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STATE OF ALABAMA

APR 24 1990

90-00288

Honorable Edwin C. Bridges  
Director  
State of Alabama  
Department of Archives and History  
624 Washington Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36130

Department of Archives and  
History - Museums -  
Contributions - Funds

There is no prohibition which  
would prevent the placement of  
a contribution box to receive  
voluntary donations in the  
lobby of the Department of  
Archives and History so long as  
all contributions are used to  
benefit the Department.

Dear Dr. Bridges:

This opinion is issued in response to your request for an  
opinion from the Attorney General.

QUESTION

As you may also know, a common practice for  
many museums is to have a cash box --  
normally a clear plexiglas box -- into which  
visitors can drop contributions. Some of  
the Friends' board members have asked if  
they could place such a contribution box in  
the lobby of the Archives with a sign which  
would make it clear that these donations  
will go to the Friends of the Alabama  
Archives -- a tax-exempt charitable

organization which exists solely for promoting the programs of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

#### FACTS AND ANALYSIS

Your request presents the following additional information:

Neither the Friends or anyone else will make any special effort to compel or even encourage people to make contributions. The box would simply be there so tourists who are passing through and who enjoy and want to support the programs of the department can have the means to do so.

As you may know, the Friends of the Alabama Archives is a 501-C-3 corporation, the sole purpose of which is to promote and assist in programs of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Through membership contributions and a few small fund-raising activities, the Friends raise about \$35,000 each year to support various programs and activities in the department. The money may be used as matching funds for grants or to support purchases for which we do not have state funds.

It appears that this proposal is a very practical way in which the State of Alabama can receive a substantial benefit. Therefore, under the specific facts presented, it is the opinion of this office that a contribution box to receive voluntary donations may be placed in the lobby of the Department of Archives and History.

#### CONCLUSION

There is no prohibition which would prevent the placement of a contribution box to receive voluntary donations in the lobby of the Department of Archives and History so long as all contributions are used to benefit the Department.

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I hope this sufficiently answers your question. If our office can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

DON SIEGELMAN  
Attorney General

By:

  
CAROL JEAN SMITH  
Assistant Attorney General

DS/CJS/jho

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