



Georgia Senate Press Office Staff

Ines Owens
Acting Director

Brittany Wagner
Communications Specialist

Andrew Allison
Communications Associate

Elisabeth Fletcher
Communications Associate

Nick Seymour
2017 Legislative Aide

India Westbrook
2017 Legislative Aide

Yaya Toussaint
2017 Legislative Intern

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

FOLLOW US



fb.com/GeorgiaStateSenate



@gasenatepress



@gasenatepress



GeorgiaStateSenate

This Week in the Senate

February 21 - February 24, 2017



Preparing for Crossover Day

We finished week seven of the 2017 Legislative Session. A total of 21 general Senate bills made it to the Senate floor this week. These bills dealt with subjects ranging from carnival ride safety, regulation of controlled substances, narcotic treatment programs and child support recovery.

On Friday, we took up seven bills with four of them focusing on public safety officers. Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) championed the passage of Senate Bill 160, the “Back the Badge Act of 2017.” SB 160 would impose stricter penalties on individuals convicted of harming public safety officers. The brave men and women who serve as public safety officers put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe. Although we can never thank them enough for what they do, I believe SB 160 sends a powerful signal that we will not tolerate those who would do harm to the guardians of our public safety.

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) sponsored Senate Bills 154, 155 and 169 which likewise place us squarely behind our public safety officers. SB 154 and 155 address additional protections, and compensation and benefit reviews for law enforcement officials. SB 169 allows motor vehicle owners to honor law enforcement by purchasing license plates titled “Back the Badge.” Proceeds from the sale of the tags would be donated to the Peace Officers Annuity and Benefit Fund.

Along with debating and passing important legislation, the Senate was honored to host several special guests. On Thursday, I was pleased to host three outstanding high school seniors who won college scholarships from the Third Annual Senator David Shafer Essay Scholarship competition. Madison Seagraves of Landmark Christian School earned first place in the scholarship contest with her essay on World War I hero Alvin York. Angela Huang of Johns Creek High School placed second with her essay on Anne Sullivan and Pooja Prabakaran of Lassiter High School earned third place with her essay on James Madison.

We will reconvene next Monday for Day 25 and will finish the week with Crossover Day on Friday, March 3. If you have any questions, comments or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Direct Primary Care Act

Sen. Hunter Hill (R – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Bill 50 which would grant the use of primary care agreements in the state of Georgia and create a legal structure for carrying out these agreements. Physicians and their patients would have a contract between each other where the physician or physician's medical practice agrees to provide the individual patient with health care services for an agreed upon fee and for a period of time. The bill passed by a vote of 49 to 0. – **SB 50**

Bankruptcy Exemptions for Health Savings Account

Senate Bill 71, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), would exempt assets in health savings accounts and medical savings accounts from bankruptcy. The bill passed by a vote of 51 to 0. – **SB 71**

Regulation of Controlled Substances

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) sponsored Senate Bill 106 which would restore the privileges of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) to provide anesthesia without a doctor on-site. CRNAs would not be allowed to dispense, prescribe or distribute a controlled substance without a physician or physician assistant being present. This bill revises a provision relating to healthcare professionals who must be on-site at a pain management clinic in order for the clinic to provide medical treatment. The bill passed by a vote of 49 to 2. – **SB 106**

Physician Assistants Authorized to Prescribe Hydrocodone Products

Senate Bill 125, sponsored by Sen. Rick Jeffares (R – McDonough), would allow physician assistants who have been authorized by a physician the right to issue prescriptions for hydrocodone products for five days or less. This bill would require that all physician assistants who are authorized to write prescriptions must also complete continuing education. The bill passed by a vote of 48 to 3. – **SB 125**

Recognizing Captain Gwen Fulton

Sen. Valencia Seay (D – Riverdale) sponsored Senate Resolution 65 recognizing Captain Gwen Fulton on her retirement and her outstanding public service. After 33 years of law enforcement service, Captain Fulton will be retiring from the Department of Public Safety this month. She devoted her efforts to educating the drivers, especially high school students regarding the Move Over Law to reduce the number of motorists who hit emergency personnel while they are working outside of the vehicle. – **SR 65**

