



Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Del Marsh  
Press Clips  
Tuesday, July 08, 2014

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## **Senator Marsh: U.S. Department of Commerce should protect American steel industry (AL.com)**

By State Sen. Del Marsh

The steel industry has played an integral role in the Alabama economy since the early 1900s. This sector employs thousands of people across the state and has a multi-million dollar economic impact for Alabama. Today, however, the industry is in a fight to save American manufacturing and the high paying jobs that go with it.

Alabama steel mills manufacture steel pipe, known in the industry as Oil Country Tubular Goods (OCTG). OCTG are the pipe products used in the exploration of oil and natural gas, including casing, tubing and drill pipe. Steelworkers here in Alabama and across the U.S. are working hard every day, using state-of-the-art technology to manufacture these OCTG products. These safe, high-quality steel products are critical for oil and gas exploration and the development of infrastructure, and they have been in high demand in recent years due to the acceleration of oil and natural gas development in the United States.

In July 2013, several domestic OCTG producers, including Alabama companies such as United States Steel, filed a trade case against South Korea and eight other countries based on the alarmingly rapid and intense surge in OCTG products imported into the U.S. market, primarily by South Korean companies. This case is now under consideration by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Alabama pipe producers have made significant investments in new technology and the expansion of their capacity and capabilities to meet their customers' growing needs, all while competing fairly in the global marketplace. Unfortunately, some foreign pipe manufacturers devise elaborate governmental schemes, which artificially lower prices in order to circumvent U.S. trade laws. This illegal practice, known as "dumping," results in an oversupply of OCTG imports to the U.S. market that are priced significantly below their true cost of production. When this occurs, steel companies and their workers depend on the U.S. government to enforce existing U.S. trade laws, which are designed to maintain a level playing field and allow for true market-based competition.

This is not the first time foreign manufacturers have manipulated the system. In 2008, Chinese companies aggressively dumped OCTG product into the U.S. market, and pipe mills across the country, including those in Alabama, closed or significantly reduced their operations. The American OCTG market was essentially shut down and thousands of steelworkers were left without jobs.

The American steel industry fought against these illegally dumped Chinese imports and won.

After Chinese imports decreased, U.S. facilities began to bring Americans back to work, and U.S. companies began to reinvest in new facilities. Now, the South Koreans have stepped in to seize the position in our market vacated by the Chinese.

On July 8, 2014, the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) will render its final determination on this matter. It is my hope that when all the facts are uncovered and due process is followed, the DOC will be able to calculate sufficient dumping margins and impose them on OCTG producers in all nine countries in question.

Steel production facilities in Alabama are state of the art, and the products made there are of the highest quality. All of that hard work is in jeopardy due to relentless surges of unfairly traded steel products.

It is imperative that our elected leaders in Washington, D.C. make certain that the DOC uses all of the tools at its disposal during its final phase of investigation in this current OCTG case to uncover the truth about these dumping practices and render a fair, well-reasoned decision. This is a battle our state and our nation cannot afford to lose.

(Del Marsh serves as the President Pro Tempore of the Alabama Senate and represents District 12, which includes Calhoun and St. Clair counties.)

## **[Runoff set in State Senate 30 race \(Montgomery Advertiser\)](#)**

The Alabama Republican Party has certified the Primary election results and there will be a runoff in the state Senate District 30 race, said Bill Armistead, chairman of the party.

Clyde Chambliss Jr. collected 9,144 votes, or about 49.9 percent. Harris Garner gathered 5,862 votes or about 31.99 percent.

The runoff is July 15.

UPDATE 9:19 A.M.

The chairman of the Alabama Republican Party said this morning that the organization hasn't received provisional ballot totals from two counties in the state Senate District 30 race, which means it can't make the call on if a runoff is needed.

"The probate judge's in those two counties assured me Tuesday that they would overnight the results and we would get them by 10 a.m. today," Bill Armistead said from his Birmingham office about 9:03 a.m. Wednesday. He couldn't recall which two counties have the outstanding reports. "We just feel that we need the hard numbers in hand before we make any decision."

#### ORIGINAL STORY:

No decision was announced by Tuesday evening from state Republican Party officials on whether a runoff will occur in the state Senate District 30 race, so the candidates took matters into their own hands.

Frontrunner Clyde Chambliss Jr and Harris Garner say they have pushed their campaigns into high gear leading up to the July 15 runoff. The Alabama Republican Party was waiting for provisional ballots to be counted Tuesday since the race is too close to call. The party made no announcement on its website by Tuesday evening, and party Chairman Bill Armistead did not return phone calls seeking comment for this story.

