



Fellow bar members:

I am writing to ask your help in spreading the word on why adequate funding of Alabama's courts is important and necessary. The Alabama State Bar supports fully funding our state's judicial system. Alabama has limited resources, but the judicial branch needs to be adequately funded to ensure access to justice for all of our state's businesses and citizens.

Your client's legal issues need to be dealt with – and dealt with in a timely and efficient manner. Whether your client is a business seeking to protect its trade secrets and prevent unfair competition or a battered spouse seeking protection from abuse, justice delayed is justice denied.

Continued budget cuts have a major impact on court staffing and eventually erode the public's access to justice. Throughout a number of budget cycles that involved budget cuts to the courts, our courts have made many difficult operational decisions and they have implemented a number of innovative solutions making the system more efficient.

The courts contribute many millions of dollars to Alabama's General Fund each year through costs and fees collected. This year, the courts need to be adequately funded to preclude additional personnel cuts that would have a significant negative impact on important operations. At this point, further cuts will result in layoffs or terminations of employees essential to operations, which would inevitably result in delays for litigants.

In the long term, after many years of budget cuts, Alabama needs a multi-year plan for reinvestment for the trial courts with additional investments to help stabilize funding for the entire judicial branch. Such an approach is needed to rebuild and create a more accessible and efficient court system to serve the people of Alabama.

Please help the Alabama State Bar as we continue to make the case for adequate funding of our courts by reaching out to our state's legislators and explaining these matters to members of the public.

Richard J.R. Raleigh, Jr.
President, Alabama State Bar