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Alabama has a voters problem

By Josh Moon
Feb. 8, 2015

Stop blaming Roy Moore.

I mean it. Lay off the guy.

Sure, as the chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, he should know better than to publicly state that he'll ignore a federal judge's ruling that our same-sex marriage ban is unconstitutional.

But you know what? That's who Roy Moore is.

That's who he was when he was booted from the bench over a Ten Commandments monument. That's who he was a few years ago when he called gay marriage the "ultimate destruction of our country."

Roy Moore has never hid who he is.

And that means we don't have a Roy Moore problem.

We have a voters problem.

Alabama voters are the world's biggest suckers, consistently fooled by blatant religious pandering, kindergarten scare tactics and good-ol'-days rhetoric from hypocritical, moronic politicians.

Case in point: Chip Beeker.

Thanks to Alabama voters, Beeker now resides on the Alabama Public Service Commission. He beat out Terry Dunn, the lone voice of reason on a PSC who wanted to put Alabama Power through a formal rate hearing process to properly examine the company's rates.

So, obviously, Dunn had to go. Especially when Beeker promised to fight President Obama on ... something.

At a meeting last week, Beeker took over, going on an extended rant in which he bemoaned the federal government's overreach in Alabama – one of the biggest federal welfare states in the country – and took shots at welfare recipients, gay marriage and teen pregnancy.

Beeker spoke of the good ol' days, saying that the federal government when he was growing up didn't "punish success" with "the wealth redistribution scheme."

"These days, the federal government feeds, houses and clothes people without providing an escape from it," Beeker said. "The sense of pride one feels in meeting your own needs cannot be found there."

And if anyone would know, it's Beeker.

While bemoaning government handouts to the poor, he forgot to mention that his family has been some of the biggest takers out there. Between 1995 and 2012, Beeker and his wife received more than \$500,000 in farm subsidies. In 2007 alone, they received over \$110,000.

The majority of the handouts came in the form of "conservation subsidies, according to the EWG Subsidies database. The ultra-conservative CATO Institute says most conservation subsidy money is paid to farmers so they won't farm certain land.

So, the guy claiming the country's going to hell because a poor mother gets \$2,100 per year to help feed her kids got \$107,000 one year for most likely doing nothing.

Oh, but we're not finished.

Head north and we'll find the guy who's quite possibly a bigger embarrassment to Alabama than Moore – Congressman Mo Brooks.

Brooks has a knack for saying some of the most racist and insensitive things imaginable, and there appears to be no way that he can prevent whatever crosses his mind from coming out of his mouth.

Brooks' usual target is immigrants, and last week, without a shred of evidence in his favor and every shred suggesting he's way wrong, he said a recent measles outbreak could be caused by South American kids.

It isn't. Doctors believe the disease was brought here by (most likely white) Europeans. But you know, facts – pfft. Who needs 'em?

Brooks' comments made the national rounds and was one more blow for the state in image department.

I hear Alabamians complain all the time about how the state is portrayed nationally, as this racist, bigoted state. People seem to disagree with that portrayal.

But keep in mind this state's very memorable history, which is currently being shown in movie theaters across the county, and then think about the last few weeks.

In which a Congressman again wrongly blamed the Hispanic or Latino children; our probate judges stopped performing weddings to avoid having to marry a gay couple; our indicted House Speaker invoked the Bible, probably while eating shrimp and wearing clothes made of two fabrics, to excuse a same-sex marriage ban; our governor and attorney general fought in court to

keep the ban; and a PSC commissioner criticized handouts unless they're going to people who look like him.

These people are the reason Alabama's image remains largely unchanged, and these people are who voters have chosen to represent them and represent this state.

That's a voters problem.