

2009-2010 SENATE VETERANS,  
MILITARY & HOMELAND SECURITY  
COMMITTEE ROSTER

Senator John Douglas, 17th  
*Chairman*  
295 Nicklaus Circle  
Social Circle, GA 30025

Senator Jeff Chapman, 3rd  
*Vice Chairman*  
P. O. 3119  
Brunswick, GA 31521

Senator Robert Brown, 26th  
*Secretary*  
P. O. Box 5742  
Macon, GA 31208

Senator Jim Butterworth, 50th  
P. O. Box 2000  
Cornelia, GA 30535

Senator Bill Jackson, 24th  
*Ex-Officio*  
P. O. Box 528  
Appling, GA 30802

Senator Emanuel Jones, 10th  
P. O. Box 370244  
Decatur, GA 30037

Senator Jack Murphy, 27th  
*Ex-Officio*  
3830 Adams Road  
Cumming, GA 30041

Senator Cecil Staton, 18th  
*Ex-Officio*  
P. O. Box 26427  
Macon, GA 31221

Senator Curt Thompson, 5th  
6320 Glenbrook Drive  
Tucker, Georgia 30084

## VETERANS, MILITARY AND HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

2009-2010

1. Quorum of the committee shall be five (5) members.
2. The Chairperson shall determine which bills and resolutions are to be considered and the order in which said measures are considered.
3. The Chairperson shall have the authority to refer bills and resolutions to subcommittees for study. Subcommittees in turn shall have authority to make recommendations on such measures to the full committee at such time as shall be designated by the chairperson. All actions of any subcommittee shall be approved or disapproved by the standing Committee.
4. The committee shall convene, recess, and adjourn upon the order of the chairperson.
5. A bill or resolution will be considered only after presentation by its principal author or other legislator whom he or she may designate. The principal author shall be the legislator whose name appears first on the list of authors.
6. Any member or members of the committee who disagrees with the majority report of the committee shall be privileged to file a minority report if they so desire.
7. These rules may be amended upon a motion duly made and subsequently approved by two-thirds of the members of the committee.
8. Bills and resolutions, at the option of the Chairman, may be acted on at the first reading.
9. All meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public in accordance with Senate Rule [1-5.1].
10. The Secretary of the Committee will have a copy of these rules distributed to all members of the Senate.
11. Where these rules are silent on a specific issue, the Rules of the Senate as adopted shall govern.

**Minutes of the  
Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee  
January 28, 2009**

The Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 in Room 310 of the CLOB. Chairman Douglas called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Douglas, 17<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
Butterworth, 50<sup>th</sup>  
B. Jackson, 24<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
Jones, 10<sup>th</sup>  
Murphy, 27<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
Staton, 18<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
C. Thompson, 5<sup>th</sup>

Note: Senators Brown and Chapman were absent.

Senator Douglas called for a motion to adopt the rules of the committee.

Senator Murphy made a motion to adopt the rules of the Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee. The motion was seconded by Senator Butterworth. Rules adopted unanimously.

Senator Douglas introduced Senator Don Balfour, whose son is going to Afghanistan as a member of the 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade. He also introduced General Terry Nesbitt and Mr. Michael Fowler of the Georgia National Guard.

**Major General Terry Nesbitt, Georgia National Guard  
Mr. Michael Fowler, Georgia National Guard**

Senator Douglas introduced both Major General Nesbitt and Mr. Fowler to the committee. Major General Nesbitt stated that the 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade is doing well and they're preparing for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

Major General Nesbitt informed the committee that there are 11,500 troops and continuing to grow. They have been asked to slow down on recruitment. He further stated that the recruits are some of the best he has seen. Currently, there are a total of 800 members on active duty now including just over 600 in Iraq and 30 in Afghanistan. There is a lot of preparation to pre-mobilization, with 60 days of intense training. Troops will train at Fort Shelby, Mississippi and then at Fort Atterbury, Indiana.

Major General Nesbitt invited members of the committee to travel to Fort Shelby during May and then to Fort Atterbury in June to visit the troops and witness their training. General Nesbitt informed the committee that he was unable to discuss a great deal about the upcoming mission to Afghanistan because it is classified and stated that he would be happy to answer questions from the committee.

After discussion, Senator Douglas thanked General Nesbitt for his attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator John Douglas, 17th  
Chairman

/s/ Ethel R. Blackmon  
Recording Secretary

**Minutes of the  
Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee  
February 18, 2009**

The Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, February 18, 2009 in Room 310 of the CLOB. Chairman Douglas called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Douglas, 17<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
Butterworth, 50<sup>th</sup>  
B. Jackson, 24<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
Murphy, 27<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
Staton, 18<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
C. Thompson, 5<sup>th</sup>

Note: Senators Brown, Jones, and Chapman were absent.

