



This Week in the Senate

February 4 – February 8, 2013

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A Message from Senate President Pro Tem David Shafer

"It was the genius of our Founding Fathers to establish a government of three co-equal yet separate branches that check and balance each other. This week we heard from Chief Justice Carol Hunstein, who delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address to a joint session of the General Assembly. Also this week the House nominated and the Senate confirmed Greg Griffin as the State Auditor, the legislative officer who sees that tax dollars are spent as appropriated. Next week will bring a full calendar of committee hearings as we consider the many bills have thus far been introduced."

State of the Judiciary

On Thursday, February 7, the Senate joined the House in a joint session to hear Georgia Supreme Chief Justice Carol Hunstein delivered her last speech, which centered on reforming Georgia's juvenile justice system. Hunstein focused on exploring alternative measures for non-violent offenders through community centers and services such as probation supervision, rehabilitation centers, anger management classes and family counseling. She referenced changes in the adult justice system that have successfully diverted non-violent offenders away from costly prison beds into alternative programs. This has enabled the state to slow the growth of its prison population save approximately \$264 million over the next five years. To view the full text of the address, [click here](#).

Statewide Alzheimer's and Dementia Task Force Plan Passes the Senate

Senate Bill 14, which would establish a statewide Alzheimer's and Dementia Task Force to assess the current and future impact of these diseases in Georgia, passed the Senate on Wednesday, February 6 by a vote of 51-0. Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), Chair of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, sponsored this legislation to build the necessary infrastructure for patient programs. Task force members will also examine the existing programs and determine the need for additional legislation. —SB 14

State Auditor Nomination and Election

House Resolution 203 passed the Senate on Thursday, February 7 with a vote of 52-0. This legislation provides for the nomination and election of the state auditor. The state auditor provides decision-makers with credible management information to provide improvements in accountability and stewardship in state and local government. Greg S. Griffin was elected as State Auditor on Friday, February 8

—HR 203

Moody Elected to State Board of Transportation

The House and Senate held caucuses this week to fill vacancies on the State Board of Transportation. Congratulations to former Senator Dan Moody who was elected to represent the Sixth Congressional District.

Sen. John Wilkinson Honors Georgia 4-H Program

Members of Georgia's 4-H program visited the Capitol on Monday, February 4, for 4-H Day at the Georgia State Capitol. Sens. Ross Tolleson (R-Perry), John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), Bill Cowser (R-Athens) and Tyler Harper (R-Ocilla) honored Georgia's 4-H Club with Senate Resolution 39. The mission of Georgia 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members to society. —SR 39



Sen. John Wilkinson Supports Georgia Agriculture with Equine Youth Day

Sen. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 85, which made Tuesday, February 5 Equine Youth Day at the Georgia State Capitol. Over 500 youth were in attendance to support the equine youth project. Sens. Tyler Harper (R-Ocilla), Bill Heath (R-Bremen) Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) and Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville) co-sponsored the resolution. —**SR 85**

The Lite House Recognized

Sen. Valencia Seay (D-Riverdale) and Sen. Donzella James (D-35) recognized The Lite House, Inc. for its significant contributions to the community on Tuesday, February 5. The Lite House is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Fayetteville. Its unique program provides academic support services and extracurricular activities free of charge to underprivileged, at-risk youth ages 5-18. Melvin Morris, executive director, announced that The Lite House is opening up two new centers named after Sen. Seay and Sen. James. The Lite House serves more than 2,500 underprivileged and at-risk children each year. —**SR 118**

Sen. Renee Unterman Recognizes Court Appointed Advocates

Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) recognized Court Appointed Advocate day at the Georgia State Capitol on Tuesday, February 5. These individuals advocate for the best interests of juveniles in abusive situations during judicial proceedings. —**SR 124**

Sen. Jesse Stone Recognizes Medical College of Georgia

Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro) honored Medical College of Georgia (MCG) with Senate Resolution 134 on Tuesday, February 5, to celebrate the school's 185th anniversary. MCG's economic impact is more \$2.5 billion each year. "MCG is one of the oldest medical schools in the nation, and it's also one of the largest," said Sen. Stone. "Since 1828, MCG has been serving the citizens of Georgia in many ways. Over 95 percent of the students enrolled are Georgia citizens, and over half of the graduates eventually practice in Georgia."—**SR 134**

Sen. Buddy Carter Honors Georgia State Firefighter Association

Sen. Buddy Carter (R-Pooler) welcomed the Georgia State Firefighter Association to the State Capitol on Tuesday, February 5. This event marked the 41st Annual Firefighters Recognition Day held at the State Capitol. Sen. Carter sponsored Senate Resolution 152 to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by firefighters in their communities on a daily basis. —**SR 152**



