

# The Citizen Builder

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## Delegation Goes to Montgomery

Zak McCullar



Friday, the Boys State Delegation traveled to Montgomery for its annual pilgrimage to the capital of the state of Alabama.

The group boarded eleven buses and made its way down U.S. Highway 82, stopping at the State Capitol Building, dismounting on the corner of Washington and Union. The delegation entered the Capitol building, constructed in 1851, and toured it, viewing sights such as the place Jefferson Davis lay in state, a courtroom famous for the “Scottsboro Boys Trial,” the rotunda, both house chambers, and a wing of executive offices.

The delegation returned to their buses and traveled over to the National Memorial of

Peace and Justice. There the group toured the place of solemn remembrance for victims of racial violence that opened in 2018.

Immediately afterwards, the buses returned to the Capitol building for lunch on its lawn. As soon as lunch was eaten, delegates broke off into interest groups. Congressmen went to the chambers of their real-life counterparts to discuss and vote on legislation. Constitutional Convention spoke with people who had actually helped edit the Alabama Constitution in 2022. Law enforcement, fire college, military, and healthcare went to centers of their respective crafts, learning much valuable information in the process. Elected and

Appointed went to the offices of their respective counterparts to learn more about the positions to which they had been chosen.

Many interest groups ended early, giving chances for more extended tours of the Capitol grounds. Some delegates crossed Washington Avenue to visit the Alabama Department of Archives and History, a place where many artifacts of Alabama history are contained.

The trip to Montgomery is usually a highlight in the “Week That Shapes a Lifetime,” and this year it was no different. Many memories were made that will never be forgotten!

## Senate Passes Historic Legislation, Welcomes Special Guest Wesley Britt

William Burgess

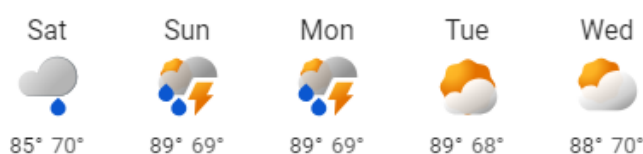
The Alabama state Senate passed several significant bills this session. Lawmakers approved tax cuts for Alabama miners with household incomes below 150% of the federal

poverty line, providing relief for working families. The chamber also passed a lottery bill and landmark marijuana reform legislation.

In a memorable highlight, Wesley Britt

— husband of Senator Katie Britt of Alabama — visited the Senate floor, where members took photos with him.

### 5-DAY WEATHER OUTLOOK



*A Message From Our Staff: The editorial and writing staff at the Alabama Boys State Citizen Builder would like to sincerely thank those who made this week possible. To Judge Pete Johnson, Col. Mark Valentine, our councilors, and all of the staff from both the American Legion and the University of Alabama we say thank you. This has certainly been a week that shapes a lifetime.*

# Governor, Joint Houses Endure Tension

Seth Herring, Jaiden Bloodworth

*(Author's Note): All statements made in the following come from primary accounts. The bulk of statements received were from the Senate. Sources include Lieutenant Governor William Burgess, Senator Cambell Crowe, Senator Michael Pinelo, & Cabinet Member Hub Hogan.*

Thursday morning, Governor Ellard called a joint meeting between the Senate and House of Representatives. This forced the House to relocate to the Senate Chamber. The entire purpose of this meeting was for Governor Ellard to rally the Congressman and tell them to hurry up in passing “[his] Legislation.” Ellard spoke for less than a minute before adjourning the meeting. This offended the Senate, feeling it was a waste of their time.

Prior to the start of Interest Groups (in which Congress is held), Ellard called Lieutenant Governor William Burgess with

orders to say the same thing and shorten the allotted time frame decided upon by the rules committee. Ellard allegedly stated, in this call, that the Senate always takes too long to pass Bills.

Cambell Crow was sent to speak on the Senate’s behalf to the Governor and ask for an apology. Ellard reportedly treated Crow respectfully, but then sent a delegation to “explain” instead of apologize. Sources allege Ellard has yet to give a formal apology to the Senate. Ellard also sent two cabinet members to attempt to sit in on the Senate’s meeting and “tell [them] what to pass.” Senators claim that this is a blatant attempt by the Executive Branch to challenge the separation of power. Ellard’s delegates were reportedly asked to leave by Clint Usher.

Thirty minutes later, Ellard sent another

group of delegates, led by CatDog Young, who gave “feelings of reassurance.” Sources claim this group also tried to sit in on the Senate and was asked to leave. The Senate then appointed Kingston Nelson as their Seargent at Arms, with the purpose of barring Ellard’s Delegates from entry.

Ellard has, according to sources, resolved tension with the House according to his cabinet members. Reports from Senators state that more tension was present between the Senate and the Governor’s cabinet at that night’s meeting over the Senate laying a proposed budget on the table, feeling they didn’t have ample time left in the session to reach a decision.

These events at Alabama Boys State highlight the tension that can occur when people convene to make a difference.

## Success in the Senate

Michael Pinelo

The Senate had a busy final day. It had the consensus to pass bills in the Alabama State House in an orderly and cordial manner. The first bill that was passed and discussed was the budget that Governor Ellard proposed. In amending this budget, his plans are finally being implemented. The next bill that was discussed pertained to a tax reduction for minors who contribute to their household income; by implementing a tax reduction, this bill was proposed by the House of Representatives. This

bill was passed by a wide majority. The next bill proposed was from Senator Hudson, which discusses further details and support about English as a second language. This bill was voted on by a wide majority. Vice President Nick Frazier stated, “No more softball bills,” and the Senate then proceeded with the most its most controversial bill presented in the Senate. This bill regarded the legalization of Marijuana. The Senate was split about this discussion, with it eventually ending with the amending of this bill.



Despite the back and forth, it felt like the entire Senate came to a consensus at the end about this bill and passed it.

## A New Constitution Takes Center Stage

Coleman Waldrop

Delegates participating in the Constitutional Convention group at Alabama Boys State undertook the task of rewriting Alabama’s constitution. The current Alabama Constitution, originally adopted in 1901, is one of the longest constitutions in the world and has often been criticized for its length and policies.

During the process, delegates heard

from Othni Lathram, Director of the Legislative Services Agency, who provided guidance and advice. Lathram also served as co-chair during the 2022 revision of Alabama’s real constitution.

After completing their work, delegates presented the revised constitution to the House of Representatives, where it was passed. The proposal later moved to the Senate, where

delegates expressed more disagreement and concern over parts of the document.

Delegates across Boys State will now vote on whether to officially adopt the revised constitution. The project gave delegates a firsthand look at the challenges of constitutional reform and the legislative process.

## Public Service Commission Hard at Work

Michael Pinelo

The Public Service Commission Board has been very busy making new motions. They moved to regulate power and public utility rate cases every three years with the main ambition

being to unfreeze rates on utilities. They are also attempting to pass a bill dealing with fixing highway roads.

