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This Week in the Senate

January 23-26, 2017



Focusing on the Budget

The Georgia Senate went back into session on Monday after taking a break last week for budget hearings. During “budget week,” the Governor and state agencies present their proposed budgets to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees.

Under the Zero Based Budgeting Act that I wrote in 2013, the so-called “continuation” system of budgeting was abolished. Instead, one-eighth of the state budget is zeroed out each year. As a result, over the normal two terms served by a Governor, the entire budget is rebuilt from scratch.

This week, Senate committees began meeting to adopt committee rules. Nearly ninety Senate Bills have been introduced and assigned to committee. The first hearings on legislation will likely begin next week. If you have any questions, comments or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sen. David J. Shafer
President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

MONDAY, JANUARY 23

Recognizing Miss Georgia USA 2017

Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) sponsored Senate Resolution 17 commending DeAnna Johnson who was recently crowned Miss Georgia USA 2017. DeAnna is from Hazlehurst and attends East Georgia State College. She is very involved in her community where she has served as a volunteer at local shelters for battered women and abused children. DeAnna is also a talented vocalist who appeared on NBC’s, “The Voice”, where she placed in the top 10. DeAnna continues to inspire others by supporting charities and promoting tourism in Georgia. – **SR 17**



TUESDAY, JANUARY 24

Recognizing Cartersville High School Football Team

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) sponsored Senate Resolution 32 commending the Cartersville High School Football Team on their undefeated season. They were also recognized for winning the GHSA 2016 AAAA State Championship. Sen. Thompson described the team's head coach Joey King as “an incredible coach, husband, father, follower of Christ and a person who studies people and the environment he is in.” – *SR 32*



Senate Commends Fayette Chamber of Commerce

Sen. Marty Harbin (R – Tyrone) sponsored Senate Resolution 33 recognizing and commending the Fayette Chamber of Commerce on their 50th anniversary. Sen. Harbin was joined by members of the Fayette Chamber of Commerce. President and CEO Carlotta Ungaro thanked her colleagues and praised the Senate for recognizing their anniversary and success. – *SR 33*

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

State of Judiciary Address

The Senate attended a joint session in the House Chamber to hear the annual State of the Judiciary Address delivered by Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice P. Harris Hines. He spoke about what the judicial branch has accomplished in the last year, the problems it still faces and the steps that need to be taken to solve them. Chief Justice Hines touted that Georgia has become a national leader in criminal justice reform policy. It was noted that Georgia still has room for improvement. Georgia has the highest probation rate in the nation and more than 800,000 cases of individuals having to represent themselves in court because they fall into a group of people who earn too much to qualify for legal aid and too little to afford an attorney. The opportunities technology can bring to our judicial systems can help simplify the processes currently in place. The key to the future success of our courts is to make them more efficient and accessible by advancing the technology available.

REACH Georgia Day at the State Capitol



Sen. Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton) sponsored Senate Resolution 41 commending the Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH) Georgia program for its efforts of promoting academic success and increased admission to higher education institutions. REACH Georgia is a public-private mentorship and needs based scholarship program that awards participants a scholarship of up to \$10,000 to be used at a HOPE eligible two-year or four-year college or university. There are currently 685 students in 69 school districts participating in the REACH Georgia program. – *SR 41*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

Health Information Technology Day

Senate Resolution 40, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), recognizes January 26, 2017, as Health Information Technology Day at the Capitol. The resolution commends the Technology Association of Georgia Health, the Georgia Chapter of the Healthcare Information Management and Systems Society, the Institute for Healthcare Information Technology and the health information technology industry for their contributions to Georgia's economy. Atlanta is often referred to as the health information technology capital of the United States, and Georgia leads the nation with over 26,000 employees in the industry. – *SR 40*

Recognizing Alpharetta Director of Public Safety Gary D. George

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) sponsored Senate Resolution 44, commending Gary D. George, Director of the Alpharetta Department of Public Safety. Director George was appointed to his current position on July 1, 2006, and he is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development course and Northwestern University’s School of Police Staff and Command. Director George has had an immeasurable impact on the lives of the citizens of Alpharetta; his talents have made the city safer for residents and more attractive to businesses. – *SR 44*

Commending Roosevelt Jackson

Sen. Ed Harbison (D – Columbus) sponsored Senate Resolution 47, recognizing Roosevelt Jackson for his enthusiasm for life and commitment to achieving his goals. Jackson’s most recent accomplishment was receiving an honorary high school diploma from Marion County High School at 98-years-old. His achievement inspires students to treasure the importance of education and shows that education is a lifelong continuation where each path brings new lessons. Jackson also played baseball for numerous teams in the Negro league and is the oldest living scout, manager and former player from that league. – *SR 47*



The Georgia Senate will reconvene for **DAY 9 at 10:00 a.m. on
MONDAY, JANUARY 30.**