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This Week in the Senate

February 23 - 27, 2015



A Message from Senate President Pro Tempore David Shafer

In keeping with our commitment to children, the Senate overwhelmingly passed Senate Bill 34 amending our “Good Samaritan” law to encourage the rescue of young children and others locked in hot vehicles.

We had two healthy floor debates this week, one on a bill dealing with payroll debit cards and the other on a bill dealing with regulation of plastic bags. The payroll debit card legislation, which encourages the electronic payment of wages, was amended on the floor to clarify that the option remains with the employee.

Sen. David Lucas, a veteran of the House, passed his first bill as a state senator. Senate Bill 11 abolished the City of Payne, completing the consolidation of Bibb County and the City of Macon.

The House of Representatives passed House Bill 76, the Fiscal Year 2016 State Budget, this week. Under the capable leadership of Sen. Jack Hill, we have already begun our careful review of the document. Subcommittees of the Senate Appropriations Committee will go through the budget line by line.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Dissolution of Payne City

Sen. David Lucas (D - Macon) sponsored Senate Bill 11, which dissolves Payne City and transfers all assets, property, legal rights, and obligations to the governing authority of Macon-Bibb County. SB 11 passed with a vote of 49 to 2. - **SB 11**

Expansion of Accounts Accepted by Real Estate Brokers

Senate Bill 95, sponsored by Sen. Michael Williams (R - Cumming), passed with a unanimous vote. Currently in Georgia, real estate brokers are only able to accept funds in a real estate transaction from a designated trust or escrow account that is a federally insured bank checking account. SB 94 changes escrows from being exclusively FDIC insured checking accounts to any FDIC insured account, including money market and savings accounts. - **SB 95**

Commending Mary Nathaniel Long

Sponsored by Sen. Valencia Seay (D - Riverdale), Senate Resolution 280 commended Mary Nathaniel Long for her achievements in both her lobbyist career and as a nurse. Mary Nathaniel Long began her nursing career when she graduated from the Grady Memorial Hospital’s School of Nursing in 1963, and went on to become the first African-American President of the Georgia Nurses Association. - **SR 280**

Georgia 4-H Day at the Capitol

Sen. Ross Tolleson (R -- Perry) sponsored Senate Resolution 22, which recognized February 23, 2015, as Georgia 4-H Day at the Capitol. Georgia's 4-H organization is dedicated to assisting members in acquiring knowledge and developing leadership skills through hands-on learning experiences focused on agricultural and environmental issues. - **SR 22**



Deputy Sheriff Cynthia Hall Honored

Sponsored by Sen. Steve Henson (D -- Tucker), Senate Resolution 41 honored Deputy Sheriff Cynthia Hall for her bravery on the ten-year anniversary of an injury received in the line of duty. Deputy Sheriff Hall sustained a severe brain injury on March 11, 2005, while escorting the inmate later convicted of the 2005 Fulton County Courthouse shootings. While she was unable to return to her duties as a Sheriff's Deputy, Hall remains dedicated to public service through volunteering at various local nonprofit organizations. -**SR 41**



Anesthesiology Assistants of Georgia

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R-- Rome) sponsored Senate Resolution 268, which recognized the Anesthesiology Assistants of Georgia. The Emory University School of Medicine and South University in Savannah are currently the only two universities in the state that train anesthesia assistants. Joy Rusmisell, President of the Georgia Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants, spoke to the Senate and thanked members for the recognition. - **SR 268**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Senate Amends Good Samaritan Law

Senate Bill 34, sponsored by Sen. Greg Kirk (R - Americus), passed with a vote of 50 to 2. SB 34 will protect individuals who enter a parked vehicle to remove those in imminent danger. SB 34 will amend Georgia's "Good Samaritan" law and protect these individuals from liability of property damage or injury. - **SB 34**



Boys & Girls Clubs - Georgia Military Youth of the Year

Senate Resolution 185, sponsored by Sen. Hunter Hill (R - Atlanta), commended Andrew Brown on being named the 2015 Boys & Girls Clubs Georgia Military Youth of the Year. The Boys & Girls Clubs Georgia recognizes a club member who participated in a military-based program and has demonstrated exceptional character. Andrew will have the opportunity to be selected as the 2015 Boys & Girls Clubs of South East's Regional Youth of the Year. - **SR 185**

Boys & Girls Clubs - Georgia Youth of the Year

Sponsored by Sen. Hunter Hill (R - Atlanta), Senate Resolution 186 commended MiKayla Taylor on being selected as the 2015 Boys & Girls Clubs Georgia Youth of the Year. This honor is bestowed upon a young person for their service to their community, academic success and demonstration of strong moral character. MiKayla will be awarded a \$5,000 college scholarship and the opportunity to be selected as the 2015 Boys & Girls Clubs of South East Regional Youth of the Year. - **SR 186**



Future Farmers of America Day

Sen. John Wilkinson (R - Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 136 recognizing

February 24, 2015, as Future Farmers of America Day at Capitol. The Georgia Future Farmers of America Association prepares young professionals to meet growing agricultural demands. With 37,684 current members, the Georgia Future Farmers of America Association is the third largest FFA group in the nation. - **SR 136**



