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## STATE OF ALABAMA

October 6, 2015

The Honorable Terri Sewell  
United States House of Representatives  
1133 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Sewell:

Over the weekend, I read your call to action and your concerns with the recent decision to reassign ALEA personnel to district offices. I believe your comments were impulsive, ill-informed, and based on irresponsible media reports concerning the decisions that were made to allocate limited resources of state government. As you are aware from past experience, as your Governor and your friend, I am available to you and your office as often as needed. Had you contacted me regarding this issue, I would have been pleased to share with you the same facts we shared with the taxpayers of our state. For your benefit, I will address the concerns you raised in this correspondence.

The budget passed by the state legislature required many executive branch departments to make difficult business decisions regarding how they will allocate their limited resources in Fiscal Year 2016. As Governor, I am obligated to provide a certain level of government services to the people of Alabama and to do that without political preference. While we were able to prevent the closure of driver license offices, the resources used in some supplemental services – such as satellite locations owned and operated by local governments – are necessary to ensure that ALEA can provide for its core functions. Typically, ALEA satellite offices are located in the county buildings where the registrars and probate judges offices are located. No additional transportation burden is caused by the elimination of the satellite offices with respect to an Alabama citizen obtaining a Voter ID or driver license.

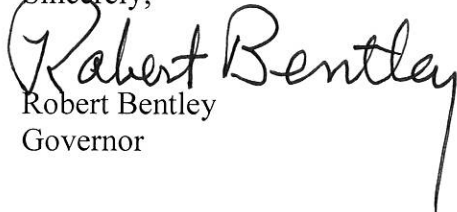
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Prior to the FY16 budget cuts, ALEA had provided a state government license examiner to drive to various county offices anywhere between one and three times a week to conduct driver license examinations (written and vehicle-operating). This was a service provided to allow individuals in counties that do not have an ALEA district office to conduct a license examination if they were receiving a license for the first time (for example, a 16-year-old), or receiving their first Alabama license (originally from out-of-state), or reinstating their license due to some other reason. Given the constraints created by the legislative budget cuts, ALEA made the business decision to reallocate the examiners back to the district offices and refrain from sending them to 31 county offices in a supplemental capacity.

As a statewide elected official, my job is to represent all the people of Alabama. Our value for democracy is a defining characteristic of our identity as a nation and that is why we work to maintain integrity in the democratic process. In all 67 counties a citizen will find an available office of the local board of registrars. These offices are located in each county's seat and are equipped to provide free photo identification so that no one has to pay in order to vote. In addition, the Secretary of State provides mobile units to register and develop photo identification cards to those who need it throughout the state, and who may find themselves limited by lack of transportation.

After ensuring all counties provided government-issued identification at no expense to the voter, we allocated our resources to the most prudent services. The resources used to provide services at the satellite locations were needed elsewhere to ensure ALEA can continue to fulfill its core functions. To best serve the citizens of Alabama, we looked at expenses and transactions to determine how to most appropriately streamline government. If you would like to discuss this further with me, or members of my cabinet, please know we are always available to you.

Sincerely,

  
Robert Bentley  
Governor