



Georgia State Senate Press Office Staff

Jennifer Yarber
Director

Adam Sweat
Sr. Communications Specialist

Emily Williams
Communications Specialist

Brett Johnson
Broadcast Specialist

Brittany Wagner
Communications Associate

Natalie Rossetti
2015 Legislative Aide

Gavi Coffman
2015 Legislative Aide

Ike Duru
2015 Legislative Intern

Tyna Duckett
Photographer

201 Coverdell Legislative Office Building
18 Capitol Square S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303
p: 404.656.0028
f: 404.463.6747

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This Week in the Senate

January 26 - 30, 2015



A Message from Senate President Pro Tempore David Shafer

The Senate met again this week, completing the first eight days of the 2015 Legislative Session. On Monday, the Senate Majority Caucus released a legislative agenda beginning with Senate Bill 1, which passed the full Senate on Thursday by a unanimous, bipartisan margin. Senate Bill 1 addresses the staggering number of new autism diagnoses among children. More children are projected to be diagnosed with autism than those diagnosed with pediatric AIDS, pediatric cancer and pediatric diabetes combined. Early intervention will save lives and money.

Over in the House, legislation was introduced this week providing new sources of revenue for state transportation projects. We will be watching closely as this legislation works its way to the Senate.

MONDAY, JANUARY 26

Georgia National Guard Day at the Capitol

Sens. Jack Hill (R - Reidsville), Ed Harbison (D - Columbus), Mike Dugan (R - Carrollton), Bill Cowsert (R - Athens), Hunter Hill (R - Atlanta) and others sponsored Senate Resolution 42, which recognized January 26 as Georgia National Guard Day at the Georgia State Capitol. The Senate was joined in the chamber by several members and officers. Sen. John Albers' (R - Roswell) son, Will, was recognized for recently joining the Georgia National Guard and was present in chamber as he prepared to leave for basic training. - **SR 42**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

Recognizing Georgia Economic Development Association

Sens. Frank Ginn (R - Danielsville), Jeff Mullis (R - Chickamauga), David Shafer (R - Duluth), Mike Dugan (R - Carrollton) and Ben Watson (R - Savannah) sponsored Senate Resolution 57 commending the Georgia Economic Developers Association and its members for the significant role they play in Georgia's economic growth and success. The Georgia Economic Developers Association works to maintain a strong business climate, increase employment opportunities, and attract and encourage investment in Georgia. - **SR 57**

Atlanta Hawks Day

The Senate welcomed the Atlanta Hawks to the chamber to commend the team for their sportsmanship and pursuit of excellence on the basketball court. Dominique Wilkins, the all-time leading scorer in Hawks history, presented the Senate with a basketball signed by all 15 players on the team. CEO Steve Koonin also delivered remarks about the team's 16 game winning streak, the longest in Hawks history. The Hawks have been in Atlanta since 1968 and have generated \$1.8 billion in revenue for the state in the last ten years. - **SR 63**

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

Autism Awareness Day

Sen. John Albers (R - Roswell) sponsored Senate Resolution 56, declaring January 28 as Autism Awareness Day at the Capitol. He was joined by Ava Bullard, the inspiration for Ava's Law. Ava's Law calls for insurance coverage for children under six who are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The CDC reports that one in 68 children in America are diagnosed with autism each year. Sen. Albers thanked the Senate for stepping forward and making this issue a top priority. - **SR 56**

Sen. Renee Unterman Recognizes Gwinnett County Employees

Sen. Renee Unterman (R - Buford) sponsored Senate Resolutions 17, 18 and 21, honoring three outstanding Gwinnett County retirees. SR 17 recognized Ari Russell, who is retiring as the Executive Director of GUIDE after more than 28 years of service. SR 18 honored Gwinnett County Police Chief, Charles Walters, who began his career as a police officer with the Gwinnett County Police Department in 1979. Mr. Kim Conroy, Director of the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation was recognized by SR 21. Conroy also served on the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners. These Georgians were recognized for their deep personal commitment to the welfare of citizens. - **SR 17, 18 & 21**

Martial Arts School Commended for Excellence

Sens. Valencia Seay (D - Riverdale), Michael Rhett (D - Marietta), Vincent Fort (D - Atlanta), Harold Jones (D - Augusta) and Steve Henson (D - Tucker) sponsored Senate Resolution 36, commending the New Tradition Martial Arts School and Master Rickey Murray for excellence in instructing children and adults alike in the martial arts. New Tradition Martial Arts School is a partner in education with Clayton County Public Schools, encouraging its students to take advantage of the benefits martial arts has to offer, including as self-discipline, self-defense, focus, concentration and a positive attitude. - **SR 36**

