



# This Week in the Senate

*February 17-21, 2014*

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## **A Message from Senate President Pro Tempore David Shafer**

“The Senate took a bold step to ensure Georgia’s most at-risk children receive the best possible care and protection with the passage of SB 350 earlier this week. I commend Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) and Sen. Fran Millar (R – Dunwoody) and the Foster Care Reform Working Group for their hard work on this important issue.

“Appropriations sub-committees met this week to review related sections of the FY 2015 general appropriations bill. Although the process is arduous, this effort is necessary in order to fulfill our constitutional obligations to the great citizens of Georgia.”

### **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17**

#### **Electronic Format for Georgia General Assembly Communications**

Senate Bill 60, sponsored by Sen. Bill Heath (R-Bremen), passed by a vote of 49 to 3. SB 60 requires all communications sent to officers, members or employees of the Georgia General Assembly to be sent in electronic format. The electronic format helps catalog and store all communications in case they need to be retrieved. –**SB 60**

#### **Alcohol Consumption on Sunday Preceding St. Patrick’s Day**

Senate Bill 318, sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D-Savannah) allows alcohol sales for on-site consumption on the Sunday immediately before St. Patrick’s Day. The bill failed by a vote of 28 to 20, but reconsidered by a vote of 32 to 10. The bill now transfers back to Rules Committee for further consideration. –**SB 318**

#### **State Plan for Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias**

Senate Resolution 746, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), was passed by a vote of 52 to 0. The resolution encourages the adoption of the State Plan for Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias recommended by the Georgia Alzheimer’s and Related Dementias State Plan Task Force. The plan developed by the Task Force is intended to serve as a blueprint to improve dementia prevention and treatment, community services, family support and public awareness. –**SR 746**

### **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18**

### **Non-Partisan Elections for County CEO's**

Senate Bill 95, sponsored by Sen. Fran Millar (R-Atlanta), requires the nonpartisan election of chief executive officers in counties that utilize a CEO or county commission form of government. It effects future elections only, not current terms of office. The bill passed by a vote of 29 to 23. **–SB 95**

### **State Board of Cosmetology Violations**

Sponsored by Sen. William Ligon (R-Brunswick), Senate Bill 336 amends the process for the State Board of Cosmetology to fine licensees for violations. The bill reduces fines for first time violations and sets a fine schedule. This includes \$25 for the first violation, \$75 for the second and \$300 for each subsequent violation. The bill passed by a vote of 54 to 1. **–SB 336**

### **State Board of Barbers Violations**

Sponsored by Sen. William Ligon (R-Brunswick), Senate Bill 337 amends the process for the State Board of Barbers to fine licensees for violations. The bill reduces fines for first time violations and sets a fine schedule. This includes \$25 for the first violation, \$75 for the second and \$300 for each subsequent violation. The bill passed by a vote of 49 to 1. **–SB 337**

### **Members of the Board of Community Health**

Senate Bill 346, sponsored by Sen. Josh McKoon (R-Columbus), requires at least one member of the Board of Community Health to serve as a member of the State Health Benefit Plan. Under this legislation, the Board of Community Health will consist of nine members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Current members are to serve out the remainder of their terms. All members will serve three-year terms, which will take effect on July 1, 2014. The bill passed by a vote of 51 to 0. **–SB 346**

### **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)**

Sponsored by Sen. Charlie Bethel (R-Dalton), Senate Bill 349 revises the functions and responsibilities of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). The intention of SB 349 is to enhance the quality of the services provided by DBHDD, as well as create a state public safety net program, following the recent transition from institutional care to community care in Georgia. The bill also establishes governing boards and also clarifies the powers and duties for every community service board (CSB) in the state. The bill passed by a vote of 51 to 0. **–SB 349**

### **Senate Passes Child Welfare Bill**

Senate Bill 350 was approved by a vote of 31 to 18. Sen. Renee Unterman (R–Buford) sponsored this legislation to allow for child welfare services such as foster care, adoption and case management to be bid upon through contracts with community-based providers, including non-profit and faith-based groups. This legislation will provide a greater level of services for Georgia's children and families while also improving access to specialized care, resources, and support. **–SB 350**

