



Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Del Marsh  
Press Clips  
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**[Alabama Legislature cancels Wednesday activities due to treacherous roads \(AP\)](#)**

MONTGOMERY, Alabama — The Alabama Legislature has canceled all activities Wednesday due to icy roads.

The House couldn't get enough members to Montgomery to meet on Tuesday. The Senate got barely enough members to the Statehouse and had a busy afternoon.

House Speaker Mike Hubbard and Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh say the Legislature will waste a meeting day Wednesday, but it's best for safety reasons. They are planning for the House and Senate to try to meet at 10 a.m. Thursday. But Hubbard said it may be Thursday afternoon before roads are clear enough for enough members to arrive for a meeting.

## **[Gov. Robert Bentley cautions Alabamians to stay indoors, says ice on roadways is the biggest problem \(al.com\)](#)**

Gov. Robert Bentley continued to caution Alabamians about the treacherous weather making its way through the state during a press conference at the Emergency Management Agency in Montgomery on Tuesday afternoon.

Bentley said the state of emergency he issued on Tuesday will continue for as long as necessary, and residents should remain at home and stay off the roadways as much as possible tonight through Wednesday.

"Let me tell you, you cannot be out on the roads right now," said Bentley. "So, call the appropriate responders to make sure that your neighbors are taken care of. We do not need a lot of people on the roads right now."

Alabama Emergency Management Director Art Faulkner said that while they were not expecting the freezing rain and sleet to hit so far north, they are dealing with situation. However, icy bridges and overpasses have caused serious problems across the state by resulting in traffic accidents.

"The Alabama Department of Transportation has been working continuously to make sure those major thoroughfares are open first. However, that problem has been compounded by the accidents that are occurring. So, what I would encourage you to do is if you're able to get off the highway, even if you're not about to make it home, if you're able to get to a safe location and get off the highway, go ahead and do that as quickly as possible."

Bentley has activated 350 national guardsmen to assist first responders and citizens in emergency situations. The governor also said one silver lining to this winter storm is that icing on power lines has yet to be a major issue, and loss of power is minimal across the state.

With harsher conditions in North Alabama, students at some schools in Shelby County, Jefferson County and Talladega County are stuck in place due to icy roads and poor weather conditions that make bus transportation an unsafe option.

Bentley said he wanted to assure parents of those students that they will be taken care of throughout the night.

"I understand the anxiety and the concern of the parents who cannot get to their children, but I want to reassure all the parents that if you trust your teacher to take care of your child during the day, they will take care of them tonight. Your children in these schools will be taken care of."

Faulkner also cautioned that anyone who is stuck in their car or has run out of gas should remain inside the vehicle and call for help. Overall, 67 local emergency management agency facilities have been activated.

"The temperature is not going to rise any higher in most locations today," said Faulkner. "If there is ice in your area, that ice is likely going to stay on the ground or on the roadway or on the bridge until sometime tomorrow or, in some cases, sometime Thursday so you need to monitor your local media and look at the temperature before you go out. Be very cautious and be very careful."

State offices will be closed on Wednesday and will not reopen until noon on Thursday. Bentley said they will continue to monitor the situation.

"Please understand this," said Bentley. "We are aware of the severity of this winter storm. We are using every state resource that is necessary to assist in this need. All state emergency response personnel are out helping in this response. I would like to say this is a very dangerous situation."

## **[Alabama Department of Transportation: Stay off roads until noon -- at earliest \(al.com\)](#)**

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- Brian Davis, division engineer with the Alabama Department of Transportation, has seen worse storms than this.

Unfortunately, this one came without warning.

"The forecast called for a dusting," Davis said this morning. "This caught us by surprise."

ALDOT began sanding roads at 9 a.m. Just before 3 a.m., Davis said ALDOT was working with Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency to find buses to get stranded motorists off of snow and ice covered roads.

Several area police and fire departments are also working to get drivers off of the road and into shelters.

With freezing temperatures expected to last through the morning, Davis is asking people to stay off of the roads until noon Wednesday -- at a minimum -- and follow news reports before venturing out.

## **Alabama Senate works despite icy weather (AP)**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — The Alabama House couldn't hold its scheduled meeting Tuesday because many members were blocked by icy roads, but the Senate had an unusually busy day without bickering between Democrats and Republicans.

Tuesday is the first meeting day each week for the Legislature. Twenty-two of the 35 senators showed up Tuesday — one more than the number required by state law to conduct business. The Senate gave final approval to a bill that moves up Alabama's deadline for Democratic and Republican candidates to sign up for elections by two months. The bill is the result of a lawsuit filed against the state by the U.S. Justice Department over problems getting absentee ballots to the military and other Alabamians living overseas in time to be counted in elections.

