



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

March 6 - March 10, 2017



Focus Moves to House Bills

This week we convened on Monday, Thursday and Friday for Days 29, 30 and 31 of the legislative session. With Crossover Day behind us, the Senate committees have turned their attention to House bills.

For me, Tuesday and Wednesday were taken up with “green door” meetings where we reconciled the reports of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittees in an effort to produce a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2018. Senate Appropriations Chairman Jack Hill (R – Reidsville) will present our work – the Senate version of House Bill 44 – to the full Senate Appropriations

Committee next week. Once approved by the full Senate, it will go back to the House for further consideration.

We recognized several important groups this week, including the Georgia National Guard and our law enforcement community. Sen. Hunter Hill (R – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 172 which recognizes March 6, 2017, as National Guard Day at the Capitol. Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) sponsored Senate Resolution 295 which recognizes March 6, 2017, as Law Enforcement Day at the Capitol. It was a humbling experience to be joined by representatives of these two important groups whose members go above and beyond for us. These brave men and women put their lives on the line every day and it was an honor to recognize them.

This week the Senate unanimously approved House Bill 146 which provides our firefighters with special and much needed cancer insurance coverage. These courageous men and women risk their lives charging into buildings that others flee. All of us are grateful to Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) and Rep. Micah Gravelly (R – Douglasville) who have doggedly led the effort to ensure that they and their families are financially protected.

The pace will pick up as we enter the final nine days of the legislative session. We will reconvene Monday for Day 32. 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, MARCH 6

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia

House Bill 127, carried by Sen. Marty Harbin (R – Tyrone), would remove inactive sections of the Georgia Code relating to Blue Cross Blue Shield. This bill would also make changes to the Insurance Code that would conform to the repealing of these chapters. HB 127 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 127**

Federal Food Safety Modernization Act

House Bill 176, carried by Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry), would designate the Georgia Department of Agriculture as the agency responsible for enforcing the Federal Food Safety Modernization Act. Under HB 176, an additional article is provided regarding the labeling, standards and adulteration of food. This bill would allow the Georgia Department of Agriculture to partner with the federal government to implement federal laws. HB 176 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 176**

State Commission on Family Violence

House Bill 303, carried by Sen. Elena Parent (D – Atlanta), would amend the terms and qualifications of members of the State Commission on Family Violence. This new legislation would prohibit members from serving two consecutive terms unless they are serving in an ex-officio capacity. HB 303 would require each commission member to be appointed for a three year term and would provide allowances to legislative members. HB 303 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 303**

Honoring McKenzie Coan

Senate Resolution 80, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa), commends Paralympic gold medalist McKenzie Coan. McKenzie, a resident of Habersham County, won four medals in the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She was diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta when she was a child and began swimming for physical therapy. McKenzie has since perfected her swimming skills and has been recognized as the fastest swimmer in the Paralympic class. – **SR 80**



National Guard Day

Sen. Hunter Hill (R – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 172 which recognizes March 6, 2017, as National Guard Day at the Capitol. The Georgia Department of Defense consists of the Georgia Army National Guard, the Georgia Air National Guard and the Georgia State Defense Force. The Georgia National Guard is the eighth largest in the nation and deployed over 600 soldiers and airmen in 2016. Georgia's National Guard also hosts the Youth Challenge Academy in Forts Stewart and Gordon where over 14,000 high school dropouts have been given an opportunity to receive a high school diploma. – **SR 172**

Recognizing Miss Atlanta 2017

Sen. Steve Henson (D – Stone Mountain) sponsored Senate Resolution 176 honoring Miss Atlanta 2017 Paula Smith. She is a sophomore at Savannah College of Art and Design and is heavily active in the art community. Paula is involved with the the Georgia Art Therapy Association and her “A Roadmap To Success” program where she teaches about the advantages of art therapy. – **SR 176**



