

# NCSL- 2011 Fall Forum

## Legislative Services with Tough Budget Choices

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## How Alabama is Meeting the Challenge



**Start out by getting to know your New Legislators  
and help them learn the Legislative Process.**





# Don't assume anything

New Leadership

New Legislators

New to Elected Office



# The New Alabama House

- New Speaker- First party change in 100 yrs
- 65 Republicans/40 Democrats
- 36 Members were not in House in 2006
- 31 of 105 First Time Legislators



# The New Alabama Senate

- President Pro Tem-First party change in 100 yrs
- 22 Republicans/12 Democrats/1 Independent
- 19 Members were not in the Senate in 2006
- 11 of 35 First Time Legislators



# Living with funds available

- Reduced state revenues
- Reduced federal funds
- No New taxes
- Higher benefit costs (Retirement, medical)



# Legislator expectations

- Better way of doing things
- Instant and individual service
- Address their issues
- Cut waste
- Reduce costs of staff
- Social networking skills





Work with new leadership  
and  
Legislators

one at a time



# Don't assume anything

## Remember all Politics is Local

i.e.. Staff's work means nothing to me  
unless it helps me.



# Explain what you do and how you do it.

The Alabama Law Institute, created by an act of the Legislature in 1967, is a legislative agency that operates with volunteers.



Our purpose is to **clarify and simplify the laws of Alabama**, to revise laws that are out-of-date and to fill in gaps in the law where there exists legal confusion.



# Explain your budget

- % \$\$\$ Salary & Benefits (93%)
- % \$\$\$ Office Expense
- % \$\$\$ Other

Managing volunteers cost money.





# Major Code Revision

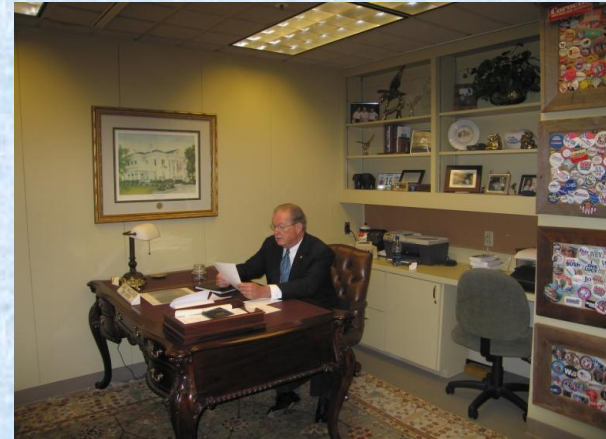
- Major code revisions, such as revision of an entire section of law, as Alabama's “Business Corporation Act”, “Criminal Code”, “Probate Code”, “Election Code”, etc. were drafted by the Alabama Law Institute.





# Who are the Volunteers who prepare the major revisions?

- Lawyers who practice in the State
- Judges
- Law faculty, and
- Lawyer members of the Legislature, and



# What money can't buy...

- Technical legal services from the State's best lawyers;
- 12 drafting committees > \$ 2,000,000 in 2011;
- Keeping the State current with the rest of the United States in business laws, family laws, criminal laws and other matters which are not high profile issues.



# How are you saving the legislators money while the Legislature is in session?

By providing:

Legislative Committee Legal Staff;

Capitol Interns; and

Law Clerks.





# Legislative Committee Legal Staff

- For over 35 years, the Institute has hired Lawyers for the session to provide nonpartisan legal counsel to the committees in the Legislature.
- Committee lawyers work on contract only during the session.



# CAPITAL INTERN PROGRAM

Since 1979

Established to provide student interns for the Legislature and allowing them to observe and participate in the legislative processes during the Regular Session



# College students may serve as a Legislative Intern



TROY UNIVERSITY



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA





# Each Intern is assigned to two Legislative Committees





# Law Clerks

- Second or third year law students
- 10-12 hours per week during session
- Assigned to Legislative committees
- Under supervision of Institute Lawyers



# Interns, law clerks and Committee lawyers are located in our State House office



# After the Session is over, We train Public Officials



- Legislators
- Practicing Lawyers
- Election Officials
- Probate Judges
- Sheriffs' Training
- Circuit Clerks
- City/County Attorneys



# And Provide Educational Material on New Laws

- Election Handbook
- Probate Laws
  - Forms: estates; adoptions; guardianships; etc.
- Criminal Laws
  - Forms: Warrant and Indictment
  - Forms: Criminal Jury Charge





# LAW INSTITUTE OFFICES

- State House
  - Legislative Services
  - Committee lawyers,
  - Interns, and
  - Law Clerks
- and
- The State Law School for research



# Alabama Law Institute

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# THE END