### **Lupus Awareness Day**



February 18, 2014, is recognized as Lupus Awareness Day by Senate Resolution 769. Sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), the resolution recognizes Lupus, an acute and chronic autoimmune disease, as a significant health issue that takes an immeasurable toll on Georgia families. –**SR 769**

### **Tom Glavine Day**

Senate Resolution 785, sponsored by Bruce Thompson (R-White), recognizes the February 18, 2014, as Tom Glavine Day at the Georgia State Capitol. The resolution commends Thomas Michael "Tom" Glavine for his many contributions to baseball and outstanding service to communities across Georgia. Glavine is a two-time Cy Young Award winner and helped lead the Atlanta Braves to victory in the 1995 World Series. –**SR 785**

### **Thrombosis Awareness Day**

Senate Resolution 793, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), was adopted by the Senate and recognizes February 18, 2014, as Thrombosis Awareness Day. Through raising public awareness, the State of Georgia seeks to minimize the frequency of deep vein thrombosis (blood clots) and pulmonary embolism. – **SR 793**

### **Georgia FFA Association Day**

The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 803, which names February 18, 2014, as Georgia FFA Association Day. The resolution, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), commends the Georgia FFA Association, its goal to provide a strong foundation for the youth of America, and also highlights the important role of sustainable agriculture on today's society. –**SR 803**



### **University of West Georgia Day**

Sponsored by Sen. Mike Dugan (R-Carrollton), Senate Resolution 935 recognizes February 18, 2014, as University of West Georgia Day and commends the University of West Georgia coed cheerleading squad and coaches for winning their 10th Universal Cheerleader Association National Championship. –**SR 935**

## **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19**

### **HIV Status Disclosure**

The Senate passed Senate Bill 342, sponsored by Sen. Dean Burke (R-Bainbridge), by a vote of 55 to 0. SB 342 allows the Department of Public Health to disclose confidential information regarding HIV positive patients to a licensed health care provider whom that person has consulted for medical treatment or advice. –**SB 342**

### **Conveyance of Specific State-Owned Real Estate**

Senate Resolution 788, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), was adopted by a vote of 55 to 0. The resolution authorizes the transfer of specific state-owned real estate throughout the state for local development purposes. –**SR 788**

### **Granting of Nonexclusive Easements**

The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 868 by a vote of 52 to 0. SR 868, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), allows for the construction, operation and maintenance of facilities or utilities that go through or intersect property owned by the State of Georgia in the following counties: Appling, Barrow, Bibb, Bryan, Fulton, Gordon, Jasper, Laurens, McIntosh, Monroe, Toombs, and Troup. –**SR 868**

### **Family and Consumer Sciences Day**

Senate Resolution 781, sponsored by Sen. Rick Jeffares (R-McDonough), recognizes February 19, 2014, as Family and Consumer Sciences Day at the State Capitol. The resolution recognizes the impact of family and consumer sciences on the lives of Georgia citizens. – **SR 781**

### **Habersham County Day**

The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 802, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), recognizing February 19, 2014, as Habersham County Day at the State Capitol. Habersham County continues to become one of the state's top tourist destinations and is a statewide leader in economic development through its thriving farming industry. –**SR 802**

### **Lady Trojans Softball Team of Gordon Lee High School**

Senate Resolution 830 was adopted by the Senate and commends the Lady Trojans Softball Team of Gordon Lee High School for winning the 2013 Class A State Championship for the fourth consecutive time in school history. The resolution was sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga). –**SR 830**

### **Rep. Calvin Smyre Inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame**

Senate Resolution 842, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D-Atlanta), commends Representative Calvin Smyre for his induction into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame. Rep. Smyre was honored for his tireless efforts on behalf of the Civil Rights Movement and over four decades of legislative service. –**SR 842**

