

“For I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” — Genesis 37:17

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## TRUMP’S SIGNATURE UNDER NEW SCRUTINY



MICHAEL CONROY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Donald Trump holds a document with his signature April 26, 2019, as he speaks at the Nation Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action Leadership Forum in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

LAURIE KELLMAN  
Associated Press

The signature of an American president is one of the planet’s most powerful symbols. It can set your tax bill, your immigration status and who does or does not get aid from the world’s largest economy. Now, Donald Trump’s distinctive signature is under scrutiny. Two documents in Jeffrey Epstein’s 50th-birthday album purportedly include Trump’s signature — one on a risque line drawing of a female body and one on a picture of Epstein holding up a novelty check bearing Trump’s name. A House committee released the 2003 book this past week, with some members insisting the signa-

tures are authentically Trump’s, one of the best-known autographs in the world. The White House says the president did not sign the letter or the check to Epstein, who was later exposed as a sex offender and reportedly died by suicide in prison in 2019. “It’s not my signature,” Trump told reporters Tuesday night. “And it’s not the way I speak.” The president declared the Epstein matter “a dead issue” in a phone call that day with NBC News. The “birthday book” signatures matter in part because they are perceived as a measure of how close Trump was to Epstein before the president says he ended the friendship two decades ago.

They’re also part of a bipartisan push in Congress for the release of the Epstein investigation files after years of speculation and conspiracy theories stoked by Trump and many of his allies. The Justice Department in August began turning over records from the Epstein sex trafficking investigation to the House Oversight Committee. By the standards of handwriting scholars, determining whether it’s truly Trump’s signature is difficult. By the standards of the U.S. political system, it’s impossible. Despite the obvious resemblance to Trump’s other signatures, partisan loyalty drives opinion.

Please see **SIGNATURE**, Page A2

## Who’s running in Alabama’s 2026 House elections?

Some powerful lawmakers  
are stepping down

MIKE CASON, AL.COM

Republicans hold 71 of the 105 seats in the Alabama House of Representatives, and almost all of those lawmakers are hoping voters will send them back to Montgomery for another term.

More than 60 have reported raising campaign funds since the fundraising period started for the 2026 election. That was on May 19, one year before the primary. A few of the lawmakers who have not yet filed reports said they are running. Two Republican House members announced they are stepping down after this term — Reps. Bob Fincher of Randolph County and Jim Hill of St. Clair County.

Both are committee chairmen. Fincher leads the Constitution, Campaigns, and Elections Committee, while Hill chairs the Judiciary Committee. Hill, 75, a former district court and circuit court judge, said the physical demands of the job are one reason he will step away next year after his third term. “I just believe it’s time for me to step back and let someone else do this job,”

said Hill, a former district court and circuit court judge in St. Clair County. Fincher, a retired teacher, told 1819 News that he believes in term limits and thought it was time to step away after his third term. A third member who won’t be back is Rep. Rhett Marques of Enterprise.

Please see **ELECTIONS**, Page A2

Weather  
Sunshine  
High 90 • Low 62  
FORECAST • A8

Local flag football teams  
take part in tourney  
SPORTS, PAGE C1

Around the Wiregrass,  
an events calendar  
PAGE A3

Inside  
Opinion A7  
Business A6  
Sports C1