**[SB 136](#) (Douglas, 17th) Penal Institutions; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Rapid Removal of Eligible Parolees Accepted for Transfer; participate**

Senator Douglas addressed the committee and explained that this legislation would direct the Georgia Department of Corrections and the State Board of Pardons and Parole to establish a process and agreements among agencies for the implementation of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Rapid Removal of Eligible Parolees Accepted for Transfer program (REPAT). This would enable the deportation of aliens in the state prison system who are eligible for parole and deportation.

Ms. Inger Eberhart and Mr. D. A. King of the Dustin Inman Society spoke to the committee urging them to support and pass this legislation

Representatives from MALDEF and the ACLU spoke in opposition to the legislation.

Senator Bill Jackson made a motion to amend **SB 136** by striking lines 62-64 of Section 2-G and Senator Staton seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

After further discussion from interested parties in attendance, Chairman Douglas asked for a motion.

Senator Bill Jackson moved that **SB 136 Do Pass by Substitute**. Senator Butterworth seconded the motion. SB 136 passed by a vote of 5-1. Senator Curt Thompson voted Nay.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator John Douglas, 17th  
Chairman

/s/ Ethel R. Blackmon  
Recording Secretary

**Minutes of the  
Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee  
March 4, 2009**

The Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, March 4, 2009 in Room 310 of the CLOB. Chairman Douglas called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Douglas, 17<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
Chapman, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Vice Chairman  
Butterworth, 50<sup>th</sup>  
B. Jackson, 24<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
Jones, 10<sup>th</sup>  
Murphy, 27<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
Staton, 18<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio

Senator Brown joined the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

Note: Senator C. Thompson was absent.

Senator Douglas asked Senator Jones to present the bill.

**SB 216 (Jones, 10<sup>th</sup>) Public Officers; provide spouse of armed forces member; 90 days of personal leave with pay/additional 30 days without pay; define term**

Senator Jones presented the bill and explained that the purpose of the bill is to grant any State employee who is the spouse of a combat disabled veteran up to 90 days of paid personal leave. This leave would begin no later than the second month after the service member's return to Georgia. After the 90 day period has expired, the employee would be entitled to an additional 30 days of unpaid leave. Senator Jones further stated there would be a minimal fiscal impact on the state.

After discussion on the length of time an employee could be absent from the workplace and the impact of the absence on the employee's co-workers, Senator Staton made a motion to amend **SB 216** by substituting ".....shall be entitled to 30 days of personal leave with pay and an addition 90 days of leave without pay;" Senator Bill Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0.

Senator Douglas called for a motion on SB 216.

Senator Chapman made a motion that **SB 216 Do Pass by Substitute**. Senator Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 8-0.

Senator Douglas introduced Colonel Robert L. Shannon, Jr., Georgia Air National Guard, to the committee. Colonel Shannon assumed the responsibility of Vice Commander of the Georgia Air National Guard on February 1, 2009 and he reports directly to Major General Terry Nesbitt. The Joint Staff is responsible for and supports approximately 15,000 soldiers, airmen and members of the State Defense Force in all areas of personnel/administration (J-1); Intelligence (J-2); Operations (J-3); Logistics; (J-4); Strategic Planning/Exercises (J-5/7); Communications/Information Technology (J-6); and Finance/Budgeting (J-8). Colonel Shannon stated that the Georgia Air National Guard has the highest retention rate of any unit in the country. The 165<sup>th</sup> is the highest decorated in the country and they are going to Afghanistan for the fifth time.

Colonel Shannon also stated that the Georgia Air National Guard is now in the strategic planning process and has engaged in statewide exercises in combating terrorism in South America and drug wars in Mexico. He further stated that at some time in the future there may be an opportunity for interested members of the committee to travel to Afghanistan.

After discussion, Senator Douglas thanked Colonel Shannon for his attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator Robert Brown, 26th  
Secretary

/s/ Ethel R. Blackmon  
Recording Secretary

**Minutes of the  
Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee  
March 18, 2009**

The Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, March 18, 2009 in Room 310 of the CLOB. Vice Chairman Chapman called the meeting to order at 3:11 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Chapman, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Vice Chairman  
Butterworth, 50<sup>th</sup>  
B. Jackson, 24<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
C. Thompson, 5<sup>th</sup>

Note: Senators Douglas, Jones, Murphy, Staton, and Brown were absent.

