



Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Del Marsh
Press Clips
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Ballots and bullets: Counties cannot issue blanket ban of firearms at polling places, Luther Strange says (AL.com)

Counties do not have the authority to prohibit voters from carrying firearms at all polling place, Attorney General Luther Strange said in an opinion issued Monday.

The issue was raised during primary elections in June as voters carrying holstered guns were stopped by law enforcement officers at the doors of some polling places across the state.

Shelby County officials reported three such encounters, and though no arrests were made, deputies did not allow voters visibly carrying weapons to take them into polling places.

In Chambers County, officials met after complaints from voters and, while the polls were still open, decided they were not legally able to prohibit firearms at the polls and took down signs forbidding them.

The Chambers County Commission, though, wanted clarity on the matter and asked Alabamas Attorney General Luther Strange for an opinion on the matter.

A little more than a month later, and a week before voters will head back to the polls for runoff elections, Strange said that although carrying weapons into places such as courthouses is still prohibited, counties cannot issue a blanket ban keeping voters from carrying at all polling stations.

"The Chambers County Commission does not have the authority to prohibit firearms at all polling places," Strange said. "Whether firearms may be prohibited in polling places depends on the nature of the location."

For instance, Strange said, in courthouses and the offices of a district attorney, guns are already banned and that ban is not lifted when the same facilities are used as a polling place.

Likewise, schools and facilities that implement certain levels of security and already prohibit firearms may continue to do so even if they become polling places on election day.

Strange said that when a piece of private property such as a church serves the public purpose of acting as a polling place, gun owners must have a concealed carry permit or the permission of the

property owner to carry a weapon there. Strange said even those with a concealed carry permit can be prohibited from carrying onto private property at the discretion of the property owners.

"The owner of private premises or another authorized person may revoke the license or privilege of a person to enter or remain on private property," Strange said. "Therefore, the owner of the private property who allows his or her property to be used as a polling place may personally or by an authorized representative, prohibit firearms on the premises, even with respect to persons who have a permit."

ALGOP Chairman: Liberal AEA out of touch with hard-working educators, must answer for failures (Yellowhammer News)

"Follow the money" has been a term coined to describe where candidates get their political contributions. During a 2010 special session, the Republican-led legislature enacted a variety of laws to clean up the way money was spread around to candidates. One new law prohibited PAC-to-PAC transfers, in order to provide transparency to discover who is actually providing campaign money to candidates.

A component of another one of these laws is just now going into effect. The law prohibits organizations, like the Alabama Education Association (AEA), from receiving dues through payroll deductions unless they certify that the dues money is not used for political purposes. The state should have never been in the business of helping a political organization collect dues that would be used for political purposes.

Just a few months after the law was passed in 2010, the AEA and others sued in the federal court in the Northern District of Alabama to keep the law from being implemented. The court issued a preliminary injunction to block the law from taking effect. For over three years, this law sat dormant. However, this injunction was overturned earlier this year, allowing the law to finally be put into effect.

The AEA and other like organizations had until June 30 to certify that the money they collected from dues was not going to be used for political purposes. The organization failed to do so. AEA spokeswoman Amy Marlowe said that promising not to use payroll funds for political purposes would have "silenced AEA".

With over 95,000 members in Alabama, automatic payroll deductions were a huge source of income for AEA. The organization now must attempt to transition its members to a bank draft system. The dues will now be right in front of them, instead of automatically taken out before they received their paychecks. Although AEA claims the change will not largely hurt their membership numbers, Senate Pro Tem Del Marsh said that with the new bank drafts, members "may look more closely at what the teachers association is doing."

For an organization that reportedly pumped \$7 million into the Alabama Republican Primary, with the goal of electing candidates who would be blindly loyal to the AEA, this could mean rough waters ahead. The AEA funded races against many incumbent Republican legislators, including Speaker Mike Hubbard and Senate Pro Tem Del Marsh, in an effort to regain the control they had over the legislature when Democrats were the majority. The effort by the teacher union was a colossal failure, they have little to show for throwing away millions of dollars in the Republican Primary.

