



This Week in the Senate

February 6- February 9

House Bill Eases Education Restrictions on Nurses

Senator Renee Unterman (R-Buford) spoke on House Bill 675 which allows three year nursing programs from nonprofit schools the allowance to practice nursing in the state of Georgia. The bill will ease restrictions on educational requirements for licensure as an RN or LPN so as to make it easier for graduates of nontraditional nursing programs outside of Georgia to be licensed. The bill passed 53-0. –**HB 675**

Bill to Transfer Assets to DNR Passes Senate Floor

Georgia Aviation Authority will transfer personnel, aircraft, and other assets from the Georgia Aviation Authority back to the Department of Natural Resources and the State Forestry Commission according to SB 339. The bill is sponsored by Senator Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) and passed the Senate on Tuesday with a 50-5 vote. – **SB 339**.

Senate Bill 337 Passes

Senator Greg Goggans (R-Douglas) presented SB 337, which passed on Tuesday 49-5. The bill will prohibit using a dentist's or physician's participation in any public or private health insurance plan as a condition of granting a state license to practice medicine. –**SB337**

Office of the Comptroller General to Relocate

A bill to create the Office of the Comptroller General in the State Accounting Office was passed 47-4 by Senator Bill Heath (R-Bremen) on Wednesday. Currently, the title of Comptroller General is reserved for the Commissioner of Insurance. This bill removes that title and office from the Department of Insurance and creates a new office in the State Accounting Office. –**SB 343**

Requirements of Municipal Court Judges to Change

Senator John Crosby (R-Tifton) sponsored a bill that will require training standards for judges of courts exercising municipal court jurisdiction. The Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council will keep records of the judges' training and the reasonable costs of the training will be paid by the city or county where the judge presides. The bill passed 48-0. –**SB 351**

Municipal Courts Allowed to Employ Prosecuting Attorneys

Wednesday, the Senate passed legislation that would give municipal courts and courts exercising municipal court jurisdiction (such as traffic courts, recorders courts, and mayor's courts) the authority to employ prosecuting attorneys to represent the jurisdiction in criminal proceedings in such courts. The bill was sponsored by Senator John Crosby (R-Tifton) and passed 50-0. –**SB352**

Notice of Foreclosure Sale Required for All Property

Under previous law, sale notices were only required when a debtor's property was used as their current dwelling place. Because of new legislation which passed the Senate Floor Thursday 48-0, this requirement will now apply to all property, in addition to the debtor's home. Senator Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro) sponsored the legislation. - **SB333**

Laws Pertaining to Treated Timber Sale Repealed

Part 2 of Article 5 of Chapter 14 of Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia has been repealed. This piece of Georgia law pertains to the sale of treated timber. Since the original legislation was passed in 1973, changes in the regulation process of treated timber led to the legislation becoming outdated and unnecessary. Georgia remained one of two states to still have such a law. This marked Senator John Wilkinson's (R-Toccoa) first time at the well and his bill passed 51-0. – **SB357**

Resolution Passes Urging Congress to Allow States to Decide on Immigration

Senate Resolution 715, sponsored by Senator Tommie Williams (R-Lyons), passed on Thursday and pertains to federal immigration reform. It urges Congress to expand the H-2A guest worker program by allowing states to administer their own H-2A guest worker programs under the supervision of the United States Department of Agriculture. Harsher immigration laws have cost the state around \$300 to \$400 million. The resolution passed 53 to 0 and received bi-partisan attention from the well. –**SR715**

Multi-Agency Alliance for Children Day (MAAC)

Senator Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta) recognized MAAC for their aid to the neediest of Georgia's children. MAAC serves the entire state of Georgia including all 159 counties. Executive Director of MAAC, Ms. Heather Rowles, was in the Chamber to witness February 6th become MAAC day at the Capitol. –**SR 795**.