Vice Chairman Chapman explained that Senator Douglas was in a House Judiciary Committee meeting presenting a bill and hopes to join the meeting prior to adjournment.

Senator Chapman introduced Colonel Lou Coroso, Chief of Staff, and Command Sergeant Major Randy Garrett of the State Defense Force.

Colonel Coroso explained that the State Defense Force is comprised of volunteers who, at the request of the Governor, come to the aid of the National Guard. One-third of the members have prior military experience and two-thirds are civilians. There are 665 active members and the majority are in metro Atlanta. They were involved in search-and-rescue efforts during Hurricane Katrina; they handle crowd control, safety training and most recently the search for Meredith Emerson. The State Defense Force has been in state service since 1940. Volunteers undergo three months of formal training including the basics of soldiering and map reading and then six months of OCS training at their expense and on weekends. They also work with Homeland Security, FEMA, and GEMA and can be on the ground immediately. The SDF is a 501-C-3 organization.

Sgt. Major Garrett stated that it takes a unique person to be a part of the SDF and that he has been a member for six years. An individual requires an initial outlay of \$2,000 to maintain in the field for 72 hours. He further stated that he is the mayor of a small town and is honored to serve in the State Defense Force.

After discussion, Senator Chapman thanked the members of the State Defense Force for appearing before the committee.

Senator Chapman introduced General Maria Britt of the Georgia National Guard.

General Britt gave the committee a personal update; she has been in the military for 26 years, since 1983. She is married and has three daughters; the oldest is a teacher at the Goddard School in Boston, the middle is a student at Georgia Institute of Technology, and the youngest is eleven and in the sixth grade. Her husband, Colonel Timothy Britt, is currently deployed to Afghanistan. Her 82 year old mother-in-law resides with her. She is Italian by descent with parents from Sicily and Naples, was raised in Connecticut, and has lived in the South for the last 25 years. She is Commander of the Georgia National Guard including all 11,500 troops. They hope to grow to 15,000 troops by the year 2020.

General Britt stated that the Georgia National Guard is doing very well with recruitment and that they are considering cutting back on bonuses. She provided the members of the committee with updated information on the 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade sendoffs.

After discussion, Senator Chapman thanked General Britt for her attendance and updated the committee on the deployment schedule for the 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade.

Meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator Jeff Chapman, 3rd  
Vice Chairman

/s/ Ethel R. Blackmon  
Recording Secretary

**Minutes of the  
Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee  
March 25, 2009**

The Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, March 25, 2009 in Room 310 of the CLOB. Chairman Douglas called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

The following Senators were present:

Douglas, 17<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
Chapman, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Vice Chairman  
Butterworth, 50<sup>th</sup>  
B. Jackson, 24<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio  
Jones, 10<sup>th</sup>  
Murphy, 27<sup>th</sup>, Ex Officio

Note: Senators Brown, Staton, and C. Thompson were absent.

Senator Douglas called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

**[HB 674](#) (Smyre, 132<sup>nd</sup>) Bingo games; limits on amounts of prizes; remove**

Representative Len Walker joined the meeting to speak on behalf of the bill for Representative Calvin Smyre. He explained that this bill increases the maximum prize amount allowable in bingo games operated by non-profit organizations from \$1,500 to \$2,500 per day and from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per week. The term “bingo game” is specifically defined in statute. Also, responsibility for the regulation of bingo games and issuance of bingo licenses is transferred from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to the Department of Revenue and references are changed accordingly.

Representative Walker reported that this bill is seeking higher limits per person per day because of the competition Georgia VFWs are encountering from the VFWs in neighboring states that offer higher limits.

Mr. Bobby Boss of the American Legion, Post 233 of Loganville and Mr. Les Schneider spoke in support of this legislation.

Senator Jones made a motion to amend **HB 674** striking line 200: “It shall be unlawful to award cash prizes in bingo games, as defined in subparagraph (B) of Code Section 38-4-40.” The motion was seconded by Senator Murphy.

Senator Douglas called for the motion.

Senator Jones made a motion that [\*\*HB 674 Do Pass by Substitute\*\*](#). Senator Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator John Douglas, 17th  
Chairman

/s/ Ethel R. Blackmon  
Recording Secretary

May 5, 2009

Honorable Bob Ewing  
Secretary of the Senate  
State Capitol  
Room 353  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Mr. Ewing:

Along with the minutes of the **Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee**, I am returning the following Bills and Resolutions:

[SR 626](#)

[SR 692](#)

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Ethel R. Blackmon  
Recording Secretary  
Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee