEM**

Now let's get to the question behind all these questions.

Why are we changing the Constitution to handle so many ordinary matters of local government?

Why must communities repeatedly seek state-level permission to make decisions about their own affairs?

To understand that, you have to understand Alabama's history.

The 1901 Constitution wasn't simply a collection of legal provisions.

It was part of a political project designed to preserve white supremacy, disenfranchise Black voters and concentrate political and economic power.

It also restricted the ability of local governments to govern and raise revenue.

In 2022, Alabama reorganized its Constitution, removing racist language and obsolete



ARTWORK: CHROMATIC BLACK

NOVEMBER

03



**YOUR VOTE.  
YOUR PLAN.**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3  
POLLS OPEN 7 A.M. TO 7 P.M.

## Know what's on your ballot.

Read it. Research it. Make your plan.

### OCT 27

**Mail applications due**  
Application must be received by your county absentee election manager.

### OCT 29

**Apply in person**  
Last day to apply for an absentee ballot in person.

### NOV 02

**Return by hand**  
Hand-delivered absentee ballot due by close of business.

### NOV 03

**Election Day**  
Mailed absentee ballots due by noon, except UOCAVA voters.



**READER FEEDBACK**  
**Talk Back to The Buzzard.**

### BRING AN ACCEPTED PHYSICAL PHOTO ID.

Check your polling place before you leave. If you are in line when polls close, stay in line.

## AFTER THE BALLOT

An election is more than a contest between candidates. It is a decision about who gets to exercise public power — and what they will do with it.

The people elected on November 3 will help determine how public money is spent, how schools are funded, how healthcare is delivered, how utilities are regulated and whether local communities have

the resources and authority to solve their own problems.

Those decisions have consequences long after campaign signs disappear.

That is why knowing what's on your ballot matters. Every office carries particular responsibilities. Every constitutional amendment has implications. And every candidate seeking public authority should be

## ACCOUNTABILITY BEGINS WHEN THE POLLS CLOSE.

examined not simply for what they promise, but for what they have done, whom their decisions have benefited and how they intend to be held accountable.

### MAKE YOUR VOTING PLAN BEFORE ELECTION DAY.

Review your sample ballot. Research the candidates and amendments. Confirm your polling location and make sure you have an accepted form of photo

identification. If you qualify to vote absentee, pay close attention to the application and ballot-return deadlines.

On Tuesday, November 3, Alabama's polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. If you are in line when the polls close, remain in line.

Voting alone will not fix everything that needs fixing in Alabama. But it is one way to influence who makes the decisions. What happens afterward