### **Honoring Jim Chavers**

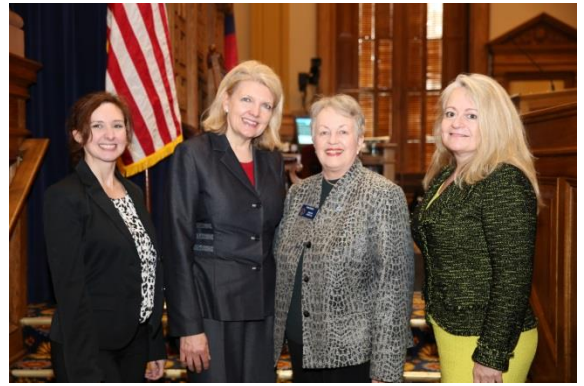
The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 927, sponsored by Sen. Buddy Carter (R-Pooler) and Lester Jackson (D-Savannah), honoring one of Georgia's most distinguished citizens. Jim Chavers is the only remaining survivor of the 4th Marine Division that fought in World War II's infamous Battle of Iwo Jima. Chavers served as a guardian of freedom and liberty with the United States Marine Corps and courageously protected his fellow Americans during World War II. –**SR 927**

### **State Restaurant Day**

Senate Resolution 959, sponsored by Sen. Don Balfour (R-Snellville), commends the restaurant industry of Georgia and recognizes February 19, 2014, as State Restaurant Day at the State Capitol. The restaurant industry plays a vital role in Georgia's economic prosperity. –**SR 959**

## **Dr. Debby Cannon Honored with Georgia's Distinguished Service Award**

Sponsored by Sen. Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta), Senate Resolution 960 commends Dr. Debby Cannon for being awarded Georgia's Distinguished Service Award by the Georgia Restaurant Association. Dr. Cannon is the Director of the Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality at Georgia State University and has grown the school to more than 500 students during her tenure. –**SR 960**



## **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20**

### **Fire Protection and Suppression Contractors**

Sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), Senate Bill 325 strengthens the provisions regulating fire protection sprinkler and fire suppression contractors. Violations of the code may now establish fines or refusal of license, permit or certificate. The bill passed by a vote of 49 to 2. –**SB 325**

### **Georgia Code Revisions**

Senate Bill 340 updates and corrects some of the language in the Official Code Of Georgia. Sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro), the bill includes updates to grammar, terminology and punctuation. Changes occur in 29 different sections of the code. It passed by a vote of 51 to 1. –**SB 340**

### **Powers of Probate Court Clerks**

Senate Bill 341, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro), would expand jurisdiction of Probate Court Clerks to include uncontested matters. Under this legislation, county populations would no longer have to exceed 90,000 persons in order for the Probate Court Clerks to exercise the same power as Probate Court Judges in uncontested matters. The bill passed by a vote of 48 to 4. –**SB 341**

### **Senate Welcomes Rep. Sanford Bishop and Rep. Jack Kingston**

Rep. Sanford Bishop (GA-2) and Rep. Jack Kingston (GA-1) appeared in the chamber to update the Senate on congressional endeavors in the U.S. Senate. They thanked the Senate for their service to the State of Georgia.



### **American Red Cross of Georgia Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary**

Sponsored by Sen. David Shafer (R-Duluth), Senate Resolution 764 honors the American Red Cross of Georgia and recognizes 100 years of dedicated service. The organization serves citizens statewide by providing invaluable lifesaving training, disaster relief and hosting community blood drives. –**SR 764**

### **Recognizing Friends of Disabled Adults and Children**

Sponsored by Donzella James (D-Atlanta), Senate Resolution 826 recognizes the continued work and services that Friends of Disabled Adults and Children provides to the state. For 27 years, the organization has helped people with disabilities regain their independence and overall quality of life. –**SR 826**

### **Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Day**

Sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D-Savannah), Senate Resolution 839 commends Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and the Georgia District Chapters by recognizing February 20, 2014, as Alpha Phi Alpha Day at the State Capitol. –**SR 839**

