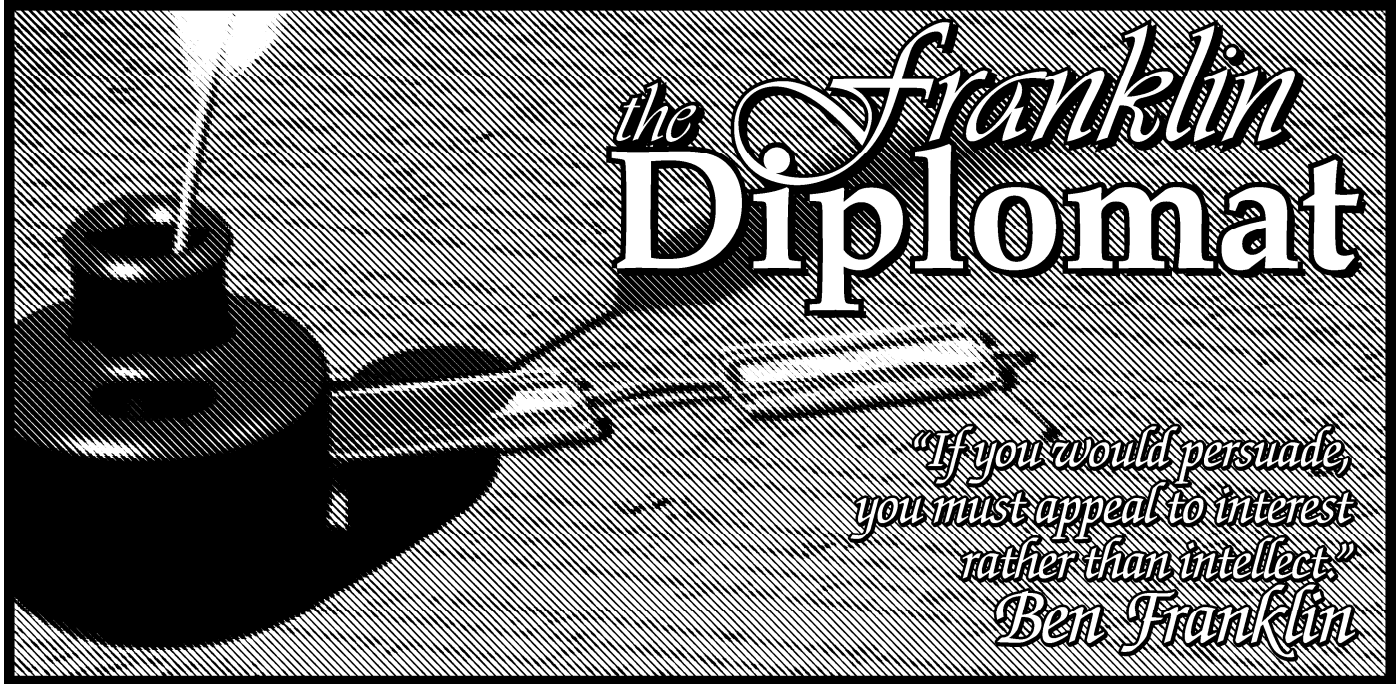


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THIS WEEK IN LEGISLATURE

Productive

THE BUDGETS

Final Stretch

BINGO

The Situation

QUALIFYING SURPRISES

Who

The House Reconvenes:
Tuesday, April 13 at 1:00 p. m.

The Senate Reconvenes:
Tuesday, April 13 at 1:00 p. m.

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THIS WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE**Productive**

In contrast to most of the legislative session, the Senate moved smoothly this week procedurally passing many bills. The Senators worked from a special order calendar Tuesday consisting of thirty bills passing most without disagreement. One was House Bill 260 by Rep. Robert Bentley (R-Tuscaloosa) potentially creating 5,000 new jobs by giving tax breaks to businesses hiring unemployed workers. Thursday, the Senate passed its version of the Education Budget in less than thirty minutes. They then adopted a special order calendar with thirty-seven bills and moved swiftly through about three-fourths of the calendar before adjourning for the day.