4-H Day at Celebrated at the Capitol

Hundreds of 4-H students filled the Capitol Monday in honor of 4-H Day. Senator Johnny Grant (R-Milledgeville) presented a senate resolution in honor of the 172,366 4-H members in Georgia. Dowdy White, President of 4-H and a resident of Crisp County, expressed his gratitude for all that 4-H and Senators have done for him. –**SR 661**

Catholic Day Recognized

On Tuesday, Senator Josh McKoon (R-Columbus) recognized February 7, 2012 as Catholic Day at the Capitol. Members of the Catholic Church filled the Gallery and applauded when the resolution was passed. Archbishop Wilton Gregory thanked all the high school students for attending this special day. – **SR 780**

Sen. Harbison Host Columbus Day

Prestigious citizens of Columbus, GA were in the Chamber Tuesday to celebrate Columbus Day at the Capitol. Senator Ed Harbison (D-Columbus) welcomed Mayor Teresa Tomlinson and President of the School Board Cathy Williams as part of recognizing the city of Columbus. Mayor Tomlinson thanked the Senate for being the best elected delegation in the state of Georgia. –**SR 698**

Girl Scouts Welcomed at the Capitol

Senator Renee Unterman (R-Buford) honored Girl Scouts at the Capitol Tuesday. Over 200 Girl Scouts were in the Capitol to serve as House and Senate Pages. Sen. Unterman praised the organization for providing teamwork, leadership, and community involvement for young girls.

Senator Buddy Carter (R-Pooler) said he was proud to live in Savannah, the home of the Girl Scouts and also thanked them for everything they do for Georgia. - **SR 709**

Filmmaker's Recognized for *Courageous* Film

Alex and Stephen Kendrick of Sherwood Films, located in Albany, Ga., were honored in the Senate Chamber for their film, *Courageous*, which as of last week was the number one DVD. Senator Barry Loudermilk (R- Cassville) presented the resolution and commented on how the movie's message and quality was extraordinary. - **SR 800**

Firefighters Recognition Day

Senator John Albers (R-Roswell) honored and commended the firefighters of Georgia and observed the 40th annual Firefighters' Recognition Day on Tuesday, February 7th. Sen. Albers told members of the Senate that the very best of Georgia were in the Chamber. - **SR 660**

Equine Youth Day at the Capitol

The accomplishments of Georgia's young equestrians were celebrated on Tuesday. Many equestrians gathered at the Capitol, and a reception was held for them at the Old Freight Depot during lunch hours. -**SR798**

Sportsmen's and Coastal Day at the Capitol

On Wednesday, representatives came from various state agencies, nonprofits, and other organizations important to the state's sportsmen and coastal resources. Visitors had the opportunity to learn about the management of some of Georgia's natural resources and the important policy issues currently faced by those involved. While special attention was given to Georgia's coast, all of Georgia's unique and diverse ecological regions were celebrated for their importance to the state's sportsmen. -**SR814**

Emergency Services Workers Honored

Senator Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga) presented Emergency Medical Service workers with a resolution declaring February 8, 2012, Emergency Medical Services Day at the Capitol. Over 16,000 EMS workers provide life-saving services each year and respond to almost one million calls for assistance annually. Director of EMS Georgia, Keith Wages, and Executive Director Kimberly Littleton were in the Senate Chamber to receive the honor. -**SR 791**

2011 Georgia Peach Queens Commended

On Thursday, Senator George Hooks (D-Americus) and the State Senate commended the Georgia Peach Festival and the 2011 Georgia Peach Queens. Since 1987, the Peach Festival has celebrated the symbolic and economic importance of peaches to the state and Peach County, in particular. - **SR740**

Pharmacists Day at the Capitol

Georgia's pharmacists were welcomed to the Capitol on Thursday. They were commended for their service to the state and their importance to Georgians by the Senate Chamber.

Restaurant Day at the Capitol

Senator Don Balfour (R-Snellville) recognized Georgia's food service industry for generating an excess of \$14 billion and sustains over 300,000 jobs. From the twenty-five international food

service industry brands to the countless small business restaurants, the restaurant industry is a major player in the state economy. Thursday was declared Restaurant Day at the Capitol. –**SR693**

Young Farmers Day

The Georgia Young Farmers Association was recognized Thursday by Senator John Bulloch (R-Ochlocknee) and the Senate for their contributions to educating Georgia's youth in topics related to agriculture. Since its founding in 1971, the association has grown to become the largest organization of the Young Farmer Association network. A reception for the Georgia Young Farmers was held at the Old Freight Depot. –**SR659**

Community Health Centers Day

Georgia's community health centers throughout the state serve over 400,000 Georgians each year in over 137 communities. The Senate recognized them for their outstanding service to underserved Georgians including uninsured, the working poor, a large number of underinsured, elderly, homeless, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations. –**SR810**

Georgia Celebrates 279th Birthday

February 12, 2012 marks the anniversary of Georgia's colonial founding by James Oglethorpe in 1733. Employees of the Georgia State Archives were present in the Capitol Rotunda on Thursday to display Georgia's copy of the Declaration of Independence, dated 1777.