

1 HR325  
2 185419-1  
3 By Representative Morrow  
4 RFD: Rules  
5 First Read: 20-APR-17

8 CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF REBEKAH MASON.  
9

10 WHEREAS, in 2010, Governor Robert Bentley was  
11 elected the 53rd Governor of the State of Alabama and was  
12 reelected to a second term in 2014; and

13 WHEREAS, Governor Bentley has admitted to engaging  
14 in an inappropriate, extramarital relationship with a married  
15 senior political advisor, Rebekah Mason; the release of  
16 recordings and transcripts of recordings substantiating the  
17 inappropriate relationship has garnered both statewide and  
18 national attention, embarrassment, and criticism; and

19 WHEREAS, complaints were filed with the Alabama  
20 Ethics Commission to determine whether Governor Bentley  
21 violated campaign finance laws and state ethics laws by using  
22 state property in the furtherance of the inappropriate  
23 relationship and whether he used his position to interfere  
24 with any investigation; and

25 WHEREAS, the Alabama Attorney General also  
26 investigated whether Governor Bentley has violated state  
27 campaign finance and ethics laws; and

1                   WHEREAS, impeachment articles (HR367) were  
2 introduced in the House of Representatives during the 2016  
3 Regular Session asserting that the Governor should be  
4 impeached for willful neglect of duty and corruption in  
5 office; and

6                   WHEREAS, on April 5, 2017, the Ethics Commission  
7 issued its probable cause findings that the Governor: (1)  
8 violated state ethics laws by using public resources,  
9 including subordinate personnel, equipment, and time under his  
10 control for personal interests; and (2) violated campaign  
11 finance laws in three separate instances; and

12                  WHEREAS, after unnecessary legal delay tactics by  
13 the Governor, the House Judiciary Committee began its  
14 impeachment hearings on April 10, 2017; by the end of that  
15 day, Governor Bentley had pled guilty to two misdemeanor  
16 campaign finance violations and immediately resigned from  
17 office; and

18                  WHEREAS, although delayed for a time, justice has  
19 prevailed and Governor Bentley has reaped the consequences of  
20 his actions; however, the protagonist of Governor Bentley's  
21 demise, Rebekah Mason, has emerged virtually unscathed and  
22 without punishment for her selfish, manipulative, and possibly  
23 unlawful actions; and

24                  WHEREAS, Mrs. Mason has defiantly refused to  
25 cooperate in the investigation of Governor Bentley and  
26 evidence discovered and released during the course of the  
27 House Judiciary Committee's impeachment investigation reveals

1 that she purposefully monopolized the Governor's agenda and  
2 vindictively directed the majority of the Governor's wrongful  
3 actions; and

4 WHEREAS, it appears that Mrs. Mason was the  
5 architect of numerous policy decisions that were contrary to  
6 the Governor's agenda and contrary to the best interests of  
7 the citizens of this state; she was the catalyst for the  
8 closing of driver's license offices in poor, rural counties,  
9 resulting in an overt assault on the rights of the residents  
10 in those counties and her actions are clearly akin to the  
11 condemned actions of staff taken in the "Bridgegate" scandal  
12 in New Jersey; and

13 WHEREAS, Mrs. Mason used improper influence to  
14 defeat the passage of certain legislation and improperly  
15 attempted to influence the passage of certain legislation; and

16 WHEREAS, the lack of transparency of Mrs. Mason's  
17 compensation arrangement and mysterious status throughout  
18 Governor Bentley's second term further demonstrate corrupt  
19 motives and suggest circumvention of state ethics laws; and

20 WHEREAS, Governor Bentley is not the sole victim of  
21 Mrs. Mason's actions; from personal attacks and adverse  
22 employment decisions, to blatant assault on the sanctity of  
23 marriage and family, the former First Lady of Alabama and her  
24 staff, as well as the Governor's own staff and Cabinet, among  
25 numerous others, have also suffered severely from Mrs. Mason's  
26 strident manipulation and control of the Governor; and

1                   WHEREAS, professional women in this state have  
2 labored for decades to achieve equality and respect in the  
3 workplace only to observe Mrs. Mason significantly erode the  
4 progress achieved in a mere matter of months; and

5                   WHEREAS, accomplished and respected women throughout  
6 this state have made the following remarks with regard to the  
7 self-indulgent and voracious actions of Mrs. Mason in  
8 rejection of the false image of Alabama women she has  
9 displayed to the nation:

10                  (1) "Women in Alabama have performed their jobs with  
11 respect and honor and strive to advance their careers with  
12 dignity and integrity. Women in Alabama have worked to remove  
13 the glass ceiling and to be treated equally and with respect  
14 in the workforce by displaying ability, intelligence, and  
15 leadership qualities. Women in Alabama are intelligent,  
16 capable, honorable, and hard working."