[Alabama Senate District 30: Chambliss, Garner battle for Republican nomination \(AL.com\)](#)

One of the hottest state Senate races is in District 30 in central Alabama, where two Republicans face each other in the July 15 runoff.

The choice will be between Prattville City Councilman Clyde Chambliss and Millbrook businessman Harris Garner.

The Senate seat became open when state Sen. Bryan Taylor, a Republican, said he would retire.

The initial Republican primary had four candidates. On June 3, the field was narrowed to Chambliss and Garner.

District 30 includes all of Autauga and Coosa counties, most of Elmore County and parts of Chilton and Tallapoosa counties.

There is no Democratic candidate for the seat. Bryan Morgan of Prattville has qualified to run as an independent.

Chambliss completed a degree in civil engineering from the University of Alabama in 1992, according to his campaign website. In 1996, Chambliss was elected to his first of three terms on the Autauga County Commission.

Chambliss said he opposes Common Core, the educational agenda, and will impose fiscal discipline on state government.

Garner was born in the district, according to his website.

After serving in the U.S. Navy, Harris said he returned home so he and his wife, Cathy, could raise their family and start Garner Electric, the small business they run today.

Garner opposes Common Core and said he will oppose all tax increases, according to his website and public statements.

Payday loan opponents continue battle (WELD)

It's about eight months until the Alabama Legislature convenes its 2015 regular session, but proponents of laws to control payday and title loans are working hard in the off season.

The Alliance for Responsible Lending in Alabama (ARLA), a nonprofit coalition of organizations that focuses on payday and title loans, is developing grassroots support for a state law that would limit interest rates and impose other restrictions. The group also is working closely with city officials around the state in efforts to get cities to restrict payday and title loan businesses.

"We now have 21 ordinances in place that in some way restrict predatory loans," says Shay M. Farley, legal director of the Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice Inc., a member of ARLA.

Montgomery recently adopted a zoning ordinance that requires new payday and title loan businesses to be at least 2,500 feet apart as well as at least 250 feet away from schools, churches, parks and houses.

Pelham adopted a one-year moratorium on new payday and title loan stores, pawn shops, check-cashing business and other businesses in June.

Farley now is working with officials in Tuscaloosa and Troy on possible ordinances and says some officials in Huntsville are interested in restrictions as well.

"Part of the next steps is getting more city councils interested," Farley says.

While she is pleased that cities are taking action, Farley says they are not able to impose limits on how payday and title loans do business. So ARLA is now asking city councils to pass resolutions asking the Alabama League of Municipalities and legislative delegations to support bills restricting predatory lending in the 2015 session.

Several bills that would have limited payday and title loans died in the legislature in 2014. One sponsored by State Rep. Patricia Todd (D-Birmingham) would have limited payday loans to 36 percent interest and required lenders to use a common database so that borrowers could get no more than \$500 in loans at one time.

Payday loans are short-term loans that are accessible to people who have jobs and checking accounts with no credit check. Typically, borrowers promise to repay the loans on their next payday and are charged 17.5 percent interest for that period, which generally is two weeks to 30 days. Borrowers give lenders checks dated for their payday.

Thus, a \$300 loan carries \$52.50 in interest. A \$500 loan, the highest allowed by Alabama law, costs \$587.50 to repay. That equals as much as 456 percent annual interest.

Many payday lenders require borrowers to return on payday with cash to cover the loan and interest. They are given their checks back at that point. If the borrower does not come, the lender cashes the check. Some lenders simply cash the checks on the borrowers' payday instead of asking borrowers to pay in cash.

Borrowers frequently take out another loan immediately after they repay one.

Title loans, which are basically pawns of car titles, carry the same 25 percent per-month interest allowed for pawn shops, or 300 percent annual interest.

A bill sponsored by State Rep. Roderick Scott (D-Fairfield) would have limited title loans to 36 percent interest, and one introduced by State Sen. Scott Beason (R-Gardendale) would have restricted the interest for both kind of loans to 30 percent.

