



This Week in the Senate

January 9 – January 13

First Bill of Session Passed

Sen. Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock) sponsored a bill that allows the State School Superintendent to hire and fire all employees at the Georgia Department of Education and State Schools for the Deaf and Blind. Other provisions include allowing the State Board of Education to overturn the Superintendent's hiring or firing with a 2/3 vote, and the Superintendent may enter into contracts up to \$250,000 without the approval of the State Board of Education. Previously, the State Board of Education had the discretion to delegate this authority to the superintendent and the superintendent was specifically granted the authority to employ five senior staff positions and enter into contracts up to \$50,000. **–SB38**

Education Bill changes Reduction in Teaching Force Policy

Sen. Tommie Williams (R-Lyons) sponsored an education bill directing the Department of Education to establish the Professional Learning Rules Task force and prohibiting local boards from implementing a policy that allows the length of teaching time to be the main factor when reducing staff. By July 1, 2013, the Professional Learning Rules Task Force must review the current professional learning rules for educators and provide suggestions for revision of the rules. Additionally, the local board can consider student academic performance when implementing a reduction in force policy. Nothing in this legislation prohibits a local board from using the elimination of a program as the primary factor in a reduction in force. **–SB184**

House Bill pertaining to the Sale of State Patrol Cars passes Senate

This legislation authorizes the Commissioner of Public Safety to transfer obsolete State Patrol cars to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center for training purposes. The vehicles may also be sold or traded and the proceeds used toward the purchase of new motor vehicles for DPS. This legislation will take effect upon the Governor's signature. **–HB253**

Senator Robert Brown Remembered

On Tuesday, Senator Donzella James (D-Atlanta) spoke from the well in order to lead a moment of silence in honor of the late Senator Robert Brown (D-Macon) of the 26th District. Sen. Brown served District 26th for 20 years and was the Democratic Leader in the State Senate. He retired from the State Senate last year prior to his untimely passing in December. Brown was remembered as a dedicated public servant who put other before himself.

Senator Fort speaks on his recovery from illness

Senator Vincent Fort (D-Atlanta) of the 39th District was welcomed back to the Senate this Friday after a period of absence due to illness. Sen. Fort thanked his colleagues for their continued support during his time away and expressed his excitement in returning to the Senate.

Sen. Johnny Isakson visits the State Senate

U.S. Congressman Johnny Isakson (R-GA) spoke to the Senate on Tuesday where he encouraged State Senators to voice their opinions to him directly. He also praised Georgia for being fiscally conservative and suggested that Washington, D.C. could take a note from Georgia on this issue.