

**I VOTE
AND MAKE
AN IMPACT!
DO YOU?**

DEONTAY WILDER
World Boxing Council
Heavyweight Champion



**WHAT
DO YOU MEAN
YOU'RE NOT
REGISTERED
TO VOTE?!**



Annual Report

2017



TO REGISTER TO VOTE OR SECURE A FREE ALABAMA PHOTO VOTER ID CARD, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BOARD OF REGISTRARS, VISIT ALABAMAVOTES.GOV OR CALL 1-800-274-8683. Paid for by the office of the Secretary of State, John Merrill, Montgomery, AL.



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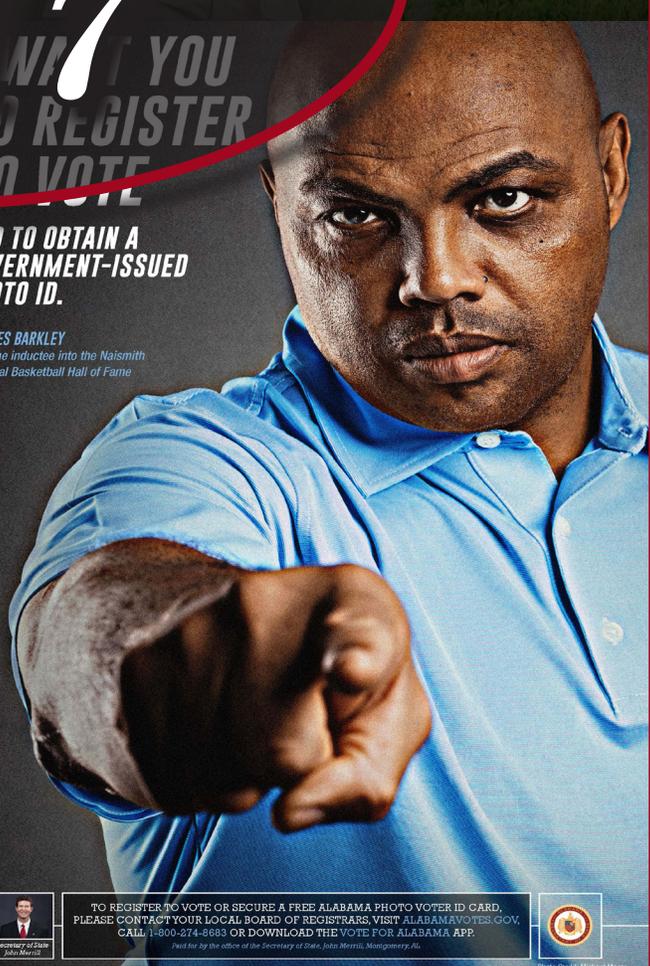


BOOM!
I TOLD YOU
YOU COULD MAKE
A DIFFERENCE
IF YOU WERE REGISTERED
TO VOTE!

**DO YOU
KNOW YOU
TO REGISTER
TO VOTE**

**AND TO OBTAIN A
GOVERNMENT-ISSUED
PHOTO ID.**

CHARLES BARKLEY
Two-time inductee into the Naismith
Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame



TO REGISTER TO VOTE OR SECURE A FREE GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTO ID, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BOARD OF REGISTRARS, VISIT ALABAMAVOTES.GOV OR CALL 1-800-274-8683. Paid for by the office of the Secretary of State, John Merrill, Montgomery, AL.



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Photo Credit: Michael Moore



Not registered to vote? Have an Alabama driver's license? Visit www.alabamavotes.gov to register through our online system!

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A Letter from Secretary Merrill



January 1, 2017

Dear Citizens of Alabama:

2016 has come and gone, and what a productive year it has been! From the SEC Presidential Primary on March 1st to the Electoral College Event on December 19th, 2016 has proven to be a magnificent year that we shall never forget.

In this year's issue of our Annual Report, you'll find a great deal of information covering a variety of topics, including our 2016 NASS Medallion Award ceremonies, Electronic Poll Books, Constituent Services report, 2016 Legislative Agenda, Student Mock Election, the 2016 Presidential Election, and much more.

2016 was another outstanding year, and I'm certain that 2017 will be even greater. Remember that I work for YOU, and I will continue to work with you to help make Alabama the best that it can be!

Sincerely,

John H. Merrill
Secretary of State

International Adoption Day 2016



Have you adopted an international child? Interested in participating in next year's International Adoption Day Celebration? Contact us at 334-242-7200, and we'll add your name to our invitation list!

Secretary Merrill honored several families at the second annual International Adoption Day celebration on February 5, 2016. The event took place in the Alabama State Capitol's Old House Chamber, and Alabama Crimson Tide football player Adam Griffith and his mother, Michelle Griffith (both pictured above), attended as guest speakers to share the touching story of the former's adoption from Stargard, Poland.

"We were honored to have Adam and his mother share their story at our event," Secretary Merrill stated. "Our office is dedicated to remove all obstacles from the international adoptions process, and I'm glad that we were able to honor more families for opening their hearts and their homes to children from all over the world."

The third International Adoption Day celebration is scheduled to take place on January 27, 2017.

***Have any questions or concerns for our Government Support,
Authentications, & Trademarks Division?***

Call 334-242-5325.

NASS Medallion Award Ceremonies 2016

“The NASS Medallion Award allows individual Secretaries of State to recognize outstanding service and dedication to furthering the mission of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) within the states.”

