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Alabama Treasurer Kay Ivey proposes bills to ensure PACT tuition payments made

By Kim Chandler -- The Birmingham News

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MONTGOMERY -- Alabama Treasurer and gubernatorial candidate Kay Ivey on Tuesday announced she is proposing legislation that would guarantee tuition payments for families who bought into the state's troubled Prepaid Affordable College Tuition program.

The prepaid college tuition program is facing a funding shortfall.

Ivey said she is backing two separate bills. The first would simply guarantee tuition for families who purchased contracts.

Ivey is also proposing to divide the current assets in the PACT trust fund among Alabama universities and colleges. In exchange for the block allotments the universities and colleges would guarantee the education of eligible PACT participants.

However, Ivey acknowledged the universities and colleges could not be forced to go along with the proposal. "There is no forcing anybody," Ivey said. Ivey said she hoped the universities and colleges would be willing to discuss her ideas.

Ivey said morally, the right thing for the state to do is to honor the contracts it sold to parents, grandparents and other family members.

"It will give them peace of mind. They completed their end of the bargain, and they deserve to know their students will be able to participate in college PACT benefits," Ivey said.