

WINDOM GALLIHER

MONTGOMERY UPDATE

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Legislature organizes for quadrennium

There was little drama as the Alabama Legislature convened Tuesday for the first time this quadrennium for its organizational session.

The intrigue of last November's House Republican Caucus vote long since disappeared as Speaker of the House Mike Hubbard (R-Auburn) overwhelmingly – and unanimously – won re-election to his leadership post. He was the only candidate nominated and received 99 votes.

"Over the past several months, this House has blessed my family and me with your prayers and constant expressions of support," Speaker Hubbard told the body after the vote. "Our home thanks this House for turning adversity into a magnificent opportunity."

Speaker Pro Tempore Victor Gaston (R-Mobile) was also re-elected, and the House reaffirmed Jeff Woodard, as the non-partisan House Clerk, who oversees the administrative functions of the body.

The Senate followed suit in re-electing its "member leader," by returning Sen. Del Marsh (R-Anniston) to his position as President Pro Tempore. Of course, under the state Constitution, Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey serves as President of the Senate, but most administrative and leadership powers are given to the President Pro Tempore.

Previously, Sen. Greg Reed (R-Jasper) was tapped to be Majority Leader, taking one of the roles held by veteran Sen. Jabo Waggoner (R-Vestavia Hills), who will continue to serve as chairman of the powerful Rules Committee. Senate Democrats chose Sen. Quinton Ross (D-Montgomery) as their leader.

In the House, Rep. Micky Hammon (R-Decatur) returns as Majority Leader, while the House Democrats chose Rep. Craig Ford (D-Gadsden) to continue as Minority Leader.



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE MIKE HUBBARD (R-AUBURN) CRUISED TO RE-ELECTION

The other important part of the organizational session is for both chambers to write the operating rules. While the state Constitution outlines basic procedures for the Legislature to operate, the bulk of the rulebook for each chamber is a self-written document. Because one chamber has 35 members to navigate and the other has 105, the rules are always slightly different.

Most of the changes from the House rules adopted in 2011 are technical in nature, but one of them takes away the likelihood of a favored delaying tactic by the minority – having an entire bill read aloud. A few bills are hundreds of pages in length and can take several hours – such as the redistricting bill. In the former rules, a member could have the bill read, then leave the chamber without penalty. Now, if a member asks for a bill to be read, they have to remain "in the well" – essentially at their speaker's podium for the entire reading. Two other changes were considered, but rejected. One would have shortened the required notice for a committee reading from 24 hours to 12. The other would



SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEM DEL MARSH (R-ANNISTON) RE-ELECTED

have prevented House members from objecting to local bills that affected counties other than the ones they represent. The local bill objection change was removed when House members considered they would be losing leverage in disputes with Senators. Once those disputes were handled, the House approved their rules quickly and unanimously. The Senate, however, couldn't agree on the first day and moved into Wednesday.

Weaver takes charge of House Health Committee

The election of former Rep. Jim McClendon to the Alabama Senate created a large vacancy in a committee chairmanship that drew great interest.

When House committee rosters were announced Wednesday, our thoughts were confirmed. Rep. April



**REP. APRIL
WEAVER**

Weaver (R-Brierfield) was the choice of Speaker Mike Hubbard (R-Auburn) to succeed now-Sen. McClendon as the chair of the House Health Committee.

Rep. Weaver is in her second term in the Alabama House, and she emerged as

one of the stars of the freshman class that was elected in the 2010 GOP wave.

A strong healthcare background in her professional life in addition to her quick adjustment to the legislative process made Rep. Weaver a sound choice to lead the committee that will be extremely busy over the next four years as efforts to reform Medicaid continue with the establishment of regional care organizations.

The study of long-term care and Medicaid will begin soon as well. The committee, which has 11 members, is perennially one of the busier committees in terms of number of bills as well as in the heft of the subject matter of those bills.

There are several multi-term House members on the committee that will provide a lot of institutional knowledge. Returning to the committee are: Vice chair Mike Millican (R-Hamilton), ranking minority member John Knight (D-Montgomery), Rep. Elaine Beech (D-Chatom), Rep. Laura Hall (D-Huntsville), Rep. Ron Johnson (R-Sylacauga), Rep. Paul Lee (R-Dothan), Rep. Becky Nordgren (R-Gadsden), and Rep. Jim Patterson (R-Hazel Green).

Three Republican freshmen — Reps. Matt Fridy of Montevallo, Arnold Mooney of Birmingham, and Jack W. Williams of Semmes — join the panel, as does veteran Rep. Pebblin Warren (D-Tuskegee).

