

NEWS RELEASE

# Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## AG ANNOUNCES SENATE PASSAGE OF LOOTING BILL

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced that the Alabama Senate today approved another bill in his legislative package - SB 302 which creates the crime of looting. SB 302 is sponsored by Senator Gerald Allen of Tuscaloosa and passed the Senate on a 25-0 vote. It now goes to the House for consideration. Earlier this week the House of Representatives passed HB 340 (the companion bill to SB 302) on a 102-0 vote. HB 340 is sponsored by Rep. John Merrill of Tuscaloosa and was today referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee for inclusion on its agenda.

“I am pleased that the House and now the Senate has acted to protect Alabamians in these times of severe disaster and crisis,” said Attorney General Strange. “When people are experiencing destruction of property, serious injuries and perhaps even the loss of loved ones, it has been appalling to see criminals take advantage of a tragedy by looting what may be left of a business’s inventory or the belongings from someone’s home. It has become all too evident that Alabama needs a stronger law to protect our citizens at just such times when they are suffering and vulnerable. The law we offer would apply in times of emergency such as following the devastating tornadoes recently experienced by our state and the hurricanes that frequently strike our Gulf Coast. I commend both Senator Allen and Representative John Merrill for their hard work in the successful passage of these bills out of their respective chambers. Both bills are in excellent position for final passage when the legislature returns from spring break.”

Senate bill 302 and House bill 340 specifically criminalize looting and make it a class C felony, which is punishable by one to 10 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$15,000. "A person commits the crime of looting if the person intentionally injures without authorization any building or real property during a state of emergency and obtains, exerts control over, damages, or removes the property of another person without lawful authority." It also is specified that a person subject to prosecution for looting still may be prosecuted for other applicable offenses. This law would apply when the Governor has proclaimed an official state of emergency.

Attorney General Strange developed this legislation based on discussions within the Attorney General's Law Enforcement Advisory Committee and the law officers' recommendations for better tools to combat looting.



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