



# This Week in the Senate

*February 24-28, 2014*

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

"The Georgia General Assembly completed the first of its two constitutional obligations when it gave final approval to the amended appropriations bill for FY 2014. As for the FY 2015 budget, the subcommittees filed their reports yesterday, and we will be working over the weekend to prepare our version for presentation to the full Senate Appropriations Committee next week.

"The Senate made a strong commitment to Georgia's economic competitiveness by passing Senate Resolution 415. I was proud to sponsor this proposed constitutional amendment that will prohibit increases in our state income tax.

"Also this week, Senate Bill 397 passed unanimously, broadening the availability of early intervention services to children with autism. Sens. Tim Golden and Renee Unterman deserve praise for this well-crafted piece of legislation, which builds on the early work of Sens. Tommie Williams and John Albers.

"Monday is Day 30, also known as Crossover Day, which is the last day for a Senate bill to pass the Senate and crossover to the House, and vice versa."

### **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

#### **Partnership for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Act**

Senate Bill SB 255 passed by substitute by a vote of 43 to 8. SB 255, sponsored by Sen. Hunter Hill (R-Atlanta), creates a guidelines committee as well as a joint legislative oversight committee, to help regulate the management and awarding of contracts between public and private partnerships for the development of public infrastructure and facilities. **–SB 255**

#### **Veterans Court Programs**

Sponsored by Sen. Ed Harbison (D-Columbus), Senate Bill 320 states that any Georgia court with jurisdiction in criminal cases can create a veterans' division to handle cases involving veterans. The bill passed by substitute by a vote of 52 to 0. **–SB 320**

#### **Revised Definitions of "Peace Officer" and "Law Enforcement Officer"**

Senate Bill 324, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro), revises the definitions of "peace officer" and "law enforcement officer" to include persons who are charged with the oversight of

delinquent children under intensive supervision in the community. The bill passed by a vote of 53 to 0. –**SB 324**

### **Revise, Modernize and Correct Errors in Title 47**

Senate Bill 339, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro), passed by a vote of 52 to 0. The bill revises, modernizes and corrects errors and omissions in Georgia Code relating to retirement and pensions. –**SB 339**

### **Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness**

Senate Bill 352 passed by a vote of 51 to 2. Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) sponsored this legislation to create the Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness within the Georgia Department of Health. –**SB 352**

### **Georgians of Great Character Month**

Senate Bill 356 passed by a vote of 52 to 0. SB 356, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R-Marietta), designates September as of each year as “Georgians of Great Character Month” to recognize outstanding people in Georgia’s history. –**SB 356**

### **Metropolitan Area Planning and Development**

Sponsored by Sen. Hunter Hill (R-Atlanta), Senate Bill 367 will allow the president or presiding officer of the state’s most-populated municipalities to serve as a member on local planning and development commissions. Currently, the law simply states that only a member of such legislative bodies may serve on these particular commissions. The bill passed by a vote of 48 to 2. –**SB 367**

### **Prohibit Increase in State Income Tax**

Senate Resolution 415, a constitutional amendment limiting the power of the Georgia General Assembly to raise the state income tax above its current rate, passed the Senate by a vote of 42 to 11. The resolution was sponsored by Sen. David Shafer (R-Duluth). –**SR 415**

### **Joint Study Committee on Emergency Relocation of Abused Adults**

The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 828 by a vote of 50 to 1. Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) sponsored this legislation to create the Joint Study Committee on Emergency Relocation of Abused Adults. –**SR 828**

### **U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson Visits the Capitol**

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) addressed members of the Senate and commended them on their hard work during session. Sen. Isakson shared he is in the final steps securing funding for the Port of Savannah expansion. Sen. Isakson served seven terms in the State House of Representatives and one term in the State Senate.