"We're absolutely using the off season to spread the word louder and further. ... We are trying to go to at least the four corners of the state. We have done the Wiregrass. We've done the northeast section of the state," Farley says. "We also incentivize people to be engaged at the local level."

ARLA is holding informational meetings to let participants know about the issues surrounding payday and title loans. Farley says about 45 people, including city officials and representatives of the faith community, attended a recent session in Huntsville.

"Beyond that, we have done some pretty good things. ... We are doing a mobile petition where we have created these banners that we are asking people who come out to our meetings to add their names to," she says "We can use that as an example of the support to show the size and the scope of the support."

She believes the support for restrictions on payday and title loans is growing. She uses the fact that the Southern Baptist Convention and Northern Alabama District of the United Methodist Church both have recently adopted resolutions as evidence. Newspapers around the state also have published editorials in favor of restrictions.

Farley says she has been working to educate people about payday and title loans for six years. Support in the legislature has galvanized only in the last two sessions. She says no bill had made it to the floor in the legislature until this year, when Scott's bill made it that far.

"It took us 12 years to get a landlord-tenant law," Farley says.

ARLA plans to continue campaigning for restrictions on payday and title loans, and Todd says she intends to introduce a bill again in 2015.

Farley says people who learn that borrowers pay up to 456 percent interest on their loans often are offended by that fact.

"If you believe that everyone should only take out loans that they can afford, you should not believe in these payday loans," Farley says. "The most conservative person who believes in fiscal responsibility should not be for this product."

ARLA will keep expanding its community engagement in coming months. "If we can continue to do these outreach sessions, the number of people who are talking about it will continue to get that momentum flowing," Farley says.

State school board selects Ella Bell as vice president (Montgomery Advertiser)

The Alabama State Board of Education on Tuesday elected Ella Bell of Montgomery as the board's vice president.

Bell said she plans to push forward with the board's Plan 2020 to improve the state's schools. (Scott Johnson/Advertiser)

As vice president, Bell effectively will lead the board for the next year. By statute, Gov. Robert Bentley is president of the board.

State Schools Superintendent Tommy Bice said he believes Bell, who represents District 5, will be an effective leader for the board.

"She believes in students, (and) she stands up for students that are underrepresented, so I think we're in good shape," Bice said.

Bell replaces District 6 board member Charles Elliot as vice president. Bell had been serving as the board's president pro tem, and District 7 board member Jeff Newman was chosen to replace her in that role.

Bell said that she looks forward to working with the board to advance Plan 2020, a master plan for improving state schools.

"I'm expecting the teachers and our leadership at our schools to feel that same kind of resurgence of education excellence in our schools," Bell said.

Public Service Commission, Place 2: Two candidates battle for Republican nomination (AL.com)

-Republican voters will choose the next commissioner on Place 2 of the three-member Alabama Public Service Commission in the statewide July 15 runoff election.

The choice will be between an incumbent commissioner, Terry Dunn, and his challenger, Chip Beeker.

Two seats on the three-member Public Service Commission were up for grabs in 2014. The Place 1 election was settled on June 3 when incumbent Commissioner Jeremy H. Oden won election. There is no Democrat on the ballot in the fall, giving Oden a win now.

The same is true for Beeker and Dunn; there is no Democrat on the ballot. The July 15 runoff will determine the commissioner for the next four years.

The PSC is the state's agency that regulates a variety of industries and companies, including Alabama Power. It also inspects railways.

The terms run for four years. Each PSC seat pays \$96,600 per year.

The president of the PSC, Republican Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh, was elected in 2012.

In the race for Place 2, Commissioner Terry Dunn is seeking re-election.

Dunn, 54, is from Southside, Etowah County.

Dunn owns Dunn Development Corp. and Dunn Investment Group.

