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This Week in the Senate

January 12 - 16, 2015

A Message from Senate President Pro Tempore David Shafer



We began the 2015 Legislative Session on Monday with the usual pomp and circumstance. We quickly got down to business, adopting rules, electing officers and appointing committees. In his State of the State address on Wednesday, Governor Deal laid out his plans to reform education and improve transportation. I look forward to working with him and my colleagues in the General Assembly as we tackle these important issues.

MONDAY, JANUARY 12

Senators Sworn in for the 2015 Legislative Session

All 56 Georgia Senators were sworn in by State Supreme Court Justice Hugh Thompson to mark the beginning of the 2015 Legislative Session. Judge Thompson presented the Oath of Office and offered remarks about personal fulfillment and joy in servitude to the senators and their families.

Sen. David Shafer Re-Elected as President Pro Tempore

Members of the Senate unanimously approved the re-election of Sen. David Shafer (R - Duluth) as President Pro Tempore. Senate Majority Leader Bill Cowser (R - Athens) nominated Sen. Shafer, and in a show of bipartisan unity, Senate Minority Leader Steve Henson (D - Tucker) seconded the nomination. Sen. Shafer, first elected in 2002, is the 68th person to serve as President Pro Tempore of the Senate. As President Pro Tempore, Sen. Shafer will serve as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Administrative Affairs and as a member of the Budget Conference Committee.

David Cook Sworn in as Secretary of the Senate

David Cook was confirmed to serve his second term as Secretary of the Senate and was sworn into office by Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle. Cook formerly served as Commissioner of the Department of Community Health under Governor Nathan Deal. He is also a former President of the Medical Association of Georgia.

Senate Passes First Resolutions of the Legislative Session

Sen. David Shafer (R - Duluth) sponsored Senate Resolutions 1 through 4. SR 1 approves the adoption of the Senate rules for the 2015-2016 legislative term. SR 2 states the Senate has convened for the 2015 Legislative Session, and SR 3 notifies the Governor that the Senate has convened. The Biennial housekeeping resolution, SR 4, sets provisions for the 2015 assembly. **-SR 1, 2, 3 & 4**

Gov. Nathan Deal Sworn into Second Term

Gov. Nathan Deal took his second Oath of Office from his son, Jason, who is a Superior Court Judge in Hall County. The inaugural ceremony was scheduled to be held at 9 a.m. outside the Capitol Building at the newly constructed Liberty Plaza, but due to inclement weather, the ceremony was moved into the House Chamber. Constitutional officers were also sworn in, including Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13

Senate Commends the Georgia FFA Association

Sen. John Wilkinson (R- Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 8, commending members of the Georgia Future Farmers of America Association for their recent success at the 87th National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The National FFA Organization acts on recommendations from the national convention delegates and agricultural education stakeholders to set the vision and policies for FFA. - *SR 8*



Senate Passes Joint Session Resolutions

The Senate passed House Resolution 10 and House Resolution 11. HR 10 calls for a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate in order for Governor Nathan Deal to deliver his annual State of the State address. HR 11 allows the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia to address both chambers as well with his State of the Judiciary address. - *HR 10 & 11*



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

Senate Endorses Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict

Sen. Renee Unterman (R- Buford) sponsored Senate Resolution 16, which reaffirms the shared commitment of the United States and the United Kingdom to end sexual violence through the goals and ideals of the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. - *SR 16*

Gov. Deal Delivers State of the State Address

Gov. Nathan Deal delivered his fifth State of the State address, providing an overview of Georgia's successes and upcoming legislative challenges. He expressed an urgent need for transportation funding and proposed a new plan to rescue failing schools. Gov. Deal also spoke about medical cannabis, stating that he plans to sign legislation to decriminalize cannabis oil so that families who need the drug will not be prosecuted if that legislation is passed by the Georgia General Assembly. He proposed a new state agency that would oversee probation and parole supervision as part of his criminal justice reform package. Gov. Deal also offered a brief look at his budget recommendations for FY 2016, including significant increases for the ethics commission and K-12 education, as well as targeted pay raises for some state employees.



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

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

Sportsmen's and Coastal Day

Sen. David Shafer (R-Duluth) sponsored Senate Resolution 9, recognizing Jan. 15, 2015, as Sportsmen's and Coastal Day. The resolution recognizes the State of Georgia's booming hunting and fishing industries, as well as its diverse wildlife. – *SR 9*

Senate Passes Joint Session Resolutions

The Senate passed House Resolution 19, adjourning the Georgia General Assembly until Monday, Jan. 26. The resolution sets the legislative calendar through day 15. – *HR 19*



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