-www.nass.org

2016 Medallion Award Recipients:

**Former Alabama Law Institute Director
Robert McCurley**

**Alabama Law Institute Director
Othni Lathram**

**Auburn Professor Emeritus of History
James Wayne Flynt**

**6th Circuit Court Judge
John England**

**SEC Primary Media Founders/Designers
Jordan & Ashley Doufexis**



www.nass.org



Presentation Date: January 14, 2016

For more than 30 years, **Mr. Robert McCurley** has served as a law school instructor for The University of Alabama School of Law and Honors College and the Cumberland School of Law. He previously served as the Director of the Alabama Law Institute from 1975 to 2011, was the former President of the Kiwanis International Foundation, and has written 11 books on law and government. Mr. McCurley is also involved with the Revision Commission in their efforts to draft a new Alabama Constitution, which serves as the world's largest functioning constitution with 340,000 words and over 800 amendments.



Presentation Date: April 7, 2016

Mr. Othni Lathram, current Director of the Alabama Law Institute, formerly served as an Associate and Member of Whatley Drake and Kallas, as well as the Assistant Director of the Alabama Law Institute before his promotion to Director. His experience ranges from litigation to criminal law, arbitration, legislative relations, and product liability, amongst many other noteworthy skills.



Presentation Date: May 6, 2016

Dr. James Wayne Flynt, Professor Emeritus of History, served as an instructor at Samford University for 12 years from 1965-1977 and Auburn University for 28 years from 1977-2005. He wrote numerous books concerning Alabama's history and economy and earned several awards for his works, which includes The University of Alabama's Clarence Cason Writing Award. Dr. Flynt also worked as the Editor-in-Chief of Auburn University's and the Alabama Humanities Foundation's online Encyclopedia of Alabama.



Presentation Date: June 24, 2016

Judge John England currently serves as the Judge of Alabama Circuit 6 and spent two years of valiant service in the U.S. Army’s Military Police. He worked as an attorney in private practice from 1974 to 1993, an elected member of the Tuscaloosa City Council from 1985 to 1993, an Alabama Supreme Court Justice from 1999 to 2000, and Judge of Alabama Circuit 6 from 1993 to 1999 and from 2001 to the present day.



Presentation Date: October 7, 2016

Mr. Jordan Doufexis served as the Administrator for Curewell Medical Center from March 2009 to August 2011, volunteer of “Mitt Romney for President” from August 2011 to November 2012, Creator and Executive Producer of “Heat Check: A Season with the Plainview Bears” from November 2013 to March 2015, and Founder and CEO of Southern Torch, Inc. from April 2013 to July 2015, as well as SECPrimary.com from May 2015 to March 2016. He was the Alabama Digital Grassroots Director of “Marco Rubio for President” from September 2015 to March 2016, and currently serves as the Creative Director of AMEX Media since January 2015. He also serves as the Co-Chairman and member of the Communications Committee for the Young Republicans National Federation, Inc. since January 2016, Vice Chairman of the Young Republicans Federation of Alabama, and Founder and Chairman of the Young Republicans of Northeast Alabama.

Mrs. Ashley Stanford Doufexis worked as a Tour Guide and Admissions Counselor for Lee University from January 2008 to May 2009, Production Coordinator of Town Creek Productions, LLC from August 2009 to June 2011, and Multimedia Production Coordinator for Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. from June 2011 to February 2014. She was the Digital Media Director of Southern Torch, Inc. from February 2014 to June 2015, and currently serves as the Web Designer for SECPrimary.com since May 2015, President and Media Director for AMEX Media since June 2015, and Partner of Native Inc. since August 2015. She also serves as the Digital Grassroots Deputy Director of “Marco Rubio for President” since September 2015, Committeewoman of the Young Republicans of Northeast Alabama, and District 4 Chairwoman and member of the Communications Committee of the Young Republicans Federation of Alabama.

Probate Judges Advisory Council

Secretary of State John Merrill established the Probate Judges Advisory Council in 2015 to ensure that elections and corporate filings are administered appropriately, accurately, efficiently, and as effectively as possible at the county and state levels. The Advisory Council held its first meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at Ross Bridge Resort to establish criteria and goals for the year and continued to hold meetings throughout 2016.

The eight-person council is a bi-partisan collection of Probate Judges from counties over the state that advise Secretary Merrill and keep him informed about issues that need improvement in the counties and at the state level. Current members of the council include the following Probate Judges:

Eldora Anderson - Perry County
Tammy Brown - Cullman County
Bill English - Lee County
W. Hardy McCollum - Tuscaloosa County
David Money - Henry County
Steven Reed - Montgomery County
Ryan Robertson - Cleburne County
Tim Russell - Baldwin County

Electronic Poll Books

One issue that often plagues the voting process is long lines. Lines create excessive wait times that often require voters to leave the line before they have an opportunity to cast their ballot and return to work. Secretary Merrill planned a pilot program to apply modern technology to the antiquated system currently in place with the paper-based voter rolls. The electronic poll book system was that solution. Once legislation was passed allowing the use of the iPad-based voter check-in system, our team then reviewed proposals from companies that have electronic poll book solutions from all over the country. After receiving a review from the office, Secretary Merrill elected to utilize a company called KNOWiNK. This company was chosen for two reasons. First, they have not ever had an election day implementation issue. Second, the team was able to utilize preexisting hardware already in place in many of the participating counties. In total, 24 counties participated in the November 8th Pilot Program, and all reported resounding successes. This includes Cleburne County, which was the only county to have county-wide implementation. Jackson County actually averaged processing one voter every 27 seconds.