Dunn has promised to push for formal rate reviews for Alabama Power and Alabama Gas. Formal rate reviews were suggested by Dunn at a January 2013 PSC meeting, but the motion died for lack of a second. Dunn said he wants to keep utility rates low.

Chris "Chip" Beeker is also challenging. Beeker, 65, is a former Greene County commissioner.

Beeker owns Beeker Catfish and Cattle Farms in Eutaw. He was elected to the Greene County Commission as a Democrat in 1986, switched to the Republican Party in 1996.

Beeker served on the Greene County Commission until 2006.

Beeker has promised to stand up to environmentalists and question policy mandates coming down from the Environmental Protection Agency and President Barack Obama.

Fate of MOWA Choctaw gaming machines pushed back into state court (AL.com)

A federal judge pushed the court case involving the seizure of gambling machines owned by the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians back into Mobile County Circuit Court after challenges to the state's authority faltered.

The tribe argued against the state's ability to seize and destroy 50 gaming machines that were carted away from the MOWA Choctaw Entertainment Center in November 2013 by the Mobile County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies raided their facility in Mount Vernon, hauling away the gambling machines, three computers and about \$10,000 in cash.

During a forfeiture hearing, attorneys for the tribe invoked sovereign immunity, arguing the case could not be heard in state court because the judge lacked jurisdiction, forcing the legal proceedings into federal court.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Sonia F. Bivins disagreed. Her report and recommendation, dated July 3, will be reviewed by a federal court judge, who will decide how much of her reasoning will be made law.

Each party has up to 14 days to file objections.

Mobile District Attorney Ashley Rich said her office is working with the state Attorney General's Office on any legal proceedings going forward.

Sam Hill, attorney for both defendants, said the tribe and JLM Games Inc. plan to file objections, adding that the decision lacked an "overlay" of American Indian law.

Hill, who is also the tribal judge for the MOWA Choctaws, said certain "assumptions in Indian law" were not fully addressed.

"Was this order surprising? No. Was it disappointing? Yes," Hill said.

In her ruling, a 27-page analysis of the case, Bivins explained that the tribe could not challenge the state's authority on the basis of tribal immunity, one of the tribe's key claims.

The tribe also sought to dismiss the suit on the grounds that the Indian Gaming Regulation Act, the federal law that governs the three classes of gaming federally recognized tribes are allowed to provide, preempted the state's authority.

"Because IGRA's text unambiguously limits its scope to gaming by tribes that have obtained federal recognition," Bivins wrote, "the statute does not apply to tribal groups such as the MOWA Tribe who have not obtained such recognition from the Secretary of Interior."

Bivins also ruled against a claim made by the tribe that their civil rights were violated.

No-shows leave southwest Alabama candidates without debating partners at Baldwin forum (AL.com)

A tea party-sponsored candidate forum turned into a question-and-answer session Tuesday when half of the invited candidates failed to show up.

State Senate candidate Harry D'Olive, Baldwin County Commissioner Bob James and Baldwin school board candidate Tony Myrick found themselves on the stage without their competitors in the July 15 runoff.

Moderators from the Common Sense Campaign instead peppered the candidates who did show up with questions they had prepared as well as those submitted by audience members.

Candidates for state auditor and public service commissioner also spoke to the audience at the Baldwin County Annex Building.

Senate District 22 race

D'Olive's opponent, former state Rep. Greg Albritton, cited a scheduling conflict in missing the event.

A lawyer and former Baldwin County probate judge, D'Olive seeks the Republican nomination for Senate District 22, which sprawls across parts of eight different counties.

D'Olive said he would work on homeowners insurance reform. One idea, he said, would be to switch to an elected state insurance commissioner. "Let him answer to the people instead of the governor," he said.

D'Olive also took a shot at Albritton, who has received some \$27,905 in "in-kind" support from a political action committee associated with Alfa Mutual Insurance Group.

"My opponent has been heavily backed by Alfa. I don't know how that would affect him," he said.

Albritton has said the assistance from Alfa is more about his support of farmers. Alfa is the insurance arm of the Alabama Farmers Federation.