### **4-H Day at the State Capitol**

Senate Resolution 815 recognizes February 24, 2014 as 4-H Day at the State Capitol. Sponsored by Sen. Ross Tolleson (R-Perry) the resolution commends the 4-H organization on their leadership, character building and service work. –**SR 815**

### **Jackson-Butts County Day**

Sen. Burt Jones (R-Jackson) sponsored Senate Resolution 977 recognizing February 24, 2014, as Jackson-Butts County Day at the State Capitol. The resolution also commends Jackson-Butts County for its culture, tradition and history. Sen. Jones welcomed dozens of county leaders to celebrate the first Jackson-Butts County Day. –**SR 977**



### **Anesthesiology Assistants of Georgia**

Sponsored by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R-Rome), Senate Resolution 1010 recognizes Anesthesiology Assistants of Georgia for their work and dedication to the medical field. Georgia follows the most cost-effective and safest model of providing anesthesiology care to patients. –**SR 1010**

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25**

### **Restore Educational Authority to Georgia**

Senate Bill 167 passed by substitute with a vote of 34 to 16. SB 167, sponsored by Sen. William Ligon (R-Brunswick), is a combined substitute of both SB 167 (Student Right to Privacy Act) and SB 203 (An Act to Restore Educational Authority to Georgia Citizens). SB 167 allows Georgia to move away from national standards, currently known as "Common Core," and limits the collection and sharing of student data. The bill also provides new protections for the privacy of students in order to prevent life-long data tracking. –**SB 167**

### **High School Athletics Overview Committee**

Senate Bill 343, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga), passed by substitute by a vote of 50 to 0. The legislation creates the High School Athletics Overview Committee and also amends portions of Georgia code related to athletic association participation in the Quality Basic Education Act. –**SB 343**

### **Required Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)**

The Senate passed Senate Bill 397, sponsored by Sen. Tim Golden (R-Valdosta), by substitute by a vote of 51 to 0. SB 397 requires insurers to cover children six years of age or younger who are diagnosed with an ASD. Coverage for applied behavior analysis may be capped at \$35,000 annually. –**SB 397**

### **FY2014 Amended Budget Finalized**

The Senate passed the final Fiscal Year 2014 Amended Budget, also known as the supplemental budget, by a vote of 49 - 0. The bill was carried in the Senate by Sen. Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) and sponsored by House Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge). The \$20.2 billion supplemental budget runs through June 30, 2014, and includes increases to K-12 education and the State Health Benefit Plan. The bill was immediately sent to Governor Deal's office for his signature. –**HB 743**

### **Woodlawn Elementary Archery Team**

Senate Resolution 745, sponsored by Sen. Charlie Bethel (R-Dalton), commends the Woodlawn Elementary School archery team for its achievements. The team is now the reigning Georgia State Elementary School Archery Champions, National Elementary School Archery Champions and World Elementary School Archery Champions. –**SR 745**

## **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

### **Use of Suppressors on Hunting Firearms**

Senate Bill 93, sponsored by Sen. Bill Heath (R-Bremen), passed the Senate by a vote of 43 to 10. The bill allows the use of suppressors on legal hunting firearms and suspends hunting privileges of a person convicted of violating certain hunting regulations. –**SB 93**

### **Incorporation of the City of Lakeside in DeKalb County**

Senate Bill 270, sponsored by Sen. Fran Millar (R-Atlanta), passed by substitute by a vote of 32 to 17. SB 270 proposes the incorporation of the City of Lakeside in DeKalb County, contingent upon approval by qualified voters of the proposed city on September 16, 2014. The bill establishes city government structure, powers, duties and corporate limits. –**SB 270**

### **Child Support and Enforcement of Child Support Orders**

Sponsored by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R-Rome), Senate Bill 282 enacts a number of changes recommended by the Georgia Child Support Commission (GCSC) relating to child support and the enforcement of child support orders. SB 282 passed by a vote of 31 to 0. –**SB 282**

### **Addition of Superior Court Judge for Waycross Circuit**

Senate Bill 331, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R-Ocilla), increases the number of superior court judges on the Waycross Circuit from three to four. The judge who will fill this new vacancy will be appointed by the Governor and will serve from July 1, 2014 until December 31, 2016. The position will be filled by an election every four years, thereafter. The bill was passed by a vote of 42 to 0. –**SB 331**