Electronic Registration Information Center

In July 2016, approximately 1.2 million eligible Alabamians who were either not registered to vote or in need of updating their voter registration information received a Mail-In Voter Registration Application. This effort was in cooperation with the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), which identifies eligible citizens who are not yet registered to vote, and member states must contact those citizens, educating them on the most efficient means of registering. Alabamians who received the application had the opportunity to register to vote or update their information by mailing their form back to their local Board of Registrars Office, visiting www.alabamavotes.gov/vote, or downloading the "Vote for Alabama" app. ERIC is a non-profit organization with the sole mission of assisting states to improve the accuracy of America's voter rolls and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens. ERIC is governed and managed by states who choose to join and was formed in 2012 with assistance from The Pew Charitable Trusts.



Constituent Services

Executive Division

•Treating the Office Budget Like Your Household Budget

~Upon taking office on January 19, 2015, the office (all Divisions included) consisted of **48 employees**. As of January 17, 2017, the office consists of **38 employees**, excluding the Secretary of State. Since January 19, 2015, **24 employees have either resigned, transferred, retired, or have been released.**

~**Phased out the Personnel Division.** Today, office personnel duties are assigned to 2 existing staff members. **Personnel costs were reduced approximately \$60,000** by not having to fill a staff position with this singular responsibility.

~For the period of January 19, 2015 to January 17, 2017, **expenses were reduced by \$1,507,138.21.**

~In April 2015, **four divisions of the Secretary of State's Office relocated to the Alabama State House**, which will save taxpayers nearly \$270,000 over a four-year period.

~Beginning with the FY2016 State Budget (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016) and at the request of Secretary Merrill, the office **no longer receives a State General Fund Appropriation for Administrative Services.** The amount the office **gave back to the state is approximately \$1.3 - \$1.8 million dollars.**

~Secretary Merrill's first letter in office was written to the Chief Examiner of the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts to request a formal audit in regards to the financial administration of the office. Secretary Merrill is **working to turn around nearly a decade of audit and financial issues** in the office.

~Although not required, Secretary Merrill issued a 9-page response to the Chief Examiner's audit (for the period of October 1, 2009 through January 19, 2015) that outlined his plan of corrective actions to remedy the seven financial deficiencies. The plan is aggressive and includes a plan of corrective actions to cure several concerns that persisted since another audit (for the period of January 16, 2007 through September 30, 2009) was issued.

•Increasing Transparency

~In 2015 and 2016, Secretary Merrill **visited all 67 counties** at least once to discuss voter registration and voter photo I.D. delivery with 350+ individual visits in 2016 alone.

~**The option to request Public Records/Information became available online.**

~**Instructed a 24-hour turn around time** to respond to all Public Records/Information requests.

~**Informational Releases are sent out to the media on a regular basis.**

~**Quarterly Reports are issued and placed online** at the conclusion of each 3-month period to inform the public of the highlights of each prior quarter.

~An **Annual Report is published and placed online** at the conclusion of each year to inform the public of the highlights of the prior year.

~To comply with the Alabama Open Meetings Act, **meeting minutes have been placed online** for boards, committees, or commissions where the Secretary of State is responsible to serve as an administrator.

~**Concise descriptions of the funds** administered by the Secretary of State are **placed online.**

~A concise description of the **fees provided by law or rule have been placed online.**

~A description of the **boards, committees, and commissions the Secretary of State serves on are placed online.**

~The **Probate Judges Advisory Council was created to work with Alabama's Probate Judges** and meet the needs of Alabama's counties in their interaction with the Secretary of State's Office.

•Establishing Expectations

~Secretary Merrill requires **Annual Ethics training for all staff once a year.**

~**Personnel policies were established** to ensure certain personnel aspects are properly administrated, and the first personnel handbook for Secretary of State employees was composed to ensure comprehensive employee compliance, expectation, and accountability standards are met.

~**All employees are evaluated annually** on the accomplishment of duties. In previous years, some employees were not issued evaluations.

~Secretary Merrill requested that all staff position descriptions include the statement "Delivers service to the citizens of Alabama with a servant's and helper's heart" in order to measure employee citizen service. Alabama's taxpayers and citizens deserve the best, and Secretary Merrill expects his staff to perform as the best.

~Division Heads meet once a month with the Chief of Staff to establish and strengthen real **team building and informational sharing** that were major organizational deficiencies upon Secretary Merrill entering office.

~Division Heads are required to teach the application of **cross-training** to staff to build comprehensive staff abilities, which will benefit their ability to help citizens.

•Legislation

~**Nine bills** sponsored by the Secretary of State's Office were passed in the 2015 Legislative Sessions, and **11 bills were passed in 2016.**

Finance Division

•Treating Your Money with Respect

~Purchases made by the office are **required to receive approval prior to purchase**. In previous years, a loose purchasing process allowed many purchases that were duplicative, contrary to state purchasing procedures, and/or wasteful.

~Payments made to any Division of the Secretary of State's Office are required to be **deposited in 1 day**. Prior to this, payments were held as long as several weeks or 7 months before deposit, increasing the chances for NSF charges to be assessed to the issuer. **This one requirement to deposit payments in 1 day has, as a by-product, resulted in all the Divisions of the Secretary of State to quickly complete citizen transactions.**

~On several occasions when vendors conducted business with the state through the Secretary of State's Office and did not fully fulfill their role, the Secretary requested and received **monetary adjustments, which benefited the state**.

~For the first time, **establishing procedures related to the proper administration of bad checks** has been issued by the Secretary of State's Office.

~**The lack of proper attention given to one Secretary of State fund** that was not coded revenue (for deposit therein) for over half a decade has been corrected.

~A provision has been inserted into all new contracts that requires a vendor to reduce their invoiced expenses for failure to perform in an adequate fashion.

Elections Division

•Serving Those Who Serve Us

~Military voters can now receive and transmit their ballot securely and electronically from anywhere in the world. Previously, military members needed access to a printer and mail service to participate in the election process.

•Promoting Alabama's Voice in the National Presidential Conversation

~Secretary Merrill enthusiastically advocated Alabama joining the **SEC Presidential Primary** in June 2015, thus moving Alabama's primary election date to March 1, 2016.

~From August 2015 to February 2016, **10 presidential candidates visited Alabama** multiple times.

~Due to the promotion of the SEC Presidential Primary, 1.25 million voters cast ballots during the March 1, 2016 election, making it the largest turnout (40.68%) in a gubernatorial or presidential primary election.

•Voter Registration

~Since Secretary Merrill took office in January 2015, **586,950 citizens have registered to vote, which sets the total to 3,321,270 registered voters.**

~**Online Electronic Voter Registration and a voter registration mobile device app were unveiled** for the first time in Alabama's history.

~The **Secretary of State Voter Registration and Photo Voter ID Mobile Unit** works throughout the year by attending numerous statewide community events in all 67 counties at least once per year. The unit can be sent to any community and/or household at any time, 7 days a week, in all 67 counties.

~**Alabama Head Football Coach Nick Saban, Auburn Head Football Coach Gus Malzahn, World Boxing Heavyweight Champion Deontay Wilder, and former NBA Star Charles Barkley** assisted with encouraging voter registration by promoting Alabama's Photo Voter ID Law in the state.

~In July 2016, an informational **video concerning voter registration was uploaded to the SOS YouTube channel.**

•Working to Ensure Voter Roll Integrity

~Under the authority of state legislation requested by Secretary Merrill, Alabama joined both the ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center) and the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck program in October 2015 **to ensure Alabama joined a union of states that work together to crosscheck voter rolls to reduce duplication of names in Alabama and across state lines.**

•Increasing Transparency

~Beginning with the March 1, 2016 statewide primary election and leading to the November 8, 2016 statewide general election, **each county's elections results have been placed online in real-time on the SOS website, resulting in 100% participation of all Alabama's counties.**

~The **Alabama Election Fairness Project** (an agreement signed between the Attorney General, State Bureau of Investigation, & Secretary of State) was established to ensure more fair elections in Alabama.

~**Fair Campaign Finance Reports are under constant review.**

~The **Fair Ballot Commission information is linked to the website** so Alabamians can find information on proposed state constitutional amendments, which oftentimes are hard to understand.

~For the first time in Alabama's history, **citizens can purchase voter list information online.**

~**The Alabama Elections Handbook is available online** for the first time to eliminate publishing costs and increase viewer use beyond state and county election officials to, now, be accessible to and include the general public.

~An informational calendar for all state and local elections is available on the website, including local tax referendums.

~Online information regarding the State Boards and Commissions is updated annually.

~A search feature in the Acts of Alabama online database was implemented to make it easier to find information in the text of a legislative act.

•Assisting Alabama's Counties

~**The Secretary of State's administration of the Help America Vote Act Grant Program was reorganized** to more adequately serve Alabama counties (whose local government is closer to the people) to:

~More quickly respond to county requests for use of the grant funds,

~More quickly issue approved grant funds to counties,

~Provide capital asset inventory and surplus guidelines to the counties related to grant funds purchases that are required under federal regulations.

~The Secretary of State Office's Elections Division held a **Board of Registrars training session**, which involved nearly 200 participants and continues to conduct training sessions with Alabama's election officials.

~**The office has continued to assist Alabama's 67 counties** by continuing to pay for Handicap Accessible Voting Machines software and maintenance until December 2016.

Business Services Division

•Helping Alabama's Businesses

~Secretary Merrill's instruction to deposit funds in 1 day caused **all new domestic entities filing for the first time to be issued within 1 day of their Business Entity Number, which is available on the website**. This process is a tremendous help to a new business where banks, lenders, and others can verify the existence of a new domestic entity.

~Upon being informed that the state law provision on the payment of an "expedite" fee related to certain business filings was being processed in 3 business days, **the expedition of the filings to be accomplished in less the 24 hours** was immediately ordered, as the state law requires.

~Secretary Merrill instructs the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) sub-division (of the Business Services Division) to accomplish its recordation and filing activities in the time period required by state law (to be fulfilled in 2 days). After a period of adjustment, **the UCC sub-division is consistently accomplishing its public duties mostly the same day but no later than the next business day**.