Sen. Jack Hill Recognizes Blue Key National Honor Society

Sen. Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) recognized members of the University of Georgia's (UGA) Blue Key Honor Society on Tuesday, February 5. Blue Key Honor Society recognizes deserving students who have demonstrated a record of success and excellence in scholarship, leadership and service. UGA is home to the second established chapter of Blue Key National Honor Society, and membership in the organization is considered one of the highest honors on campus. Sen. Charlie Bethel (R-Dalton) is a former president of the organization and Sen. Jason Carter (D-Decatur) is a former member.

Sen. Ed Harbison and Sen. Josh McKoon Honor Columbus, Georgia

Sen. Ed Harbison (D-Columbus) and Sen. Josh McKoon (R-Columbus) honored Columbus, Georgia with Senate Resolution 77 on Wednesday, February 6. The resolution praised Columbus' exciting visitor attractions, expansive economic growth and development, and beautiful natural landscapes. Columbus mayor Teresa Tomlinson and a delegation of city officials were in attendance, including city manager Isaiah Hugley, Dick Ellis of the Development Authority, Mike Gamon and Jacki Lowe of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, and Staff Sgt. Brandon Shannon of Fort Benning Maneuver Center of Excellence. Sgt. Shannon presented Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle with a challenge coin inspired by General George Patton, to remind him of Columbus' challenge to become the best region in the state of Georgia.

—**SR 77**

Georgia State Marks Centennial Anniversary

On Wednesday, February 6, Sens. Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), Freddie Sims (D-Dawson), Renee Unterman (R-Buford), Curt Thompson (D-Tucker), Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur) and Lindsey Tippins (R-Marietta) sponsored Senate Resolution 114 to mark the centennial anniversary of Georgia State University (GSU). GSU is a leading urban research university focused on providing advanced educational opportunities to more than 32,000 students. Five Georgia State Senate members are GSU alumni. GSU currently serves a population of more than 32,000 students. Its students and graduates demonstrate exemplary skills in leadership, academics and athletics, which contribute to the state and local economy by creating a globally competitive base of talent for research, civic and economic leadership. —**SR 114**

Veterinarians Honored at Capitol

Sens. Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), and Renee Unterman (R-Buford) welcomed veterinarians to the State Capitol for Veterinary Medicine Day on Thursday, February 7. Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black and State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Cobb were in attendance along with hundreds of veterinarians and veterinary students. —**SR 82**

Turkish American Day

Sens. Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga), Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta), Donzella James (D-Atlanta), Valencia Seay (D-Riverdale), and Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) sponsored Senate Resolution 163 recognizing Thursday, February 7, 2013 as Turkish American Day at the State Capitol. An estimated 8,000 Turkish Americans live in Georgia, and this community contributes significantly to the cultural diversity, vitality, and economic well-being of the State of Georgia. There are an estimated 8,000 Turkish Americans living in Georgia as well as an estimated 500 Turkish American businesses. —**SR 163**

Sen. Unterman Raises Awareness to End Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) sponsored Senate Resolution 197 to raise awareness for and analyze the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Georgia is the first state to scientifically track the number of adolescent girls victimized by sexual crimes. Nearly 1,000 people gathered at the Capitol on Tuesday, February 8 to raise awareness about the need to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Georgia. —**SR 197**

Sen. Buddy Carter Recognizes Law Enforcement Cooperation

Sen. Buddy Carter recognized law enforcement cooperation between the State of Georgia, the United States Department of State, and the Republic of Georgia on Friday, February 8. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation was honored for its selfless donation of time and experience reflected in the assistance they provided to the Republic of Georgia Ministry of Internal Affairs. —**SR 188**

John Bulloch Day

Senate members honored John Bulloch on Friday, February 8 by wearing jeans in chamber, as was Bulloch's Friday custom. Bulloch was first elected to the Georgia State Senate in 2002 and served as chairman of the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee. He was respected for his commitment to his constituents, his high moral standards and his work ethic. Sen. Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta) spoke to Bulloch's character. "His bravery, courage and understanding went far when battling bad policy," she said.



Sen. James and Sen. Davenport Honor Black History Month

Sen. Donzella James (D-Atlanta) and Sen. Gail Davenport (D-Jonesboro) honored Black History Month with educational presentations about important African-American leaders. Among those discussed were [Rosa Parks](#), [Alonzo Herndon](#), [Henry McNeal Turner](#)

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