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The first regular session of Doctor Robert Bentley's governorship began on Tuesday, March 1st at high noon.

The new Republican controlled legislature ran on a platform called "A Handshake with Alabama". In this they pledged action on several issues including, keeping Alabama out of the new national health care system, immigration and others. These issues dominated the first week of the 2011 session. And the leadership says that until the "Handshake" is passed there will not be much else considered by either house.

This did not keep your association from having a busy first week. The Statute of Repose bill was introduced in both houses. In the Senate it is Senate Bill 59 by Senator Cam Ward. The bill was assigned to the Judiciary Committee. In the House it is House Bill 132 by Representative Canfield. This bill was sent to the Commerce Committee. This measure will take the time that an architect, engineer or contractor can be sued from fifteen years to six years. AGC is leading a coalition to get the bill passed and signed by the Governor.

This bill will be the top priority of your association this session. I urge all of you to talk to all of your Senators and Representatives and urge them to support and vote for these bills. Remember the numbers SB59 and HB132. When talking with your representatives always mention those numbers. That is how the members recognize legislation.

As mentioned before, immigration reform was a large part of the "Handshake". Representative Mickey Hammon introduced HB 56 that addresses this issue. Although we feel that in some areas the bill goes too far and will go to the courts, it is for the most part not unfair to business. The Alabama Employers for Immigration Reform (ALEIR) of which AGC is a member has written Mr. Hammon a letter with several suggestions. We will see how many of those he accepts. One change that is almost certain to take place is that all employers are going to have to use E-verify.

On the defensive side, a horrible bill was introduced by Senator Linda Coleman of Birmingham. Senate Bill 106 would require, "a contractor to utilize subcontractors owned and operated by individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged, business certified under the federal HubZone Program, or any small business enterprise located within the state to fulfill no less than 20 percent of the original contract award." AGC will oppose this bill and will urge all other business organizations to do the same.

Until next time.

Chris Williams
Director, Governmental Relations

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