

**2007-2008 SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ROSTER**

Senator Seth Harp, 29th
Chairman
P.O. Box 363
Midland, GA 31820

Senator Bill Cowsert, 46th
Vice Chairman
P.O. Box 512
Athens, GA 30603

Senator Cecil Staton, 18th
Secretary
P.O. Box 26427
Macon, GA 31221

Senator Ronnie Chance, 16th
P.O. Box 267
Tyrone, GA 30290

Senator Tim Golden, 8th
110 Beacon Hill
Valdosta, GA 31602

Senator Gail Davenport, 44th
7740 Fielder Road
Jonesboro, GA 30236

Senator Curt Thompson, 5th
6563 Devonshire Court
Norcross, GA 30093

Senator John Wiles, 37th
800 Kennesaw, Suite 400
Marietta, GA 30060-7946

Senator Nan Orrock, 36th
1070 Delaware Avenue, SE
Atlanta, GA 30316

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE RULES

1. These Committee Rules of Operation shall be consistent with Senate Rule 2-1.5 (d) regarding the establishment of Rules of Operation.
2. Quorum of the Committee shall be five (5) members.
3. The Chairman shall have the authority to refer bills and resolutions to be considered and the order in which said measures are considered; the Chairman shall have the authority to call a bill, resolution, substitute or amendment for debate and explanation only.
4. The Chairman shall have the authority to refer bills and resolutions to subcommittees for study. Such subcommittees in turn shall have the authority to make recommendations on such measures to the full Committee at such time as shall be designated by the Chairman.
5. The Committee shall convene, recess, and adjourn upon the order of the Chairman.
6. A bill or resolution will be considered only after presentation by its principal author or other legislator whom he/she may designate. The principal author shall be the legislator whose name first appears on the list of authors.
7. The Chairman reserves the right to delay action on substitutes and amendments not provided to the Chairman at least 24 hours prior to the hearing.
8. Any member or members of the Committee who disagree(s) with the majority report of the Committee shall be privileged to file a minority report if they so desire.
9. These rules may be amended upon a motion duly made and subsequently approved by two-thirds of the members of the Committee.
10. Where these rules are silent on a specific issue, the Rules of the Senate as adopted shall govern.

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Higher Education Committee met in Room 450 of the State Capitol, Wednesday, January 24, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Harp of the 29th
Cowser of the 46th
Staton of the 18th
Davenport of the 44th
Golden of the 8th
Orrock of the 36th
Thompson, Curt of the 5th
Wiles of the 37th

Note: Senator Chance of the 16th was absent.

Chairman Harp called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Chairman Harp stated that the first order of business was to adopt the rules of the committee. Senator Wiles moved that the Committee Rules be adopted. Senator Staton seconded the motion. The Committee Rules passed by unanimous vote.

Chairman Harp introduced the members of the Senate Higher Education Committee and the staff. He then introduced special guest Mike Gerber of ARCHE who made comments to the Committee. Chairman Harp then introduced Tom Daniel with the Board of Regents.

There being no further business, Chairman Harp adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Staton of the 18th, Secretary

/s/ Vicki Gibbs, Recording Secretary

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Higher Education Committee met in Room 450 of the State Capitol, Friday, February 9, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Harp of the 29th
Cowser of the 46th
Chance of the 16th
Davenport of the 44th
Wiles of the 37th

Note: Senator Staton of the 18th, Senator Curt Thompson of the 5th, Senator Orrock of the 36th and Senator Golden of the 8th were absent.

Chairman Harp called the meeting to order at 2:11 p.m.

SR 125 (Sen. Carter, 13th) Protection of Lottery Funds

Senator Carter introduced **SR 125**. He stated that the bill allows Georgia voters to affirm that the future is bright for the HOPE scholarship. He also stated that the bill will require lottery funds to be used only for college funds and pre-K.

Senator Davenport asked what the funds had been used for in the past.

Senator Carter answered that the funds have been used for capital outlay, TV studios and technological advancements.

Senator Harp asked if the reserves are still in place.

Senator Carter stated that the reserves are at \$80 million with \$223 million in the shortfall reserves and \$440 million in an escrow account. These reserves may only be used for college and pre-K.

Senator Harp stated that this prevents the economy from affecting the use of these funds.

Senator Chance moved that **SR 125** “do pass”. Senator Cowser seconded the motion. **SR 125** passed by unanimous vote.

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SB 111 (Sen. Harp, 29th)
Non-lapsing Revenues from Tuition

Senator Harp presented **SB 111**. He stated that this bill prevents the lapsing of tuition fees.

Senator Chance moved that **SB 111** “do pass”. Senator Cowser seconded the motion. **SB 111** passed by unanimous vote.

Senator Curt Thompson came into the meeting after the votes were taken.

