



Georgia State Senate Press Office Staff

Jennifer Yarber
Director

Ines Owens
Sr. Communications Specialist

Brittany Wagner
Communications Specialist

Brett Johnson
Broadcast Specialist

Gavriella Coffman
Communications Associate

Andrew Allison
2016 Legislative Aide

Jacob Hamilton
2016 Legislative Aide

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

February 1 - 5, 2016



Protecting Georgia Families

The Senate focused on the protection of families this week with the passage of Senate Bill 193, which was authored by Sen. Charlie Bethel. The legislation elevates a first conviction of family violence battery to a felony if the defendant has a record of prior violent felony convictions. We passed this bill on Stop Violence Against Women Day at the state Capitol.

Other bills this week receiving Senate approval include Senate Bill 279, which adds two seats to the Georgia P.O.S.T. Council, Senate Bill 199, which clarifies the definition of campaign materials that may not be brought into polling places and Senate Bill 273 eliminating duplicate regulation of non-diagnostic biomedical research facilities.

Senate Bill 199, authored by Sen. Rick Jeffares, arose from an incident in which poll workers wrongly denied the right to vote for wearing an NRA cap. The bill clarified that the prohibition on campaign materials was meant to prohibit materials advocating the election of candidates. Senate Bill 273, authored by Sen. Dean Burke, was written to make Georgia more attractive to federally regulated biomedical research facilities and passed unanimously.

Subcommittees of the Senate Appropriations Committee met throughout the week to complete work on the Amended FY 2016 Budget. Reports of the subcommittees were submitted Friday to the "Green Door Committee" which, with the help of the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office, have been reconciled into a proposed Senate version of the Budget. The Senate Appropriations Committee will take up the amended budget on Monday. Work on the General FY 2017 Budget will begin soon.

Sen. David J. Shafer

President Pro Tempore, Georgia State Senate

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Two Seats Added to Georgia P.O.S.T. Council

Senate Bill 279, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), creates two additional seats on the Georgia P.O.S.T. Council for the Commissioner of Juvenile Justice and the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The bill passed the Senate with a vote of 49 to 3. – **SB 279**

Celebrating Georgia Tech Student Day

Sen. P. K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) sponsored Senate Resolution 803 establishing February 1, 2016 as Georgia Tech Student Day. Sen. Martin commended Georgia Tech for its commitment to innovation and for making Georgia a technological hub. Georgia Tech President Bud Peterson and Student Government

President Jen Abrams thanked senators for their continued support of higher education and student in government. – **SR 803**

Commending Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

Sen. Gloria Butler (D – Stone Mountain) introduced Senate Resolution 823 commending the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and recognizing February 1, 2016 as Delta Day. Sen. Butler spoke to some of the ideals of Delta Sigma Theta and their impact on the Atlanta community, particularly on women's involvement in politics. Delta Sigma Theta was founded 103 years ago by 22 women at Howard University. – **SR 823**



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Amending Penalties for Family Violence and Battery

Senate Bill 193, sponsored by Sen. Charlie Bethel (R – Dalton), amends Georgia law to treat a first conviction of family violence battery as a felony if the defendant has a prior conviction in Georgia or another state for family violence. The bill passed 51 to 0. – **SB 193**

Legislative Counsel Admission to Georgia Judicial Retirement System

Senate Bill 243, sponsored by Sen. Jack Hill (R – Reidsville), allows attorneys in the Office of Legislative Counsel to become members of the Georgia Judicial Retirement System. The bill supersedes a previous law passed in 2005, which barred attorneys in the Office of Legislative Counsel from joining this retirement system. The bill passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **SB 243**

Macon Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court Honored

Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) introduced Senate Resolution 857, commending the work of the Macon Judicial Veterans Treatment Court and their exceptional progress with rehabilitating incarcerated veterans. Sen. Kennedy was joined by judges from across the state of Georgia, as well as one of the program's participants. – **SR 857**

Senate Celebrates Girl Scouts of the USA's 100 Year Anniversary

Sen. Elena Parent (D – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 705, honoring the Girl Scouts of the USA for 100 years of service. The Girl Scouts of the USA were founded in Savannah by Juliette Gordon Low in 1912 and has remained an organization dedicated to helping young women exhibit a greater sense of self, life satisfaction and community service. Sen. Parent was joined by the Director of the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, Amy Dosik, who thanked senators for their service. – **SR 705**

Dyslexia Awareness

Sen. Hunter Hill (R - Atlanta) introduced Senate Resolution 743, recognizing the impact dyslexia has on children in schools all across the state. Sen. Hill was joined by Alisha Gant, legislative counsel and advocate for Decoding Dyslexia Georgia. Gant spoke about the many recent diagnostic and treatment advancements for dyslexia. – **SR 743**

National School Counselor Week

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 732 recognizing this week as National School Counselor Week. The resolution acknowledges the evolving role of counselors in the school system and their impact on student's personal growth and career development. – **SR 732**

44th Annual Firefighters Recognition Day

The Senate recognized February 2, 2016, as the 44th annual Firefighters Recognition Day. Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) was joined by members of the Senate who currently serve as firefighters or first responders, and those who served previously, for the presentation of Senate Resolution 845. – **SR 845**

Stop Violence Against Women Day

Sen. Elena Parent (D – Atlanta) introduced Senate Resolution 808, recognizing February 2, 2016 as Stop Violence Against Women Day. Sen. Parent spoke out against the violence encountered by women and how the Senate can work to end it. – **SR 808**

