

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY & HOMELAND  
SECURITY**

**2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**Sen. Ben Watson, M.D., Chairman**  
District 1  
1326 Eisenhower Drive, #2  
Savannah, GA 31406

**Sen. Ed Harbison, Vice-Chairman**  
District 15  
P.O. Box 1292  
Columbus, GA 31902

**Sen. Mike Dugan, Secretary**  
District 30  
106 Champion Drive  
Carrollton, GA 30116

**Sen. John Albers, Ex-Officio**  
District 56  
3330 Preston Ridge, Rd, Suite 380  
Alpharetta, GA 3656

**Sen. Tonya Anderson**  
District 43  
P.O. Box 1026  
Lithonia, GA 30058

**Sen. Ellis Black, Ex-Officio**  
District 8  
5900 Jumping Gully Road  
Valdosta, GA 31601

**Sen. Gail Davenport**  
District 49  
P.O. Box 1074  
Jonesboro, GA 30237

**Sen. Emanuel Jones**  
District 10  
P.O. Box 370244  
Decatur, GA 30037

**Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, M.D.**  
District 32  
P.O. Box 108-895  
Marietta, GA 30062

**Sen. Michael A. Rnett**  
District 33  
P.O. Box 777  
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## **2018 SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY & HOMELAND SECURITY**

### **RULES**

1. These Committee Rules of Operation shall be consistent with Senate Rule 2-1.5 regarding the establishment of Rules of Operation.
2. Quorum of the Committee shall be five (5) members.
3. The Chairman shall determine which bills and resolutions are to be considered and the order in which said measures are considered.
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 a time as shall be designated by the Chairman.
5. The Committee shall convene, recess, and adjourn upon the order of the Chairman.
6. Any members of the Committee who disagree with the majority report of the Committee shall be privileged to file a minority report, in writing, with the Secretary of the Senate when the committee report is read, pursuant to Senate Rule 2-1.6.
7. These Rules may be amended upon a motion duly made and subsequently approved by a quorum of the Committee in a meeting called by the Chairman.
8. A bill, resolution or other matter will be considered only after the presentation by its principal author or legislator whom he designates to do so. In the event that more than one member of the General Assembly has signed a measure, the principle author shall be the one whose name appeared first in the list of authors.
9. The Chairman reserves the right to delay action on substitutes and amendments not provided to the Chairman at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the hearing.
10. Where these Rules are silent on a specific issue, the Rules of the Senate, as adopted, shall govern, pursuant to Senate Rule 2-1.5.

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY & HOMELAND  
SECURITY  
January 24, 2018**

The Senate Veterans, Military & Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 in Room 307 of the Coverdell Legislative Office Building at 8:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sen. Ben Watson (1st), Chairman  
Sen. Ed Harbison (15th), Vice-Chairman  
Sen. John Albers (56th), Ex-Officio  
Sen. Ellis Black (8th), Ex-Officio  
Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd)

**NOTE:** Sen. Mike Dugan (30th), Secretary, Sen. Tonya Anderson (43rd), Sen. Gail Davenport (44th), Sen. Emanuel Jones (10th), and Sen. Michael A. Rhett (33rd) were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Watson (1st).

Chairman Watson (1st) asked Sen. John Albers (56th) to lead an opening prayer. Everyone bowed their heads for prayer.

**The proposed Committee Rules were reviewed.** No motions to amend the rules were proposed.

**[HB 287](#) (Rep. Kirby, 114th, LC 39 1507); Special License Plates**

**Proposes an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Georgia so as to provide for eligible members of a fallen service member to receive up to two free Gold Star license plates. Eligible family members must be related to the fallen service member as the spouse, mother, father, child, stepparent, or surviving spouse of each service member's sibling.**

Rep. Tom Kirby (114th) presented the bill to the Committee.

Sen. Albers (56th) and Sen. Harbison (15th) thanked Rep. Kirby (114th) for proposing the bill.

Sen. Black (8th) asked Rep. Kirby (114th) to repeat the provisions of the bill.

Chairman Watson (1st) made a motion **DO PASS**. Sen. Harbison (15th) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a vote 4-0. Sen. Kirkpatrick (32nd) will be the Senate sponsor.

**HB 287 (LC 39 1507) DO PASS**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Watson (1st) at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Sen. Ben Watson (1st), Chairman

/s/ Phyllis Williams, Recording Secretary

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY & HOMELAND  
SECURITY  
February 14, 2018**

The Senate Veterans, Military & Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, February 14, 2018 in Room 310 of the Coverdell Legislative Office Building at 8:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sen. Ben Watson (1st), Chairman  
Sen. Ed Harbison (15th), Vice-Chairman  
Sen. Mike Dugan (30th), Secretary  
Sen. John Albers (56th), Ex-Officio  
Sen. Ellis Black (8th), Ex-Officio  
Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) (*Arrived late*)

**NOTE:** Sen. Tonya Anderson (43rd), Sen. Gail Davenport (44th), Sen. Emanuel Jones (10th), and Sen. Michael A. Rhett (33rd) were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 8:29 a.m. by Chairman Watson (1st).

**NOTE:** Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) arrived at 8:35 a.m.

Chairman Watson (1st) asked Sen. John Albers (56th) to lead an opening prayer. Everyone bowed their heads for prayer.

**HB 309** (Rep. Barr, 103rd, LC 43 0624S) **State Liability; activities of organized militia**

**Under current law, the State is exempt from any liability for losses resulting from the activities of the Georgia National Guard when engaged in State or Federal training or duty, with the exception of vehicular accidents. This legislation clarifies this exemption by specifically exempting the activities of the organized militia.**

Rep. Timothy Barr (103rd) presented the bill to the Committee with guest speaker Captain Allen Hayes of The Georgia Defense Force. Captain Hayes gave an overview of The Georgia Defense Force and the purpose of the bill.

Sen. Kirkpatrick (32nd) thanked Rep. Barr (103rd) for proposing the bill and made a motion **DO PASS**.

Chairman Watson (1st) asked for clarification of the bill.

Sen. Dugan (30th) asked Rep. Barr (103rd) and Captain Hayes to define the term “tag.”

Sen. Harbison (15th) asked if current law already provides protection from liability and why protection is necessary.

Chairman Watson (1st) called on Legislative Counsel to provide an explanation of the bill.

Chairman Watson (1<sup>st</sup>) made a motion **DO PASS**. Sen. Harbison (15th) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a vote 5-0. Sen. Kirkpatrick (32nd) will be the Senate sponsor.

**HB 309 LC 43 0624S DO PASS**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Watson (1st) at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Sen. Mike Dugan (30th), Secretary

/s/ Phyllis Williams, Recording Secretary

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY & HOMELAND  
SECURITY  
February 21, 2018**

The Senate Veterans, Military & Homeland Security Committee met on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 in Room 307 of the Coverdell Legislative Office Building at 8:15 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sen. Ben Watson (1st), Chairman  
Sen. Ed Harbison (15th), Vice-Chairman (*arrived late*)  
Sen. Mike Dugan (30th), Secretary  
Sen. John Albers (56th), Ex-Officio  
Sen. Ellis Black (8th), Ex-Officio  
Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd)  
Sen. Michael A. Rhett (33rd) (*arrived late*)

**NOTE:** Sen. Tonya Anderson (43rd), Sen. Gail Davenport (44th), and Sen. Emanuel Jones (10th) were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 a.m. by Chairman Watson (1st).

Chairman Watson (1st) asked Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) to lead an opening prayer. Everyone bowed their heads for prayer.

**NOTE:** Sen. Ed Harbison (15th), Vice Chairman, and Sen. Michael A. Rhett (33rd) arrived at 8:25 a.m.

**SB 395 (Chairman Watson, 1st, LC 44 0811ERS) Georgia Joint Defense Commission; creates the 18-member Georgia Joint Defense Commission; provides for the membership and purposes of the Commission.**

Chairman Watson (1st) presented the bill to the Committee.

Sen. Dugan (30th) asked Chairman Watson (1st) a question about the bill.

Mr. Cosby Johnson with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce signed up to speak for the bill. Chairman Watson (1st) called on Mr. Johnson to speak for the bill.

Chairman Watson (1<sup>st</sup>) made a motion **DO PASS BY SUBSTITUTE**. Sen. Black (8th) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a vote 6-0.

**SB 395 (LC 44 0811ERS) DO PASS BY SUBSTITUTE**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Watson (1st) at 8:28 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Sen. Mike Dugan (30th), Secretary

/s/ Phyllis Williams, Recording Secretary



**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY & HOMELAND  
SECURITY  
March 6, 2018**

The Senate Veterans, Military & Homeland Security Committee met on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 in Room 307 of the Coverdell Legislative Office Building at 9:15 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sen. Ben Watson (1st), Chairman  
Sen. Ed Harbison (15th), Vice Chairman  
Sen. Mike Dugan (30th), Secretary  
Sen. John Albers (56th), Ex-Officio (*Left early*)  
Sen. Ellis Black (8th), Ex-Officio  
Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd)  
Sen. Michael A. Rhett (33rd) (*Arrived late*)

**NOTE:** Sen. Tonya Anderson (43rd), Sen. Gail Davenport (44th), and Sen. Emanuel Jones (10th) were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 9:16 a.m. by Chairman Watson (1st).

Chairman Watson (1st) asked Sen. Ellis Black (8th) to lead an opening prayer. Everyone bowed their heads for prayer.

**HB 422 (Rep. Hitchens, 161st, LC 44 0323) Georgia Veterans Service Foundation, Inc. Authorizes the Veterans Service Board to establish the Georgia Veterans Service Foundation, Inc.**

Rep. Bill Hitchens (161st) presented the bill to the committee.

**NOTE:** Sen. Michael A. Rhett (33rd) arrived at 9:26 a.m.

Mr. Mike Roby, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service spoke for the bill.

Sen. Kirkpatrick (32nd) asked a question about the bill.

Chairman Watson (1st) made a motion **DO PASS**. Sen. Kirkpatrick (32nd) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a vote 6-0.

**HB 422 LC 44 0323 DO PASS**

Chairman Watson (1st) will be the Senate sponsor for the bill.

**HB 840 (Rep. Hitchens, 161st, LC 34 5374S) Military Service in a Combat Zone; Provide Tax Penalty Exemption. Exempts military service members who are serving in a combat zone from having to pay any financial penalty when defaulting on paying business taxes and fees.**

Sen. Harbison (15th) asked a question about the bill.

Sen. Albers (56<sup>th</sup>) made a motion **DO PASS**. Sen. Harbison (15th) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a vote 6-0.

**HB 840 LC 34 5374S DO PASS BY SUBSTITUTE**

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) will be the Senate sponsor for the bill.

**NOTE:** Sen. Albers (56th) left the meeting at 9:27 a.m.

**HB 700 (Rep. Belton, 112th, LC 44 0636) Georgia National Guard Cancelable Loan Revises requirements and eligibility for the provisions of the Georgia National Guard Cancelable Loan**

Rep. Dave Belton (112th) presented the bill.

Colonel Joe Ferrero, Deputy Adjutant General of Georgia Department of Defense, spoke for the bill.

Sen. Kirkpatrick (32nd) asked a question about the bill.

Sen. Rhett (33rd) made a comment on the bill.

Sen. Dugan (30th) asked a question about the bill.

Sen. Kirkpatrick (32nd) made a motion **DO PASS**. Sen. Rhett (33rd) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a vote 5-0.

**HB 700 LC 44 0636 DO PASS**

Chairman Watson (1st) will be the Senate sponsor for the bill.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Sen. Mike Dugan (30th), Secretary

/s/ Phyllis Williams, Recording Secretary