McCutcheon rules the roost on House Rules committee

One of the least surprising decisions by Speaker Mike Hubbard (R-Auburn) was to return Rep. Mac McCutcheon (R-Madison) to the chairmanship of the powerful House Rules Committee.

To say Rep. McCutcheon is a wildly popular chairman would be an understatement. His popularity is rooted in an easy-going personality that calms tensions when he enters a room. He has followed the path blazed by his predecessor — our own Blaine Gallier — allowing members to be involved. The protocol, supported by Speaker Hubbard, has created a framework by which the House has had relatively few breakdowns over the past four years as members of both parties have felt they've had a fair shake to get bills to the floor of the House for debate.

Because members are allowed to select bills for inclusion on the calendar, seats on the committee are coveted.



**THE RULES COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY
REP. MAC McCUTCHEON, PICKS THE
BILLS FOR DEBATE EACH DAY**

Returning members are: Vice chair Ron Johnson (R-Sylacauga), Ranking minority member James Buskey (D-Mobile), Rep. Elaine Beech (D-Chatom), Rep. Barbara Boyd (D-Anniston), Speaker Pro Tem Victor Gaston (R-Mobile), Rep. Lynn Greer (R-Rogersville), Rep. Alan Harper (R-Northport), Rep. Kerry Rich (R-Albertville), Rep. Oliver Robinson (D-Birmingham) and Rep. Randy Wood (R-Oxford).

New members are: Rep. Elaine Beech (D-Chatom), Rep. Randy Davis (R-Daphne), Rep. Paul Lee (R-Dothan), Rep. Barry Moore (R-Enterprise) and Rep. Pebblin Warren (D-Tuskegee).

Tuggle's new job will keep him busy as State Govt. chair

The House State Government committee has a broad name and a big job, handling scores of bills that affect some facet of the state apparatus.

It is little surprise that Mark Tuggle (R-Alexander City) will be moving from a seat on one side of the table to the seat at the end. Upon the announced retirement of former chair Jamie Ison (R-Mobile), Rep. Tuggle's name was seen as most likely to succeed.



**REP. MARK
TUGGLE**

It is anticipated that Speaker Mike Hubbard (R-Auburn) will rely heavily on the committee to stretch its wings a little and handle some major issues, including consolidation of some state agencies. (A full list of House committee chairs is on Page 4.)

Senate adopts rules, but says 'To be continued ...'

If chairing the Senate Finance & Taxation-General Fund committee isn't a difficult enough task, Sen. Arthur Orr (R-Decatur) had another mountain to climb in the organizational session.

Sen. Orr was the choice to be the author/editor of the Senate rules, and thereby the one chosen to carry the rules on the floor.

While the House of Representatives took a couple of hours to sort through revisions to the previous rules before adopting them, the Senate — known as "the deliberative body" — took a couple of days before adopting its rules.

In fact, the 35 Senators left Montgomery with the full understanding that while rules have been adopted, some changes may be made when the regular session opens March 3.

Sen. Orr patiently handled questions and proposed amendments in Wednesday's session, and implored his colleagues to submit their prospective changes to him in the next couple of weeks.

He acknowledged there are likely to be negotiations in the interim, and whatever changes are to be made will be voted on early on the first day of the regular session.

Following the adoption of the rules, the Senate Committee on Assignments announce the chairs and members of the 16 standing committees.

Surprises were few as it was known that Sen. Greg Reed (R-Jasper) would relinquish his chairmanship of the Health Committee in favor of being named Majority Leader. The favorite to assume the chairmanship, Sen. Gerald Dial (R-Lineville), was appointed.

Sen. Jabo Waggoner (R-Vestavia Hills), who surrendered his Majority Leader position, retained his chairmanship of



SEN. ARTHUR ORR'S WORK ON SENATE RULES ISN'T OVER QUITE YET

The Senate Committee Chairs

Rules: Sen. Jabo Waggoner (R-Vestavia Hills)

Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry: Sen. Tom Whatley (R-Auburn)

Banking & Insurance: Sen. Slade Blackwell (R-Mountain Brook)

Confirmations: Sen. Clay Scofield (R-Arab)

Constitution, Campaign & Elections: Sen. Bill Hightower (R-Mobile)

County & Municipal Government: Sen. Paul Sanford (R-Huntsville)

Education & Youth Affairs: Sen. Dick Brewbaker (R-Montgomery)

