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Alabama's Governor, Lawmakers Look Ahead After Scandals

Alabama lawmakers return to Montgomery to begin the 2018 legislative session.

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FILE - In this Nov. 17, 2017 file photo, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey speaks to the media in Montgomery, Ala. Ivey will take center stage on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2018, as she gives her first state of the state address since being catapulted to the governor's office nine months ago. (AP Photo/Brynn Anderson, File) The Associated Press

AP

By KIM CHANDLER, Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — [Alabama \(/news/best-states/alabama\)](#) Gov. Kay Ivey, in her first State of the State address since scandal catapulted her into the governor's office, told legislators Tuesday that the state has turned the page after a cloud of controversy enveloped Alabama government for much of the past two years.

Ivey, who took the governor's office in April after the sudden resignation of then-Gov. Robert Bentley, addressed lawmakers on the opening day of the 2018 legislative session.

"Tomorrow marks nine full months since I unexpectedly became governor. A lot has happened since then. We have lifted the dark cloud, wounds have started healing, and the people's faith in a government 'for and by the people' is being restored," she said.

Ivey, who had been lieutenant governor, succeeded Bentley when he stepped down amid an impeachment investigation in the wake of an alleged affair with a staffer.

Amid rosier budget projection, Ivey's speech focused on the state's economic recovery and laid out a legislative agenda that included pay raises for teachers and state employees, increased funding for state prisons to avert a federal takeover of the state system, and developing rural broadband.

"Though we are almost two decades into the 21st century, many of our rural communities do not have adequate access to broadband," Ivey said

The speech — which Ivey began with the quip "What a game!" in reference to the University of Alabama's championship win over rival [Georgia \(/news/best-states/georgia\)](#) — was a crucial moment as Ivey seeks the office of governor in the upcoming 2018 election. The Republican will face challengers in the GOP primary and in the November general election. The new session will unfold as many lawmakers also face challengers in the looming elections.

"I thought the governor did a good job. The speech was very upbeat. She had a lot of exciting things to talk about. It's a good story. It's a

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