John Millsap presented a 75 year history of the Board of Regents to the Committee. He stated that in 1931 the Board of Regents was created with 11 members. He told the committee that in 1947 the University System had 27,000 students, one half of those being veterans from the war.

Senator Nan Orrock came into the meeting during the presentation and after all votes were taken.

There being no further business, Chairman Harp adjourned the meeting at 2:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Harp of the 29th, Chairman

/s/ Vicki Gibbs, Recording Secretary

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Higher Education Committee met in the Mezzanine of the State Capitol on February 27, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Harp of the 29th
Cowser of the 46th
Staton of the 18th
Chance of the 16th
Curt Thompson of the 5th

Note: Senator Davenport of the 44th, Senator Wiles of the 37th, Senator Orrock of the 36th and Senator Golden of the 8th were absent.

Chairman Harp called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

SB 169 (Sen. Hamrick, 30th) **Direct Loans at an Annual Rate of One Percent**

Les Schneider from DeVry, Inc. presented **SB 169** for Senator Hamrick. This bill creates a one percent need-based loan program for students which can be used to bridge the gap from HOPE. Mr. Schneider pointed out that Georgia was receiving very poor “marks” for the loan programs that they were able to offer students. He asked that the Committee approve the bill so that money does not stand in the way of a student getting an education. This loan would be a loan of last resort and would be subject to funding availability.

Senator Curt Thompson moved that **SB 169 “do pass”**. Senator Chance seconded the motion. **SB 169** passed by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, Chairman Harp adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Staton of the 18th, Secretary

/s/ Vicki Gibbs, Recording Secretary

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Higher Education Committee met in Room 450 of the State Capitol on March 13, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Harp of the 29th
Cowser of the 46th
Stanton of the 18th
Chance of the 16th
Davenport of the 44th

Note: Senator Curt Thompson of the 5th, Senator Wiles of the 37th, Senator Orrock of the 36th and Senator Golden of the 8th were absent.

Chairman Harp called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

SB 74 (Sen. Powell, 23rd) Admission Standards for Combat Veterans

Chairman Harp informed the committee that this would be a hearing of the bill only. Senator Powell spoke to **SB 74**. He stated that the legislation came about as a result of one of his constituents returning from Iraq with serious physical injuries. Senator Powell said that he was trying, with this legislation, to give this veteran and others a chance for an education. He further stated that this bill would only open the door and was not intended to lower the standards. He wanted these veterans to come back to the U.S. as productive members of society.

Senator Douglas also spoke for the bill stating that it puts combat veterans on a level playing field.

Jim Flowers, representing the Board of Regents, also spoke to **SB 74** and the Board's work with the author. He stated that the State of Georgia is doing very comprehensive work with returning veterans, including waivers for out-of-state tuition, for military stationed in Georgia as well as working with veterans to help with gaps in education so that they are assured educational success.

Senator Harp stated that he would encourage preparatory courses for the returning veterans and posttraumatic stress treatment as well as treatment for the physical injuries. A preparatory academy would help the veterans be competitive.

Jim Flowers said that a lot of the two-year programs are beginning to offer preparatory classes and Senator Harp stressed that the veterans need to return to a friendly environment, unlike the Vietnam returning veterans.

[SB 75](#) (Sen. Meyer von Bremen, 12th)
Minimum Statewide Standards: Honors Courses

Senator Meyer von Bremen spoke to **SB 75**. He stated that this bill corrects an oversight in the 2004 legislation. The bill makes reference to International Baccalaureate, Honors and Advanced Placement courses that high school students choose to take. The IB and AP courses maintained weighted scores, while Honors courses did not. Current law takes away the weighted scores of freshmen entering college in 2007. This bill would restore the weighted scores for grades earned from Honors courses. The bill also provides the State Board time to establish statewide standards for Honors courses.

Hank Payne from Woodward Academy and Les Schneider from Wimberly and Lawson attended the meeting to voice their support for **SB 75**.

Senator Chance made the motion that **SB 75 “do pass”**. Senator Staton seconded the motion. **[SB 75](#)** passed by unanimous vote.

[SR 397](#) (Sen. Harp, 29th)
Urging Board of Regents to Establish Programs for Intercollegiate Wrestling

Senator Harp spoke to **SR 397**, urging the Board of Regents to adopt an intercollegiate wrestling program.

Senator Chance made the motion that **SR 397 “do pass”**.

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Senator Davenport seconded the motion. [SR 397](#) passed by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, Chairman Harp adjourned the meeting at 3:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Staton of the 18th, Secretary

/s/ Vicki Gibbs, Recording Secretary

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Higher Education Committee met in Room 450 of the State Capitol on April 11, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Harp of the 29th
Cowser of the 46th
Staton of the 18th
Chance of the 16th
Davenport of the 44th
Wiles of the 37th
Golden of the 8th

Note: Senator Curt Thompson of the 5th and Senator Orrock of the 36th were absent.

