

## **SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE ROSTER 2014**

Senator Bill Cowsert, 46<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
P.O. Box 512  
Athens, GA 30603

Senator Josh McKoon, 29<sup>th</sup>, Vice Chairman  
P.O. Box 2565  
Columbus, GA 31902

Senator Burt Jones, 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary  
407 East Second Street, SE  
Jackson, GA 30233

Senator Buddy Carter, 1<sup>st</sup>  
406 Purple Finch Drive  
Pooler, GA 31322

Senator Hardie Davis, 22<sup>nd</sup>  
P.O. Box 6389  
Augusta, GA 30916

Senator Tim Golden, 8<sup>th</sup>  
110 Beacon Hill  
Valdosta, GA 31602

Senator Lester Jackson, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
1501 Abercorn Street  
Savannah, GA 31401

Senator Nan Orrock, 36<sup>th</sup>  
1070 Delaware Avenue  
Atlanta, GA 30316

Senator Cecil Staton, 18<sup>th</sup>  
P.O. Box 26427  
Macon, GA 31221

## 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 Rule 2)

## SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The **Senate Higher Education Committee** held a meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 125 of the State Capitol.

The following Senators were present:

Cowsert of the 46<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
McKoon of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Vice Chairman  
Jones of the 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary  
Golden of the 8<sup>th</sup>  
Staton of the 18<sup>th</sup>

NOTE: Senator Carter of the 1<sup>st</sup>, Senator Davis of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Senator Jackson of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Senator Orrock of the 36<sup>th</sup> were absent.

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

### **SB 214 (McKoon, 29<sup>th</sup>)                      Anonymity of Lottery Winners**

Senator McKoon introduced **SB 214**. He stated that the purpose of the bill would be to allow lottery winners who wish to stay anonymous to remain so upon written request and a donation of 25 percent of their earning to the Lottery for Education Account or another tax exempt organization.

Senator Staton asked Senator McKoon to clarify the bill's underlying purposes. Senator McKoon explained that many persons would wish to remain anonymous, therefore gaining more for education.

Senator Jones made a motion that **SB 214, "do pass by substitute" (LC 34 4049S)**.

Senator Staton seconded the motion. **SB 214** passed by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, Chairman Cowsert adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator Jones, 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary

## SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The **Senate Higher Education Committee** held a meeting on Monday, February 24, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 125 of the State Capitol.

The following Senators were present:

Cowsert of the 46<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
Jones of the 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary  
Carter of the 1<sup>st</sup>  
Jackson of the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Orrock of the 36<sup>th</sup>

NOTE: Senator McKoon of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Senator Davis of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Senator Golden of the 8<sup>th</sup>, and Senator Staton of the 18<sup>th</sup> were absent.

Chairman Cowsert called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m.

### **SB 274 (Seay, 34<sup>th</sup>)**

### **Agricultural History Museum**

Senator Seay presented **SB 274** to the committee stating that the idea that children of today do not know where their food supply comes from bothered her to the point that she felt that an Agricultural History Museum was needed. She said that it could be placed here in the Capitol building and that it would represent the importance of Georgia's history as an agricultural state. Senator Seay said that this bill would not require any state funds, but would use federal funds and private donations. The Capitol Arts Standards Commission would determine the placement and manner of the agricultural display.

Chairman Cowsert asked if the Senator would be amendable to striking the word "statues" on line 24. He explained that he felt that statues came under the authority of another agency and might cause a problem between agencies.

Senator Carter offered a committee substitute to strike "statues" on line 24. Senator Orrock moved the substitute pass, Senator Jackson seconded the substitute. The substitute passed unanimously.

Senator Carter made a motion that **SB 274, "do pass by substitute" (LC 41 0219S)**. Senator Jones seconded the motion. **SB 274** passed by unanimous vote.

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**SB 326 (Jeffares, 17<sup>th</sup>) Authorizing Teleconference for the Private Colleges and Universities Authority**

Senator Jeffares presented **SB 326** to the committee explaining that the meetings by teleconference would go on like any other meeting. This bill would allow for someone in Valdosta, for example, to forgo a trip to Atlanta for a meeting by being able to attend the Senate Higher Education Committee meeting telephonically. He stated that this would be a savings of expenses for the members and make it more convenient for members to attend.

Senator Carter asked if there was a possibility of a comprehensive code revision to allow other agencies or committees to meet via teleconference.

Senator Jones made a motion that **SB 326**, “**do pass**”. Senator Orrock seconded the motion. **SB 326** passed by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, Chairman Cowsert adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator Jones, 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary

## SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The **Senate Higher Education Committee** held a meeting on Thursday, March 6, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 125 of the State Capitol.

The following Senators were present:

Cowsert of the 46<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
Jones of the 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary  
Carter of the 1<sup>st</sup>  
Orrock of the 36<sup>th</sup>  
Staton of the 18<sup>th</sup>

NOTE: Senator McKoon of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Senator Davis of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Senator Golden of the 8<sup>th</sup>, and Senator Jackson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> were absent.

Chairman Cowsert called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

### **HB 697 (Evans, 42<sup>nd</sup>)                      Zell Miller Grant Scholars; Provide Eligibility Criteria**

Representative Evans introduced **HB 697**. She explained that this bill provides for Zell Miller Grant Scholars. These Scholars have met applicable eligibility requirements to receive a HOPE grant and earned a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of a least 3.5 at the end of any quarter or semester in which the student has attended courses toward a diploma or certificate. She said that Zell Miller Grant Scholars will be awarded an amount to equal the then current academic year standard undergraduate tuition amount at the institution to be paid or the exceptional tuition rate amount in effect on January 1, 2014, for programs with exceptional tuition rates. Eligibility to be a Zell Miller Grant Scholar will be determined on a semester or quarter basis and will be paid for the next semester or quarter in which the student is enrolled. A Zell Miller Grant Scholar will also receive one semester or quarter of retroactive payment if the student was not eligible to be a Zell Miller Grant Scholar because he or she had no cumulative GPA. The bill also renames Zell Miller Scholars as “Zell Miller Scholarship Scholars”.

Senator Carter made a motion that **HB 697**, “**do pass by substitute**” (**LC 41 0232S**). Senator Orrock seconded the motion. **HB 697** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Bethel will carry the bill in the Senate.

**HB 763 (Epps, 144<sup>th</sup>) Bachelor of Applied Science Degree Programs**

Representative Epps spoke to **HB 763**. He stated this bill would add provisions that The Georgia Military College can go beyond the level of an associate degree of education when studying for a Bachelor of Applied Science degree. This would allow Georgia Military College to be more competitive and offer students with an Associate of Applied Science degree a pathway to a four year Bachelor of Applied Science degree.

Chairman Cowser asked why there had to be legislation to permit a school to add this degree. He was answered that it involved state funding for the program.

Tom Daniels, Senior Vice Chancellor, External Affairs, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, spoke in favor of the legislation. He explained that Georgia Military College was created by Georgia Code as a 2-year academic college. To add a 4-year program, Mr. Daniels explained that the Georgia code must be amended by legislation. This degree would be an applied technical degree, having to do with hands on computer technology. He stated the degree was now being offered in some technical colleges.

Senator Staton made a motion that **HB 763**, “do pass”. Senator Jones seconded the motion. **HB 763** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Jones will carry the bill in the Senate.

**HB 490 (Barr, 103<sup>rd</sup>) Revise Health Insurance; Employees of County and Regional Libraries**

Representative Barr spoke to **HB 490**. He explained that currently employees employed by county and regional libraries cannot work more than 17.5 hours per week without being added to the State Health Benefit Plan. This bill would increase the number of hours per week that could be worked to 30 hours before State Health Benefit Plan insurance benefits would be required. It was further explained that this affected approximately 164 personnel throughout the State, who would like more hours and did not necessarily need insurance benefits.

NOTE: Senator Staton left the meeting.

Debra Nesbit, Associate Legislative Director, Association County Commissioners of Georgia, spoke in favor of the bill.

Senator Orrock asked if this bill would keep these people from having the insurance that they needed and if this was not taking health care in the wrong direction.

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Senator Jackson asked if this would mean there would be fewer library employees.

Senator Carter, 1<sup>st</sup> made a motion that **HB 490, "do pass"**. No second was received.

There being no further business, Chairman Cowser adjourned the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator Jones, 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary



## SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The **Senate Higher Education Committee** held a meeting on Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 125 of the State Capitol.

