



# This Week in the Senate

February 11 – February 15, 2013

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“Congratulations to Senator Tyler Harper for shepherding his first bill through the State Senate. It is a time honored tradition to give freshman senators a hard time when they present their first piece of legislation. Although it offers a light hearted break from our regular routine, it is also an important reminder that speaking out for or against a bill is what our constituents expect us to do. We should be able to factually defend the bills we sponsor and engage in respectful debate about bills that appear to be flawed.

“The Senate Appropriations Committee is finishing work on the FY 2013 Amended Budget, and a bill will likely be voted on in the Senate chamber next week. We will work cooperatively with our House counterparts over the next few weeks to negotiate a final amended budget and pass a general budget for FY 2014.”

– **Senate President Pro Tem David Shafer**



## Senate Bills

### **Bill Authorizing Licensed Professional Counselors to Perform Emergency Evaluations Passes Senate**

SB 65, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) passed the Senate on Monday, February 11, by a vote of 51-2. This legislation would authorize licensed professional counselors to perform emergency evaluations of individuals who are mentally ill or alcohol or drug dependent and to issue a certificate stating that such a person requires involuntary treatment. Georgia law currently authorizes physicians, psychologists, clinical social workers, and clinical nurse specialists in psychiatric/mental health to execute a certificate stating that he or she has personally examined a person within the preceding 48 hours and determined that the person requires involuntary treatment due to mental illness or alcohol or drug dependency. This bill authorizes licensed professional counselors to do the same. SB 65 will now travel to the House of Representatives for consideration. –**SB 65**

### **Increased Penalties for Contempt of Court Bill Passes Senate**

SB 66, sponsored by Sens. Stone (R-Waynesboro), Josh McKoon (R-Columbus), John Crosby (R-Tifton) Bill Jackson (R-Appling), and William Ligon (R-Brunswick) passed the Senate on Monday, February 11, by a vote of 42-9. This legislation would amend Title 15 of the state code to increase the penalties imposed for contempt of superior and state courts. SB 66 will now travel to the House for consideration. –**SB 66**

### **"Emerging Crops Fund Act" Repealed**

SB 91, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R-Ocilla) passed the Senate on Wednesday, February 13, by a vote of 51-0. This bill repeals the “Emerging Crops Fund Act” since similar funds are already available for farmers and it has yet to be appropriated. SB 91 will now travel to the House for consideration. –

**SB 91**

### **Roadside Markets Incentive Program Repealed**

SB 87, which would repeal the Roadside Markets Incentive Program, passed



the Senate on Thursday, February 14, by a vote of 45-0. The legislation was sponsored by Sen. Frank Ginn (R – Danielsville). –**SB 87**

### **Agricultural Commodity Commission for Beef Created**

SB 97, which would create the Agricultural Commodity Commission for Beef, passed the Senate on Thursday, February 14, by a vote of 47-0. The bill was sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa). –**SB 97**

## **House Bills**

### **State Wide Application of Warrants Using Surveillance Devices**

HB 55, carried by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro), passed the Senate on Tuesday, February 12, with a vote of 48-6. HB 55 allows investigators to conduct wiretapping state wide regardless of the county where the warrant was issued. Investigators who do not have the resources to build listening stations within their jurisdiction will now be able to legally conduct wiretapping at any listening station in Georgia, provided there is a warrant. Pen registers and trap and trace devices are treated the same as surveillance devices with respect to state wide warrants and interception of communication. –**HB 55**

## **Senate Resolutions**

### **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Visits Capitol**

Sen. Gloria Butler (D-Stone Mountain) welcomed Delta Sigma Theta Sorority members to the State Capitol on Monday, February 11. The historically African-American sorority has more than 200,000 members and focuses on economic development, educational development, international awareness and involvement, physical and mental health, and political awareness and involvement. –**SR 171**



