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STATE OF ALABAMA

May 14, 2020

Members of the Alabama Legislature:

As you prepare for your final legislative day of the 2020 Legislative Session on Monday, May 18th, I wanted to let you and your colleagues know what some of my hopes are in terms of going forward.

I also feel it could be helpful to put some recent events that have occurred into perspective. My goal is not to reignite any tensions from the past few days but to, hopefully, help you better understand – at least from my perspective – what some of our goals and opportunities should be going forward.

I do this in the spirit of believing that trust is the glue for all relationships and truth and transparency build trust.

As elected representatives of the people of Alabama, your leadership will be key to ensuring our State's success in the face of this global pandemic. This is especially true right now following the enactment of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act which was passed by Congress and signed into Law by President Trump on March 27, 2020.

The CARES Act was passed with the clear intent of reimbursing *only* those expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, this obligation is for a period that begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020, meaning if this money isn't spent (not only allocated, but spent!) by the end of this year, it goes back to the U.S. Treasury.

Let me be clear – I know the Alabama Constitution gives the Legislature the authority to appropriate funds. Again, I never had any interest in controlling where this money goes; I simply believe it should go where it can do the most good to help the most people who have been adversely affected by this deadly and costly disease. *We have but one opportunity to get this right for Alabama.*

From the beginning, it was my hope to work in a transparent manner with the Legislature to most expeditiously use the federal CARES Act funds for its intended purpose – to help state and local governments respond to the COVID-19 crisis in the most appropriate way possible. Not once did I, or my staff, imply that the Executive Branch would have sole discretion and authority over these funds.

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The money belongs to the people of Alabama – not the Governor or the Legislature. It is not my desire to control a single penny and I insist that it be accounted for publicly. Furthermore, those who steer these funds must be held publicly accountable.

To this end, it is my intent to sign both the General Fund and Education Trust Fund for FY 2021. However, I will also be offering an Executive Amendment to SB161, the FY 2020 supplemental appropriations bill which would appropriate the CARES Act dollars. The purpose of this amendment is simple: To ensure that the CARES Act money is immediately put to use for the purposes Congress and President Trump intended.

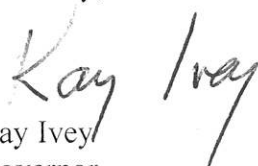
We can all agree that we have recently lived through some challenging days. Since March, many tireless nights and long weekends have been spent studying data, soliciting input and considering options as we respond to the virus as well as its impact on our health and economy, and I intend to see this through.

We cannot turn back the clock on our response to this virus. Sadly, we will not bring back those who have died after contracting COVID-19; we will not bring back every shuttered business; we will not make every business, county, municipality or agency whole again; and the more than 450,000 newly unemployed and families that suffered will not recover overnight.

At this moment, my hope is that we can resolve to help our State and her people to make the best choice available by *working together*. To accomplish this, we must take a thoughtful, measured and collective approach in our handling of the federal funds Alabama has received to respond to this virus.

I value my relationship with each member of the Alabama Legislature, and I look forward to working with you in a transparent manner for the people of Alabama. Please do not hesitate to call my staff or me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Kay Ivey
Governor