

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

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8 CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF REBEKAH MASON.
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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."

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, Mrs. Mason has contributed to the public
27 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.