



## No 'appetite' for taxes? Gov. Bentley says the lack of appetite is for cuts to state services

Gov. Robert Bentley in a bill signing ceremony (AL.com file photo)

Gov. Robert Bentley

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Gov. Robert Bentley told a Prattville civic group today that he will not call a second special session of the Legislature to deal with a deficit in the state's General Fund budget until sometime in September.

Speculation has swelled regarding when Bentley might call lawmakers back into a second special session after a first special session ended last week without the budget deficit having been fixed.

The General Fund is facing a \$200-plus-million deficit which if not bridged could see the state cut medical and mental health care to adults and children, reduce the number of state troopers on highways, close most state parks, forced nursing home patients to have to leave care and see rural hospitals close.

The New budget year start Oct 1.

Both in the regular session of the Legislature and in the first special session, Bentley proposed tax increases as the only way to fix the budget crisis by Oct. 1. Each time lawmakers refused to act on the governor's plan.

Some lawmakers believe the solution is to cut the budget by \$200 million. Some lawmakers led by state Senate leader Del Marsh, support legalizing gambling and taxiing it to fix the long term problems with the General Fund, a solution that would not solve the problem by Oct. 1.

Marsh has maintained that if the House of Representatives pass a tax package and send it to the Senate it will likely die. Marsh has said repeatedly said he does not believe the Senate has an "appetite for tax increases.

Bentley threw that that word back at Marsh Tuesday speaking to the Prattville Kiwanis Club telling an audience of about 50 that he believes Alabamians do not have an appetite to cut critical state services.

"Do I believe when you go up to people and ask them do you support raising taxes the answer you get is yes? Of course not. What fool is going to say yes?" Bentley said as the audience laughed. "So when I hear people in the Senate say there is no appetite for raising taxes I say of course not."

"But there is an appetite for not closing down hospitals. There is an appetite for making sure children are

immunized," Bentley continued. "There is an appetite for making sure we don't fire pediatricians at Children's Hospital in Birmingham. There is an appetite for making sure we have enough troopers on the road."

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