Election night tallies had Chambliss, an engineer from Prattville, collecting about 50 percent of the vote in the four-person race. Garner, an electrical contractor from Millbrook, came in second with about 32 percent.

To win outright, Chambliss would have had to get 50 percent plus one vote to be declared the winner without a runoff.

"We got the provisional numbers from the courthouses Tuesday, and our calculations show we are about 19 votes short of the requirement," Chambliss said. "The runoff takes place five weeks from today, so time is a factor. We have been operating from the position that there will be a runoff, so our strategy hasn't changed."

Garner said he knew there was going to be a runoff after the numbers came in following last week's Republican primary.

"It is very close, but it is also clear Mr. Chambliss didn't receive the majority of the votes as state law requires," Garner said. "That means the voters in the district will have one more chance to have their

voices heard. We have been working hard since the primary, and we will continue to run a hard campaign until the runoff takes place."

The district covers all of Autauga and Coosa counties and portions of Elmore, Chilton and Tallapoosa counties. The seat became open when freshman incumbent Bryan Taylor did not seek re-election. The winner of the runoff likely will serve in the State House. There were no Democratic candidates in the primaries and no independent candidates have qualified for the race.

The state party has until Friday to send the Alabama Secretary of State's Office a list of runoff races.

## **[Robotics park lauded for bringing thousands more jobs to state as governor announces money for final expansion \(al.com\)](#)**

MONTGOMERY, Alabama – Gov. Robert Bentley today announced funding that had been anticipated for the third phase of the Alabama Robotics Technology Park in Limestone County.

Bentley had been scheduled to make an announcement in person at the park last month but canceled that appearance.

After touring Aerobotix, a robotics company in Madison today, Bentley said that \$6 million was released this morning for the construction of Phase III of the park, which is across U.S. Highway 31 from Calhoun Community College. The new facility is expected to be online next year.

"The Alabama Robotic Technology Park is one of the biggest assets we can have for companies," Bentley said in the press release. "The park allows us to provide an opportunity for a technically trained, highly skilled and educated workforce for jobs in Alabama. The Robotic Technology Park is an opportunity that can help companies be successful in Alabama."

According to the press release, the planned 50,000-square-foot building is designed to let employees of companies train on new equipment and software before a company installs it in a factory. Using the park's planned Phase III building will enable employees to test ahead of time how new products will work together.

The building also will include an area for training employees to use robots and manual spraying to paint vehicle parts or other products.

The total cost of the facility is \$9 million, according to the governor's office. The Alabama Industrial Development Training, the state workforce training agency that runs the Alabama Robotic Technology Park, got \$3 million of the construction cost last year from a state bond issue.

Alabama companies can send employees to train at the robotics park for no cost. Out-of-state companies can use the center, but must pay for the cost of training.

Ed Castile, director of Alabama Industrial Development Training, said the first two phases are probably responsible for "thousands and thousands" jobs to date, and in a couple more years when the third phase is in full swing, thousands more could be added.

The robotics park, which he said has no equal in America because it's the lone location where all 12 major robotics vendors co-exist, has proved an effective marketing tool, he added. Remington, in particular, showed interest in the robotics park for improving its automation process at its new fun manufacturing plant in Huntsville, he said.

A couple hundred companies sent more than 600 employees to train at 90 robotics classes the park conducted in 2013 alone, Castile said.

State gets a No. 1 ranking: Alabama bests other states in advanced placement (TimesDaily)

Alabama might not be first in many positive rankings, but when it comes to advanced placement testing, high school students are doing it right.

The State Department of Education's A-Plus College Ready program has provided a major boost to AP programs in high schools across the state by providing funding to cash-strapped systems that couldn't otherwise afford to offer advanced courses.

Alabama high school students had the largest percentage increase in qualifying math, English and science AP test scores in the nation from 2008-13.

The number of qualifying scores achieved by students in the three areas grew by 118 percent, compared to a nationwide growth of just 42 percent.

As a result, the program will receive an additional \$4.27 million to expand to an additional 21 schools this year.

The program began with a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative.

Among the area's schools being funded through the program are the three Colbert County high schools, Colbert Heights, Cherokee and Colbert County High School; Florence High School and Russellville High School.

Muscle Shoals High School was designated an A-Plus College Ready school in 2010 with the three-year grant expiring at the end of the 2012-13 school year. The district has seven advanced placement courses with plans to add an eighth, AP computer science, as soon as it becomes a designated course. Now the school is a partner with A-Plus. Though it doesn't get full funding with training and bonuses for students and teachers, the school is eligible for matching grant funds to continue helping offset costs.

Muscle Shoals Principal Chad Holden said AP is the best route a student can choose in preparing for college.