Tuesday, the House passed their version of the General Fund budget. Thursday Representatives passed Senate Bill 162 by Sen. Ted Little (D-Auburn) by a vote of 102-0 giving the state Prepaid Affordable College Tuition program (PACT) \$236 million over the next eight years from the Education Trust Fund. The House amended the senate bill placing a cap on the amount universities can raise tuition for the 40,000 students in the PACT program. The Senate along with higher education has opposed this provision. The bill is expected to go to conference committee to attempt to work out the differences.

The House Government Appropriations Committee gave approval to Senator Lowell Barron's (D-Fyffe) \$1 billion Roads Bill this week putting it in line to be debated in the final days of the session. If passed by the House it will be placed on the November ballot for Alabama voters to decide if they want to take the money from a state investment account over the next 10 years and spend it on building and repairing roads and bridges.

As in previous years, proponents in the House favoring legislation removing the state sales tax on groceries, failed to receive the three-fifths votes necessary to bring up and debate the Constitutional Amendment. The Budget Isolation Resolution vote failed 54-42 and is dead for the session. The vote surprised many because talk throughout the week was the votes were there to pass it out of the House.

THE BUDGETS**Final Stretch**

The Senate passed an Education Budget Thursday that restored \$850, 000 to the two-year college chancellor's office, but otherwise mirrored the budget passed last week by the House. It now goes back to the House where it is expected they will concur and send it to the Governor.

The House passed the General Fund budget Tuesday by a vote of 104-0. The General Fund budget funds most non-education state agencies such as prisons, Medicaid and the state's court system. Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb said the Judicial Branch was funded within about \$2 million of what they can live with, without more anticipated layoffs. The Senate Finance & Taxation General Fund Committee gave approval to the budget without any changes, however it is expected that Chairman Roger Bedford will make substantial changes on the floor of the Senate when they are expected to take up the budget Tuesday.

BINGO
The Situation

“Still some negotiations going on” – Rep. Marcel Black

With four legislative days remaining in the 2010 legislative session, Senate Bill 380 by Sen. Roger Bedford (D-Russellville) saw no movement in the House this week after passing the Senate last week. Thursday, The House Tourism and Travel committee met with Bingo the only bill on the agenda, but House sponsor Rep. Marcel Black (D-Tuscumbia) asked the committee to carry the bill over at the call of the chair because negotiations are still continuing over possible amendments.

The Tourism and Travel committee is expected to meet next Tuesday morning and give the bill a favorable report after which there would be three legislative days left for an opportunity to be voted on by the House. Because the legislation is a constitutional amendment it doesn't go to the Governor but straight to the ballot for a vote of the people in November.

Speaker of the House Seth Hammett said he expects the full House to debate the bill Wednesday of next week. If the Senate bill is amended and passed in the House it will have to go back to the Senate for concurrence.

QUALIFYING SURPRISES

Qualifying to run for elected office closed last Friday and there were a few surprises.

State Senator Jim Preuitt (D-Talladega) switched parties and will run for re-election as a Republican. Sen. Preuitt has been caucusing with Senate Republicans for the last few years.

Sen. Harri Anne Smith (R-Slocumb) was denied the opportunity to run again as a Republican by the Republican Party because of her support for Democratic Congressman Bobby Bright in 2008. She is expected to run as an Independent.

Sen. Charles Bishop (R-Jasper) is retiring from the Senate and running against Majority Leader Ken Guin (D-Carbon Hill) in the House.

Governor Riley's Policy Director Bryan Taylor qualified as a Republican to run against Sen. Wendell Mitchell (D-Luverne).

The final 4 legislative meeting days have been established. Next week they will meet on Tuesday and Wednesday, the following week will be Wednesday and Thursday. Sine Die will be four days earlier than the maximum allowed by law.

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