

# Bentley: 'Potentially criminal' actions in Finance Dept.

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Two Department of Finance managers have been relieved of their duties over what Gov. Robert Bentley called "potentially criminal" actions involving access to criminal justice resources.



Governor Robert Bentley speaks with the media about the weeks events at the state capitol building in Montgomery, Ala., on Friday morning April 29, 2016. (Photo: Mickey Welsh / Advertiser)

In a letter dated June 10 and released Friday afternoon, Bentley told Assistant FBI Director Stephen L. Morris that contract personnel were "improperly given access to IT resources" supporting the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency and the state's Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) network. The governor also wrote that they had identified "several major security concerns" with a wide-area network (WAN) operated by Finance's Information Services Division (ISD) and contractors.

"Secretary (Stan) Stabler informed me that ALEA has met with members of the Office of the United States Attorney here in Montgomery and confirmed that some of the actions of senior managers within the Department of Finance and its Information Services Division are potentially criminal in nature," Bentley wrote.

Assistant Finance Director Rex McDowell has been placed on mandatory leave, according to letters released by the governor's office. Chief Information Officer James Nolin has been fired. Bentley said he told Finance Director Bill Newton to make the moves, and said an ALEA investigation is continuing.

The letter also shined a light on an audit request from the governor that, until Friday afternoon, remained a mystery. The letter asks the FBI to provide "audit and investigative" personnel to examine the system as a whole and any possible criminal actions.

It is not clear from the letter what specific actions may have been criminal, or what if any resources may have been compromised.

Local FBI personnel say they are not currently working on an audit of the governor's office, but say [such audits are common](#).

Stabler said in a statement accompanying the letter Friday ALEA's State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) "secured information system equipment and other documents for further review" as part of the audit request.

The letter said Bentley hoped to "facilitate the quickest resolution possible."

"Since honesty and integrity are two virtues that I have and will continue to prioritize for my Administration, I was very disheartened to know that the improper actions of a few appear to have had a significant negative impact on the security of the state's technology resources, especially those serving our criminal justice community," the governor wrote.