



## Georgia State Senate Press Office Staff

**Jennifer Yarber**  
Director

**Adam Sweat**  
Sr. Communications Specialist

**Brittany Wagner**  
Communications Specialist

**Brett Johnson**  
Broadcast Specialist

**Gaviella Coffman**  
Communications Associate

**Natalie Rossetti**  
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

### FOLLOW US



fb.com/GeorgiaStateSenate



@gasenatepress



@gasenatepress



GeorgiaStateSenate

# This Week in the Senate

## March 16 - 20, 2015



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

The Senate Appropriations Committee completed its thorough review of House Bill 76, the Fiscal Year 2016 General Appropriations Act, which was sent to the Senate floor and approved. House and Senate leaders will now work with each other to settle differences between the two versions before the bill is sent to Governor Deal for his signature.

The Senate also passed House Bill 170, a comprehensive transportation bill that will help our state complete critical transportation initiatives. The bill received a great deal of debate on the Senate floor and was substantially amended to improve efficiencies at the Department of Transportation, give legislative oversight and create a mechanism for broader tax reform. It too goes back to the House for further consideration.

With five legislative days scheduled, next week will be demanding. However, I know members and staff will rise to meet the challenge.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

#### Georgia Controlled Substances Act

Carried by Sen. Ben Watson (R - Savannah) and sponsored by Rep. Bruce Broadrick (R - Dalton), House Bill 211 will add 15 new substances to the Georgia Controlled Substances Act and revise the definition of a “dangerous drug” to include 43 new substances. HB 211 will exclude fluticasone from being defined as a “dangerous drug” and remove certain provisions relating to hydrocodone and requires the name of the prescribing practitioner on the label, not the physician. HB 211 passed unanimously. - **HB 211**

#### Georgia’s Day of Coding

House Resolution 103, carried by Sen. Elena Parent (D - Atlanta) and sponsored by Rep. Ed Setzler (R - Acworth), passed unanimously. HR 103 recognizes December 10th as Georgia’s Day of Coding as well as the computer programming field, and encourages more students to pursue careers in computer science. - **HR 103**

#### Atlanta Metropolitan State College Day

Sponsored by Sen. Vincent Fort (D - Atlanta), Senate Resolution 189 recognized March 18, 2015, as Atlanta Metropolitan State College Day at the Capitol. Atlanta Metropolitan State College was commended for its growth and for providing education to students who primarily come from metro Atlanta. Dr. Gary A. McGaha, President of Atlanta Metropolitan State College, thanked the Senate for their support. - **SR 189**

### **Keep Georgia Beautiful Program**

Sen. Ross Tolleson (R - Perry) sponsored Senate Resolution 399 commending the Keep Georgia Beautiful Program for their efforts to improve Georgia communities. The Keep Georgia Beautiful Program is a nonprofit focused on building sustainable communities through litter prevention, waste reduction, recycling, water resource management and community greenspace. Over the last 10 years, the Keep Georgia Beautiful Program has reduced the amount of litter collected in Georgia by 75 percent. - **SR 399**



### **United State Air Force Academy - Georgia Parents Club**

Senate Resolution 409, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (D - Dahlonge), commended the United States Air Force Academy Georgia Parents Club for their dedication to developing future military leaders of Georgia. The United States Air Force Academy Georgia Parents Club is the most active parents club in the nation and supports 180 Georgia cadets and their families. - **SR 409**



### **Law Enforcement Appreciation Day**

Sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R - Ocilla), Senate Resolution 454 recognized March 18, 2015, as Law Enforcement Appreciation Day at the Capitol and commended all law enforcement officers in Georgia. Gov. Nathan Deal, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and Sen. Harper hosted a reception for all law enforcement officials and thanked them for their service to Georgia. - **SR 454**

### **Ryan Cameron Foundation**

Sen. Vincent Fort (D - Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 506 commending the Ryan Cameron Foundation. The Ryan Cameron Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing Atlanta's youth with life skills for academic and career development. The foundation has awarded more than \$70,000 in scholarships to graduating high school seniors from the metro Atlanta area and has provided a year's worth of free medical and dental services to more than 4,100 children and their families. - **SR 506**



---

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 19**

### **Senate Welcomes Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush**

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush appeared in the chamber and urged the Senate to focus on moving towards a child-centered education system. His remarks included the idea that there is nothing more important than making sure our nation has a system where every child has a chance to read, write and calculate math. Gov. Bush thanked the Senate for their service to the state of Georgia.

