

SENATE INTERSTATE COOPERATION COMMITTEE ROSTER

2013 Legislative Session

Senator Hardie Davis

Chairman

District 22

P.O. Box 6389

Augusta, GA 30916

Senator Freddie Powell Sims

Vice-Chairman

District 12

5377 Goose Hollow Road

Dawson, GA 31742

Senator Emanuel Jones

Secretary

District 10

P.O. Box 370244

Decatur, GA 30037

Senator Vincent Fort

District 39

121-J State Capitol

Atlanta, GA 30334

Senator Ed Harbison

District 15

P.O. Box 1292

Columbus, GA 31902

RULES

Senate Interstate Cooperation Committee

2013 Legislative Session

Introduction:

Each member of the Committee should be mindful of the Senate Rules especially regarding attendance.

1. A quorum of the Committee shall be 3 members.
2. The Chairman shall determine which bills and resolutions are to be considered and the order in which said measures are considered.
3. 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.
4. The Committee shall reconvene, recess, and adjourn upon the order of the Chairman.
5. A bill or resolution will be considered only after presentation by its principal author or other legislator whose name appears first or second on the list of authors or co-sponsors, unless the author or co-sponsor has made other arrangements with the Chairman.
6. No member of the Committee shall be allowed to vote by proxy.
7. Members may not abstain from voting unless the member or any member of the Senator's immediate family has a direct pecuniary interest in the result of such vote which interest is distinct, unique or peculiar to the Senator or the Senator's immediate family.
8. Any member or members of the Committee who disagree 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.

Minutes
Senate Interstate Cooperation Committee
Tuesday, February 5th, 2013
125 State Capitol

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m. The following members were in attendance:

Senator Hardie Davis, 22nd, Chairman
Senator Freddie Powell Sims, 12th, Vice-Chairman

This was the first meeting of the Senate Interstate Cooperation Committee of the 2013 Legislative Session. Chairman Davis introduced himself and welcomed committee members, staff, and guests.

The meeting began with discussion and adoption of the committee rules for the 2013 Legislative Session.

Chairman Davis then directed the committee to take a look at the handout before them outlining the interstate compacts Georgia is a part of. Chairman Davis explained that this meeting would serve as an organizing meeting with more testimony and hearings in the weeks to come. Chairman Davis drew the committee's attention to two compacts that the committee would be focusing on: the Compact for Juveniles and the Child Placement Compact.

Chairman Davis explained that in 2011, Georgia did not renew their membership in the Interstate Compact for Juveniles; he noted that he would like the committee to address this in this year's Legislative Session.

Chairman Davis introduced the members of the audience who were interested in this type of legislation. Polly McKinney, Advocacy Director for Voices for Georgia's Children, and Eric John, Executive Director of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia, greeted the committee. Eric John explained that because Georgia is not part of the compact, other states are not working with us.

Sims of the 12th asked if Eric John knew why the compact was dismissed. Eric John replied that this is a national compact that Georgia did not enter; as a result, our law is null and nobody is recognizing it.

Chairman Davis explained that this conversation regarding the Interstate Compact for Juveniles would be ongoing during the session.

There being no further business, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Senator Hardie Davis, 22nd
Chairman

/s/ Allison Hughes
Recording Secretary

Minutes
Senate Interstate Cooperation Committee
Wednesday, March 13th, 2013
125 State Capitol

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. The following members were in attendance:

Senator Hardie Davis, 22nd, Chairman
Senator Freddie Powell Sims, 12th, Vice-Chairman
Senator Emanuel Jones, 10th, Secretary

Senator Vincent Fort, 39th (arrived at 2:13 p.m.)

Chairman Davis explained that the purpose of the meeting would be to hear testimony regarding the Interstate Compact for Juveniles.

Kirsten Widner, the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Barton Child Law and Policy Center, introduced herself. Widner explained that the organization works to improve outcomes for abused children. Widner noted that at Chairman Davis' request, the organization looked at the cost involved in being a part of the compact and added that she had heard that it would be expensive. Widner explained that after looking into it, she was told that the cost for Georgia would be \$27,000 per year which would allow our state access to the national database of juveniles in the system. Widner highlighted that the state would see a substantial return on investment and efficiency.

Widner then shared a story she had heard from a judge relating to the types of issues they are facing. She explained that the judge once had a young girl come into court who was sex trafficked by her parents. Because of the lack of membership in the Interstate Compact for Juveniles, the judge felt that he had no option but to return her; the girl was returned to her parents' custody and is now back on the streets

Jones of the 10th inquired as to why Perdue took Georgia off of the compact. Widner explained that when the new compact was created, the state declined for two reasons- cost and state sovereignty. Jones of the 10th asked her to be more explicit. She replied that what she shared was what they were told. At the present time, Georgia is the only state that has not entered into the compact.

Eric John, Executive Director of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia, testified next regarding the compact. He explained that he had heard many stories about how this is affecting the courts and highlighted that his organization wants to bypass any barriers in the way to get this in place.

Chairman Davis noted that Georgia has only one written agreement with South Carolina; the others are all verbal agreements. Chairman Davis asked if John could speak to the issue of moving juveniles across state lines without this in place. John explained that there are some states that have refused to initiate any conversations- Texas, New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut, for example.

Chairman Davis inquired if many of these cases that involve juveniles also involve sex trafficking. John replied that they do and this issue could become worse over time. Chairman Davis noted again that the annual dues required would be \$27,000.

A representative from Voices for Georgia's Children testified that the organization fully supports this work and is planning to look at this over the summer.

In closing, Chairman Davis explained that the committee's plan is to prepare a report which will be communicated to leadership with a strong recommendation. Chairman Davis added that he wants to give the Governor's Office an opportunity to weigh in on the cost and impact of entering into this compact and that he wants to move swiftly to do this.

A motion was made by Sims of the 12th to move forward with preparing a report of the Committee in support of Georgia joining the Interstate Compact for Juveniles; the motion was seconded by Fort of the 39th. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Senator Emanuel Jones, 10th
Secretary

/s/ Allison Hughes
Recording Secretary

*****NO BILLS WERE ASSIGNED TO THIS COMMITTEE DURING THE
2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.***