The two sides recently reached agreement to move up the candidate qualifying deadline, which will give county election officials more time to prepare and send absentee ballots. The bill passed by the Senate implements that agreement and moves this year's deadline for candidates from April 4 to Feb. 7. The bill now goes to the governor for signing into law.

The bill was one of 20 non-controversial measures that passed on unanimous votes Tuesday. Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, and Senate Minority Leader Vivian Figures, D-Mobile, said that after senators drove over terrible roads to get to Montgomery, they decided to put together a

work agenda of bills that members of both parties could support. The result was a busy day without the delaying tactics that have marked most days of the 2014 session.

In the House, 40 of the 105 members were present when House Speaker Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn, gavelled the chamber to order. That was 12 short of the number needed to meet. Legislative rules require the House to keep trying to meet every day at 10 a.m. until 52 members show up. Hubbard said the House wouldn't try Wednesday because roads are supposed to remain treacherous. But another attempt will be made Thursday, when the snow and ice are expected to clear.

The Senate canceled all activities Wednesday, but will meet Thursday. Skipping Wednesday will result in the Legislature wasting one of its 30 meeting days, but Hubbard and Marsh said it's best for safety reasons.

Some legislators began driving to Montgomery on Tuesday morning but gave up when the snow and ice turned out to be worse than expected.

Republican Reps. Ed Henry of Hartselle and Terri Collins of Decatur were carpooling south on Interstate 65 to Montgomery, but they turned around near Warrior because of numerous wrecks. "We could see semis spinning out and sliding," Henry said.

He said traffic was moving less than 10 mph when they gave up. "We decided at that point it was only going to get worse," he said in a phone interview.

In the Senate, members passed a bill to require circuit clerks' offices to take debit and credit cards. The bill's sponsor, Republican Sen. Arthur Orr of Decatur, said it will make it easier for people to make payments because many people don't carry checks any more. Under his bill, the person using the debit or credit card will have to pay the transaction fee. His bill now goes to the House for consideration.

The Senate also passed a bill clarifying that the state Department of Education doesn't regulate private schools, but the schools have to comply with state laws on school attendance and child safety. Another bill that cleared the Senate allows the military to renew a car tag without paying a late fee if the tag expired while they were deployed elsewhere and they renew it within 30 days of returning to Alabama. Both bills now go to the House for consideration.

## **Tracking the 2014 session: Senate musters a quorum, passes non-controversial bills (al.com)**

MONTGOMERY, Alabama --- The winter storm stopped business in the Alabama House of Representatives today but not in the Senate.

Only 40 of 102 House members answered roll shortly after the House was scheduled to meet at 1 p.m. Some who had tried to get to Montgomery were turned back by icy road conditions. The House can't operate without a majority of its members present.

Twenty-two of the 35 senators were on hand today, four more than needed for a quorum.

Today was the seventh official meeting day in the legislative session, which can have up to 30 meeting days.

Even though the House and Senate won't meet Wednesday, it will count as the eighth day because of a rule that says if the House does not have a quorum at the time it is scheduled to meet, it is automatically scheduled to meet at 10 a.m. the next day.

Rachel Adams, spokeswoman for House Speaker Mike Hubbard, said the House might discuss changing that rule because of what happened today.

Gov. Robert Bentley announced that state offices would be closed Wednesday and would not reopen until noon Thursday.

What they did:

The Senate passed about 20 noncontroversial bills, most with little or no debate.

-- Gave final passage to a House bill to change some deadlines related to elections, such as when parties certify their candidates, to conform with changes to federal law to make sure that citizens overseas and in the military are able to vote. The Department of Justice had sued the state over the issue. Goes to governor.

-- Passed a bill that would require circuit courts and district courts to accept debit card and credit card payments for court costs, fines and fees. Goes to House.

-- Passed a bill to provide that foods people prepare at home for bake sales and similar events are exempt from regulation by county health departments. Goes to House.

-- Passed a bill saying that Alabama military don't have to pay late fees for renewing car tags if they were deployed elsewhere when their tag expired and they renew the tag within 30 days of returning to the state. Goes to House.

Coming up:

The House and Senate return at 10 a.m. on Thursday.

Quote of the day:

"We do not need a lot of people on the roads right now."

Gov. Robert Bentley, urging people to avoid travel if necessary.