### **Rock Springs Health Clinic**

Sen. Burt Jones (R - Jackson) sponsored Senate Resolution 399 commending the Rock Springs Health Clinic for their service to the citizens of central Georgia. The Rock Springs Health Clinic is a non profit medical facility that provides physical health care and counseling to the uninsured. Since 2008, the Rock Springs Health Clinic has provided healthcare to over 13,000 Georgians without health insurance. - **SR 399**

### **Commending Will Crain**

Senate Resolution 277, sponsored by Sen. Butch Miller (R - Gainesville), commended Will Crain for being selected to represent the United States at the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games. He will compete on the United States kayaking team. Will has overcome many obstacles in his life including a liver transplant in 2006. - **SR 277**

## Caribbean American Day

Sponsored by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D - Decatur), Senate Resolution 415 recognized March 19, 2015, as Caribbean American Legislative Day at the State Capitol. SR 415 commends the many contributions that Caribbean Americans have made to Georgia. - **SR 415**



## Usher's New Look

Sen. Ronald Ramsey (D - Lithonia) commended Usher's New Look for its work in Georgia communities. The Usher's New Look program was founded by singer-songwriter Usher Raymond to transform the lives of youth from underserved communities. Since 1999, Usher's New Look program has successfully trained and assisted more than 22,000 youth. - **SR 481**



## Georgia High School Fencing League

Senate Resolution 549, sponsored by Sen. Judson Hill (R - Marietta), commended the Georgia High School Fencing League. The Georgia High School Fencing League was founded in 2004 to provide organization, guidance and support to high schools that have or wish to develop a fencing program. The Georgia High School Fencing League has been holding tournaments for the past 11 years. - **SR 549**

---

## FRIDAY, MARCH 20

### FY 2016 General Budget

The Georgia Senate approved more than \$21.7 billion in state funding for the 2016 Fiscal Year General Budget through the passage of HB 76, sponsored by Rep. David Ralston (R - Blue Ridge) and carried in the Senate by Sen. Jack Hill (R - Reidsville). The Senate version includes significant increases to K-12 education in regards to instructional days and reductions of furlough days with increases to teacher pay and additional funding for economic development projects. Passed by a vote of 52 to 1, HB 76 will now go back to the House. If the House does not agree to the Senate's changes, a conference committee will be appointed. - **HB 76**



### Transportation Funding Act of 2015

House Bill 170, sponsored by Rep. Jay Roberts (R - Ocilla) and carried in the Senate by Sen. Steve Gooch (R - Dahlonega), passed with a vote of 29 to 25. HB 170 includes a 24 cents-per-gallon state excise tax on gasoline and diesel, removes state sales taxes on motor fuel, creates a special joint committee to study Georgia's current revenue structure, and instructs future General Assemblies to make annual payments of \$250 million toward debt service for the Department of Transportation. As it passed, HB 170 removes any reference to a highway user fee but applies a \$5 fee per day on rental car purchases. Local authorities may continue to collect sales taxes on motor fuel based on distributor prices up to \$3.39 per gallon without restrictions on how they spend that revenue. - **HB 170**



### Banking and Finance

Sponsored by Rep. Bruce Williamson (R - Monroe) and carried in the Senate by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R - Macon), House Bill 184 extensively revises outdated Georgia Code definitions relating to banking and finance. The bill specifically targets the differences between banks chartered at the state level versus the federal level. HB 184 unanimously passed. - **HB 184**



### **Senate Commends Isaiah Crowell**

Sponsored by Sen. Ed Harbison (D - Columbus), Senate Resolution 402 commended Isaiah Crowell for his successful and ongoing football career. Isaiah Crowell, a native of Columbus, was named the Associated Press Freshman of the Year following his 2011 season at The University of Georgia. After several seasons at Alabama State University, he signed an undrafted free agent contract with the Cleveland Browns in 2014. - **SR 402**

### **Senate Recognizes Dr. Jamye Coleman Williams**

Sponsored by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D - Decatur), Senate Resolution 417 commends Dr. Jamye Coleman Williams for her outstanding public service and contribution to the State of Georgia. Dr. Williams has remained an active volunteer with the NAACP and on several other boards including the Board of the National Conference for Community and Justice and the National Council of Negro Women. - **SR 417**

### **Spelman College Day**

Sen. Gail Davenport sponsored Senate Resolutions 493 and 480, respectively. SR 493 recognizes March 20, 2015, as Spelman College Day at the State Capitol. Founded in 1881, Spelman College is home to more than 2,100 students from 41 states and 15 foreign countries. SR 480 recognizes the retirement of Spelman College President, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum. Dr. Tatum has served as president of Spelman College since 2002 and was present in the chamber to thank members of the Senate for the recognition. - **SR 480, SR 493**

### **Senate Commends Spout Springs School of Enrichment**

Senate Resolution 466, sponsored by Sen. Butch Miller (R - Gainesville), commends Spout Springs School of Enrichment for being the first school in Georgia to be named an Alliance for a Healthier Generation 2014-2015 GOLD National Recognition School. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's National Healthy Schools Award is an honor given to schools that have implemented changes to create a healthier school environment. - **SR 466**

### **Senate Recognizes Former Senator Steve Thompson**

Sponsored by Sen. Valencia Seay (D - Riverdale), Senate Resolution 147 recognizes and commends former Sen. Steve Thompson for his outstanding public service. Thompson served the 33rd Senate District from 1990-2014, making him the longest serving member of the Senate. During his years in the Senate, he twice chaired the Senate Transportation Committee and served on the Appropriations, Finance and Banking and Financial Institutions. Thompson thanked members for the recognition. - **SR 147**

**The Georgia State Senate will reconvene for **DAY 34**  
on Monday, March 23, at 10:00 a.m.**