



# This Week in the Senate

February 3-7, 2014

---

*Review the week in pictures with the Georgia State Senate's Facebook Photo Essays!*



## A Message from Senate President Pro Tempore David Shafer

“The Georgia Senate completed one of its constitutionally mandated responsibilities by passing our version of the FY 14 Amended Budget this week. The long hours spent reviewing this appropriations bill will safeguard Georgia’s fiscally responsible status and provide a seamless transition into the FY 15 budget next July. If the House agrees to minor changes made by the Senate during our budget process, the bill will receive final passage and go to the Governor’s desk.”

### **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3**

#### **Bill Passes to Establish Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency**

The Senate passed Senate Bill 291 by a vote of 45 to 5. Sen. Renee Unterman (R—Buford) sponsored this legislation to repeal the Division of Aging Services and establish the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency and its governing board. —**SB 291**

#### **Senate Passes Bill to Create Alzheimer’s Disease Registry**

SB 292 passed the Senate by a vote of 45 to 6. Sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R—Buford), this legislation establishes an Alzheimer’s Disease Registry within the Georgia Department of Public Health. The Alzheimer’s Disease Registry is a comprehensive database that will assist the legislature with elder care planning and the development of future public policy. —**SB 292**

#### **Limiting Land Development on Jekyll Island**

Sponsored by Sen. Ross Tolleson (R-Perry), Senate Bill 296 passed by a vote of 49 to 0 and will set a maximum acreage limit of 1,675 acres of developable land on Jekyll Island; a 78 acre increase from the already 1,597 acres of developed land. The bill would change the previous existing law from a 35 percent limitation, which caused ambiguity due to tidal changes, erosion and other natural changes. —**SB 296**

#### **Gordon Lee High School Softball Team**

Senate Resolution 830 commends the Lady Trojans Softball Team of Gordon Lee High School for winning the 2013 Class A State Championship. The resolution was sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga). —**SR 830**

### **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4**

### **A Convention of States**

Sponsored by Sen. Cecil Staton (R- Macon), Senate Resolution 736 passed the Senate today by a vote of 37 to 16. The resolution calls for a convention of states to impose fiscal restraints on the federal government to address the lack of a balanced budget and growing national debt. The resolution also provides for potential constitutional amendments that would limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, as well as the terms of office for federal officials and members of Congress. **–SR 736**

### **Non-Profit Licensing for Alcohol Production**

This legislation will allow non-profit museums to manufacture and distribute samples of distilled spirits through obtaining a \$100 annual permit. Senate Bill 240 was sponsored by Sen. Hunter Hill (R-Smyrna) and passed by a vote of 43 to 9. **–SB 240**

### **Maternal Mortality Review Committee**

Senate Bill 273 passed by substitute with a vote of 51 to 1. Sponsored by Sen. Dean Burke (R–Bainbridge), this legislation would require the Department of Public Health to establish a Maternal Mortality Review Committee to review and develop strategies that would prevent maternal deaths in Georgia. **–SB 273**

### **Ad Valorem Tax Clarification**

Sen. Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) carried House Bill 399 in the Senate, which passed by a vote of 39 to 13. The bill changes existing laws regarding use of properties in airports so that these properties are not subject to ad valorem taxes in certain cases. The law also clarifies language to avoid future discrepancies and address past concerns. **–HB 399**

### **Education on Traditional Winter Celebrations**

The Senate passed Senate Bill 283, sponsored by Sen. Mike Dugan (R-Carrollton), by a vote of 43 to 8. SB 283 will allow public school systems to educate students about the history of traditional winter celebrations and greetings without concern for legal retribution. **–SB 283**

### **Firefighter’s Day**

Senate Resolution 845, sponsored by Sen. Buddy Carter (R-Pooler), recognizes February 4, 2014 as the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Firefighter’s Day at the State Capitol and honors the brave men and women who serve as firefighters. There are more than 30,000 firefighters statewide serving in 900 local fire departments. **–SR 845**

### **Ava’s Law Day**

Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell) sponsored Senate Resolution 835 to recognize Ava Bullard and her family’s tireless work towards Autism awareness. The resolution also recognizes the continued fight for Ava’s Law in Georgia to benefit those diagnosed with Autism. **–SR 835**



**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5**

### **Georgia State University Day**

Senate Resolution 840 recognizes February 5, 2014, as Georgia State University Day at the State Capitol. Sponsored by Sen. Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), the resolution commends the work Georgia State University's efforts in research, student success and athletics. –**SR 840**

### **Chief Justice Thompson Delivers State of the Judiciary Address**

Chief Justice Hugh P. Thompson delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address in the House Chamber during a joint session of the Senate and the House. He highlighted the lack of accessibility to legal services in Georgia, especially among the poor and rural populations. Chief Justice Thompson stressed the importance of accountability courts and also stated the need for more court interpreters in his address.