Future Farmers of America

Senate Resolution 81, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa), recognizes the week of February 19-26, 2017, as National Future Farmers of America (FFA) week and February 21, 2017, as FFA Day at the Capitol. FFA has 317 local chapters across the state and a current membership of 41,000. The FFA's mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by amplifying their potential for personal growth, leadership and career success. – **SR 81**

Recognizing Dr. Tincie M. Lynch and Female Veteran's Day

Sen. Tonya Anderson (D – Lithonia) sponsored Senate Resolution 237, recognizing Dr. Tincie M. Lynch for her public service with the armed forces and recognizing February 21, 2017, as Female Veterans Day at the Capitol. Dr. Lynch serves as the senior outreach coordinator, congressional liaison and veterans service organization liaison at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Lynch has raised the bar for public service by serving with honor and distinction. – **SR 237**



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Congressman Sanford Bishop Welcomed to the Senate

Congressman Sanford Bishop (GA – 02) was welcomed to the Senate Chamber as a special guest. Congressman Bishop commended the Senate for their hard work and leadership, and recognized Georgia's reputation as No. 1 state to do business. Congressman Bishop represents the 2nd Congressional District of Georgia and is serving his 25th year with Congress. He previously served in the Georgia State Senate.

U.S. Senator David Perdue Visits the Senate

The Georgia Senate welcomed U.S. Sen. David Perdue (R – GA) who praised the Senate for their sound leadership and fiscal responsibility. During his address, Sen. Perdue delivered a brief update on Washington's progress with President Trump's initiatives. Sen. Perdue has been serving in the United States Senate since 2015.



The Georgia Regional Transit Council

Senate Bill 6, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega), would form the Georgia Regional Transit Council. The Council will work to create plans to reduce travel times, road congestion, improve access to highways and develop ideas for transportation innovations. SB 6 passed by a vote of 48 to 0. – **SB 6**

Visiting Sports Teams Physicians Exemption

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) sponsored Senate Bill 47 which would permit physicians, physician assistants and athletic trainers who are licensed in other states to treat team members and coaching staff of visiting sports teams during events held in Georgia. This bill would exempt medical personnel from state licensure requirements when they have an agreement with a traveling team, or are invited by a national sports committee. Senate Bill 47 passed with a vote of 47 to 0. – **SB 47**

Chief Judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County

Senate Bill 73, sponsored by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would develop a new process for appointing the Chief Judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County and would establish a Court Administrator position for the Recorder's Court of Chatham County. Senate Bill 73 passed with a vote of 34 to 16. – **SB 73**



Statewide System of Emergency Cardiac Care Centers

Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored Senate Bill 102 which would establish the Office of Cardiac Care under the Department of Public Health. The office of Cardiac Care would be responsible for selecting qualified hospitals to become emergency cardiac care centers. Senate Bill 102 passed with a vote of 48 to 0. – **SB 102**

Correcting Printed and Electronic Ballots

House Bill 42, carried by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), would allow the elections superintendent to correct errors discovered on printed or electronic ballots. The elections superintendent would be required to give the Secretary of State and candidates who may be affected by the ballot errors a 24 hour notice before revisions are made. HB 42 would also allow special elections or primaries for municipal office to happen in conjunction with federal offices. HB 42 passed with a vote of 46 to 0. – **HB 42**

Math Day at the Capitol

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) sponsored Senate Resolution 125 recognizing February 6, 2017, as Math Day at the Capitol. SR 125 commends the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics for promoting quality education in mathematics for all students in all levels of education in Georgia. – **SR 125**

Albany-Dougherty County Day at the Capitol

Sen. Freddie Powell Sims (D – Dawson) sponsored Senate Resolution 209 recognizing February 22, 2017, as Albany-Dougherty County Day at the Capitol. The Senate commends the work of the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce for the role it has played in Georgia's economic growth and its contributions to serving the economic hub of southwest Georgia. – **SR 209**

Commending William Anderson Dilworth at the Capitol

Senate Resolution 218, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa), commends William Anderson Dilworth for his service to the Royston community. Dilworth served as the Mayor of Royston, President of the Royston Lions Club and President of the Georgia Grocer's Association. Dilworth was recognized as the Georgia Grocer of the Year in 1971 and was the first retail Grocer to be presented with the Alfred Dorman Wholesaler Award. He is currently the President of Dill Food City. – **SR 218**