## **Snow and ice force cancellation of Alabama House session; Senate convenes (Montgomery Advertiser)**

With icy weather making travel from many parts of the state impossible, the Alabama House of Representatives Tuesday adjourned without having a quorum of members present.

The Senate, meanwhile, managed to get a majority of members presents and conduct business Tuesday afternoon. Both chambers have canceled committee meetings scheduled for Wednesday.

Only 40 of the House's 102 current members answered the roll when the chamber convened after 1 p.m. Tuesday. The House needs a majority of representatives present to conduct business.

House Speaker Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn, said he had spoken to members in the previous few days, and urged them to put safety first.

"We can plan for many things, but the weather is not one of them," he said.

Under law, the House will have to return for business at 10 a.m. Wednesday. But Hubbard, again stressing the need for safety, asked members not to come in Wednesday, and said they would aim to reconvene Thursday morning at 10 a.m. The speaker said he did not expect a quorum to be present until 1 p.m. that day.

House committee meetings scheduled for this week will be reposted, he said.

"There's not enough of us here today," said Rep. Dimitri Polizos, R-Montgomery. "It's crazy weather, and we can't control it."

The Senate convened at 2 p.m., with 22 of the chamber's 35 members -- 18 Republicans and four Democrats -- present. The Senate managed to pass 18 mostly noncontroversial bills in a session lasting just under two hours that afternoon. The Senate planned to reconvene at 10 a.m. Thursday.

By law, the Legislature will end up counting Tuesday and Wednesday toward its 30-day legislative calendar. Hubbard, Marsh and Senate Minority Leader Vivian Davis Figures, D-Mobile, all said Tuesday that they wanted to develop a bill that would allow leadership in the House and Senate to change meeting dates of the chambers if an emergency, such as Tuesday's winter weather, made it impractical for the Legislature to assemble.

## **Rescuers along U.S. Highway 280 face a scene that 'looks like Armageddon' (al.com)**

As of 9 p.m., the highways east of Birmingham still looked much like they did all day. Cars lined the roadways, and people dressed in business suits walked gingerly on the icy surfaces.

"All day we thought it looked like a nuclear holocaust," said Jefferson County sheriff's Deputy Chief Randy Schlitz. "It looks like Armageddon."

On U.S. 280, there were as many cars on the side of the road as there were still trying to make it home, that despite law enforcement warnings to stay put. Included among the stranded vehicles was a Maxx bus with passengers inside. Some with four-wheelers were picking up friends, and even strangers, to take them home.

One man told AL.com he left work at UAB at 10:45 a.m. He drove a short distance, then turned around and parked back at work. And then he started the long walk to Vestavia Hills.

At 8:25 p.m., Schlitz and sheriff's Capt. Ken Mosley picked up the man on Rocky Ridge Road and drove him the rest of the way home. Schlitz and Mosley had been doing similar pick-ups since 11 a.m.

"We've dropped one off and before we could get to the next one, we've picked two or three people up on the side of the road who were stranded," Schlitz said. "People just left their cars in the middle of



the road. We've all day been trying to get from Point A to Point B and have had to redirect at least five times. And even then, it's been an adventure."

Like many other law enforcement officers throughout the Birmingham area, the pair had been involved in rescues all day. Most of the pair's 30 or so "rescues," he said, involved medical issues. One little boy was out of his asthma medicine at a daycare, and they had to get him to his mom. Others needed a ride to the hospital.

Schlitz said he's never seen anything like it.

"The stretch between 280 and Liberty Parkway northbound on I-459 is just a parking lot," he said. "There are at least 1,000 cars, and there's no way to get through. We were freaking out because there were vehicles coming at us the wrong way on 459. They were just trying to maneuver the quagmire. It's still slammed."

About 8:30 p.m. Schlitz and Mosley picked up Katrina Vinson, who had been trying since 10 a.m. to get to her 9-year-old son at Gresham Elementary School.

Vinson got on U.S. 280 at Cahaba Beach Road. She made a stop for gas, peanuts and pizza, but other than that, spent all day and much of the evening in her car. She spoke with her son's teacher, and decided she better go get him. "He was fine earlier," Vinson said, "but as it got later, he started freaking out."

Vinson made it to the BP service station on Rocky Ridge Road and then started to walk up the dark and windy Dolly Ridge Road. Schlitz and Mosley spotted her, picked her up and then picked up her son. They were deposited safely back at home.

"It's been a hectic day," Vinson said.

## **Weather forces many businesses to hold office sleepovers (Birmingham Business Journal)**

No one predicted this much snow would hit Birmingham today, not even famous local weatherman James Spann.

