

MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER EDITORIAL

LEGISLATORS REWARDED THEMSELVES

Don't forget 61 percent pay hike

In 2007, at the beginning of the four-year cycle of sessions between legislative elections, the Alabama Legislature voted itself a 61 percent pay increase.

It was no fluke that such a huge pay increase was voted on so early in the quadrennium. Legislators wanted to allow as much time as possible for the voters to forget their anger over lawmakers giving themselves such a hefty pay increase.

We suspect that many of those taxpayers and voters who were very irate in 2007

have, in fact, forgotten not only just how angry they were, but also how their legislators specifically voted on the issue.

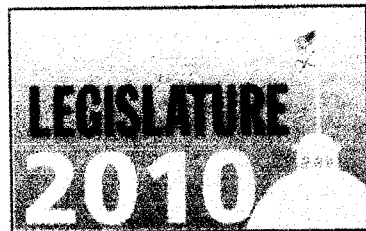
This editorial page made a promise to readers back then to remind them of this pay vote prior to the next legislative elections. With the primary election scheduled for June 1, we're keeping that promise today.

Taxpayers also should remember some of the circumstances surrounding this pay increase. They should remember that the 61 percent pay increase came at a time when the state was struggling to find funds for such programs as Medicaid.

Taxpayers also should remember that the pay increase was originally passed by an unrecorded voice vote, as legislators tried to duck responsibility by leaving no record of how any representative or senator voted. But that didn't work, because Gov. Bob Riley vetoed the resolution creating the pay increase. Legislators cannot override a veto with a voice vote, so legislators had to go on the record to increase their pay. Those votes are reported at right.

Taxpayers also should remember that the pay increase not only made Alabama legislators some of the best paid state lawmakers in the nation, but also raised their legislative pay to about \$50,000, which placed it well above Alabama's median household income of about \$36,000 per year at that time. And remember, that's comparing income for an entire household to income for an individual legislator's part-time job.

So we urge you to look through the voting list below and find how your state senator and representative voted. Legislators were banking on the public forgetting about this pay increase before the next elections; don't let them get away with it.



How legislators voted

HOUSE

Following is a list of legislators who voted for a 61 percent pay increase for themselves in 2007. The vote also approved automatic pay increases for legislators every year in the future, with no requirement for a recorded vote.

The Alabama House voted 57-41 to override a veto by Gov. Bob Riley of the resolution granting the pay.

Republicans voting for the raise: Barton, J. (Mobile); Collier, S. (Bayou La Batre); Faust, J. (Fairhope); Galihier, B. (Rainbow City); Gipson, M. (Prattville); Hill, M. (Columbiana); McClendon, J. (Springville).

Democrats voting for the raise: Bandy, G. (Opelika); Beasley, B. (Clayton); Black, M. (Tusculumbia); Boothe, A. (Troy); Boyd, B. (Anniston); Buskey, J. (Mobile); Coleman, M. (Midfield); Dukes, B. (Decatur); Dunn, P. (Bessemer); England, C. (Tuscaloosa); Fite, L. (Jacksonville); Ford, C. (Gadsden); Gordon, J. (Saraland); Graham, B.C. (Alexander City); Grantland, R. (Hartselle); Guin, K. (Carbon Hill); Hall, L. (Huntsville); Hammett, S. (Andalusia); Hilliard, E. (Birmingham); Hinshaw, R. (Meridianville); Howard, R. (Greensboro); Hurst, S. (Munford); Jackson, T. (Thomasville); Keahey, M. (Grove Hill); Kennedy, Y. (Mobile); Knight, J. (Montgomery); Laird, R. (Roanoke); Lindsey, R. (Centre); Martin, J. (Clanton); McCampbell, A.J. (Linden); McClammy, T. (Montgomery); Millican, M. (Hamilton); Mitchell, J. (Mobile); Moore, M. (Birmingham); Morrow, J.M. (Red Bay); Newton, D. (Birmingham); Page, J. (Gadsden); Robinson, J. (Scottsboro); Robinson, O. (Birmingham); Rogers, J. (Birmingham); Sakaam, Y. (Selma); Schmitz, S. (Toney); Scott, R. (Fairfield); Sherer, T. (Jasper); Spicer, T. (Elba); Taylor, B. (New Hope); Thomas, J. (Selma); Vance, L. (Phenix City); Warren, P. (Tuskegee); White, H. (Athens).

Republicans not voting: Moore, P. (Pleasant Grove); Payne, A. (Trussville).

Democrats not voting or abstaining: Holmes, A. (Montgomery); McDaniel, F. (Albertville); Curtis, M. (Florence); Irons, T. (Florence); McLaughlin, J. (Guntersville).

SENATE

The Senate voted 20-15 for the pay increase.

Republicans voting for the pay increase: Beason, S. (Gardendale); Glover, R. (Semmes).

Democrats voting for the increase: Barron, L. (Fyffe); Bedford, R. (Russellville); Coleman, L. (Birmingham); Denton, B. (Muscle Shoals); Figures, V. (Mobile); Griffith, P. (Huntsville); Lindsey, P. (Butler); Little, T. (Auburn); Little, Z. (Cullman); McClain, E.B. (Midfield); Mitchell, W. (Luverne); Mitchem, H. (Union Grove); Penn, M. (Union Springs); Preuitt, J. (Talladega); Ross, Q. (Montgomery); Sanders, H. (Selma); Singleton, B. (Greensboro); Smitherman, R. (Birmingham).