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Carmage Walls
Commentary Prize

2019 Entry Form

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What is the subject/title of the entry? Robert J. Bentley, will you please go now?

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Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Under

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

You would like this editorial on a plane.

You would enjoy reading it on a train.

Alabama's "Love Gov" at times.

Was worth turning into rhymes.

Robert J. Bentley, will you please go now?

THE ISSUE Disgraced former Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley is trying to burnish his reputation and even hints he might run again for public office. This is a terrible, no-good idea.

Robert J. Bentley,
We don't care how
Robert J. Bentley,
Will you please
GO NOW?

Just go.

Go!

We don't care how.

You can go by foot.

You can go by cow.

Robert J. Bentley,

Will you please go now?

Alabama has enough problems without the disgraced former Gov. Bentley trying to polish his reputation — a task rather like polishing something else far less pleasant — and hinting, just hinting mind you, at a possible comeback.

We already have lawmakers who have pleaded guilty to, been convicted of or are currently under indictment for various federal offenses.

We have just endured a special election for U.S. Senate that saw one candidate dogged by accusations of misconduct involving teenage girls — accusations voters deemed credible enough to deny Republican nominee Roy Moore election to what should have been the safest of Republican seats.

Alabama already has gained a reputation for political corruption that puts it in a category with infamously corrupt states such as Illinois and Louisiana, except we don't even get the benefit of colorfully corrupt politicians. Whatever laws they break and whatever scandals they make, our pols remain dull, dull, dull.

That brings us to the dermatologist-turn-lawmaker who, by a quirk of fate, became Alabama's governor and proceeded after 1½ largely uneventful terms, to become the "Luv Guv."

Last week, Bentley returned to the public eye in an attempt to convince everyone he was a far better governor than everyone remembers. He launched a "Bentley for Alabama" website, detailing his six years in office, and reactivated his social media accounts. He told The Associated Press that he started the website as "a historic record of our administration."

"Bentley for Alabama is a continuation of the hard work that was done by everyone in my administration. The initiatives we started are so important and this is a way for us to keep issues like job creation, Pre-K expansion and rebuilding prisons in the forefront," Bentley wrote in an email.

Nowhere on Bentley's website, however, will one find reference to the alleged sex-tinged scandal that led to an ethics investigation, misdemeanor convictions and a resignation just ahead of a likely impeachment for misuse of his office.

You will see reference to that on Bentley's Facebook page, brought up by Alabamians who, as The AP reported, want Bentley simply to, "Go away!"

If you wish

You may go

By lion's tail

You can stamp yourself

And go by mail.

Far worse than trying to resuscitate his reputation, however, is Bentley's cracking open the door to running for office again.

In a softball interview with the conservative website Yellowhammer.com, Bentley flirts with a run for the U.S. Senate, doubtless eyeing the seat Democrat Doug Jones occupies thanks, in large part, to Moore's scandal.

Asked, "Would you consider a return to public office? Maybe the U.S. Senate in 2020?" Bentley replies:

"... I have a heart for our people and I believe we are all called to serve one another in some capacity. ... I believe what is missing in public service today is loving the people that you serve and wanting to help those who need help, especially those who are less fortunate and really have nothing. If God shows me a new avenue where I can do that, I'll do it."

As they say, been there, done that. The state of Alabama has been served quite enough, thank you, Mr. Bentley. Perhaps the ex-governor should simply enjoy his involuntary retirement from politics.

Just don't let the door

Hit your caboose.

(With apologies to Dr. Seuss.)