Spann tweeted this afternoon, "I have abandoned my vehicle and am now walking to ABC 33/40. About 1 mile; not bad."

And Spann wasn't the only local weatherman stunned – and personally impacted – by the snowy outcome.

On Twitter, Fox 6 WBRC chief meteorologist J.P. Dice said, "Yes, the forecast was a bust. I missed this one. I am stuck in traffic with you" to a viewer.

Spann and Dice were not the only ones with snow trouble Tuesday. Numerous businesses are being forced to stay overnight in their offices, as icy road conditions across the metro made the trek home for many impossible. Cars have been abandoned throughout the metro, students are stranded at school and many main roads have closed.

Companies like Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, the marketing team for UAB Medicine, Sirote & Permutt, Alabama Public Television and Protective Life have let us know they will be staying the night in their offices.

For the record, so will most of the BBJ crew.

The weather situation caused Gov. Robert Bentley to declare for a state of emergency and call on National Guard troops to help out.

## **Propane problems persist on the farm (TimesDaily)**

RUSSELLVILLE — Danny Mc-Kinney managed to get his propane gas tanks filled to supply his six chicken houses. He's just not sure about what happens when he needs more.

"They're telling us it's a shortage, but basically UPG quit delivering to poultry growers," McKinney said.

McKinney, whose chicken houses are in the Isbell community, said he has about 174,000 young birds that need to be kept in houses with a temperature of 92 degrees.

"It was \$1.28 per gallon, then it jumped to \$1.58 and then \$2.49," McKinney said. "Now they won't deliver to all of us. I've got enough gas to get me through the next two weeks, but this has put all of us in a real bind. There are plenty of other growers in the same situation."

McKinney said he uses about 1,000 gallons of propane per week, per house. He has six chicken houses. He has been a chicken farmer for about nine years.

"I've seen the price of propane fluctuate, but I've never seen this kind of shortage before."

State Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow, D-Red Bay, said officials told him the situation arose when one company quit delivering to the poultry farmers.

"UPG out of Paducah, Ky., delivered to 75 percent of the growers in this area and all of a sudden they terminated their contracts," Morrow said. "The other companies were only serving 25 percent of the market and now they're trying to pick up the slack from the company that stopped delivering."

Calls by the TimesDaily to UPG were not returned Tuesday.

Lisa Fountain, of the Prattville-based Alabama Propane Gas Association, agreed that "any issue with poultry issues is due to one company that terminated service to poultry farms, commercial, government and school customers."

One chicken farmer, Kenneth McHenry, of Marion County, said prices also have become a problem. "You can get it, but basically we're paying \$3.49 instead of \$1.58," McHenry said. "That's it in a nutshell. The governor has declared a state of emergency, but that won't help us. Some of the younger growers won't make it. We had the rate locked in, but now we're just not getting the propane."

McHenry said he is trying to keep 76,000 young birds alive. "It's a bad deal for us," McHenry said. "My concerns are being able to pay for it and how deep in the hole you can go."

Fountain said the price increases are not because propane dealers have just raised the price, but rather the wholesale price has gone up.

Attorney General Luther Strange said last week the state's price gouging law now is in effect for purposes of propane gas sales and delivery. The governor declared a state of emergency throughout Alabama due to severe dangerous weather and potential propane gas shortages.

"The wholesale price has jumped over \$3 from Dixie Pipeline," Fountain said. "Then the dealer has overhead costs of transporting the gas and paying their workers. They are unable to charge wholesale price."

In addition to a supply shortage, weather issues in south Alabama caused some companies to pull their trucks off the road due to ice and snowy conditions, Fountain said Tuesday.

Fountain said the association is working with poultry farmers to get them gas and to conserve it as much gas as possible. When tank gauges get to 35-40 percent, poultry producers need to call about getting deliveries.

"Every other dealer other than one has serviced their customers, according to my knowledge," Fountain said.

Fountain said the propane supply line runs from Texas to North Carolina. Alabama has two distribution centers, in Opelika and Demopolis.

Not all chicken farmers are having issues.

Mark Emerson, who has a farm outside Russellville, said he has been able to get enough propane to last him another month. "After that, I'm not sure, but it's not been an issue for me so far," Emerson said Tuesday morning.

Fountain said propane dealers didn't expect the current demand.

"They never knew they would be taking on customers who need 4,000, 6,000 or 8,000 gallons of propane," she said. "They are used to residential customers who may get 200 gallons."

## **[State Senate wants courts to accept credit, debit cards \(TimesDaily\)](#)**

MONTGOMERY — The Senate today passed a bill pertaining to how district and circuit courts around the state accept payments.

