

## ALABAMA SECURITIES COMMISSION

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### Alabama Securities Commission Partners with “SHORT the Squirrel” to Launch New Financial Education Program for Young Readers

**MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA (September 9, 2021)** – The Alabama Securities Commission (ASC) is pleased to announce the launch of a financial education program for young readers in Alabama. Through a partnership with Monica Anderson Young and Dr. Dee Bennett, the founders of the literacy initiative ‘SHORT the Squirrel’, and a grant from the Investor Protection Trust (IPT), ‘SHORT’s Money Tree’ was developed to introduce young readers to finance in a fun and understandable way. In the book, “Short” is confronted with several financial scenarios and is asked to evaluate the options, and hopefully make wise financial decisions.

The program is being piloted in Monroe and Montgomery County schools during the month of September with an anticipated statewide appearance in classrooms and businesses by April of 2022. “Short the Squirrel” will be making an appearance to promote his new book at **Dalraida Elementary School on Friday, September 10 at 8:30 AM**. Financial institutions and other organizations interested in sponsoring the financial education book for distribution in their field, can contact ‘SHORT the Squirrel’ via email at [contact@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com).

“The Commission is very excited to be able to help offer this program in Alabama schools. The sooner a student begins their financial education, the less likely they are to make costly financial mistakes. We are very thankful to our partners from ‘SHORT the Squirrel’ who have helped make this program possible,” said ASC Director Joseph P. Borg.

“When ASC Director Borg approached us with the idea of combining financial dialogue with literacy, we immediately recognized a unique opportunity to reach Alabama’s young readers in two important areas. SHORT loves to help children fall in love with reading, and reading impacts future economic stability. Working with the ASC through the IPT is truly an honor,” said Bennett and Young. “We are thrilled for SHORT’s Money Tree to reach all first graders in Alabama.”

The story takes SHORT through the decision-making process of selecting items, if any, to purchase at a book fair. Each page provides students a valuable lesson on money, and also contains a financial fact for advanced readers. Students will learn the difference between wants versus needs, lessons on spending wisely, and on how delayed gratification and hard work can have big returns.

“I believe this program will be incredibly instructive for teaching our young readers valuable financial concepts because of the characters and interactive nature of the workbook. We wanted the concepts to be age appropriate, and educationally meaningful. We are delighted we could accomplish that with SHORT,” said ASC Chief Deputy Director Amanda Senn.

The ASC would like to thank the Alabama State University Tennis team and the Troy University Panhellenic groups (an organization for 26 national women's sororities) who assisted with the project. To learn more about SHORT the Squirrel, please visit [@shortthesquirrel](https://www.instagram.com/shortthesquirrel) on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube or our website, [www.shortthesquirrel.com](http://www.shortthesquirrel.com).

The ASC cautions citizen investors of all ages and experience to thoroughly scrutinize and research any investment opportunity or offer. Contact the ASC at 1-800-222-1253 to check out any person or a financial professional offering an investment opportunity or investment advice for a fee and the products they offer for proper registration. Contact the ASC to report suspected fraud, inappropriate securities business practices, or to obtain consumer information. The ASC provides free investor education and fraud prevention materials in print, on our website, and through educational presentations upon request.

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