Finance & Taxation-Education: Sen. Trip Pittman (R-Montrose)

Finance & Taxation-General Fund: Sen. Arthur Orr (R-Decatur)

Fiscal Responsibility & Economic Development: Sen. Phil Williams (R-Rainbow City)

Health: Sen. Gerald Dial (R-Lineville)

Judiciary: Sen. Cam Ward (R-Alabaster)

Governmental Affairs: Sen. Jimmy Holley (R-Elba)

Transportation & Energy: Sen. Gerald Allen (R-Tuscaloosa)

Tourism: Sen. Del Marsh (R-Anniston)

Veteran & Military Affairs: Sen. Bill Holtzclaw (R-Madison)

the agenda-setting Rules Committee.

Both Sen. Orr and Sen. Trip Pittman (R-Montrose) retained their positions as the Senate's chief budget writers. Sen. Orr will continue to chair the General Fund committee, while Sen. Pittman will con-

tinue to lead the Education budget committee.

The lone oddity was a smallest on record, three-member Tourism committee, led by Senate Pro Tem Del Marsh (R-Anniston).

Confirmations and a big “YES” for Sen. Scofield

No one had a better week in Montgomery than Sen. Clay Scofield (R-Arab).

His week was finished off by being appointed chairman of the Senate Confirmations Committee, which considers hundreds of appointments to positions on scores of state boards, agencies and commissions.

As the chairman controls the agenda when appointments are considered, Sen. Scofield is now a one-man powerhouse for people to see in Montgomery. If you want to be a university trustee, a member of a state regulatory board, or another such position or job that requires Senate confirmation, you'll be visiting with Sen. Scofield first.

In fact, Sen. Scofield's "new best friend" is sure to be Governor Robert Bentley, who will need the Senator's OK on appointments.

Such is the nature of his chairmanship. And yet, it wasn't the best news of the week for the Marshall County farmer.



SEN. CLAY SCOFIELD GETS ON BENDED KNEE TO PROPOSE TO COLLIER TYNES; SOON ENOUGH, APPOINTEES WILL BE ON BENDED KNEE SEEKING HIS APPROVAL

On Tuesday, Sen. Scofield called his girlfriend, Collier Tynes, who is chief aide to First Lady Dianne Bentley, to the Senate floor. After asking her to stand in the well, he made a brief statement, then cued the Senate staff to place a photo on the video board of the two of them with the question "Will You Marry Me?"

Sen. Scofield made it official, dropping to a knee to present her with a ring. Thankfully, she didn't filibuster, but immediately concurred in the amendment to their relationship with a "YES" vote.

Facing a confirmations committee of a potential bride should be solid on-the-job training for a future committee chair.

The committee chairs in the House of Representatives

Rules: Rep. Mac McCutcheon (R-Madison)

Ways & Means-Education: Rep. Bill Poole (R-Tuscaloosa)

Ways & Means-General Fund: Rep. Steve Clouse (R-Ozark)

Judiciary: Rep. Mike Jones (R-Andalusia)

Agriculture & Forestry: Rep. David Sessions (R-Bayou La Batre)

Boards, Agencies & Commissions: Rep. Howard Sanderford (R-Huntsville)

County & Municipal Government: Rep. Steve McMillan (R-Gulf Shores)

Constitution, Campaign & Elections: Rep. Randy Davis (R-Daphne)

Children & Senior Advocacy: Rep. K.L. Brown (R-Jacksonville)

Commerce & Small Business: Rep. Jack D. Williams (R-Vestavia Hills)

Economic Development & Tourism: Rep. Alan Harper (R-Northport)

Education Policy: Rep. Terri Collins (R-Decatur)

Ethics & Campaign Finance: Rep. Mike Ball (R-Madison)

Financial Services: Rep. Lesley Vance (R-Phenix City)

Health: Rep. April Weaver (R-Brierfield)

Internal Affairs: Rep. Alan Boothe (R-Troy)

Insurance: Rep. Mike Hill (R-Columbiana)

Local Legislation: Rep. Alan Baker (R-Brewton)

Military & Veterans Affairs: Rep. Barry Moore (R-Enterprise)

Public Safety & Homeland Security: Rep. Randy Wood (R-Oxford)

State Government: Rep. Mark Tuggle (R-Alexander City)

Technology & Research: Rep. Phil Williams (R-Huntsville)

Transportation, Utilities & Infrastructure: Rep. Lynn Greer (R-Rogersville)