"The A-Plus program certainly helped grow our enrollment in these courses," Holden said. "It is expensive for school systems, but it's good for students."

The Florence district now offers 19 AP courses, including the three added by this year's acceptance into the A-Plus program. The school is getting \$80,000 for the upcoming year and is adding AP physics I, AP physics II and physics C mechanics.

Florence Schools Superintendent Janet Womack said the program allows her district to provide the kind of academic rigor necessary for college success.

But for school districts such as Colbert County that have long wanted to offer AP courses but couldn't afford to, the grant is coming at the perfect time, according to Assistant Superintendent Jeff Cornelius. At the start of the 2014-15 school year, all three high schools will offer AP biology, calculus, language/composition and literature. In addition, Cherokee High School will add AP chemistry. Each course is allotted \$2,000 in funding.

"The lack of funds is the main reason we haven't offered these courses in the past," Cornelius said. "It's very expensive."

The grant covers teacher training for two summers for AP courses as well as Pre-AP. While it doesn't provide for textbooks, the grant covers the costs of special equipment for the classes.

"The big payoff is that the kids can get college credit up to 15 hours for qualifying test scores and that's a whole semester they won't have to pay for," Cornelius said. "The students ultimately are better prepared for the ACT, which means higher scores and more scholarships, and the teachers are better for having gone through the training as well. It gives them new strategies for the classroom." Cornelius said the initial expense of implementing AP courses is the greatest. By the end of the grant period, he said, it should be less expensive to continue the curriculum.

"It's just a win-win situation and we're grateful to be in on this funding," he said. "It's going to make a big difference with our students, with our district."

## **State GOP chairman says committee has gathered evidence of voter fraud in June 3 election (al.com)**

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- Bill Armistead, the chairman of the Alabama Republican Party, said the GOP's efforts to gather information on voter fraud paid off.

The party had set up a hotline to report voter fraud in the June 3 election. And if that wasn't enough, the GOP offered a \$1,000 reward for information that leads to a felony conviction related to voter fraud.

The Alabama GOP now says it has gathered information, through tips and interviews, compelling enough to turn over to the state's attorney general. Armistead said he believes the information could lead to convictions.

The Alabama GOP, in an email sent to supporters on Tuesday, listed some of the alleged irregularities, but declined to provide details because of potential investigations by the state.

The allegations include: voters receiving primary ballots in the mail without request; voters asked to vote absentee but who were only given the Democratic option; a candidate helping voters fill out ballots; and a voter finding out, in person, that her ballot had already been cast as an absentee ballot.

Armistead said reports and complaints came from both Republicans and Democrats.

## **Alabama prison officials suggest grisly medical tales incomplete and "grossly inaccurate" (al.com)**

Alabama prison officials today responded with disappointment and disagreement following the release of a new report by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

That report, "Cruel Confinement," assembles a series of jarring medical tales to argue that medical care for Alabama prisoners is cruel and therefore unconstitutional.

"The Alabama Department of Corrections is proud of the health care we provide to inmates, health care which costs Alabamians millions of dollars each year and is better than health care given to most uninsured Alabamians," replied Kim Thomas in a lengthy statement emailed to media outlets this afternoon.



The Southern Poverty Law Center, collaborating with Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program, issued a report loaded with individual stories. A prisoner allowed to bleed to death. A prisoner left untreated on the floor after a stroke. Prisoners not provided blood sugar tests or cancer treatments. The list goes on.

But prison officials say the stories are incomplete and that the Southern Poverty Law Center won't help the state track down the details.

"We have allowed the Southern Poverty Law Center and Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program to come into our institutions, and permitted access to our facilities, records and offender interviews for more than two years in an effort to work with them on a variety of concerns related to the prison system," continues the statement.

"We are disappointed that we were not allowed more information so we could look into certain allegations raised in the report."

Thomas says that officials with the Alabama Department of Corrections met with the SPLC and ADAP recently and had seen their findings.

"With an interest in working to resolve their concerns, we asked for clarification and additional information so we could fully understand their concerns and investigate the information they claimed to have received," said Thomas. "Our requests for clarification and more information were, however, emphatically denied."

"We are disappointed that we were not allowed more information so we could look into certain allegations raised in the report."

The report also argues that Alabama prisons do not provide adequate accommodations for individuals with disabilities and that prisons provide little mental health care.

Thomas said prison officials continue to review the report and have passed the information on to medical contractor, Corizon of Tennessee, and the mental health provider, MHM of Virginia. "MHM and Corizon have informed me that many of the allegations in the report are grossly inaccurate and appear to be based on incomplete information."