~Secretary Merrill instructs the Business Entities sub-division (of the Business Services Division) to accomplish the recordation and filing activities required by state law for the Secretary of State to fulfill (such as foreign filings, agent changes, name reservations, corrections to name reservations, certificates of existence, and mergers & conversions) in the time period required by state law (to be fulfilled in 7 days). After a period of adjustment, **the Business Entities sub-division is consistently accomplishing these public duties mostly the same day but no later than the next business day**.

~Secretary Merrill instructs the Business Entities sub-division (of the Business Services Division) to accomplish the recordation and filing activities required by state law, which are issued first to the county Probate Courts (such as all domestic filings) and thereafter sent to the Secretary of State in the time period required by state law (to be fulfilled in 7 days upon the Secretary of State receiving). This activity was aggressively remedied due to the fact that there have been time periods where the tasks were not accomplished until 7 months after the Secretary of State received the domestic filings from the counties. Since July 1, 2016, **domestic filings are filed mostly the same day but no later than the next business day**.

~Due to domestic entity filings being accomplished at the county level, the office is **working with Alabama's counties to establish an "online filings system" for domestic entity filings**.

~Since the above domestic entity online filings system is not mandatory to be used by all Alabama's counties, **an "online pre-filings system" was established for citizens to voluntarily use to form domestic entities**. The online pre-filings system started by only allowing domestic LLCs to be administrated, but the system was expanded to all domestic entities (LP, LLP, LLLP, domestic corporations, and domestic non-profit corporations) in July 2016.

~The online Business Services forms were updated on the new SOS website. Some forms had not been updated in a decade.

~A **new process was established to handle fraudulent business filings** submitted to the SOS office.

Government Support Division

•Coordinating Activities and Saving Money

~**The process for ordering House of Representatives Journals and State Senate Journals** for each Alabama Legislative Session was restructured. The journals are hard-back bound. Approximately 80-140 sets of House Journals and 80-140 sets of Senate Journals have been ordered each year. By coordinating the activity, only 61 sets of House Journals and 36 sets of Senate Journals are needed, which will reduce the costs paid by the state.

~**The process for ordering the Acts of Alabama is better coordinated**. By state law, the hard-back bound acts are required to be sent to over 1,000 recipients statewide. By simply paying attention to the mailing and distribution list through its constant updating, the acts are sent to the proper recipients, avoiding wasteful mailings that lack the proper address.

~The process for providing the pamphlet Acts of Alabama has been eliminated, and the Acts of Alabama are already available on the SOS website. A 2009 state law repealed this process, but the activity was never ceased.

Information Services Division

•Providing Services and Saving Money

~This division assisted with the establishment of **the Online Electronic Voter Registration system** with existing staff, rather than farming out the online development costs to a third party.

~The **Homeowners' Associations Electronic Database** was established for citizens to search and retrieve documents related to homeowners' associations that were established after January 1, 2016, as required by state law. Existing staff accomplished the work.

Authentications, Trademarks, and Lands Division

•Recognizing Alabama's Families

~To highlight and honor Alabama's families, the first **International Adoption Day Celebration** was held on January 29, 2015, and the second ceremony was held on February 5, 2016. The ceremonies highlight Alabama's families and help citizens understand the process and role required of the Secretary of State's Office.

Alabama Athlete Agents Commission

•Modernizing and Saving Money

~**This division modernized the process for accepting payments to the State of Alabama from Athlete Agents** seeking licensing from a paper receipt method to an electronic validation with existing hardware at no additional cost to the state.



2016 Legislative Agenda

SB 200 Senator McClendon and Representative Davis

Relating to Electronic Poll Books, authorizing the Secretary of State to institute a voluntary program available to all counties and municipalities for the use of electronic poll books.

SB 186 Senator Coleman-Madison and Representative England

Relating to Restoration of Voting Rights, streamlining the process for citizens who have lost the right to vote due to a felony conviction involving moral turpitude to have their right to vote restored after time has been served and all fines and fees associated with the sentence have been paid.

SB 73 Senator Holley and Representative Clouse

Relating to Boards of Registrars, daily salary of members salary increased from \$60.00 a day to \$80.00.

HB 204 Representatives Wood and Senator Marsh

Relating to elections, changing the order of offices and candidates' names on the ballot, amending Ala. Code § 17-6-25.

HB 51 Representatives Fridy and Senator Ward

Relating to reducing the number of copies of the Code of Alabama distributed to certain departments, agencies, boards, commissions, and other entities of the state, amending Ala. Code § 41-21-1.

SB 317 Senator Allen and Representative Williams

Relating to the Athlete Agents Commission, repealing the current code sections and adopting a revised Uniform Athlete Agents Act.

HB 312 Representatives Fridy

Relating to Shelby County, proposing an amendment to Amendment 804 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, now appearing as Local Amendments, Shelby County, Section 4.10, of the Official Recompilation of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended, specifying that when a vacancy in the office of circuit or district judge in Shelby County is filled by an appointment, the term of office of the appointed judge would be the same as for judicial vacancies generally.

HB 476 Representatives Davis

Relating to Baldwin County, proposing an amendment to Amendment 660 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901 as amended by Amendment 780, now appearing as Local Amendments, Baldwin County, Section 6, of the Official Recompilation of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended, specifying that when a vacancy in the office of circuit or district judge in Baldwin County is filled by an appointment, the term of office of the appointed judge would be the same as for judicial vacancies generally.