### **Georgia Farm Bureau Federation Honored**

Sens. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), Butch Miller (R-Gainesville), Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville), Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta) and Tommie Williams (R-Lyons) welcomed over 400 members of the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation to the State Capitol on Tuesday, February 12. In attendance were vice-presidents Gerald Long, Robert Fountain, Bernard Sims and Bonnie Duvall, as well as president Zippy Duvall. The group thanked the Senate for their work in supporting rural Georgia, Georgia farmers, and the Farm Bureau Federation. The Georgia Farm Bureau Federation was formed in 1937 as a voice for production agriculture in legislative affairs. The organization focuses on service to its members and the improvement of Georgia agriculture. –**SR 27**

### **Sen. Lester Jackson and Sen. Buddy Carter Honor DENTAC Command from Ft. Stewart**

Sen. Lester Jackson (D-Savannah) and Buddy Carter (R-Pooler) honored the U.S. Army DENTAC of Ft. Stewart/Hunter Army Air Field on Tuesday, February 12, for their role in maintaining the oral health of almost 25,000 active duty soldiers. These oral health care providers set high standards in their clinical proficiency and patient care and provide compassionate care to those who serve our country. –**SR 63**

### **Girl Scouts Visit Capitol**

Sens. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), David Shafer (R-Duluth), Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), and Cecil Staton (R-Macon) sponsored Girl Scout Day at the State Capitol on Tuesday, February 12. The program is committed to promoting girls' physical, social, and emotional health; increasing girls' involvement in science, technology, engineering, and math; building girls' leadership skills; and increasing girls' financial literacy. –**SR 125**



### **Sen. Donzella James honors Louis Miller and the employees of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport**

Sen. Donzella James (D-Atlanta) honored general manager Louis Miller and the employees of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport on Tuesday, February 12. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is the world's busiest airport, with nearly 90 million passengers annually. The airport strives to be a global leader in airport efficiency and customer service excellence. **—SR 211**

### **Canton Jones Congratulated**

On Tuesday, February 12, Sens. Valencia Seay (D-Riverdale), Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), Hardie Davis (D-Augusta), Donzella James (D-Atlanta), Freddie Powell Sims (D-Dawson) and Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur) honored and commended Canton Jones on the distinction of being appointed Student Pastor of New Hope Church in Fayetteville, Georgia. **—SR 119**

### **Gwinnett County Honored**

Sens. David Shafer (R-Duluth), Renee Unterman (R-Buford), Don Balfour (R-Snellville), Fran Millar (R-Atlanta) and Steve Henson (D-Tucker) honored Gwinnett County on Wednesday, February 13. Gwinnett County was founded in 1818 and named after Button Gwinnett, a founding father of the United States who signed the Declaration of Independence. Gwinnett County is home to over 800,000 Georgians as well as the Georgia's newest public institution for higher education, Georgia Gwinnett College, as well as the state's flagship college, Gwinnett Tech. **—SR 128**



### **Henry County Recognized**

Sen. Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur) and Sen. Rick Jeffares (R-Locust Grove) sponsored Henry County Day at the State Capitol on Wednesday, February 13. Henry County is home to an estimated 180,000 Georgians and to many attractions such as Atlanta Motor Speedway. **—SR 223**

### **Henry County Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Recognized**

On Wednesday, February 13, Sen. Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur) and Sen. Rick Jeffares (R-Locust Grove) recognized President and CEO Kay Pippin of the Henry County Chamber of Commerce on her retirement. "Kay Pippin is a strong advocate for education and is a person with boundless energy," said Sen. Jones. **—SR 224**

### **Lupus Foundation of America Commended**

Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) and Sen. Gloria Butler (D-Stone Mountain) commended the work of the Lupus Foundation of America on Wednesday, February 13. Lupus is an acute, chronic, and life-long autoimmune disease which causes inflammation and tissue damage to virtually every organ system in the body. Approximately 55,000 Georgians are currently living with lupus. The Lupus Foundation of America is devoted to finding a cure for lupus and to supporting the individuals and families whose lives are affected by this disease. **—SR 126**