D'Olive said he likely would not stay in office longer than two terms and would favor term limits as long as they applied to all offices. He favors strengthening a law passed by the Legislature prohibiting spending levels above the average of the previous 15 years by putting the restriction in the state constitution.

D'Olive said he opposes expanding the state's Medicaid program, supports the Second Amendment and opposes the Affordable Care Act.

Asked about his stance on the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a controversial program that seeks to standardize education standards across state lines, he said, "It's an attempt to standardize our children, and you can't standardize our children."

Pressed by the moderator and the audience, D'Olive said he would co-sponsor a bill to repeal the program in Alabama.

Baldwin County Commission race

James, who rode to office four years on a wave that turned two incumbents out of office, said he is proud of his record. He said the commission cut the budget in part by eliminating non-essential services and changed to longer-lasting asphalt on paving projects. He said the commission also has made its contracts and its checkbook available online.

The District 2 commissioner said he opposes tax increases and suggested that contrasts with his opponent, Chris Elliott.

"If you want your taxes to go up, vote for my opponent," he said. "Because they will go up."

Elliott, who said he could not attend because of a prior commitment, disputed that claim in a tweet. "Quite the contrary," he wrote. "Responsible, conservative leadership grows revenue by foster an environment favorable to business."

James said the county's heavy investment in an industrial mega-site north Bay Minette will be justified if it results in a more diverse economy. He said the county must come up with alternate ways to pay for new roads without raising taxes. He suggested toll roads and investment tax districts to pay for new highway interchanges.

School board race

Without incumbent school board District 3 member Elmer McDaniel in attendance, Myrick had free rein to criticize the leadership of the school system.

A former coach, Myrick called for scaling back the system's Digital Renaissance program, which he said is costly and diverts resources from more pressing needs, such as hiring more teachers.

"I'm afraid with these laptop computers, we're going to be cutting those teachers down," he said. "I hope that's not the case."

He said leadership at the top was the school system's weakest link. He also criticized state education Superintendent Tommy Bice, who he said was "out in left field on a lot of things."

Myrick agreed the system needs more revenue but added that he opposes raising property or sales taxes. He said he would prefer raising the levy on lodging and taxing vacation homes.

On the Common Core, Myrick was unequivocal.

"There's no way. We don't all learn on the same pace," he said. "It's government intrusion on your lives. ... On the science, they hammer you on global warming."

Statewide hopefuls

The would-be forum drew a pair of candidates for statewide offices. Mobile lawyer Jim Zeigler, who is running for state auditor, repeated his plan to turn the office into a watchdog for wasteful spending. His opponent, Dale Peterson, pleaded not guilty Tuesday in Jefferson County to a shoplifting charge and was not at the Robertsdale event.

"I have got a hobby of fighting against wasteful spending. What a hobby," he said.

Chris "Chip" Beeker, who is seeking to unseat Public Service Commissioner Terry Dunn, reiterated his desire to fight President Barack Obama's "war on coal." He the job of public service commissioner is a balancing act between allowing utilities to earn a reasonable profit while protecting consumers.

"If I ever make a mistake on that, I'll make a mistake on the side of the people," he said

Speaker Hubbard: Hobby Lobby ruling big defeat for liberals (Opelika Auburn News)

The Supreme Court's recent ruling in *Burwell vs. Hobby Lobby*, commonly known as the "Hobby Lobby Case," was a tremendous victory for advocates of religious freedom and a devastating defeat for liberals who believe that government expansion into our daily lives should take precedence over the protective restraints contained in the U.S. Constitution.

In a 5-to-4 ruling, the justices decided that the owners of privately held companies could opt out of providing contraceptives to employees under Obamacare if doing so violates their deeply held religious beliefs.

On the same day, a federal appeals court cited the ruling when releasing the Eternal Word Television Network, an Alabama-based Catholic broadcasting network, from the contraceptive requirement.

Under the Obamacare law, EWTN was facing a \$12 million annual fine for non-compliance, but the court's decision spared the network just hours before the financial penalty was to go into effect.

