



This Week in the Senate

January 23 – January 27

FY 2013 Budget Hearings

As required by law, Georgia must have a balanced budget and cannot allow any deficit spending. With the conclusion of last week came the recommendations for the 2013 fiscal year. Money allotted to education will increase K-12 enrollment. The HOPE scholarship program will maintain the same award levels and grants as FY 2012 with additional money going towards developing new graduate medical education programs. Public Safety will utilize money to create new Accountability Courts, add more beds to prisons, and create new positions for parole officers. Bonds will go toward the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project and funding for infrastructure for K-12 schools.

Senate Majority Caucus Priorities

Last week the Senate Majority Caucus outlined their priorities for the 2012 legislative session, focusing on economic growth, responsible spending and the importance of providing a quality education for Georgia students. The five key principles of the Republican Caucus' in 2012 are limited government, fiscal responsibility, pro-job tax reform, 21st century education reform, and increased protection for Georgia's children.

Senate Minority Caucus Priorities

Senate Democrats also unveiled their points of focus during the 2012 legislative session, which includes providing an educated work force, creating a strong economy, rural recovery, and building strong families. Specific legislation in the Caucus' agenda includes a Veteran's package aimed at ensuring those returning from war can find work, blocking outsourcing of state jobs, creating a state health care exchange and a study committee on aging, and offering a comprehensive and robust package on rescuing the failed HOPE Scholarship reform of 2011.

State of the Judiciary

On Wednesday, January 25, the Honorable Chief Justice Carol Hunstein delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address to the House of Representatives and Senate. Justice Hunstein spoke with regards to promoting unity and teamwork within the three branches of government and encouraged all three branches to continue their support of criminal justice reform, in particular the need for Georgia to move nonviolent offenders out from behind bars and focus on true rehabilitation.

Uniform Interstate Depositions and Discovery Act

The Senate passed House Bill 46, which enacts the Uniform Interstate Depositions and Discovery Act, which allows subpoenas from other states to be served more efficiently in Georgia. With this Act, any party who wishes to issue an out-of-state subpoena in Georgia must submit it to the superior court of the recipient's county. - **HB46**.

Incorporation of the Town of McIntyre, Ga

As result of a House bill passed on the Senate floor Wednesday, the Town of McIntyre, Georgia has become incorporated and received a new charter. The charter specifies policies pertaining to the establishment of the municipal government, as well as several other policies relevant to the town. McIntyre is located in Wilkinson County, Ga. –**HB571**

School Choice Awareness Week

This week marked the 3rd annual School Choice Awareness Week at the State Capitol. Students, parents, and teachers lobbied legislators to reform Georgia's antiquated education system to reflect the needs of a unique 21st century learning environment.

Schools in attendance included Cherokee Charter Academy, Ivy Preparatory Academy, Pataula Charter Academy, Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy, Fulton Leadership Academy, Heritage Preparatory Academy, Center Academy, Fulton Science Academy and School for Children.

Effingham County Day

Members of the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce were presented with Senate Resolution 685, declaring January 23, 2012 as Effingham Country Day at the State Capitol. Bordering on the Savannah River, Effingham is geographically positioned as an economic engine of the southeast portion of our state. One of the oldest settlements in Georgia, Effingham was created from the parishes of St. Matthew and St. Phillip, the fourth of the original eight counties to be established in 1777. Chamber President Randy Shearouse was present to celebrate Effingham's storied history while looking forward to a brighter future. – **SR 685**

Nursing Advocacy Day

A Senate Resolution sponsored by Senator Lester Jackson of the 2nd District honored Georgia's Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetic programs. Affiliates of the Georgia Nurses Association (GNA) visited the Capitol on Thursday while dressed in their white lab coats. Many of them had the opportunity to meet with their Senators and Representatives, as well as tour the Capitol and Legislative Office Building. The Senate commended Georgia's nursing students and faculty for their service to Georgia. – **SR716**

Savannah Chatham Day

The General Assembly celebrated Savannah Chatham Day this Thursday. Members of Savannah's Chamber of Commerce and leaders from county and municipal governments within Chatham County met with Senators and Representatives at the Capitol. The day concluded with the annual Seafood Festival held in the Georgia Rail Road Depot. Sponsored by Savannah and Chatham County businesses, the festival featured a buffet-style meal featuring the region's favorite cuisine.

Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality Day at the State Capitol

On Tuesday, the Senate commended Georgia's travel, tourism, and hospitality industry for the role it plays in the overall economy of Georgia. This industry has produced \$45 billion in revenue for the state. In 2010, the tourism industry sustained 391,000 jobs. Roughly 10.4% of all Georgia's jobs are, in some way, dependent upon this industry. Attendees from across the state came to the capitol to represent travel, tourism, or hospitality related businesses. – **SR716**

Sherriff's Day

January 25th, 2012 was declared Sherriff's Day under the Gold Dome as the state of Georgia celebrated one of government's oldest professions. Dating back to 600 B.C. in the Book of Daniel, the office of sheriff in America is derived from English Common Law and they were the first democratically elected officials in the history of Western Civilization. Historically, governors and legislatures have placed tremendous confidence and trust in the office of sheriff requiring them to perform services and engage in activities critical to safety. Sheriffs from around the state were on hand to receive their honor in the Senate Chamber. – **SR 678**