Senate Bill 113 from Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, would require them to take credit and debit card payments.

"We have some circuit (courts) out there that don't want to take credit cards," Orr said. He said his bill will make it easier for people to pay fines and fees, including child support.

The bill now goes to the House.

## **Summary of action in Alabama Legislature (AP)**

A summary of action in the Alabama Legislature on Tuesday, the seventh meeting day of the regular session:

### HOUSE:

-Could not meet because not enough members could get over icy roads to Montgomery.

### SENATE:

-Gave final approval to a bill moving up when Democratic and Republican candidates must sign up to run for office, which will allow absentee ballots to be issued sooner to military and other Alabama voters overseas. Goes to governor.

-Approved a bill to require circuit clerks' offices to take debit and credit cards. Goes to House.

-Passed a bill saying private schools are not regulated by the state Department of Education but are required to comply with school attendance and child safety laws. Goes to House.

-Passed a bill saying that Alabama military don't have to pay late fees for renewing car tags if they were deployed elsewhere when their tag expired and they renew the tag within 30 days of returning to the state. Goes to House.

### AGENDA:

-House and Senate meet at 10 a.m. Thursday.

## **Congressman Byrne signs on to bill to ban federal abortion funding (al.com)**

Taking another step to solidify his conservative credentials, U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne this week co-sponsored legislation to prohibit federal funding of abortion.

Byrne, R-Fairhope, became the 171st member of Congress to sign on to the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act and voted with the 227-188 majority to pass the it Tuesday. But it faces a near-certain death in the Senate, where abortion-rights Democrats control the chamber. Among the Alabama delegation, only Rep. Terri Sewell, D-Birmingham, voted against the bill.

The House passed an earlier version by a 251-175 vote in 2011.

Sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., the bill would ban federal funding for abortion. It also specifically prohibits the use of federal funds to pay for any health insurance benefits that include abortion coverage, a reference to the Affordable Care Act.

"As the parents of four wonderful children, Rebecca and I have been blessed to experience the joy of parenthood firsthand," Byrne said in a prepared statement. "Every life is precious, and as a United States Congressman I believe if we do not take action to create a culture of life in this country, it will fray the moral fabric that has sustained us for generations."

Byrne called it "unacceptable" to use taxpayer funds to pay for a procedure that many southwest Alabama residents find "morally abhorrent."

One provision of the bill that would prohibit people from deducting medical expenses related to abortion except in cases of rape, incest and endangerment of the mother's life. Some critics raised the specter of the IRS determining whether a woman has been raped.

## **[Roby & Bachus speak against govt. funded abortions, pro-abortion activists freak out \(Yellowhammer News\)](#)**

The U.S. House voted today to permanently ban federal spending on abortion and to block ObamaCare subsidies for insurance plans that cover abortion.

Shortly before the vote, Rep. Martha Roby, R-Montgomery, gave a one-minute speech on the House floor, briefly assessing the ongoing battles between pro-life and pro-abortion activists.

"I've been intrigued with the latest rhetoric in the so-called 'war on women,' Roby said. "I'm intrigued because at some point pro-abortion activists stopped using the word 'abortion.' Instead of using the 'a-word,' they started using terms like 'women's health' or 'reproductive rights.' It's a clever word game designed to disguise the truth and build artificial support. After all, who would be against the health of a woman? Who would oppose anyone's right to reproduce? But what about the baby's health? What about the unborn child's right to live? They don't call it abortion anymore because people understand what abortion is. It's the taking of a life. It is death where life once existed. It is cruel and tragic. And there is no place in the federal budget for funding it."

Needless to say, the pro-abortion crowd didn't like what Roby had to say. Many of them took to Twitter to express their outrage and to make it clear how much they love abortion.

Rep. Spencer Bachus, R-Vestavia Hills also spoke on the House floor in favor of the No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion Act.

"No child is unwanted. Let me repeat that: no child is unwanted," Bachus said. "There are millions of American couples today that are waiting to give these unborn children a loving home. I don't know all the circumstances, but I do know the unborn are little girls and little boys. While I don't know about my colleagues, I believe that God has a plan for each of these unborn children and I don't believe that plan includes terminating their lives. It may not be a popular thing to say. But can't we focus on the unborn and the fact that there are millions of families out there, many of them childless, that would love to have these little girls and boys in their homes?"

All of this comes just days after the 41st Anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade that made abortion legal in all 50 states. Since then, over 50,000,000 pregnancies have been aborted, including over 500,000 in Alabama alone.