Big government liberals were quick to label the Supreme Court ruling as the latest salvo in a fictitious "War on Women" invented for political propaganda purposes and called for boycotts of Hobby Lobby. They ignored the fact that out of the 20 contraceptives covered under Obamacare, the Christian family that owns Hobby Lobby asked for relief from only four - those that had an abortive effect on a fertilized egg.

In pushing their agenda, liberals also failed to note that the company's employees may still receive the abortifacient contraceptives, such as the "morning after pill," but would have to pay for them out of pocket. Considering the fact that Hobby Lobby's minimum wage is 90 percent above the national minimum wage and has increased \$1 a year for each of the past five years, I am sure that employees who wish to obtain the drug can afford the \$30 one-time cost, and chances are that those wanting to use these pills can also get them through a government subsidy.

Further, Hobby Lobby is not going to fire women who use the abortifacient drugs in question or penalize them in any way.

Democrats and others on the liberal left are upset because they trust in a Big Brother Obama government that controls and mandates every portion of our lives. Conservative thinkers, however,

understand that the rights and freedoms guaranteed to us under the Constitution and its Bill of Rights still reign supreme.

In order to ensure that usurpations of our God-given rights do not occur here in Alabama, Republicans in the Legislature have taken the steps necessary to protect religious freedoms and constitutional guarantees on the state level.

Last session, we passed and enacted the Health Care Rights of Conscience Act which states that Alabama health care workers cannot be forced to provide a service that violates his or her conscience, such as services relating to abortion, human cloning, human embryonic stem cell research, and sterilization.

In order to keep the Second Amendment freedoms of our citizens secure, we also approved the Alabama Firearms Protection Act, an omnibus measure that reaffirms and expands gun rights for Alabamians and provides them with some of the strongest gun protection provisions in the nation. Although the U.S. Supreme Court has blocked states from prohibiting abortions, the Women's Health and Safety Act, sponsored and approved by Republican legislators, will ensure that the procedures are conducted in the safest environment and conditions possible. In spite of the fact that this act protects women's health and guarantees them quality care if complications should occur following an abortion, liberal lawyers are working at this very moment to overturn it. In my opinion, the effort to stop this law endangers female lives at a time when they are most vulnerable.

If Alabama Republicans maintain their legislative majority following the 2014 General Election in November, we will continue working to protect our Constitutional rights on the state level while combatting the federal government's heavy-handed attempts to deny us our liberties.

In the meantime, I will be shopping at Hobby Lobby whenever possible.

Speaker of the House Mike Hubbard resides in Auburn, and represents District 79.

[GOP selects Cleveland for its 2016 convention. Does decision impact Birmingham's shot at hosting Democrats? \(AL.com\)](#)

In a move that I'm sure will surprise no one vaguely familiar with the importance of Ohio in presidential politics, Republicans have chosen Cleveland to host their 2016 presidential nominating convention.

Cleveland.jpg

Cleveland, Ohio has been selected to host the Republican 2016 convention

The Republican National Committee made the announcement today.

Democrats also have Cleveland under consideration to host its nominating convention in 2016, along with another Ohio city, Columbus. The other cities in contention for the Democrats are New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Birmingham.

Ohio has become a critically important battleground state in the race for the White House. Wins in Ohio by President George W. Bush in 2004 and by President Barack Obama in 2012 were instrumental in both men retaining the White House.

It's too early to know yet if the GOP's selection of Cleveland might cause the Democrats to quietly move the other four cities up the list, including Birmingham.

However, Birmingham's chances of hosting the convention remain a long shot, at best. Politically Alabama is a deep red state and as such it's impossible to see what political advantage the Democrats would gain by coming to Birmingham.

[Dale Peterson, candidate for Alabama auditor, pleads not guilty to Hoover Wal-Mart theft charge \(AL.com\)](#)

Dale Peterson, who will be in a Republican runoff for state auditor next week, appeared for a hearing Tuesday in Bessemer and pleaded not guilty to a theft charge.