"As Governor Bentley stated yesterday," said Thomas in his emailed statement, "my door is open to the SPLC and ADAP if they wish to cooperate with our department in resolving the concerns raised in their report. Regardless of how they proceed, this department will remain committed to ensuring that

every individual incarcerated in our system is confined in an environment that complies with the United States Constitution."

The U.S. Department of Justice in January also notified Alabama that it was expanding its investigation of sexual abuse of prisoners at Tutwiler Prison for Women to look into several other areas, including the provision of medical and mental health care.

Update: The Southern Poverty Law Center responded to Thomas late this afternoon.

"We are surprised and disappointed to hear that the Alabama Department of Corrections is proud of the health care delivered to prisoners, despite the systemic problems we have documented," replied Maria Morris, managing attorney for the nonprofit's Montgomery office and lead author of the report.

"They've known about the problems for years. We recognize that prison officials have to say some things for public consumption, but we are concerned about the commitment of officials to bring the standards up to a humane and constitutional level."

Update: Corizon and MHM issued a two-page statement late today that reiterated many of the same points asserted by Thomas, expressing "disappointment" in the actions of the Southern Poverty Law Center and repeating that many of the allegations in the report are "simply inaccurate or based on incomplete information."

"For over two years, representatives of the SPLC have been touring Alabama prisons and meeting with inmates in various prisons. During this process, representatives of the SPLC never reached out to representatives of Corizon or MHM to express any concerns regarding any particular inmate or group of inmates."

Corizon and MHM say they received a letter of the findings in April and met with the report authors in May. Corizon and MHM say the Southern Poverty Law Center declined to provide details and locations of individual inmates in need of care, and that the SPLC representatives showed "no interest in resolving these issues, but were insistent upon pursuing costly, time-consuming litigation."

They assert they provide adequate medical and mental health care and are prepared to debate the facts of individual cases in court.

"If the SPLC will provide us with proper authorization allowing us to discuss these individual patients with the media, we will be happy to discuss their care and show why we firmly believe that the care provided to our patients exceeds any applicable constitutional standards."

## **Newly appointed state BOE member thanks God, governor and family; calls board work 'a sacred trust' (al.com)**

Al Thompson, a self employed property manager from Bay Minette, thanked God today for the opportunity to serve on the Alabama State Board of Education.

He also thanked Gov. Robert Bentley, calling him "a man of integrity, ability and intellect," as well as his family, including his father, Albert Thompson II, a 94-year-old World War II veteran who attended his son's swearing-in ceremony.

"Daddy, I will use the wisdom, the values and the good judgement that you've imparted on me for the past 58 years to the best of my ability," Thompson said after taking his oath of office.

Alabama Supreme Court Justice Lyn Stuart performed the swearing-in ceremony at the start of today's board of education meeting.

Thompson went on to say he takes his new position very seriously.

"I consider this position a sacred trust to the citizens of District I," he said. "I look forward to listening and learning from all citizens in District I, but especially from parents, teachers, staff and administrators involved in public education."

Thompson comes to the board by the appointment of Bentley, filling the role of former District I board member Tracy Roberts who stepped down this month, citing "personal reasons" that required her to focus on her family.

Thompson will finish the remainder of Roberts' term, which expires in 2016. He will then have the option of running for a full four-year term in the seat.

Others attending the ceremony included Thompson's brother-in-law, Jim Turpen, a teacher and coach at Baldwin County High School, Thompson's sister, Toni Turpen, and multiple other relatives and friends.

### **3 Alabama community colleges change leaders (AP)**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Three of Alabama's community colleges have new leaders.

Community college Chancellor Mark Heinrich says the State Board of Education has approved the appointment of Andrea Mayfield as president of Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa. She had been at East Mississippi Community College for 18 years, including serving as a dean and a vice president.

The chancellor said Wednesday that Dr. Helen McAlpine is becoming interim president of Gadsden State Community College. She has been president of J.F. Drake Community College in Gadsden. Heinrich said John Reutter III will serve as acting president of Drake. He has been the college's director of planning and resource development.

### **Congressman Byrne tangles with defense secretary over Bergdahl deal, raises specter of Nixon (AL.com)**

U.S. Rep Bradley Byrne on Wednesday compared President Barack Obama's actions in a five-for-one prisoner swap with the Taliban to the legal rationale asserted by the Nixon administration during the Watergate scandal.

Byrne, R-Fairhope, participated in the questioning of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel during hearings before the House Armed Services Committee, which is looking into the deal that freed U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl.

"I appreciate Secretary Hagel for spending considerable time in front of our committee today," Byrne said in a prepared statement. "I went into the hearing with serious concerns that our military members serving in the Middle East, and Americans the world over, are in greater danger today due to the release of these Taliban officials. Secretary Hagel's testimony did little to ease my concerns, and actually only raised more questions about the security of Americans abroad."