### **Eagle's Landing Christian Academy Football Team Congratulated**

Sen. Rick Jeffares (R-Locust Grove) and Sen. Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur) welcomed members of the Eagle's Landing Christian Academy football team to the State Capitol on Wednesday, February 13. During their 2012 season, the Eagle's Landing Christian Academy Chargers maintained the state's number one ranking in Class A football for all but one week and went on to win the state championship. **—SR 50**

### **Gainesville-Hall County Recognized**

Sen. Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) and Sen. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa) recognized Thursday, February 14, as Gainesville-Hall County day at the State Capitol. The Gainesville-Hall County area is home to an estimated 185,000 Georgians and is considered one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States. Gainesville has been

celebrated as the Hospitality and Poultry Capital of the World and is home to attractions such as Lake Lanier and Road Atlanta. **-SR 183**

### **Young Farmers Commended**

Sens. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), Tyler Harper (R-Ocilla), Bill Heath (R-Bremen), Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) and Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville) welcomed members of the Georgia Young Farmers Association to the State Capitol on Thursday, February 14. The Georgia Young Farmers Association was founded in 1971 to serve as the primary adult education delivery system for young Georgia farmers and today stands as the nation's largest affiliate with 52 chapters and 4,576 members. **-SR 84**



### **Community Health Center Day**

On Thursday, February 14, Sen. Tim Golden (R-Valdosta) and Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) recognized Georgia's community health centers. Federally qualified community health centers provide high quality primary and preventative health care to 400,000 people in the State of Georgia, including over 140,000 Medicaid recipients and 200,000 uninsured, underinsured, and other vulnerable populations. **-SR 213**

### **Dr. Michael F. Adams of University of Georgia Commended**

Sens. Bill Cowsert (R-Athens), Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville), Josh McKoon (R-Columbus) and Fran Millar (R-Atlanta) commended University of Georgia (UGA) President Michael F. Adams on Thursday, February 14. Dr. Adams has served as UGA president since 1997 and will retire from his position on June 30, 2013. Under his leadership, UGA received national recognition for its increased enrollment and fundraising efforts. UGA has been recognized *US News & World Report* as one of the nation's top 20 public research universities for eight of the past ten years, and its athletic teams won 27 national championships and 58 Southeastern Conference titles. **-SR 168**



## **Events and Visitors**

### **Sen. Dean Burke Sworn In**

Sen. Dean Burke (R-Bainbridge) was officially sworn into office to represent the 11<sup>th</sup> District on Monday, February 11. Georgia Court of Appeals Judge Billy Ray, a former State Senator, conducted the ceremony. Prior to being elected to the Georgia State Senate, Sen. Burke served seven years on the Bainbridge City Council and the Lower Flint Water Council. He is also a committed member of the Rotary Club and the Boy Scouts of America. Sen. Burke has been a practicing physician for 25 years. Sen. Burke and his wife, Thea, have been married for 32 years and have two children.



### **DOT Board Elections Held**

Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) held elections for board members from the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional Districts on Tuesday, February 12. Emily Dunn was re-elected from the 9<sup>th</sup>, James Boswell was elected from the 10<sup>th</sup>, and Roger Williams was elected from the 14<sup>th</sup>. All members will serve a five-year term. To view the full list of DOT board members, [click here](#).

### **Georgia Celebrates its 281st Birthday on Tuesday, February 12**

On February 12, 1733, James Oglethorpe and 114 colonists founded the colony of Georgia on the bluff of the Savannah River. Oglethorpe proposed the idea for Georgia as a way for released debtors to begin a new life in America. He envisioned Georgia as an ideal agrarian society where the poor could make a new start. Though many of his original plans for the colony—such as growing mulberry trees for silk—were not feasible, the colony became successful in other

ways and served as an important military buffer between Spanish Florida and the southern British colonies. Georgia was the 13th and final British colony.

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