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AT ISSUE: New revenue for a stronger Alabama

What makes a state strong? We likely all could agree on a few answers: healthy people, a dependable workforce, a stable government, safe streets and vibrant communities. But without new revenue to address a huge General Fund budget shortfall, Alabama will face devastating cuts to education, health care, public safety and other vital services that make shared prosperity possible. If the Legislature can't agree on new revenue to avoid these cuts, Alabamians would see thousands of lost jobs, a sharp decline in our state's quality of life and a weaker future for years to come. Here's a snapshot of what Alabama would look like if the cuts in a no-new-revenue General Fund budget become reality:

- Kidney patients who depend on Medicaid coverage would no longer receive outpatient dialysis. Instead, they would have to be admitted to a hospital every single time they need treatment — if they can get to one.
- Working families would lose subsidies that help them afford child care for 5,000 to 8,000 children. Hundreds of child care jobs would be at risk, and many parents would have to quit their jobs to care for their children.
- Alabama would cut protective services needed to ensure that abused and neglected children stay safe at home.
- Promising new Medicaid reforms designed to keep patients healthier while saving the state money will end.
- Alabama's new prison reform law, intended to reduce recidivism and combat overcrowding in a prison system already operating at nearly twice its designed capacity, will not take effect.
- Hundreds of seniors and people with disabilities would lose the adult day care and home health services that help them live more independently. Many would be forced into nursing homes.
- Two state prisons would close. That would drive the overcrowding in Alabama's remaining prisons even higher and would increase the risk of a federal takeover of the state's corrections system.
- Thousands of Alabamians with mental illness or intellectual disabilities would lose community mental health services.
- Many AIDS patients would lose access to life-saving medications.
- Fewer Alabama highways would be patrolled amid dozens of state trooper layoffs.
- Hundreds of court employees would lose their jobs, leading to longer delays for trials and child support cases.
- Dozens of state parks and National Guard armories would close across Alabama.

BOTTOM LINE: Alabama is at a crossroads. The path we choose now could define our state for a generation. Alabamians deserve a bright future. To get there, our state needs new revenue to invest in the vital public services that make Alabama a better place to live and work.