

Selma

Alabama Delegation Reacts to Selma The Honorable William Jackson (Jack) Edwards U.S. Representative of Alabama

The reaction of the Alabama Members after the attempted march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Interview recorded August 23, 2012

I had only been in Washington two months when the Selma–Montgomery march occurred, and I just have to say that a lot of that just caught all of us totally by surprise. We knew the folks were milling around in Selma, and raising Cain, and making speeches, and that sort of thing. But the march itself and the result on the Pettus Bridge, and so forth—it was a shock. One of those things that just simply, obviously shouldn't have happened. We really were in kind of a—walking a tightrope is about the only way I think I can put it. We were not racist, and I believe that sincerely about our delegation, but we had grown up in a way of life where certain things were certain ways, and it was very difficult given the location, say, in my own district, to try to be a positive voice in a way that made sense. It really was difficult.