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State AG focuses on fighting opioid epidemic, sanctuary cities and illegal gaming

By Michael Wetzel Staff Writer Jan 4, 2018



Marshall

MOULTON — Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall said he'll campaign in hopes of keeping his job — and that entails fighting excessive opioid prescriptions, the establishment of sanctuary cities and illegal gambling.

“I am running to be the attorney general the next four years,” said the Albertville Republican while talking at the Lawrence County Republican Party meeting at Mel’s Steakhouse on Tuesday night. “I will continue to be engaged in issues that impact Alabama within its borders as well as outside. I’ll serve as long as the people of Alabama want me to.”

On Feb. 10 of last year, then-Gov. Robert Bentley appointed Marshall to fill Luther Strange's term as attorney general. Strange was appointed to the U.S. Senate when Jeff Sessions became President Donald Trump's attorney general pick.

Marshall will face GOP opposition in the AG race this year from former criminal court judge Chess Bedsole, former AG Troy King and ex-U.S. Attorney Alice Martin, while Peace Corps veteran Chris Christie is the lone Democrat to announce.

Marshall said Alabamians should not be proud of having the highest amount of opioid prescriptions per capita of any state in the nation.

Marshall said cities lining up to file a class-action lawsuit against the large pharmaceutical companies is bringing awareness to the problem, but it is not the solution.

He said his office is aware that narcotic drugs such as oxycodone are necessary in many cases, but the over-prescribing must be reined in to save lives.

“The ultimate goal is to reduce the amount of deaths, but how to get there is a very complicated question,” he said. “We have to be careful how far we swing the pendulum. There are patients who need the drugs.”

He said sanctuary jurisdictions are in essence breaking federal laws at the convenience of local municipalities. He said the sanctuaries can prohibit law enforcement agencies from effectively stopping criminal activity. “Upholding federal immigration laws will provide law enforcement agencies in the state and other states with the necessary tools to identify drug offenders who enter the country unlawfully ... ,” he said. “The sanctuary areas are making certain laws optional. It is my job to make sure state and federal laws are enforced.”

Marshall said he was proud his office was able to shut down illegal gaming businesses in five counties, including River City Entertainment in Lacey’s Spring in October.

Marshall did not endorse a gubernatorial candidate Tuesday night. The party primaries are June 5.

Lawrence County District 4 Commissioner Bobby Burch said it was enlightening to have Marshall visit the local GOP group.

“We are always pleased when we get to visit as a local party with state-level-elected officials,” Burch said. “The attorney general confirmed in person the impression I had formed of him from media reports — a tough, fair professional who has proven to do his job well.”

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