The House Armed Services Committee scheduled Wednesday's hearing in response to the deal to bring home Bergdahl, who had been held captive in Afghanistan for five years. President Barack Obama released five detainees from the U.S. detention facility at Guantonomo

Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, joined a chorus of opposition to President Barack Obama's decision to release five detainees at the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as part of the deal without giving Congress 30 days' notice as required by law. Byrne asked Hagel if he had suggested that the administration give the notice.

"All of these things were discussed – notification, the risks which we've talked about today.

I support the decision that was made on notification," Hagel said. "I didn't particularly like it. I think a lot of people didn't, but we felt in the interest of not risking any further Bowe Bergdahl, the opportunity to get him back and maybe even his life, this was the smartest way to do it."

Byrne followed with another question: "I understand it was discussed. But did you, yourself, suggest or recommend that some notification or consultation be made prior to May 31st?"

Hagel said everyone involved in the decision discussed all of the issues involved.

"At the end, we discussed it," he said. "We all came out at the same place – that the risk was just too great. We didn't want to take the risk."

Byrne asked Stephen Preston, the Defense Department's general counsel, if it was administration policy that the president can ignore particular provisions of the law without challenging them in court.

"I can only speak for myself, but I think that the president may act in the exercise of his constitutional authority as he understands it and as circumstances demand without necessarily going to court," he answered.

Byrne asked how that was different from the position taken by officials in the Nixon administration.

Said Preston: "I wouldn't even know where to begin to answer that."

Told by Byrne to start at the beginning, Preston said: "The way I would answer that is this president faced a service member in peril and in captivity and exercised a constitutional duty and authority to recover that service member in circumstances that it was the judgment of the leading policymakers in this country that the circumstances was not going to permit the 30-day notification."

In his statement, Byrne expressed grave concern over Hagel's response to his questions about the legality of the move.

"The idea that the president can unilaterally decide that a law does not apply to him should be alarming to all Americans," he stated. "This investigation is not over. We will continue to demand answers about this secret deal from the Obama administration to ensure a future transfer of this nature does not happen again."

## **Rep. Mo Brooks says shortcomings in VA healthcare points to likely failure for ObamaCare (al.com)**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Huntsville, said "sweeping reform" is needed in healthcare provided for veterans through the Veterans Administration.

The shortcomings that have come to light in recent weeks also signal that the new government healthcare system is likely doomed to failure as well, Brooks said.

"There is one positive Americans can discern from these disclosures about the dangerous and deadly quality of VA care for America's war veterans," Brooks said in a statement Tuesday. "The VA health care system is a stark warning that federal government-run health care makes matters worse, not better, that ObamaCare is a step in the wrong direction, and that federal government-run health care does not come close to providing the kind of health care America has come to demand and expect from private or local health care providers.

"No private health care provider could stay in business if it caused as many health care delays, and deaths, as the VA system has been inflicting on America's war veterans."

The House voted without dissent Tuesday to pass the Veteran Access to Care Act of 2014, passed the House on a 426-0 vote. It also eliminated employee bonuses for three years.

The bill mandates that the Secretary of Veteran Affairs enter into contracts with non-VA healthcare facilities to help serve veterans with extended waiting times for appointments at VA facilities as well as for veterans who live more than 40 miles from a VA healthcare facility.

"Recent revelations of Veterans Administration mismanagement highlight the need for sweeping reform," Brooks said. "This week, a system-wide VA audit disclosed that more than 57,000 veterans were subject to unacceptable and dangerous wait times for access to health care. America is bombarded daily with non-stop disclosures of how badly broken the VA system has become even

though, over the past decade, Congress has dramatically increased VA funding far in excess of new patient loads.

"As the VA continues to prove it is incapable of meeting patient needs, it's apparent we must permit our veterans to seek responsive health care outside of the VA system. I'm pleased the House has taken yet another step to stand up for our nation's veterans. I urge the Senate to act quickly and pass this bipartisan legislation."

## **Club for Growth endorses Palmer, will the Chamber engage? (Yellowhammer News)**

The Club for Growth PAC announced today that it is endorsing Gary Palmer for Congress in Alabama's 6th Congressional District runoff, after previously supporting Dr. Chad Mathis in the primary.

"We've always considered both Chad Mathis and Gary Palmer to be supporters of limited government and economic freedom, but our research told us that Chad Mathis had the best chance to make the runoff with Paul DeMarco. We were obviously mistaken and the credit goes to Gary for running a great campaign in the primary," said Club for Growth President Chris Chocola. "Now we have the option of supporting taxpayer hero Gary Palmer and there's no question that he is the choice of fiscal conservatives looking to put America on a path to prosperity."

