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### The Conviction of Alabama House Speaker Michael Hubbard

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# The Conviction of Alabama House Speaker Michael Hubbard: What Comes Next?

June 15, 2016



*Who is Michael Hubbard?*

Hubbard is the [former speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives](#). First elected in 1998, he represented Auburn in the state legislature and served as House Minority leader from 2004 to 2010. As chairman of the Alabama Republican Party, Hubbard spearheaded his party's [successful effort](#) to win control of both chambers of the state legislature for the first time in 136 years. In 2010, he was unanimously elected speaker and helped pass ethics laws considered among the nation's strictest.

*What crimes has he been convicted of?*

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Hubbard was convicted in the Lee County Circuit Court on [12 of the 23](#) felony ethic charges he faced, including soliciting money from lobbyists and failing to disclose a conflict of interest before voting on a bill. Following his 2010 election, Hubbard was laid off from his job at [IMG Sports Network](#). Shortly thereafter, Hubbard's own company, Craftmaster Printing, Inc., defaulted on a \$600,000 loan he had personally guaranteed. In debt, [Hubbard used his office](#) to solicit lucrative consulting work and investments from lobbyists, companies with business before the state, and even former governor Bill Riley. Hubbard eventually earned over [\\$2.3 million](#) by selling his influence in the statehouse. He helped draft and pass [Senate Bill 143](#), which granted Alabama Pharmacy Cooperative, Inc. a lucrative monopoly over state-funded pharmacy benefits, while on the company's payroll as a consultant. Hubbard was also paid hefty [consulting fees](#) by CV Holdings and Edgenuity in exchange for promoting their interests before the Governor and the Alabama Department of Commerce. Moreover, [Hubbard was found to have leveraged his office](#) to garner \$600,000 in investments for Craftmaster.

*What is unique about this case?*

Hubbard's case highlights the evolving distinction between politics-as-usual and outright corruption. Both current governor [Robert Bentley](#) and former governor [Bill Riley](#) testified at Hubbard's trial, asserting that Hubbard's outside work and use of political relationships were perfectly legal actions for a part-time legislator. Ironically, it was Hubbard's own landmark ethics bill that largely criminalized his behavior.

*How does this case relate to other ethics cases underway in Alabama?*

Remarkably, both Governor Robert Bentley and Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore are also currently subject to ethics proceedings that may result in their ouster, in which case the leaders of all three branches of Alabama government may be removed due to separate ethics violations.

Bentley became [embroiled in a scandal in March](#) when the press published leaked, sexually explicit phone conversations between the two-term Republican governor and senior political advisor Rebekah Mason. Bentley has denied that an affair took place, but the [State Ethics Commission](#) has opened an investigation into allegations that he misused government property and resources to cover up an affair and that Mason received improper payments from a social welfare nonprofit that advocates the Governor's agenda. Both Mason and Bentley are [believed to be under criminal investigation](#) by the State Attorney General's Office, which would not comment on any ongoing investigation. Twenty-three lawmakers have signed articles of impeachment. The House Judiciary Committee will hold its [first meeting regarding potential impeachment](#) on June 15.

Roy Moore, the elected chief justice of the state supreme court, was [charged with violating judicial ethics](#) by the Judicial Inquiry Commission on May 6, 2016 and suspended from the bench. Moore repeatedly [directed probate judges](#) not to issue same-sex marriage licenses, in violation of both a federal district court order and a subsequent ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court. He has until [June 21, 2016](#) to respond to the Commission's charges. If found guilty, Moore would be removed from office. In 2003, [Moore was ousted by the same body](#) for refusing to comply with a federal court order to remove a two-ton monument of the Ten Commandments that he had installed in the rotunda of the supreme court building.

*What comes next?*

Hubbard was [automatically removed from office](#) following his conviction, per state law. He is scheduled to be sentenced on July 8, 2016. He faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and a \$30,000 fine [for each of the 12 counts](#). Hubbard maintains his innocence and [plans to appeal](#) his conviction. Representative Victor Gaston, the current house speaker *pro tempore*, [will assume the responsibilities of house speaker](#) until an election is held at the start of Alabama's next legislative session, [currently scheduled](#) for February 2017.