



**By Art Parker, Editor**

My pastor recently delivered an effective sermon he titled Interim Ethics. I must admit that one of my first thoughts, while hearing the message that Sunday morning, was about our state lawmakers. Interim Ethics - that term fits them beautifully.

If you want evidence of interim ethics just look at some of the pre-filed bills for this next session. Bills filed before the session begins must always be viewed with suspicion especially during an election year. Our legislators are notorious about presenting bills for their own political benefit.

First, a bill that deserves passage, one that truly will aid and protect those that need it. Republican Becky Nordgren of Etowah County has filed House Bill 7 (HB 7). It will require, upon written affidavit, the omission of the residential and mailing address of any registered voter who is a victim of domestic violence or who is the custodian of a minor victim of domestic violence. This bill does not seem to injure the public or offend open records where the government is favored by keeping the information secret. It does do one thing- it helps to protect those that have been victims of domestic violence. This seems to be good legislation and I see no reason for the legislature to be tardy with its passage.

Before going to more House bills let's look at a very unnecessary bill filed in the Senate. Senate Bill 18 (SB-18) says, among other things, that "existing law does not expressly allow students and district staff to offer traditional greetings regarding the celebrations, such as 'Merry

Christmas."

I've looked but cannot find where a teacher or principal, etc., has been indicted or convicted, OR even arrested for saying "Merry Christmas." This is not a problem that exists and the people, teachers, principals, etc. have the First Amendment privilege to say Merry Christmas. This bill is not necessary. The several Republican Senators that have sponsored this bill are attempting to gain political points by trying to portray themselves as greater Christians than others. It's all about votes in this election year. You know...interim ethics.

Speaking of getting votes and teachers, HB-17 will try and give immunity to teachers for their actions. The bill basically states all of the ways a teacher could be sued, e.g., acting outside his or her authority. But of course we pretty much know all about that, don't we? Mike Jones of Andalusia is the sponsor of this bill that does nothing more than try to gain points with public school teachers, especially since the Republicans have treated teachers like second class citizens the last few years. Nothing like interim ethics to get votes in an election year!

Bill Poole of Tuscaloosa is sponsoring HB 33. It will provide for the warrantless arrest of someone on the premises of an educational institution. "When the officer has reasonable cause to believe that a person has committed a trespass on the premises of an educational institution," is some of the verbiage that will allow an officer to make an arrest. However, among the definitions in the bill the word trespass is not included and that creates problems. Without that definition then trespassing can become a discriminating act. A teacher, principal or coach, not to mention a police officer can make a decision regarding trespassing at a whim. This bill is garbage. This is another way to keep taxpayers off of the property they rightfully own because they may not be in agreement with a school and its officials. I suppose I best never be critical of a coach's decisions since the next time I walk the sidelines at the school I may be considered unwelcome and therefore will be deemed guilty of trespassing.

Back to the days of Roy Moore with the filing of HB 45 by representative Duwayne Bridges of Valley. State property, including school property, is to allow the display of the Ten Commandments if this proposed Constitutional Amendment passes. Let's forget all of the arguments of the Roy Moore days and remember one thing. This will cause more lawsuits that the state cannot win. This will not work in Federal Court. Just look at part of the bill that says, "This bill would prohibit the expenditure of public funds in defense of the constitutionality of this amendment." Really? Please, let's don't be fooled into thinking that this is anything but an attempt to tap emotions to gain political points. This is another way to waste time and waste the taxpayers' money in attempt to get votes. You know...interim ethics.

## Inerim Ethics

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On a different level, HB 78 says "This bill would authorize a municipal planning commission to adopt regulations providing for administrative approval of minor subdivisions of up to six lots or a reduction in lots without notice and a public hearing under certain conditions." What this will allow for is corruption on the local level that can endanger the property and property values of others with property owners losing the right to be heard at a government hearing.

Well, that's it for now. But stay tuned. I'm just getting warmed up. There will be plenty more unfair, corrupt, money wasting and stupid ideas to spew from the top of the State House. There will be plenty of interim ethics in this election year. The Legislature goes back into session in just a couple of weeks. May God help us.