### **Honoring AJ Jones**

Anthony Parker “AJ” Jones was recognized in chamber by Senate Resolution 930. Sen. Donzella James (D-Atlanta) sponsored the resolution highlighting AJ’s miraculous story of survival. Born with cerebral palsy and weighing less than one pound at birth, doctors did not expect AJ to live through the night. AJ is now 16 years old and loves music, his faith and attending church. –**SR 930**

### **Commending Miss Apple Capital 2014**

Mary Ashley Tucker was recognized in the chamber by Senate Resolution 955, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), for winning Miss Apple Capital 2014. She will represent Ellijay and the North Georgia area at the upcoming Miss Georgia pageant. –**SR 955**

### **Commending Dream Weavers**

Senate Resolution 967, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R-Toccoa), recognizes Dream Weavers for their contributions to the North Georgia community for the last 15 years. Dream Weavers has participated in several community and service projects including an international peace walk, the Learning Center's Good to Great Conference, the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade. –**SR 967**

### **Dr. Bill Thomas**

Sponsored by Sen. Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), Senate Resolution 969 commends Dr. Bill Thomas for his years of service and dedication to the Georgia Legislative Internship Program. Since 1986, Dr. Thomas has strived to improve the program, which provides college students with an invaluable opportunity to participate in the legislative process. The resolution commends Dr. Thomas on his work and conveys the Senate’s respect, appreciation and best wishes for his retirement. –**SR 969**

### **Apple Day at the State Capitol**

Sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), Senate Resolution 985 recognizes February 20, 2014, as Apple Day at the State Capitol. Gilmer County has become known as Georgia's “Apple Capital,” and the apple industry is one of Georgia’s top agricultural products. –**SR 985**

## **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21**

### **Georgia Firefighters’ Pension Fund**

Senate Bill 235 was passed by substitute by a vote of 52 to 0. Sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), the bill would allow firefighters performing at least 1,040 hours of annual service to be eligible for membership in the Georgia Firefighters' Pension Fund. **–SB 235**

### **Watershed Protection Standards**

Senate Bill 299, Sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), the bill provides minimum standards for watershed protection and empowers local government to draft customized watershed protection plans. The bill ensures full compliance of the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Act and continues to protect the beautiful trout streams of the Blue Ridge Mountains. SB 299 passed by a vote of 46 to 7. **–SB 299**

### **Magistrate Courts**

Senate Bill 332 expands the jurisdiction of magistrate courts in matters of contempt. Sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro) the new bill gives magistrate courts jurisdiction over contempt of court in matters with fines up to \$500, an increase from the current \$200. The bill passed by a vote of 45 to 5. **–SB 332**

### **Panola Mountain State Park**

Senate Resolution 847 was passed by a vote of 52 to 0. The resolution allows the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish facilities for DNR staff at the park. Sponsored by Sen. Rick Jeffares (R-McDonough), this legislation would also allow a historical and cultural preservation laboratory to be opened at the park. **–SR 847**

### **Bad Faith Assertions of Patent Infringement**

Carried by Sen. Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) and sponsored by Rep. Bruce Williamson (R-Monroe), House Bill 809 prohibits bad faith assertions of patent infringement. It also provides factors for determining whether such an assertion has been made. The bill passed by a vote of 48 to 4. **–HB 809**

### **Honoring Joseph E. Cheeley Jr.**

Sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), Senate Resolution 837 honors the life and memory of one of Georgia's most distinguished citizens. The resolution recognizes and honors Joseph E. Cheeley Jr.'s life and work serving in the United States Air Force and as served as the only Gwinnett County Judge for 21 years. **–SR 837**

### **Commending Troy Peco**

Sponsored by Sen. Bill Cowsert (R–Athens), Senate Resolution 915 recognizes Troy Peco as the state recipient of the Technical College System of Georgia's 2013 Rick Perkins Award for Excellence in Technical Instruction. Mr. Peco has exemplified excellence in instructional knowledge and practices as an instructor for the automotive technology program at Georgia Northwestern Technical College. **–SR 915**

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