HB 490 Representative Pettus

Relating to Lauderdale County, proposing an amendment to Amendment 660 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901 as amended by Amendment 819, now appearing as Local Amendments, Lauderdale County, Section 4.01, of the Official Recompilation of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended, specifying that when a vacancy in the office of circuit or district judge in Lauderdale County is filled by an appointment, the term of office of the appointed judge would be the same as for judicial vacancies generally.

HB 472 Representative Whorton

Relating to Madison County, proposing an amendment to Amendment 334 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901 as amended by Amendment 607, now appearing as Local Amendments, Madison County, Section 8, of the Official Recompilation of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended, specifying that when a vacancy in the office of circuit or district judge in Madison County is filled by an appointment, the term of office of the appointed judge would be the same as for judicial vacancies generally.

Secretary Merrill Observes Elections in Russia

Secretary Merrill received an invitation from U.S. Ambassador Daniel Baer, who represents the United States in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to participate in an election observation deployment to the Russian Federation. The observation occurs once every five years and took place in Volgograd and Moscow, Russia from September 12th through 21st.



“The purpose of this deployment was to observe foreign elections,” Secretary Merrill stated. “The reason we observe foreign elections serves a dual purpose: to ensure that the integrity of the elections is not violated and to observe procedures for conducting elections in an international environment. This observation gave me the opportunity to objectively review an electoral process that can provide insight into the management of such a large-scale operation without the common procedures and occurrences that are typically present here at home.”



SEC Presidential Primary

March 1, 2016 proved an eventful and historic day for the State of Alabama. Not only were Alabamians given the opportunity to vote significantly earlier for the presidential primary election, but the amount of participation from voters was the largest turnout in the state's history!

Due to the release of the new Online Voter Registration system that launched in late January, thousands of Alabama citizens became registered voters, which raised an approximate participation rate from 67,000 in 2012 to 490,000 in 2016.

A record 10 Presidential Candidates visited the State of Alabama before the SEC Primary Election. The weekend before the primary, Ben Carson, Hillary Clinton, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Donald Trump made a final campaign stop to Alabama. Once the polls closed at 7 p.m. on March 1st, the Elections Division, along with the Probate Judges, worked late into the night to keep an updated record of the results on the SOS website, thus marking another accomplishment in state history. By the next morning, the elections results from all 67 counties were available to the public via the SOS website. Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were declared the victors. The state's Runoff Election was held on April 12th.

*



*Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Jeb Bush in the Republican Presidential debate.

1.25 million voters participated in the March 1, 2016 Presidential Primary Election, making it the largest turnout (40.68%) in a gubernatorial or Presidential Primary Election!

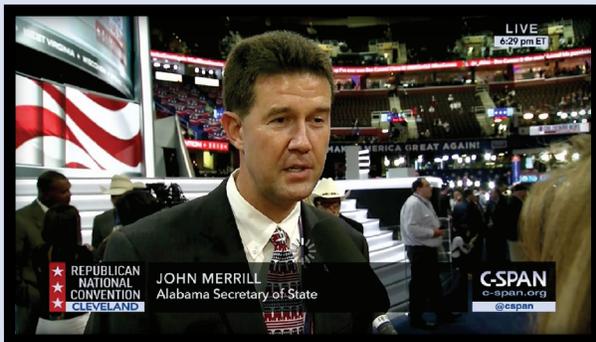
*Donald Trump's last campaign stop in Huntsville, AL on Feb. 28, 2016.



***Have a question for our Elections Division? Give us a call at 334-242-7210.**

Republican Convention 2016

The 2016 Democratic National Convention was held July 25th through 28th at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, while the Republican National Convention took place July 18th through 21st at the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio. Secretary Merrill attended the latter event, where he was interviewed live by C-SPAN.



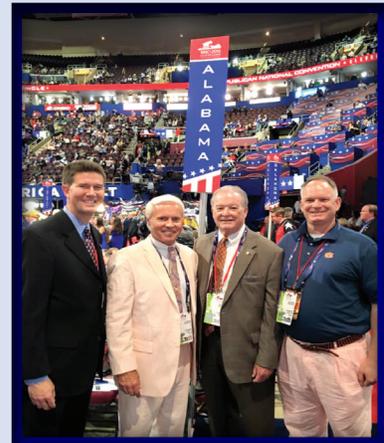
To watch Secretary Merrill's interview, visit
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4612718/john-merrill-gop>.



CBS News Anchor Scott Pelley.



Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant.



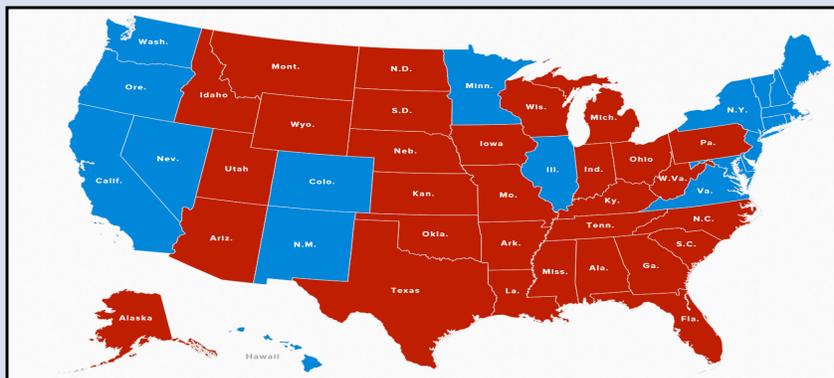
Perry Hooper, State Senator Jabo Waggoner, & State Senator Tom Whatley.

