As the UAB men’s basketball team prepared to tip-off against Iowa State on March 19 (in a game they ultimately won, 60-59), Alabama State Representative Jack Williams filed three bills aimed at dealing with concerns following the discontinuation of the university’s bowling, football, and rifle teams late last year. All three bills are currently awaiting action from the state house’s committee on education policy.

HB 339 would require those serving on university boards of trustees to complete mandatory training on the state’s ethics law, board governance, and accreditation standards including those of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This bill has 63 co-sponsors.

The one likely to be watched closely will be HB 340, a modified version of the proposed changes first suggested by Williams in late November shortly before the announcement about the affected teams was first made. The bill as first described would have made Alabama the only public university board in the country with elected officials (as many as six) serving with full voting privileges. The proposal as submitted:

- reduces the number of terms a trustee can serve from three to two;
- calls for two seats to be filled from each congressional district while adding an additional seat from the congressional districts in which UAB and UAH exist to the extra one already in existence for the Tuscaloosa campus;
- one seat each filled by appointment of the governing bodies of Birmingham, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa (it was originally suggested these be filled by the mayors of each of these cities);
- one seat each filled by appointment of the governing bodies (i.e., county commissions) in Jefferson, Madison, and Tuscaloosa counties (It was originally suggested for these to be the presidents of said commissions or their county manager);
- one seat for each campus filled by an alum of the respective campuses to be appointed by the Governor to be chosen from a list of five names submitted by each campus’s alumni association;
- one seat at-large filled by the lieutenant governor (with similar appointments made by the speaker of the house and the president pro tempore of the state senate);
- Keeps the state superintendent and the Governor as ex officio members.

The board would no longer be self-appointing, with the task being handled by a committee consisting of the president pro temp of the board; one member of each alumni association (selected by each association’s board); and the governor (or a designate that is not currently an employee of the system or any of its associated entities) serving as chair.

The bill has 41 co-sponsors.

HB 341 would require UAB field a football team with adequate funding to allow for competition at the Football Bowl Subdivision of NCAA Division I so long as the Tuscaloosa campus’s Crimson Tide remained active. This bill if passed would make Alabama the only state in the country to require that
a football team be fielded for collegiate competition by its legislative body. This bill has 38 co-
sponsors.

The bills await their debate while the men’s basketball team prepares to play UCLA on Saturday
morning (11 a.m. CDT on CBS) or available via live streaming thanks to the NCAA.