The Club has been one of the most active Washington, D.C.-based conservative groups in Republican primaries over the last several election cycles, often going toe-to-toe with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber and their allies had beaten back a series of tea party-styled candidates around the country in recent months, but with House Majority Leader Eric Cantor going down on Tuesday and long-time U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran on the ropes in Mississippi, grassroots conservatives seem to be having a bit of a resurgence on the national stage.

The big question in Alabama's 6th Congressional District is whether the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will jump in behind Paul DeMarco, setting up another "Tea Party vs. Establishment" matchup (Note: That's extremely oversimplified, but that's how the national media would frame it.)

Most recently in Alabama, the Chamber came in strong behind Bradley Byrne when grassroots conservative groups threw their support behind Dean Young in Alabama's 1st Congressional District.

Sources familiar with the Chamber's thinking told Yellowhammer today that it is highly unlikely that the Chamber will get involved in the Palmer-DeMarco matchup because "they are fine with either candidate."

"From the outside looking in a lot of people probably view Gary as the most 'tea party' of the two candidates, but people in the business community view him as sort of a 'thinking man's conservative,' due to his time running (the Alabama Policy Institute)," the source said. "Don't get me wrong, the Chamber knows DeMarco really well and would be thrilled if he won, but Gary's not the kind of candidate they're going to go way out of their way to stop from getting elected."

If that's the case, Club for Growth could mitigate DeMarco's fundraising advantage by pouring some money into the runoff either pumping up Palmer or tearing down DeMarco.

Third party groups like the Club for Growth are not allowed to coordinate directly with campaigns, but are at liberty to influence races through independent expenditures. Their ads aimed at businessman Will Brooke in the AL-06 primary are widely credited with derailing his chances of getting into the runoff.

If they jump in big behind Palmer, and the Chamber stays on the sidelines, this race could get really interesting, really fast.

## **[Alabama taking disproportionate hit in federal job losses, analysis shows \(al.com\)](#)**

Ongoing budget cuts are whittling down the federal workforce to the tune of tens of thousands of jobs, including wide-ranging losses in Alabama.

Office of Personnel Management data compiled by Federal Times shows the federal government has lost a net of more than 61,400 jobs from December 2010 to December 2013. The job loss numbers include those who left due to buyouts or early retirements, as well as hiring freezes and attrition. Alabama lost 2,724 federal jobs during that time frame. That number is the 9th highest number of job losses in the country, and close to numbers from much more populated states such as Texas and New York.

Here are the top 10 areas for federal job losses in the last three years:



Washington, D.C. – 9,423

California – 5,684

Pennsylvania – 4,611

New Jersey – 4,188

Georgia – 3,890

Illinois – 3,477

New York – 2,944

Texas – 2,818

Alabama - 2,724

Maryland picked up 4,080 jobs, most of which Federal Times notes, moved out of Washington, D.C. to new Department of Defense facilities as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process.

Alabama has about 50,000 federal workers, the majority of whom - roughly 28,000 - work for the Department of Defense. The state has about 10,000 postal workers.

## **[Alabama still working on compliance with federal law to prevent prison rape \(al.com\)](#)**

Just two states are in full compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act. And just seven states have made no promise to comply.

Alabama falls in the middle, along with 40 other states, which last month assured the U.S. Department of Justice they are working on it.

Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act in 2003 to prevent sexual abuse behind bars. But the rules of the act weren't finished until 2012. States had until May 15 this year to write the federal government of their efforts to comply.

Gov. Robert Bentley last month wrote that Alabama was working to comply, but his letter to the Justice Department pointed to "unworkable federal timeframes" and a delay in federal guidance. He wrote that Alabama was still waiting on the federal rules for the compliance audits.

"As a result, I cannot certify PREA at this time," wrote Bentley.

New Hampshire and New Jersey were the only two states to meet all the standards. Most states, like Alabama, pledged to would spend at least 5 percent of all federal grant money related to prisons on taking steps to meet the new rules.

Seven states offered the federal government no such assurance, according a Justice Department announcement in May 28. Those are Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Nebraska, Texas and Utah. Each could lose 5 percent of related federal grants.

The 128 pages of PREA regulations call for more video monitoring in prisons, adequate staffing levels, no cross-gender pat downs, no cross-gender viewing of inmates while they shower, anonymous hotlines, unimpeded access to emergency medical services, and much more.