State Restaurant Day at the Capitol

Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored Senate Resolution 223 recognizing February 22, 2017, as State Restaurant Day at the Capitol. SR 223 commends the restaurant industry for its contributions to Georgia's economic success. Georgia is home to over 36 national restaurant brands and has more than 17,900 restaurants providing nearly 446,600 jobs statewide. – **SR 223**



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Narcotic Treatment Programs Enforcement Act

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) sponsored Senate Bill 88 which would regulate Narcotic Treatment Programs (NTC) in Georgia. Anyone operating a NTC program is required to have a valid license or provisional license. In order to qualify for licensing one must prove they need to be in the community. The bill passed by a vote of 50 to 2. – **SB 88**

Womens Veterans' Office

Senate Bill 108, sponsored by Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry), would create and establish a Women Veterans Office. Female veterans have a variety of different challenges than men including healthcare, mental health, and reintroduction into society after serving. This office provides education and a mentor program to help ensure these women get the assistance they need. The bill passed by a vote of 52 to 0. – **SB 108**

Department of Driver Services to Share Information

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Bill 137 which would allow the Department of Driver Services to share the personal information of a driver with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In an effort to help prevent fraudulent applications and permits from being approved by the DNR. The bill passed by a vote of 52 to 0. – **SB 128**

Child Support Recovery Act

Senate Bill 137, sponsored by Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus), would change Georgia law so that a person who owes child support would be charged \$25 annually based off the Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Under the new bill, departments can collect the fee through different remedies and not solely monthly installments. The bill passed with a vote of 53 to 0. – **SB 137**



Carnival Ride Safety

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) sponsored Senate Bill 141 which would require an engineering evaluation by engineers on carnival rides before a permit can be issued for operation in the state of Georgia. The engineering evaluation must be done before the ride's annual inspection. The bill passed by a vote of 53 to 0. – **SB 141**

Georgia YMCA Youth Assembly Program

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) sponsored Senate Resolution 212 which commends the Georgia YMCA, its Center for Civic Engagement and "Y" Club programs for cultivating youth civic engagement. Sen. Harper was joined by Youth Governor Chan Creswell, Youth Lt. Governor Brooks Fletcher and Youth Speaker of the House Sarah Lee. The Youth Assembly celebrates 73 years of activity in 2017 and the Georgia YMCA is celebrating its 88th year. – **SR 212**

Congratulating David Shafer Scholarship Essay Contest Winners

Senate Resolution 226, sponsored by President Pro Tempore David Shafer (R – Duluth), recognized and congratulated the winners of the David Shafer Scholarship Essay Contest Madison Seagraves, Angela Huang and Pooja Prabakaran. – **SR 226**



Commending Dr. Kuanita E. Murphy

Senator Freddie Powell Sims (D – Dawson) sponsored Senate Resolution 248, which commends Dr. Kuanita Murphy for her leadership and commitment to public service. Dr. Murphy is the editor-in-chief for Rural Leader Magazine and a leader in her community through her graphic design work for civic groups. She has devoted countless hours toward the betterment of Georgia and her commitment has set the standard for public service. – **SR 248**



Congratulating Malcolm Mitchell

Senate Resolution 256, sponsored by Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson), commends Malcolm Mitchell for his contributions to promoting youth literacy in Georgia. Not only has he collected and donated 3,700 books to the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, but he also challenges students to become “Reading Ambassadors” to support youth literacy in their own communities. Mitchell was also commended for his athletic accomplishments at the University of Georgia and for his contributions to the New England Patriots’ 2017 Super Bowl Championship. – **SR 256**

Honoring Anthony Lee Coelho

Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored Senate Resolution 277 commending Anthony Coelho for his advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. In 1990, during his time as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for California’s 15th district, Coelho sponsored the Americans with Disabilities Act, a landmark equality bill that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in areas such as education, employment, commercial facilities and government services. – **SR 277**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Surprise Billing and Consumer Protection Act

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) sponsored Senate Bill 8 which would protect consumers against surprise billing by providers, hospitals and insurers for out-of-network services. Under this legislation, surprise bills for emergency services would be disputed through a resolution process within the Department of Insurance. SB 8 also requires that a database with usual and customary cost of services be created and maintained by the Department of Community Health. Senate Bill 8 was passed by a vote of 52 to 0. – **SB 8**

