



Gubernatorial candidate Ivey visits Cullman

By Patrick McCreless
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To Kay Ivey, when it comes to working knowledge of Alabama's finances, she has her fellow gubernatorial candidates outclassed.

"That's what state treasurers do," Ivey said. "Congress people don't know everything about state budgets ... they don't know about all the state's finances. I know all of the pitfalls for taxpayers."

Ivey, who is an Alabama Republican gubernatorial candidate and is currently serving her second term as the state's treasurer, stopped in the city of Cullman Friday to speak with the Cullman County Republican Women. She then came to The Cullman Times office to discuss her candidacy.

"Forty percent of the general fund this year is stimulus funding and it will be that way next year," Ivey said. "In 2011 it will not be there, which is when the next governor takes office. Who do you want at the helm at that time, when the economy is trying to get back to where it was? I've got the experience and that knowledge."

To balance the state's budget, Ivey said she would work to reduce government spending. "We need to focus on essential priorities, rather than special political projects," Ivey said. In addition to being a good caretaker of the taxpayers' money, Ivey said as governor, she would work to improve the state's educational system. A former high school teacher, Ivey said she clearly understands the state's education shortfalls and how to overcome them.

One way to improve education in Alabama, she said, would be to introduce charter schools in the state. Charter schools are schools that receive public money, but have been freed from some of the rules, regulations and statutes that apply to other public schools, in exchange for some type of accountability for producing certain results, which are set forth in each school's charter.

“Charter schools allow people to be in charge of public education, so it’s not so tied up in bureaucratic rules,” she said. “You’d get to set standards for teachers, decide the curriculum.”

She added that having charter schools would promote competition in the state’s public education system.

“Competition always produces better quality,” Ivey said.

As governor, Ivey said she would also work to promote economic growth and bring more jobs to the state. She said the state has done well in recent years to lure in the automotive industry, but now is the time to focus on other industries.

“Don’t put all your eggs in one basket,” Ivey said. “First we had steel and then the state had textile and you see what happened with that. We need to diversify ... recruit medium and light firms for smaller communities.”

To further her economic goals, Ivey said she would create a cabinet position just for workforce development, which would work with the Alabama Development Office, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the state’s two-year college system.

“It’d be a formalized collaboration with common goals ... so the left hand knows what the right hand is doing,” Ivey said.