### **Verification of Funds and Notice to Construction Contractors**

Senate Bill 363 offers a plan for construction contractors to receive a schedule of disbursements, verification of funds, notice of any material loan default and notice of any proceedings initiated for a bank or lending institution's lien on the real property to be improved. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R-Marietta), failed by a vote of 26 to 25. –**SB 363**

### **Juvenile Code Revisions**

Senate Bill 364, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro), was passed by a vote of 46 to 0. The bill amends the Juvenile Code sections relating to schedules, offenses, and penalties based on recommendations from the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform. –**SB 364**



### **Criminal Justice Reform**

Senate Bill 365 passed by a vote of 53 to 0. SB 365 sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R-Waynesboro), implements juvenile and adult offender reentry reforms recommended by the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform. –**SB 365**

### **Uniform Reporting System**

Senate Bill 372, sponsored by Sen. Josh McKoon (R-Columbus), passed the Senate by a vote of 49 to 0. The bill establishes a uniform reporting system for school districts across the state, which will assist in determining HOPE eligibility at the conclusion of the school year. –**SB 372**

### **Revising Terminology in the Urban Redevelopment Law**

Senate Bill 374, which revises terminology within the state's Urban Redevelopment Act, passed the Senate by a vote of 53 to 0. The terms "slum area" and "slum clearance and development" are replaced with "pockets of blight" and "pockets of blight clearance and development," respectively. The legislation was sponsored by Sen. Bill Cowsert (R-Athens). –**SB 374**

### **Redaction of Social Security, Taxpayer ID and Financial Account Numbers in Court Filings**

Senate Bill 386 passed by a vote of 52 to 0. SB 386, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), requires sensitive information, such as Social Security, taxpayer ID and financial account numbers, to be redacted from court filings. –**SB 386**

### **DeKalb School Board Districts**

House Bill 979, carried by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur) and sponsored by Rep. Mike Jacobs (R-Brookhaven), was passed by substitute by a vote of 36 to 17. The bill abolishes the two at-large school board seats in DeKalb County on January 1, 2015, unless local legislation is enacted prior to the 2014 qualifying period. The bill now transfers back to the House of Representatives. –**HB 979**

### **Resolution for a National Balanced Budget**

The Senate will urge the U.S. Congress to draft a Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget and federal spending limit with the passage of Senate Resolution 70. SR 70 passed by a vote of 36 to 13 and was sponsored by Sen. Judson Hill (R-Marietta). –**SR 70**

### **Property Tax Digest Impact on Education Funding**

Senate Resolution 875, sponsored by Sen. Jack Hill (R-Reidsville), creates the Property Tax Digest Impact on Education Funding joint study committee. This committee would study and evaluate the reporting of local tax revenues that impact the funding received by local school systems. The resolution passed by a vote of 47 to 0. –**SR 875**

### **Commending Deja Shimone Fambro**

Senate Resolution 800 honors Deja Shimone Fambro, an 18 year old honor student who attends North Clayton Comprehensive High School. Fambro played an integral part in raising \$30,000 to transport two busloads of her school mates and parents from North Clayton Middle School to the historical 2009 inauguration of President Barack Obama. This resolution was sponsored by Sen. Valencia Seay (D-Riverdale). –**SR 800**

### **March of Dimes Day**

Senate Resolution 1036, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R—Buford), recognizes February 26, 2014, as March of Dimes Day at the State Capitol. The March of Dimes Foundation is a proponent in improving the health of infants and women of childbearing age by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. –**SR 1036**

**Recognizing Olympic Silver Medalist Elana Meyers**

Sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D-Atlanta), Senate Resolution 1058 commends Elana Meyers for her Olympic achievements. Meyers and her teammate Lauryn Williams won the silver medal in the women's two-person bobsled competition at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. –**SR 1058**



**61st Annual Tucker Day**

Senate Resolution 1063, sponsored by Sen. Steve Henson (D-Tucker), recognizes May 10, 2014, as the 61st Annual Tucker Day at the State Capitol. For 61 years, the residents of Tucker have come together annually on the second Saturday of May to celebrate the memories of yesterday, the prosperity of today and the promise of tomorrow. –**SR 1063**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

In adjournment, as set by HR 1333.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28**

In adjournment, as set by HR 1333.

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