U.S. Presidential Election 2016

The 2016 Presidential Election was held on November 8, 2016, and Alabama's polls opened at 7:00 a.m. and closed at 7:00 p.m. All 67 counties successfully reported their individual election results, which were published live on the Secretary of State's website under the Elections Division. The outcome of the election for Alabama is as follows:

- President-Elect Donald J. Trump – 1,318,255
- Hillary Rodham Clinton – 729,547
- Gary Johnson – 44,467
- Jill Stein – 9,391
- Various Write-In Votes – 21,712

Hillary Clinton received a majority of the country's popular vote with 65,844,954 (48.2%) votes, as opposed to Donald Trump's 62,979,879 (46.1%), but the latter obtained the necessary electoral votes to secure the position of President-Elect.



*Map courtesy of Politico.com as of 12/29/16

*Results courtesy of CNN.com as of 12/29/16

Popular Vote:

Hillary Clinton: 65,844,954 (48.2% votes)
Donald Trump: 62,979,879 (46.1% votes)

Dec. 19th Electoral College Event Vote:

Hillary Clinton: 227
Donald Trump: 304



Statewide Student Mock Election

Alabama’s statewide Student Mock Election was held October 25th between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and closed with an impressive 174,125 total votes from 441 public, private, parochial/Christian, and homeschools from across the state. The youths elected Donald Trump to the presidency with 75,878 votes, 66,871 students voted for Hillary Clinton, and Gary Johnson and Jill Stein finished with 17,191 and 14,185 votes, respectively.

“I’m glad that so many students were able to participate in the Mock Election,” Secretary Merrill stated. “We have a responsibility to our youth to educate and prepare them for the opportunities and challenges they’ll face in adulthood, and I’m certain that this experience made a positive impact on their lives as they learned the importance of voicing their opinion in America’s democratic republic.”

Multiple schools submitted pictures of their students participating in the event, which can be viewed on the Secretary of State’s FaceBook page: www.facebook.com/alasecretaryofstate. One principal from Chambers County expressed that the process was an exciting and rewarding experience for the students, while a teacher from Lee County commented on the amount of fun her students had while casting their votes.

If you would like to see how your county voted in this year’s presidential Mock Election, visit <http://www.alabamavotes.gov/mockelection/statewideResults.aspx>, which is located under the “Mock Election Results” tab in our “Student Center” on the Alabama Secretary of State’s website.



Ellie the Elections Cat™

Visit <http://sos.alabama.gov/sos-office/kids> to play Ellie’s interactive presentation and elections quiz!



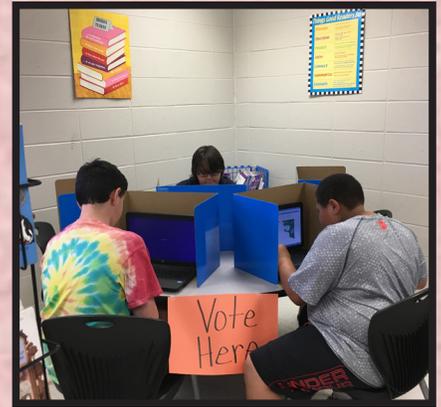
Victor Voter Bear™



Floyd Elementary School in Montgomery County



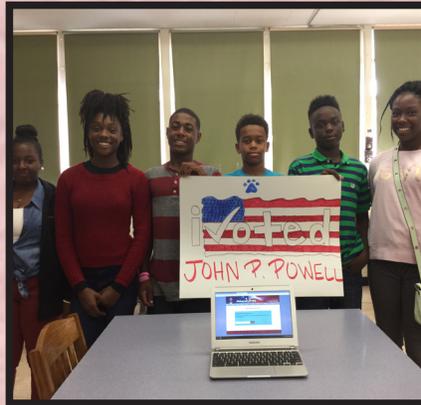
Gulf Shores Middle School in Baldwin County



Hackleburg Elementary School in Marion County



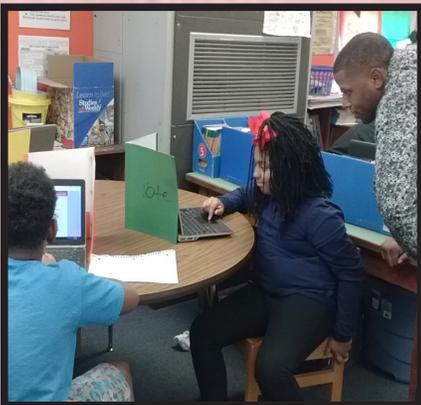
Hudson K-8 in Jefferson County



John P. Powell Middle School in Chambers County



Johnnie Carr Middle School in Montgomery County



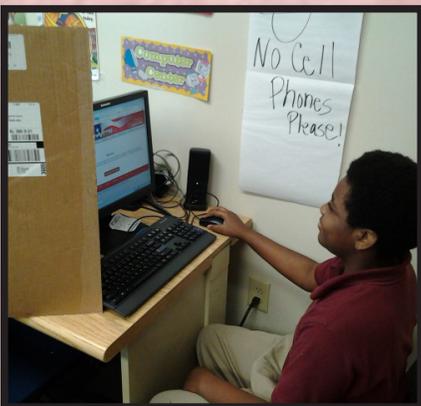
Jonesboro Elementary School in Jefferson County



Lee-Scott Academy in Lee County



Olive J. Dodge Elementary School in Mobile County



Revelation Christian School in Mobile County



Smiths Station High School in Lee County



Wellborn High School in Calhoun County

2016 Electoral College Meeting

Quick Fact:

At 1,318,255 votes, President-Elect Donald Trump received more votes than any candidate for the Presidency in the history of our state.