Pronouncement of Death of Patients in Nursing Homes or Hospice Care

Senate Bill 96, sponsored by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would permit nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants to be granted the authority to pronounce a patient’s death if they are in hospice care or a nursing home regardless of organ donor status. Senate Bill 96 passed with a vote of 52 to 1. – **SB 96**

Recognition of Emergency Medical Service Personnel

Senate Bill 109, sponsored by Sen. Michael Williams (R – Cumming), would allow emergency medical service personnel to cross state lines and treat patients in the event of an emergency. This bill would help mediate the exchange of information between other member states and would support the cooperation of member states regarding EMS personnel licensure and regulation. The bill passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **SB 109**

Protecting Public Safety Officers

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) sponsored Senate Bill 154 which would increase the punishment of individuals who commit crimes of aggravated assault or battery against a public safety officer. SB 154 would add a \$5,000 fine to aggravated assault and battery crimes, increase the payments to families of officers who are killed in the line of duty and would provide that parents or legal guardians of minors are responsible for the unlimited financial liability of these crimes. Senate Bill 154 passed with a vote of 47 to 7. – **SB 154**

Local Law Enforcement Compensation Commission

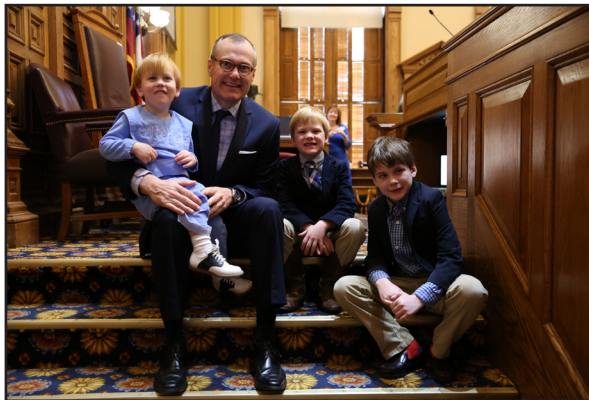
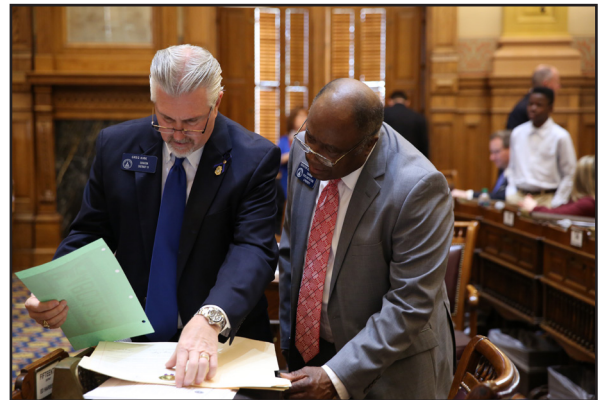
Senate Bill 155, sponsored by Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus), would establish the Local Law Enforcement Compensation Commission. The Commission would be responsible for examining the salaries and benefits of local law enforcement officers and reviewing compensation offered by law enforcement agencies across the state. SB 155 passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **SB 155**

Back the Badge Act of 2017

Senate Bill 160, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), would impose stricter penalties on individuals convicted of harming public safety officers. Under current law, punishment of 10 to 20 years is imposed on anyone who is convicted for aggravated assault for harming a public safety officer. This bill would strengthen the current mandatory minimum sentence for aggravated battery by preventing any part of the 10 year minimum sentence from being suspended, deferred or probated. SB 160 would allow juveniles to be charged as adults, when accused of aggravated assault with a firearm against a law enforcement officer. The bill passed with a vote of 40 to 12. – **SB 160**

“Back the Badge” License Plate

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) sponsored Senate Bill 169 which would honor law enforcement officers by allowing citizens to purchase license plates titled “Back the Badge”. The funds collected will be donated to the Peace Officers Annuity and Benefit Fund which prepares their members for retirement and provides a well deserved pension once that goal is reached. The bill passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **SB 169**



The Georgia Senate will reconvene for **DAY 25** at 10:00 a.m. on **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27.**