The executive summary at the start of those federal regulations reads: "In popular culture, prison rape is often the subject of jokes; in public discourse, it has been at times dismissed by some as an inevitable—or even deserved— consequence of criminality. But sexual abuse is never a laughing matter, nor is it punishment for a crime."

The U.S. Department of Justice this year documented numerous incidents of staff-on-inmate sexual abuse at Tutwiler Prison for Women in Alabama and has announced plans to continue to scrutinize the prison. The state has hired consultants with the Moss Group to help rectify the problems at Tutwiler, and Bentley mentioned that in his letter to the Justice Department.

A spokesperson for Alabama Department of Corrections earlier said Tutwiler last year added saloon doors to provide some privacy for female inmates when they shower. Tutwiler is still working on video surveillance and the entire Alabama prison system struggles with what the Justice Department calls "catastrophically" low staffing levels.

Staffing levels fell 3 percent in the Alabama prison system from March 2013 to March 2014, leaving the system with less than 60 percent of the number of officers the system is authorized to have to adequately supervise inmates.

The governor's office did not reply to requests for comment on PREA standards.

The May 28 release from the Justice Department noted 4 percent of all state and federal prisoners reported being the victim of a sexual assault within the last year. It was more than twice that for juveniles.

## **Eric Cantor to step down as majority leader at end of July, backs McCarthy as successor (Washington Post)**

By Paul Kane, Chris Cillizza, Robert Costa and Ed O'Keefe, Published: June 11

Majority Leader Eric I. Cantor (R-Va.) will step down from his leadership post at the end of July, ending a swift rise through the ranks of national politics and upending a leadership team that has run the House since Republicans took control after the 2010 tea party wave election.

Less than 24 hours after losing a primary contest to a tea party-backed economist, Cantor announced Wednesday afternoon that he will resign as leader July 31, but keep his seat until his term ends in January. He said that House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) would make an "outstanding" successor.

"While I may have suffered a personal setback last night, I couldn't be more optimistic about the future of this country," Cantor told reporters Wednesday afternoon. "I'm honored that I've had the privilege of serving the people of Virginia's 7th District."

House Republicans plan to hold new leadership elections next Thursday, according to senior aides. In addition to McCarthy, several senior Republicans are mulling bids for top posts, so it wasn't immediately clear which positions will be open next week.

Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) led a Wednesday afternoon meeting of the House Republican conference and thanked Cantor and his staff for their service.

"This is a speech I never expected to give," Boehner said. He was in tears later as Cantor addressed his 232 Republican colleagues.

Cantor's decision to leave his leadership post after losing Tuesday to economist Dave Brat came on a day that Republicans began scrambling to build support and fill the leadership vacuum.

McCarthy, the next in line after Boehner and Cantor, is preparing to run for majority leader, but will have competition from more conservative colleagues.

Rep. Pete Sessions (R-Texas), chairman of the powerful House Rules Committee, began texting colleagues Tuesday night asking to speak with them about his bid for majority leader. His top advisers were actively positioning him for the race.

A confident Sessions predicted in an interview that he would beat McCarthy, arguing that his work to elect Republicans during the 2010 elections and his current leadership of powerful Rules Committee makes him ready to manage the House floor.

"I'll be a majority leader who will be clear-headed about what we're going to try to accomplish, putting more focus on what we're trying to sell," Sessions said, adding that he has a "strong and open" relationship with Boehner. "I know how to win."

The large Texas Republican delegation, which represents 10 percent of the entire House Republican Conference, planned to meet later Wednesday with the possibility of producing a unified front for Sessions or Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas), chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, to be the Lone Star State's favorite GOP son for a leadership slot.

It's unclear when elections would be held to succeed Cantor, something that will be out of his control. Republicans aligned with more establishment figures privately expressed interest in shortening the race, for fear that a seven-week race until the end of July would be an ideological battlefield that tears the caucus apart.

Next week's planned leadership elections will allow a transition period for Cantor and his staff to leave his post. Allies of the majority leader described the timing of July 31 as one based largely on helping his staff make their moves.

In addition to stepping down as majority leader, Cantor told colleagues Wednesday that he will not run as a write-in candidate in November.

Cantor returned to the Capitol Wednesday morning by sneaking into the building through a back door on the Senate side in hopes of avoiding reporters. He appeared stone-faced and tense, grimacing when asked by The Washington Post whether he would step down from his leadership post or resign from Congress.

Cantor, who has represented the Richmond suburbs since 2001, lost by 11 percentage points to Brat. The 51-year old had been considered the next generation's GOP leader, who would take over for Boehner, 64, when he retired. In a caucus deeply divided between establishment Republicans and fire-breathing conservatives, these were the two who had shown some ability to keep order.