Chairman Harp called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

HB 363 (Rep. O'Neal, 146th) **Georgia Military College Eligible for HOPE**

Representative O'Neal spoke to **HB 363** which would add Georgia Military College to the list of eligible schools that offer the HOPE scholarship and grant.

Senator Staton made a motion that **HB 363** “do pass”. Senator Chance seconded the motion. **HB 363** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Grant will carry this bill in the Senate.

SR 446 (Sen. Whitehead, 24th) **Urges Medical College of Georgia to honor Rep. Charles Norwood**

Senator Cowser spoke to **SR 446** in the absence of Senator Whitehead, urging the committee to adopt the resolution.

Senator Staton made a motion that **SR 446** “do pass”. Senator Chance seconded the motion. **SR 446** passed by unanimous vote.

Note: Senator Orrock of the 36th arrived at the meeting.

**HB 467 (Rep. Hembree, 67th)
Course Credit for entering Freshmen Completion of
International Baccalaureate Diploma Program**

Senator Harp spoke to **HB 467** explaining the substitute which made a provision for reserving 2% of an incoming class at a University System of Georgia institution for veterans who qualify for a program of study.

Senator Douglas also spoke in favor of the substitute.

Senator Wiles expressed concern over the lack of minimum requirements for acceptance to the universities.

Senator Douglas cited success of the GI Bill from World War II and how it allowed a generation of veterans the opportunity to attend college when they may not have had an opportunity to do so.

Jason Buttermay and Debbie Woolard requested to speak to the Committee expressing support for the International Baccalaureate portion of the bill.

Tom Daniel with the Board of Regents discussed the opportunities for students to acquire college credit prior to enrollment. He stated that currently students can earn college credit in advanced placement or dual enrollment programs. He also noted that reserving 2% of the incoming freshman class at the University of Georgia would calculate to approximately 125 slots for veterans.

Deborah Smith with Georgia Tech spoke out against the substitute to the bill. Senator Wiles and Ms. Smith asked several questions concerning minimum standards and how the veterans would meet those requirements for acceptance to a school such as Georgia Tech. Ms. Smith stated that there were not any minimum standards. She stated that students are accepted on course prerequisites, such as 4 years of English, 3 years of math, etc. In terms of GPA or SAT scores, she added that the school took the highest candidates.

Senator Staton asked if the bill would require that the veteran be responsible for fulfilling the requirements of a high school diploma or GED. Senator Harp answered that yes, it would be necessary for the veteran to fulfill any requirement that the university has for acceptance.

Senator Orrock asked if the University system sets forth requirements for all campuses, then would this not constitute a minimum requirement. Ms. Smith stated that there are provisions in place at Georgia Tech that allow a student without prerequisites to be admitted to the Institute then be placed on a mandatory curriculum program to make up the credit. Senator Orrock suggested that there is a way to work with the veterans and that this should be done. She again referred to the GI Bill and the success of the post WWII programs to grant veterans the opportunity of education.

Senator Wiles made a motion that **HB 467 “do pass”**. There was no second to the motion.

Senator Orrock made a motion that **HB 467 “do pass by substitute”**. Senator Chance seconded the motion. [HB 467](#) passed by substitute 7-1 with Senator Wiles casting the nay vote. Senator Harp will carry this bill in the Senate.

[HR 322](#) (Rep. Harbin, 118th)
**Joint Study Committee on Continuing Education and
Collegiate Sports Programs for Students with
Disabilities**

Tom Daniel with the Board of Regents spoke to **HR 322** urging its adoption.

Senator Cowser made a motion that **HR 322 “do pass”**. Senator Golden seconded the motion. [HR 322](#) passed by unanimous vote. Senator Wiles will carry this bill in the Senate.

HB 243 (Rep. Hembree, 67th) Dual Credit Enrollment

Senator Harp presented **HB 243** in the absence of Representative Hembree.

Senator Wiles made a motion that **HB 243** “**do pass by substitute**”. Senator Cowser seconded the motion. **HB 243** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Harp will carry this bill in the Senate.

**HB 131 (Rep. Horne, 71st)
HERO Scholarship, surviving spouse benefit**

Representative Horne spoke to **HB 131**. He stated the changes this would make to the HERO Scholarship and the availability to surviving spouses. He stated that more often than not these widows are young women with children. This bill would give these women opportunities to continue their education. Senator Orrock asked about the qualifying time of service under the HERO Scholarship. Senator Wiles stated that he was the original author and that the original bill states that the soldier must serve 181 days.

Robert Stokely asked to address the committee. He stated that his son was killed in action in Iraq and he was concerned about the future of his daughter-in-law and all the spouses being left behind by veterans that are killed in action.