### **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

#### **Maximum Wine Alcohol Allowance Increased**

Senate Bill 286, sponsored by Sen. Jack Murphy (R-Cumming), allows wineries to purchase distilled spirits directly from manufacturers. This allows products to contain a higher alcohol percent by volume and increases the limit to 25 percent for wine and fortified wine. SB 286 passed by a vote of 46 to 5. –**SB 286**

#### **Athletic Associations Must Release Financial Reports**

Sponsored by Sen. Charlie Bethel (R-Dalton), Senate Bill 288 requires all interscholastic athletic agencies to provide an annual distribution of the previous year's financial report to all members. The report must cover all activities and include a summary of assets, liabilities, incomes and operating expenses. An adopted resolution to the bill would place the Georgia High School Association under the state oversight. The bill passed 54 to 0. –**SB 288**

#### **Centralized Public Transit Website for Public Transit**

Sponsored by Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta), Senate Resolution 735 would create a centralized public transportation website for metro Atlanta's four transit agencies. Currently, three different websites manage transit routes in the Atlanta Metropolitan area. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 50 to 0. –**SR 735**

#### **People Making Progress**

Sponsored by Sen. Fran Millar (R-Atlanta), Senate Resolution 766 recognizes the dedicated and faithful work of People Making Progress. Over the past 25 years, People Making Progress has worked to improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. The organization also partners with the Assistance League of Atlanta and has helped many adults with disabilities find employment opportunities and achieve their full potential. –**SR 766**

#### **Prostate Cancer Awareness Day**

Senate Resolution 836, sponsored by Sen. Bill Cowsert (R-Athens), commends prostate cancer survivor and founder of Save Our Dads, Kurt Gelfand, and recognizes February 6, 2014, as Prostate Cancer Awareness Day at the State Capitol. It is estimated that 241,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in the United States this year. –**SR 836**



### **Cooperation with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 841, sponsored by Sen. Judson Hill (R-Marietta). The resolution recognizes the cultural, economic, and educational relationship with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Georgia is proud to serve as home to the British Consulate General for the Southeast. –**SR 841**

### **Georgia Southern Day**

Senate Resolution 843, sponsored by Sen. Jack Hill (R-Reidsville), was adopted by the Senate. The resolution recognizes February 6, 2014, as Georgia Southern Day; commemorating Georgia Southern University's advancement of educational and economic aspirations for more than 100 years. –**SR 843**

### **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

### **FY2014 Amended Budget**

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

### **Old Suwanee Baptist Church Celebrates 185<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman, Senate Resolution 792 commends Old Suwanee Baptist Church on the celebration of its 185<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Old Suwanee Baptist Church is a local, independent Baptist church established in 1828 that continues to be a beacon of the hope and light of the Gospel. – **SR 792**

### **“Go Red” Day**

Senate Resolution 795, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), was adopted by the Senate and acknowledges the struggle that women with heart disease face every day. The resolution also recognizes February 7, 2014, as “Go Red” Day at the State Capitol. – **SR 795**



### **TeleHealth Day**

The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 878, commending Georgia Partnership for TeleHealth and recognizing February 7, 2014, as TeleHealth Day at the State Capitol. The Georgia Partnership for TeleHealth is leading the nation in applied telemedicine and health care IT integration solutions.

The Senate witnessed a live ultrasound via webcam in celebration of the day. The resolution was sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R-Ocilla). **–SR 878**

# # # #

*The Senate Press Office is located at 201 Paul D. Coverdell Legislative Office Building, 18 Capitol Square, Atlanta, Georgia 30334. We can be reached at 404.656.0028 or outside the Atlanta area 800.282.5803*