McCarthy hesitated even behind closed doors Wednesday morning to say he would run for majority leader, still stunned by the loss of his close friend, Cantor, according to aides not authorized to speak publicly about the unfolding leadership race.

McCarthy spent the morning in his spacious suite on the first floor of the Capitol, reaching out by telephone to more than 100 members, declining to go into details about his plans while hinting, with his appreciation for the encouragement, that he would run for majority leader. Later, he was seen huddling with several colleagues, including Reps. Christopher Smith (R-N.J.), Mark Sanford (R-S.C.), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) and Dennis A. Ross (R-Fla.), as he tries to shore up support and avoid competition.

A race between McCarthy and Sessions would revive a long-simmering rivalry. They both ran for whip in 2010, with McCarthy besting his older opponent. Ever since, Sessions, 59, has been eager to challenge McCarthy and is telling colleagues that an older, more conservative hand is needed near the top, aides said.

With McCarthy seeking to climb the leadership ranks, Rep. Peter Roskam (R-Ill.), the chief deputy whip, announced to his inner circle Wednesday morning that he will run for whip, the third-highest position in leadership, and throw his support behind McCarthy as majority leader.

Roskam told The Washington Post that he would not comment out of respect to Cantor. He was seen heading to a meeting with his allies to discuss his path ahead.

But Roskam is expected to face competition from Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.), who leads the conservative Republican Study Committee and is already privately whipping votes, and possibly Hensarling, according to aides familiar with the jockeying.

In his conversations with colleagues, Scalise is making the case that he would serve as “a red state voice” in leadership ranks currently lacking a hardline conservative. Hensarling was seen huddling on the House floor Wednesday afternoon alongside House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.), a key conservative broker. Earlier, he had huddled with Reps. Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.), Justin Amash (R-Mich.) and Raul Labrador (R-Idaho), a trio of renegade Republicans who rarely back leadership.

In a brief interview, Hensarling was coy, saying that he was still mulling a potential leadership run. But he was upbeat and smiling — somewhat unusual for the taciturn Republican — and enjoying the speculation.

Amid all the activity, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), currently the fourth-ranking Republican as chairman of the House Republican Conference, said Wednesday that she wouldn't be seeking a higher position, meaning the leadership contest will focus on the majority leader and whip jobs.

Boehner, meanwhile, appeared unfazed by the developments. He chatted Wednesday on the floor with close friends and avoided areas of the floor where McCarthy and others were chatting with colleagues. On Tuesday night, he stuck to his usual routine by hanging out with close friends and aides at an Italian restaurant that he likes near Capitol Hill.

The fast-paced developments left rank-and-file members stunned as the 233-member caucus began splintering off behind favored candidates.

Several conservatives said they were eager to see Cantor replaced by a southern conservative.

"I just think that there is a geographical area of the country that has not been represented in leadership and I think that could be the determining factor in what happens," said Rep. Lynn Westmoreland, (R-Ga.).

Asked to further clarify which area of the country he thought the next majority leader should hail from, Westmoreland replied: "Get a map."

But Rep. Pat Tiberi, an Ohio Republican close to Boehner, pushed back on suggestions that the next leader needs to be from the south.

"Where does it say that in the constitution?" he quipped to reporters.

Tiberi cautioned that the tea party success in ousting Cantor doesn't necessarily signal an oncoming insurgence of conservatives into the GOP House leadership.

"I've been around this business for 14 years and I can't remember when there hasn't been an anti-Washington feeling," he said.

Rep. Mo Brooks (R-Ala.) suggested that the GOP leadership team should have more equal political representation. "We need to have some people on there from red states as opposed to having all of them from blue states," he told reporters.

Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-Kan.), a frequent critic of Boehner and Cantor, said he hopes to elect a leader with deeper roots in the conservative base of the party.

"There's a widespread concern about the Republican establishment not listening to conservatives and so I think it had energized the tea party," he said. "It's certainly not dead as we found out last night."

Other colleagues, still shellshocked by Tuesday's stunning turn of events, just expressed condolences.

"I'm sorry my friend lost," said Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.).

Brat, meanwhile, appeared to struggle under fresh scrutiny of his upstart campaign. His campaign abruptly cancelled a scheduled news conference.

"Sorry, we're kind of flying by the seat-of-our pants today," a staffer said, explaining that the campaign decided to develop a media strategy before talking again to the press.

That decision came after Brat appeared on MSNBC to suggest that Cantor had lost touch with his district. Cantor "has not been present in the district," he said.

"I was door-knocking, I know what was on the minds of the folks," he added later.

But Brat appeared caught off guard by a barrage of policy questions. "I thought we were just going to chat today about the celebratory aspect," he said.