A Hoover Municipal Court judge levied fines against Peterson, 68, on a misdemeanor theft charge after he was accused of stealing beer from a Wal-Mart store in October 2012.

Court records show that the each municipal court case carried fines of \$1,000 plus court costs, plus restitution of \$48.50 for the beer and \$13.48 for the cashews. Both also carried sentences of 180 days in jail.

Peterson, now appealing that decision in circuit court, appeared for a pretrial hearing before Jefferson County Bessemer Cutoff Circuit Judge David Hobdy. The judge set a follow-up hearing for Sept. 3.

The case is one of two misdemeanor theft charges from Hoover that Peterson has appealed to the circuit court. The other is in the Birmingham division of Jefferson County circuit court and is scheduled for trial Aug. 25.

Mike Blalock, who is representing Peterson, said that what happens at the Sept. 3 status conference will depend on the disposition of the first case – whether it goes to trial in August, the trial is pushed back or a settlement is reached.

Peterson did not fight the charges when he appeared in municipal court in November 2013. Instead, he stipulated to the facts as presented by the city in order to appeal the cases to the circuit court, where he has demanded a trial by jury in each case.

Peterson will be presumed innocent as if the cases were never heard in another court, Blalock said.

Peterson said he will not comment on the legal aspects of the case or the charges. He said he does not expect his court appearance to affect his performance in the upcoming runoff.

Peterson has said both cases were misunderstandings. In the first instance, he said he had pushed his cart past the checkout lines to go to the restroom and had no intention to steal. He was charged with third-degree theft of property.

In March 2013, Peterson was hit with another theft charge after an employee at Sam's Wholesale Club in Hoover said he saw Peterson eat from a jar of cashews while shopping, return the jar to the shelf and then check out of the store, paying for other items but not the cashews.

Peterson was stopped by the employee as he left the store. He told the employee that "he had messed up and should have just paid for the cashews," according to the employee's deposition. That case is on appeal in Birmingham.

Peterson, a retired businessman who lives in Shelby County, faces Mobile lawyer Jim Zeigler in the July 15 runoff. Zeigler led a four-candidate field in the June 3 primary with 47 percent of the vote. Peterson ran second with 24 percent.

The winner will face Democrat Miranda Joseph in the general election in November.

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Huntsville International Airport's Jetplex Industrial Park is among several sites in the southeastern U.S. and Mexico competing for an automotive project that recently resurfaced after it was put on hold for several months.

Jetplex Industrial Park

[View full size](#)

A file photo of part of Huntsville's Jetplex Industrial Park.

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The project, which was tabled due to market conditions, is now back in full swing. The company is looking to develop a short list of potential sites within the next several weeks.

Brooks Kracke, director of Jetplex Industrial Park, told the Huntsville-Madison County Airport Authority this morning that they continue to have discussions with the unnamed company, which visited the park last year.

"We're still in the game," he said. "We're one of 10 sites. They've got to come down between 3-5 sites."

Kracke said Jetplex also recently met with a high-tech Florida company specializing in the production of medical devices and other products. The project, which is being led by the North Alabama Industrial Development Association in Decatur, would require 30,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

The company's founder recently made a second visit to the area and toured several North Alabama cities, including Athens, Scottsboro and Cullman.

Concerned about heavy crime in Florida, the founder decided to look at Jetplex after Remington announced it will open a gun plant near the airport.

"They hope to make a decision by the end of the year," Kracke said.

Other active projects in the Jetplex Industrial Park:

Jetplex is working with an aviation company, which is in the process of expanding at the airport. They now have plans for further development.

An unidentified maintenance, repair and overhaul company is interested in launching an operation at the airport.

Jetplex submitted a 60-acre site to a local real estate company for a possible development. No other details are available at this time.

A company is visiting with Jetplex officials tonight and will stay through Wednesday morning. Kracke said presentations will be given at The Westin at Bridge Street Town Centre.