Chairman Harp, on behalf of the Higher Education Committee, thanked Mr. Stokely on his moving testimony for the bill and his sacrifice for our country. Chairman Harp suggested that Senator Douglas, Senator Wiles and Senator Chance serve on a subcommittee to amend the bill regarding the status of a “remarried spouse.”

Senator Chance thanked both Mr. Stokely and Representative Horne for their time and work on this bill.

Chairman Harp stated that **HB 131** would be heard at the next meeting of the Higher Education Committee with recommended amendments.

**[HB 311](#) (Rep. Fleming, 117th)
**HERO Scholarship; Surviving Spouse Benefit and
Unremarried Widows****

Senator Douglas presented **HB 311** to the committee. He cited that this bill included the unremarried widow's provision on page 2, line 10. Senator Harp asked Senator Douglas if he had a preference on the language. Senator Douglas wanted the language to remain unchanged so that benefits would be available only to unremarried widows. Senator Douglas also had a concern regarding the language that would qualify a veteran for the scholarship. The change from "consecutive" days in a combat zone to "cumulative" days allows those in the Air National Guard the opportunity to take advantage of the program. Prior to this wording the bill was geared to the National Guard who are stationed typically for terms of longer than 181 days, while those who serve with the Air Force are not stationed as long as 181 days.

Senator Wiles mentioned a story about an airman who made a special request to his commander to stay in Iraq longer than he was ordered so that he could qualify for the scholarship. He stated that the intent of the bill was not to force veterans to stay in combat zones longer and be in harms way just to qualify for the HERO Scholarship.

Senator Douglas expressed another concern for when the bill may be enacted. He stated that, as written, the bill applies to veterans whose deployments were on or after May 3, 2005. However the first combat injuries to Georgia's troops were in July 2002. A change to the earlier date was recommended.

Chairman Harp suggested that Senator Douglas, Senator Wiles and Senator Chance correct the language of both **[HB 131](#)** and **[HB 311](#)** and that the committee will meet again on April 12, 2007 for a few minutes to take a vote on these two bills.

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There being no further business, Chairman Harp adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Staton of the 18th, Secretary

/s/ Vicki Gibbs, Recording Secretary

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Higher Education Committee met in Room 121 of the State Capitol on April 12, 2007 at 3:45 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Harp of the 29th
Chance of the 16th
Davenport of the 44th
Orrock of the 36th
Wiles of the 37th
Golden of the 8th

Note: Senator Cowsert of the 46th, Senator Staton of the 18th, and Senator Curt Thompson of the 5th were absent.

Chairman Harp called the meeting to order at 3:56 p.m.

HB 131 (Rep. Horne, 71st) HERO Scholarship, Surviving Spouse Benefit

Senator Harp stated that **HB 131** had a substitute that would change the qualifying date to 2009.

Senator Orrock made a motion that **HB 131** “do pass by **substitute**”. Senator Davenport seconded the motion. **HB 131** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Douglas will carry the bill in the Senate.

HB 311 (Rep. Fleming, 117th) HERO Scholarship; Surviving Spouse Benefit and Unremarried Widows

Senator Harp stated that **HB 311** had a substitute that removed the unremarried provision from the original bill.

Senator Golden made a motion that **HB 311** “do pass by **substitute**”. Senator Chance seconded the motion. **HB 311** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Harp will carry the bill in the Senate.

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There being no further business, Chairman Harp adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Harp of the 29th, Chairman

/s/ Vicki Gibbs, Recording Secretary

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Higher Education Committee met in Room 125 of the State Capitol on April 17, 2007 at 9:30 a.m.

The following Senators were present:

Harp of the 29th
Chance of the 16th
Davenport of the 44th
Orrock of the 36th
Golden of the 8th

Note: Senator Cowser of the 46th, Senator Staton of the 18th, Senator Wiles of the 37th, and Senator Curt Thompson of the 5th were absent.

Chairman Harp called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m.

HB 229 (Rep. Harbin, 118th) Lottery for Education

Joel Williams of Powell Goldstein spoke to **HB 229**. He stated that all proceeds from the lottery annuity go to the HOPE and that people should be encouraged to take the annuity rather than cash option. This would give the State and HOPE a 10% cushion. Then if the fiscal year asset drops fees would not have to be cut.

Senator Chance made a motion that **HB 229**, “**do pass by substitute**”. Senator Golden seconded the motion. **HB 229** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Harp will carry this bill in the Senate.

There being no further business, Chairman Harp adjourned the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Harp of the 29th, Chairman

/s/ Vicki Gibbs, Recording Secretary

May 2, 2007

Mr. Robert Ewing
Secretary of the Senate
353 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Mr. Ewing:

The following bills remained in the Senate Higher Education Committee at the close of the 2007 session.

[SB 35](#)

[SB 74](#)

[SB 196](#)

[SB 279](#)

[HB 152](#)

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Vicki Gibbs
Recording Secretary