Sen. Ross Tolleson Honors Miss America's Outstanding Teen 2015

Sen. Ross Tolleson (R - Perry) sponsored Senate Resolution 71, honoring Olivia McMillan, who was named Miss America's Outstanding Teen 2015. Olivia is from Centerville, and attends Northside High School, where she is a member of the National Beta Club and is ranked academically in the top 10 percent in her class. She hopes to earn a degree in vocal performance before pursuing a career in the music industry. Olivia was named a "top ten teen who changed the world in 2014" by *Teen Vogue*. - **SR 71**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

Autism Coverage Guarantee Bill Passes Unanimously

Senate Bill 1, sponsored by Sens. Charlie Bethel (R - Dalton), David Shafer (R - Duluth), Bill Cowsert (R - Athens) Steve Henson (D - Tucker), John Albers (R - Roswell) and Butch Miller (R - Gainesville), passed the Senate with unanimous, bipartisan support. The bill was the first piece of formal legislation to pass the Senate this year and requires medical insurance coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorders for children under six. SB 1 passed with a vote of 54-0. - **SB 1**

Chatham County Judge Honored

Sens. Ben Watson (R - Savannah) and Lester Jackson (D - Savannah) sponsored Senate Resolution 59, honoring Judge Patricia Parker Stone for her outstanding service to Chatham County. Judge Stone has served as the Juvenile Court Judge for the Chatham County Juvenile Court since 2003. - **SR 59**

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

Senators Honor Significant Contributors to the City of Savannah

Sens. Lester Jackson (D - Savannah) and Freddie Powell Sims (D - Dawson) sponsored Senate Resolution 81, which congratulates Benjamin Johnson on his retirement. Benjamin Johnson served with the United States Army during the Korean War and retired on June 1, 2014, as the last "A" card in the International Longshoremen's Association of Local #1414. – **SR 81**



Sens. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah), Harold Jones (D – Augusta) and Ben Watson (R – Savannah) sponsored Senate Resolution 61, commending Dr. M. Ann Levett for her service as a professional educator since 1976 and her significant contributions to education. She is currently the Chief Academic Officer of the Savannah-Chatham Public School System. – **SR 61**



Senate Resolution 82, sponsored by Sens. Lester Jackson (D - Savannah) and Freddie Powell Sims (D - Dawson), honors Michael Joseph Hamilton, Sr., for his outstanding service to the Frank Callan Boys and Girls Club in Savannah. His mission is to ensure that every child he comes in contact with can achieve any goal he or she sets throughout his or her lifetime. – **SR 82**

Sens. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah) and Freddie Powell Sims (D – Dawson) sponsored Senate Resolution 83, congratulating Bethesda Academy in Savannah on its 275th anniversary. Bethesda Academy was founded in 1740 by Reverend George Whitefield as a home for boys, and it has the distinction of being America's oldest child care institute. – **SR 83**



Remembering Deputy Michael Andrew Norris

Sens. John F. Kennedy (R - Macon), Rick Jeffares (R - McDonough), Burt Jones (R – Jackson) and Marty Harbin (R - Tyrone) sponsored Senate Resolution 85, which honors the life and memory of Deputy Michael Andrew Norris, who was killed in the line of duty on September 14, 2014. He will long be remembered for his love of family and friendship. – **SR 85**

Remembering Eston Wycliffe “Wyc” Orr, Sr.

The Senate mourned the loss of one of Georgia's most distinguished citizens with the passing of Eston Wycliffe “Wyc” Orr, Sr., on May 28, 2014. As a legal advocate, he focused intensely on providing and ensuring representation for the poor, injured, those treated unjustly and individuals less fortunate than himself. His life and memory was honored by Senate Resolution 106. SR 106 was sponsored by Sens. Nan Orrock (D - Atlanta), Steve Henson (D - Tucker), Butch Miller (R - Gainesville), Elena Parent (D - Atlanta), Vincent Fort (D - Atlanta) and others. – **SR 106**



Savannah Day at the Georgia State Capitol

The General Assembly celebrated Savannah-Chatham Day at the Capitol by highlighting Georgia's coastal region. Sens. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah) and Ben Watson (R – Savannah) welcomed various guests as they celebrated the growth and prosperity of the region. The day concluded with the annual seafood festival held at the Georgia Railroad Depot.