17                  (2) "It's women like Mrs. Mason who make it hard on  
18 women not using their sexuality to advance their careers. . .  
19 It is insulting to women generally. . .when your thoughts and  
20 ideas are less respected merely because you're not the woman  
21 intimately involved with the decision maker."

22                  (3) "I hope young women don't tend towards the path  
23 Mrs. Mason took as an easy route to gain wealth and power.  
24 Integrity, respect for others, and hard work are the values of  
25 true Alabama women, and they are the recipe for lasting  
26 success."

(4) "Implicit bias against women in the workplace is an issue for professional women throughout the world. The actions of Mrs. Mason in elevating herself based on a personal relationship while using that relationship to denigrate other women in the workplace is offensive to women everywhere. Her actions feed into the stereotypes that encourage and increase biases against women and will affect women in the workplace for the foreseeable future."

(5) "As a professional woman in Alabama, it's already difficult enough to compete in either the professional or political realms often dominated by men. To have someone using sexual favors to advance their careers is an insult to the rest of the women in the workforce. The lack of any consequences against Mrs. Rebekah Mason unfortunately will encourage some men to use their power for intimidation and it will show that a woman using her body for professional gain is acceptable. Rebekah Mason has damaged every woman in the workforce. Her message to her daughters, to all of our daughters is simply disgraceful."

(6) "As a young woman in Alabama politics, I have tirelessly used my intellect, work ethic, and integrity to earn a seat at the table. I have kept office doors open, set clear boundaries, and declined meeting invitations when required to be alone with a married man. Though sometimes it feels like I have to work three times as hard as "the good ole boys," I can look at hundreds of wives in the eyes with unwavering loyalty, love, and respect."

(7) "Rebekah Mason has managed to set back hardworking, intelligent women in Alabama politics by decades. It may take years for us to fully comprehend the damage she has done to the perception of women in our state."

(8) "This is about character, not someone's gender. Integrity, honesty, and fidelity were missing from those characteristics displayed by both of these people who obviously lacked a moral compass, and coveted power and fortune over personal caliber. Our representatives should hold themselves to a higher ethical standard to avoid situations such as this from ever happening again. Alabama suffers when our elected officials, no matter what level, surround themselves with people, male or female, that put their own self-interests before the citizens of this state."

(9) "Even as one woman is headlined around the world for bringing the Governor's office into disrepute, countless women are faithfully laboring alongside their male colleagues to make every branch of our government successful. As a young woman who has worked with the Alabama Legislature for several years, I can testify to the fact that we all know and appreciate Alabama women who are gracious, professional, and tough as nails. Our state owes its success to the thousands of men and women who aren't afraid to champion good causes, build strong families, roll up their sleeves for a better Alabama, . . .and hold the line when they need to."; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Mason has contributed to the public  
demise of a once-respected public servant, has placed her

1 self-interest above the interests of the citizens of this  
2 state, and has forever tarnished the reputation of  
3 professional women in this state; and

4 WHEREAS, it is appropriate for Mrs. Mason to now be  
5 held accountable for her actions; it is imperative to the  
6 well-being of this great state that her actions be further  
7 scrutinized for violations of law so that justice may prevail  
8 and that respect and integrity may be restored to our beloved  
9 state; now therefore,

10 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF  
11 THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That the actions of Mrs. Rebekah  
12 Mason contributing to the resignation and criminal charges of  
13 Governor Bentley are hereby strongly condemned.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this body apologizes to  
15 all victims of Mrs. Mason's schemes and action, including  
16 professional women throughout this state who have worked  
17 toward success with integrity and dedication.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Attorney General is  
19 strongly urged to investigate the actions of Mrs. Mason to  
20 identify any violations of state law.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Joint Rules  
22 Committee of the Legislature, pursuant to Rule 29 of the Joint  
23 Rules of the Two Houses of the Legislature, is strongly urged  
24 to consider whether Mrs. Mason has violated any Joint Rules  
25 Relating to Lobbying which would subject her to discipline by  
26 this body.

1                   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the former First Lady  
2                   of Alabama, Dianne Bentley, whom we hold dear, is commended  
3                   for rising to the challenges of this difficult and tumultuous  
4                   time for our state with grace, dignity, faith, and integrity.