The following Senators were present:

Cowsert of the 46<sup>th</sup>, Chairman  
Jones of the 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary  
Carter of the 1<sup>st</sup>  
Davis of the 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Orrock of the 36<sup>th</sup>  
Staton of the 18<sup>th</sup>

NOTE: Senator McKoon of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Senator Golden of the 8<sup>th</sup>, and Senator Jackson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> were absent.

Chairman Cowsert called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m.

### **HB 490 (Barr, 103<sup>rd</sup>)                      **Revise Library Personnel Health Insurance****

Chairman Cowsert explained that this bill had been discussed in the previous meeting and called for a motion.

Senator Jones made a motion that **HB 490**, “**do pass**”. Senator Orrock seconded the motion. **HB 490** passed by unanimous vote. Chairman Cowsert will carry the bill in the Senate.

### **HB 810 (Chandler, 105<sup>th</sup>)                      **HOPE Eligibility Requirements****

Representative Chandler introduced **HB 810**. She explained that this bill revises the eligibility requirements for the HOPE scholarship for entering freshmen students who obtain a GED or graduated from a home study program or a non-eligible home school. This bill would allow students in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher on the SAT or ACT tests to be eligible for HOPE.

NOTE: Senator Jackson came into the meeting

Jonathan Stroble, Georgia Student Finance Commission, spoke to the legislation stating that this would affect about 50-60 students statewide.

Senator Jackson asked how they were able to come by the numbers and Mr. Stroble stated that this was what the number showed and he believed there would never be more than 100 students.

Senator Jackson asked why there was no fiscal note with this legislation and Representative Chandler stated that the fiscal impact is minimal.

Representative Chandler stated this bill would mainly affect children who are being home schooled. As Georgia law stands now, home school children need to score 1850 on their SAT or 28 on their ACT to qualify for the HOPE scholarship because these students are not able to be weighed on their GPA. This bill drops the requirements to 1780 on the SAT or 25 on the ACT. This requirement is still higher than regular high school students from accredited schools.

Senator Staton made a motion that **HB 810, "do pass"**. Senator Orrock seconded the motion. **HB 810** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Unterman will carry the bill in the Senate.

**[HB 788](#) (Riley, 50<sup>th</sup>)      **Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Private Interests in Property of the Board of Regents****

Representative Riley presented **HB 788**. She stated that this bill provides that property held by a private party on a campus of the Board of Regents primarily used for student housing or parking will be considered public property. This property is exempt from ad valorem tax and will not constitute a special franchise. This bill would require a referendum and will be in conjunction with the November 2014 general election. If this bill is approved this exemption will go into effect January 1, 2015.

NOTE: Senator Davis left the meeting.

Chancellor Hank Huckaby, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, stated the University System is in \$3.6 billion debt. He stated this bill will involve the private sector through a competitive bidding process which allows the University system to move the debt to the private agencies. This will give the System a better bond rating and allows them not to focus on debt, but to focus on educating students.

Senator Carter questioned, if privately owned, could the properties be rented to non-students or hold non-educational events on the property.

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Chancellor Huckaby answered that there would be contractual agreements with the private contractors and only students would be able to reside in the housing. The Chancellor also added that there would be restrictions on outside people the same as if the property were dormitories owned by the schools.

Chairman Cowsert had a concern about the room and board being raised on students so that the private companies can make a profit and the cost being prohibitive to students.

Chancellor Huckaby assured him that would not happen and they would have that written in the contracts. He stated that this system is currently being used in Kentucky. If any of the contractors break the contract, the University System would take the property back over.

Senator Carter made a motion that **HB 788, "do pass"**. Senator Staton seconded the motion. **HB 788** passed by unanimous vote. Senator Bethel will carry the bill in the Senate.

There being no further business, Chairman Cowsert adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Senator Jones, 25<sup>th</sup>, Secretary

March 20, 2014

Mr. David Cook  
Secretary of the Senate  
353 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Secretary Cook:

The following bills remained in the Senate Higher Education Committee at the close of the 2014 session:

[SR 184](#)

[SR 185](#)

[SR 992](#)

[SB 16](#)

[SB 17](#)

[SB 59](#)

[SB 107](#)

[SB 111](#)

[SB 112](#)

[SB 150](#)

[SB 151](#)

[SB 262](#)

[SB 266](#)

[SB 300](#)

[SB 330](#)

[SB 394](#)

[SB 395](#)

[SB 396](#)

[SB 398](#)

[HB 184](#)

[HB 293](#)

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Vicki Gibbs  
Recording Secretary