Understanding ALISON

For those of you who are new to municipal office, legislative advocacy is a primary function of your Alabama League of Municipalities. In fact, it’s so important that the League staff relies heavily on our members to be an active part of the process. That being said, we make sure you have all the necessary information to be an effective advocate throughout the legislative session.

You will receive weekly reports from our office during each legislative session via our legislative e-newsletter, the State House Advocate, a critical part of our advocacy process that reviews the actions taken by the Alabama Legislature the previous week and outlines what we expect to take place during the upcoming week. Often times we will ask you to personally advocate on behalf of your municipality during the session to enhance our lobbying efforts. The State House Advocate and occasional Monday morning coffee and conversation conference calls will provide you with key information as well as important contact information and online resources to help you with those efforts. Online resources that will assist you with those efforts, such as how to schedule a meeting with your lawmaker and tips on meeting with your lawmaker, can be found on the League’s website under the Legislative Advocacy section. Of particular importance is ALISON (Alabama Legislative Information System Online), the website for the Legislature.

ALISON – A Valuable Advocacy Resource

Please familiarize yourself with ALISON, the Alabama Legislature’s website and legislative tracking system: www.legislature.state.al.us. Built in-house by the Legislature’s tech staff, not only is ALISON the resource we will direct you to most often for information the League is tracking, you may also find that you want to independently research a legislative action, read a bill or know how your local representatives voted on certain legislative actions. ALISON provides a wealth of information, including an overview of the legislative process, House and Senate Rules, contact information for the House and Senate, session information (House and Senate Special Order Calendars, prefiled bills, bills, resolutions, confirmation, committees, etc.), meetings and announcements as well as links to other resources. ALISON’s web address, www.legislature.state.al.us, will take you to their opening page. There you will see the following tabs: Home, House of Representatives, Senate, Legislative Services Agency, Joint Resources, Bills, Session Info and Legislative Day. (See Figure 1)

Who are my legislators, and what committees do they serve on?

To quickly reach your legislators, click on the “House of Representatives” or “Senate” tab at the top of the opening page. From there, click “House Leaders and Members” and then click “House Members.” Once you have clicked “House Members,”
you will notice each member of the House listed with tabs to view their contact information, bio, committees they serve on and bills they have sponsored. The same goes for Senate members. These links will be particularly important when you are asked by the League to reach out to your lawmaker(s) or committee(s) to advocate for or against a bill being debated. (See Figures 2 and 3)

Session Info
Another important resource via ALISON, is the “Session Info” tab on the homepage, which will link you to a variety of options regarding the legislative session.

This will take you to a page allowing you to quickly access several important categories such as the Special Order Calendars, Bills, Resolutions, etc. (See Figure 4)

Finding the Status of a Bill
During legislative session, you may want to locate bills in an effort to research what impact it could have on your community. If so, click “Bills” at the top of the homepage. This will link you to several options that will be helpful in your search for legislation. You have the option to search all bills, bills by a House or Senate sponsor or prefiled bills. (See Figure 5)

Legislative Day
The “Legislative Day” tab along the top of the ALISON website will provide you with House and Senate Special Reports, Special Order Calendars (as they are adopted), Current Matter before the bodies and Legislative Audio/Video. (See Figure 6)

Conclusion
While ALISON can be somewhat counter intuitive, it is the best resource for staying current during the legislative session. The League will absolutely need your participation throughout the 2023 Regular Session to promote our legislative priorities and to stop any bills that threaten local government. As mentioned above, your weekly State House Advocate and Monday coffee and conversation conference calls will review the session week by week and will ask for specific engagement. A link to ALISON is always prominently displayed at the end of the e-newsletter and you will most likely find yourself visiting ALISON often during the legislative session so please take some time to become comfortable navigating the site. As always, we appreciate your engagement and thank you for your support!