FAX MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Business Council of Alabama
FROM: Bill O'Connor, President BC
DATE: January 13, 1999
RE: Legislative Organizational Session

As you are aware, members of the Alabama House of Representatives and the Alabama Senate met Tuesday for the first day of their 1999 Organizational Session to elect leaders and to adopt rules for the upcoming legislative quadrennium.

In the Senate, one of the first important orders of business was the election of a President Pro Tem. On an extremely close vote of 18 to 16 with one abstention, Sen. Lowell Barron was elected over Sen. Gerald Dial. Senator Dial is a member of Lt. Gov.-Elect Steve Windom's 17-member Bi-Partisan Leadership Coalition and was Windom's choice for the chamber's leadership position. Although Dial was narrowly defeated, it is important to note that Barron was endorsed by BCA's ProgressPAC in his 1998 re-election bid. Philosophically he has proven in the past to be closely aligned with the members of Windom's Bi-Partisan Leadership Coalition. He has consistently been a strong vote for business, and we expect him to continue to support our issues.

Following that vote, the senators adopted rules outlining the daily operation of the Senate. On an 18-17 vote, the Senate adopted rules taking key powers, long held by and traditionally belonging to Alabama's second highest elected official, away from the Lt. Governor, and placing those functions at the responsibility of the President Pro Tem. Among those functions are the right to name committee members and chairpersons and to assign bills to committee.

Your Business Council has supported Steve Windom through this difficult process because he was elected by the majority of Alabama voters on November 3. He deserves an opportunity to fulfill the pledges he made to the people of Alabama, not the least of which was his sincere pledge to open the Alabama Senate and turn it into a democratic body where important issues would make it to the floor for fair and open debate. Steve has been stripped of his ability to do that. The question now is: Will the new leadership in the Senate make sure key issues get to the floor for debate?

In spite of these actions, it is important to remember that there are 25 members of the 35-member Alabama Senate whom we consider to be strong votes for business. Nothing that happened Tuesday changes that fact. We remain confident that the issues facing business and industry in Alabama will be taken up and voted on by the Alabama Senate this year. The goal of your BCA from the beginning has been to be in a position to have the issues and concerns of our members addressed by a majority of senators who share our vision for growth, opportunity and progress. We are still in that position today.

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We, as concerned Alabamians and business people owe a great debt of gratitude to those 17 senators who stood tall and remained firm, in the midst of incredible pressure, to the goals of Steve Windom's Bi-Partisan Leadership Coalition. They pledged support for the Lt. Governor-Elect and his leadership ideals early on and remained steadfast in their support. Included among that team are: Bill Armistead, R-Columbiana; Jack Biddle, R-Gardendale; George Callahan, R-Mobile; George Clay, D-Tuskegee; Gerald Dial, D-Lineville; Larry Dixon, R-Montgomery; Jeff Enfinger, R-Huntsville; Steve French, R-Irondale; Curt Lee, R-Jasper;Albert Lipscomb, R-Magnolia Springs; Del Marsh, R-Anniston; Wendell Mitchell, D-Luverne; Hinton Mitchem, D-Albertville; Hap Myers, R-Mobile; Tommy Ed Roberts, D-Hartselle; Harri Anne Smith, R-Slocomb; and J.T. "Jabo" Waggoner, R-Birmingham. If you are represented by one of these statesmen or women, please call or write them immediately to express your thanks and to encourage them to remain committed to their goals and vision for Alabama.

Late next week, at the close of the organizational session, you will receive an abbreviated version of a *BCA Legislative Bulletin* outlining the key activities of the session, committee chairs, committee members and other useful information. In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to call upon your BCA Governmental Affairs staff at 1-800-665-9647.

Thank you for your interest in the welfare of our great state and for your continued support of the Business Council of Alabama.

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