

LEADING THE IMPEACHMENT INVESTIGATION OF GOV. ROBERT BENTLEY.

Our Client's Challenge

In 2016, Alabama's governor, Robert J. Bentley, was embroiled in a scandal stemming from his reported attempts to cover up an alleged extramarital affair with a senior staffer. After an impeachment resolution passed in the Alabama House of Representatives, its Judiciary Committee engaged Lightfoot's Jack Sharman as Special Counsel to investigate claims of neglect of office and corruption and to prepare a report on his findings. He would also advise the Committee on conducting impeachment proceedings if that became necessary.

Our Approach

Several Lightfoot attorneys joined Sharman as Assistant Special Counsels to aid in the months-long process of collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses and compiling a case. The team included attorneys with diverse skills and experience: a former Congressional investigator, a former Assistant United States Attorney, and a former Wall Street analyst, as well as business and criminal trial lawyers.

Our team's work produced a 3,000-page impeachment report that was publicly released on Friday, April 7, 2017, despite attempts by the governor to block it — including an emergency court hearing that day. The Alabama Supreme Court ultimately allowed the release of the report.

The Result

On Monday, April 10, Sharman presented the contents of the impeachment report to the House Judiciary Committee. This proved to be the tipping point. Later that day, Governor Bentley pleaded guilty to two state-law criminal misdemeanors relating to campaign finance and resigned.

Lightfoot's role in the Bentley impeachment investigation received national attention and significant media coverage.