Atlanta Junior Rowing Association

Sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R - Roswell), Senate Resolution 25 commended the Atlanta Junior Rowing Association on its 27 year commitment to youth rowing in metro Atlanta. The Atlanta Junior Rowing Association has grown to almost 200 members since its founding in 1988, making it one of the largest and most successful youth rowing groups in Georgia. - **SR 25**



Columbus State University Day

Senate Resolution 250, sponsored by Sen. Ed Harbison (D - Columbus), recognized February 24, 2015, as Columbus State University and Columbus Day at the Capitol. Columbus State University was commended for its international education efforts and success of the new Honors College. Mayor Teresa Tomlinson thanked the Senate for its devotion to economic growth and development in Georgia. - **SR 250**

Health Information Technology Day

Sponsored by Sen. Brandon Beach (R - Alpharetta), Senate Resolution 284 recognized February 24, 2015, as Health Information Technology Day at the Capitol. With over 4,700 health IT jobs available, Georgia is leading the nation in the health IT industry. Tino Mantella, president of the Technology Association of Georgia, thanked the Senate for their support of Health Information Technology in Georgia. - **SR 284**



National Council of Negro Women, Inc.

Senate Resolution 289, sponsored by Sen. Gloria Butler (D - Stone Mountain), commended the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. for their commitment to educational and economic empowerment in the United States and Africa. National Council of Negro Women, Inc. Chairwoman Ingrid Saunders thanked the Senate for their support and recognition. - **SR 289**



Senate Welcomes Congressman Rick Allen

U.S. Rep. Rick Allen (GA - 12) addressed the chamber about the importance of putting American people back in charge of their health care decisions. U.S. Rep. Allen spoke about improving the health care system by lowering the cost of health care by enhancing competition.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Young Farmers Day

Senate Resolution 164, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R - Toccoa), commended the Georgia Young Farmers Association and recognized February 25, 2015, as Young Farmers Day at the Capitol. The Georgia Young Farmers Association is an agricultural education program committed to providing education, leadership and networking opportunities to young professionals interested in agriculture. - **SR 164**



United States Youth Fly Fishing Team

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R - Chickamauga) sponsored Senate Resolution 162 honoring the United States Youth Fly Fishing Team for placing first in the Federation International de Peche Sportive Mouche Youth World Fly Fishing Championships held in Nowy Sacz, Poland. Four of the six team members are Georgia natives: Gabriel Wittosch, Hunter Hoffer, Mason Sims and Andrew Brown. - **SR 162**

Turkish American Day

Sen. John Albers (R - Roswell) recognized February 24, 2015, as Turkish American Day at the Capitol. Sen. Albers commended the Turkish American Chamber of Commerce of the Southeast for their work and contributions to Georgia. The mission of the Turkish American Chamber of Commerce of the Southeast is to facilitate commerce between the U.S. and Turkey, while establishing partnerships between Turkish and American business professionals.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Crediting Wages through Payroll Card Account

Senate Bill 88, sponsored by Sen. Burt Jones (R - Jackson), passed with a vote of 43 to 8. SB 88 authorizes employers to pay employee salaries and wages through a company issued credit or debit card. Employees will also be given the option to opt-out and request a check as form of payment. - **SB 88**

New Policies Introduced for Witness Identification Procedures

Sponsored by Sen. Charlie Bethel (R - Dalton), Senate Bill 94 passed with a vote of 53 to 0. SB 94 will require law enforcement agencies to adopt new policies aimed at improving the accuracy of witness identification. SB 94 require these policies to be subject to public disclosure and inspection. - **SB 94**

Senate Regulates the Usage of Auxiliary Containers

Senate Bill 139, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R - Ocilla), passed by a vote of 32 to 19. Auxiliary containers are disposable bags, boxes, cups and bottles made of cloth, paper, plastic, extruded polystyrene or similar materials. SB 139 requires that any sale, taxation or fee imposition of these auxiliary containers can only be done through statewide law. - **SB 139**

Georgia Forestry Commission Southern Unit of the Year

Sen. Ross Tolleson (R - Perry) sponsored Senate Resolution 181 commending the Coffee-Atkinson Forestry Unit on being named the Georgia Forestry Commission's 2014 Southern Unit of the Year. The Georgia Forestry Commission Southern Unit is a state agency responsible for the protection and conservation of Georgia's forests. The Coffee-Atkinson Forestry Unit was responsible for assisting with over 88 home risk assessments, responding to 73 wildfires and completing renovations to both the Coffee and Atkinson offices, as well as buildings in the Dixon State Forest. - **SR 181**

Sen. Donzella James Honors Hamilton Bohannon

Sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D - Atlanta), Senate Resolution 365 commended Hamilton Bohannon for 50 years of excellence in the music industry. Mr. Bohannon was a pioneer of disco, house and hip-hop music. The multi-talented recording artist, songwriter, producer and author performed with artists including Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, The Four Tops and Diana Ross. He is a native of Newnan, Georgia. - **SR 365**

The Georgia State Senate will reconvene for **DAY 24
on Monday, March 2, at 10:00 a.m.**