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## **Our legislature has done poor job**

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by Darrell Turner

Heflin

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Our recently ended legislative session ended without so much as a news worthy byline informing Alabama's citizens what really took place in Montgomery. I must have been talking to myself all these months, because masses of people seem to A) don't care or B) don't know that we have been dragged under the bus.

It has not soaked in yet how much harm fellow Alabamians have done to our people and our economy. Our super majority Republican legislature eliminated 17 VA offices across Alabama, (with more closures likely to follow).

When our vets got blindsided it became painfully clear to me that our poor, our seniors, and our needy children didn't stand a chance with these guys. The GOP controlled legislature drastically cut the state's mental health budget. Those irresponsible cuts CLOSED 4 of the 6 mental health facilities that serve people in every county of this state, Democrats and Republicans, alike. The GOP controlled legislature also eliminated the "Department of Children's Affairs". While they were on a roll they also cut the "Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention" budget by over 79%. (Remember the poor children)?

The just mentioned cuts were only the opening act. Those shameless people that call themselves representatives tore at the heart strings of every family in this state when they left Montgomery with the Medicaid budget in limbo. More than 109,000 of Alabama's seniors and more than 618,000 Alabama children that depend on Medicaid services will have to wait until a constitutional amendment is voted on this fall to know for sure that help will continue to be provided. What this means in Cleburne County and the 66 other counties is that if the amendment fails, (is voted down) seniors would likely be kicked out of nursing homes, and children would lose state sponsored health care. Additionally, hospitals would close, and lifesaving treatments like dialysis, will be eliminated.

The importance of the amendment is twofold. It must pass to provide money to the Medicaid program. Passage of the amendment allows the general fund to receive \$163 million dollars from a trust fund, to be used for Medicaid payments that were unfunded by our legislature. Failure to pass would cause an immediate Medicaid budget prora-tion of 12% across the board, leaving a \$72 million dollars shortfall. Alabama is required by law to fund Medicaid at a minimum of \$602 million dollars, or our state LOSES all federal matching money. That is the time that voters will know what they did, but it will be too late to do anything about it at that time... Our super majority republican legislators knew when they tucked and ran that a reckoning day would come. If only we the people had known.

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