Secretary of State John Merrill and his office hosted the 2016 Electoral College Meeting on December 19, 2016 at 12 p.m. The program took place in the Alabama State Capitol's Old House Chamber, and the event was open to the public, although a vast majority of the attendees contacted the SOS office to reserve seats. More than 150 people attended this momentous occasion, which included Constitutional Officers Governor Robert Bentley, Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivey, and State Treasurer Young Boozer, and Congressional members Robert Aderholt, Mo Brooks, Martha Roby, and Mike Rogers.

The ceremony commenced with the Auburn High School Band's exuberant performance of John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever," as the members of Congress, Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary Merrill, and all nine Electors filed into the Old House Chamber before an audience of dozens. The Electors chosen for the 2016 Electoral College include the following:

Perry O. Hooper, Jr. - At-Large Elector
Grady H. Thornton - At-Large Elector
Frank Burt, Jr. - First Congressional District
Will Sellers - Second Congressional District
James Eldon Wilson - Third Congressional District
Tim Wadsworth - Fourth Congressional District
J. Elbert Peters - Fifth Congressional District
Mary Sue McClurkin - Sixth Congressional District
Robert A. Cusanelli - Seventh Congressional District



Secretary Merrill, serving as the Master of Ceremonies, gave a warm welcome and opening remarks, and Lt. Governor Ivey led the Pledge of Allegiance, which was followed by a heart-warming performance of the National Anthem sung by Master Sergeant Donna Johnson, and an endearing prayer led by Mamun Siddiq of Re/Max Partners Realty. Governor Bentley and Congressman Aderholt delivered speeches, and spectators were pleasantly surprised when Founding Father Benjamin Franklin (portrayed by Dr. Richard Rhone) stepped out of the 18th century to shine his insight on the historical significance of the Electoral College. After the Proclamation of the Presidential Election results and an introduction of the Electors, the nine votes for President and Vice President were cast and canvassed, and the event came to a close upon the completion of the Certificates of Votes. President-Elect Donald Trump received all nine votes. A formal RSVP luncheon sponsored by the Alabama Republican Party and Mr. Gus' Restaurant was held in honor of the Electors at Archives & History's Milo B. Howard Auditorium.

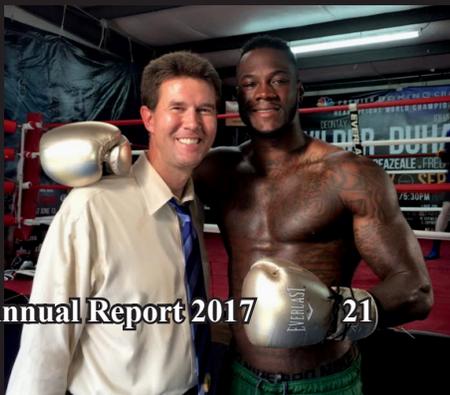
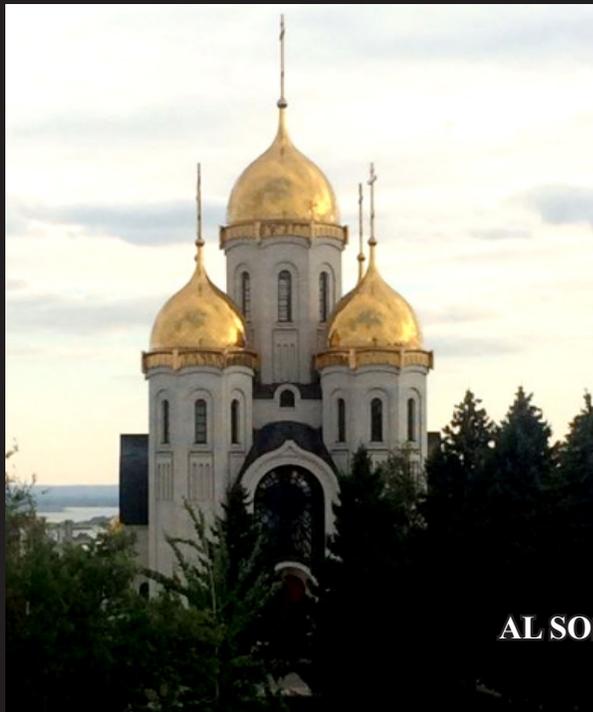
"The Electors and all others in attendance were really pleased with the way the event turned out," Secretary Merrill stated. "I'm glad we were able to organize an exciting and outstanding program that the public was able to witness and enjoy. It was a momentous occasion in history that the state shall never forget."

The 2017 Presidential Inauguration Ceremony took place on Friday, January 20, 2017.

*

A Year in Photos 2016





Office of the Secretary of State
Alabama State Capitol
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Montgomery, AL 36103-5616

I WANT YOU TO REGISTER TO VOTE

***AND TO OBTAIN A
GOVERNMENT-ISSUED
PHOTO ID.***

CHARLES BARKLEY

*Two-time inductee into the Naismith
Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame*

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