Federal Building Renaming

Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored Senate Resolution 870, urging the U.S. House of Representatives to rename the Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Gainesville to the Sidney Olsin Smith, Jr. Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. Sidney Olsin Smith, Jr., was a former U.S. District Judge who served as a defender of justice and liberty on the bench and as a community advocate for higher education at Brenau University. – **SR 870**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Distribution of Campaign Material In and Around Polling Places

Senate Bill 199, sponsored by Sen. Rick Jeffares (R – McDonough), amends Georgia law to clarify the definition of allowable campaign materials in and around polling places. The bill does not change laws related to where campaign material can be distributed, but does offer new guidelines for poll workers in deciding what constitutes campaign material. The bill passed with a vote of 39 to 15. – **SB 199**

Definition of Clinical Laboratories

Senate Bill 273, sponsored by Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge), creates an exception for nondiagnostic clinics already regulated under federal law from having to be licensed by the Georgia Department of Community Health. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid regulate all laboratory testing that is performed on humans through the federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments. The bill passed unanimously. – **SB 273**

Celebrating 4-H Day

Sen. Ellis Black (R – Valdosta) introduced Senate Resolution 691, recognizing February 3, 2016, as 4-H Day. Joining Sen. Black at the rostrum were members of the Georgia 4-H leadership team, including President Ben Lord of Hill County High School. President Lord thanked senators for their critical support of Georgia's 4-H program. – **SR 691**

Honoring Robert Wheeler Hagan

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) sponsored Senate Resolution 894, commemorating the service of Mr. Robert Wheeler Hagan to the Rotary Club of Roswell and the state of Georgia. Robert "Bob" Hagan joined the Rotary Club of Roswell in 1998 and has since served in numerous positions including President, Treasurer and most recently District Governor. Sen. Albers thanked Hagan for his community-building efforts in Roswell and hailed him as a true humanitarian. – **SR 894**

Recognizing the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce

The Senate recognized the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce for 106 years of service with Senate Resolution 689, sponsored by Sen. Freddie Powell Sims (D – Dawson). Joining Sen. Sims were members of the Albany community including Albany Mayor Dorothy Hubbard and Dougherty County Commissioner Christopher Cohlías. Both Mayor Hubbard and Commissioner Cohlías spoke before the Senate about the need for local communities to work with state government to achieve bigger and broader goals. – **SR 689**



Observing Georgia State University Day

The Senate adopted Senate Resolution 851, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta), making February 3, 2016 Georgia State University Day. Joined by Georgia State University President Mark Becker, Sen. Tippins acknowledged Georgia State for its continued dedication to student excellence and research. President Becker also thanked the Senate for their support of Georgia State's acquisition of Georgia Perimeter College; making Georgia State the state's largest public university. – **SR 851**

Commending the State YMCA of Georgia and the Center of Civic Engagement

Sen. Elena Parent (D – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 853, commending the State YMCA of Georgia and its Center of Civic Engagement for their work in teaching Georgia's future leaders about the political process and cultivating civic interests. Each year, the YMCA of Georgia hosts a mock Youth Assembly Conference where participants take part in a mock legislature and publish a daily newspaper. Sen. Parent was joined by Youth Assembly Governor Jackson Mitchell who thanked senators for their support in allowing the Youth Assembly Conference to take place in the halls of the Capitol. – **SR 853**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) sponsored Senate Bill 230, which would permit emergency volunteer health practitioners from neighboring states to assist in the event of an emergency or disaster. The bill gives GEMA discretion over issuing volunteer practitioners or organizations temporary credentials to practice medicine for the duration of the emergency. The bill was passed 52 to 0. – **SB 230**



Celebrating 30 Years of World Changers Church International

Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta) welcomed Reverend Creflo Dollar, along with his wife and co-pastor Taffi Dollar, to the Senate to present them with Senate Resolution 824. The resolution recognizes World Changers International's 30 years of service to their community. – **SR 824**



James I. Casey Honored for 50 years of Service to the Polk County Farm Bureau

Sen. Bill Heath (R – Bremen) sponsored Senate Resolution 733, recognizing James I. Casey's 50 years of service as the President of the Polk County Farm Bureau. Casey was instrumental in bringing modern communications technology to rural farmers throughout Georgia and has worked diligently to bring awareness to farming issues. – **SR 733**



Wear Red for Women Day

Sen. Valencia Seay (D – Riverdale) sponsored Senate Resolution 878, to raise awareness for cardiovascular disease in women. Sen. Seay encouraged Senate colleagues to wear red throughout the day to address their support. Approximately 44 million women are affected by some form of cardiovascular disease, 80 percent of which could be prevented, according to the American Heart Association. – **SR 878**



Jackson-Butts County Day

February 4, 2016, was recognized as Jackson-Butts County Day through Senate Resolution 897; sponsored by Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson). Sen. Jones was joined by Kay Pippin, the Mayor of Jackson, who extolled the natural beauty

and economic resources of the city of Jackson, and Butts County. – *SR 897*

Georgia Farm Bureau Federation Day

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 807, recognizing February 4, 2016, as Georgia Farm Bureau Federation Day. Georgia Farm Bureau Federation President Gerald Long spoke about the importance of the Farm Bureau, especially in rural counties. The Georgia Farm Bureau Federation boasts a chapter in every Georgia County, and a membership of more than 300,000. – *SR 807*

**The Georgia State Senate will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8.**