Miss Georgia Peach Pageant Scholarship and Georgia Peach Queens

Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry) sponsored Senate Resolution 264 commending the Miss Georgia Peach Scholarship Pageant and the 2016 Georgia Peach Queens. The Miss Georgia Peach Scholarship Pageant started in Peach County, Georgia in 1982. The pageant is open statewide to girls ages four to 24 for the purpose of building self-confidence, and also recognizes those who make a positive contribution to the community. – **SR 264**

Lt. Gen. David Poythress

Sen. Ed Harbison (D – Columbus) sponsored Senate Resolution 286 honoring the life and memory of Lt. Gen. David Poythress. During his tenure in the United States Air Force, Lt. Gen. Poythress served tours of duty during the Vietnam War and the wars in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2002, he was promoted to Lt. General making him the first Adjutant General in Georgia to earn three stars. – **SR 286**

Law Enforcement Day

Senate Resolution 295, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), recognizes March 6, 2017, as Law Enforcement Day at the Capitol. There are approximately 54,000 certified peace officers in the state of Georgia with 14,000 working for state agencies and 40,000 working as local officers. This resolution honors the state of Georgia's highly trained and professional law enforcement officers for putting their lives on the line every day and to recognize them for all they do. – **SR 295**



THURSDAY, MARCH 9

Firefighter Insurance Coverage

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 146 which would require fire departments to insure any firefighter who has served for 12 consecutive months with the department and is diagnosed with certain cancers. This bill also requires that any firefighter that is injured or suffers an illness and is unable to work be paid through separate disability. HB 146 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 146**

Revenue and Taxation

House Bill 283, carried by Sen. Michael Williams (R – Cumming), would update the definition of the term “Internal Revenue Code” to include any changes made by federal law before January 1, 2017. HB 283, the Federal Combat-Injured Veterans Tax Fairness Act of 2016, would be modified to make it compatible with Georgia Law. HB 283 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 283**

Term Limits for Members of the Congress

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) sponsored Senate Resolution 195 which asks Congress to call an Article V Convention to address a proposal to limit the terms a person can serve as a member of Congress. SR 195 passed with a vote of 31 to 19. – **SR 195**

Laurie Sossa

Senate Resolution 108, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta), commends Laurie Sossa and her organization, The Southern Barter Club. Laurie has dedicated her time and resources to assist rising entrepreneurs and to stimulate commerce and trade in Georgia. The Southern Barter Club has been recognized as one of the most committed civic organizations in Georgia and continues to provide innovation in the barter and trade industry.

– **SR 108**

Honoring Coach Greg James

Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) sponsored Senate Resolution 159 honoring Coach Greg James for his leadership and accomplishments. He has served the Vidalia City School System as a teacher and coach for 40 years. Coach James has led Vidalia High School's baseball team to victory in two GHSA AA State Championship games, appeared in the state semi-finals four times, won nine region championship games and appeared in 19 playoff games. – **SR 159**

Lupus Awareness Day

Senate Resolution 181, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta), recognizes March 9, 2017, as Lupus Awareness Day at the Capitol. Lupus is an acute and chronic lifelong autoimmune disease. There are at least 1.5 million Americans, including 55,000 Georgians, currently living with lupus. The Senate commends the work of the Lupus Foundation of America and the many organizations devoted to finding a cure for lupus. – **SR 181**

Spelman College Day

Sen. Gail Davenport (D – Jonesboro) sponsored Senate Resolution 272 which recognizes March 9, 2017, as Spelman College Day at the Capitol. Spelman College has been recognized as the leading educator of women of African descent, and was named among the top 100 liberal arts colleges in the nation. Spelman's current student body boasts more than 2,100 students, and empowers women to engage the many cultures of the world. – **SR 272**

Georgia Pre-K Week

Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta) sponsored Senate Resolution 358 which recognizes October 2-6, 2017, as Georgia's Pre-K Week. Georgia's Pre-K program helps prepare children for school and sets them on a path to reading literacy by the end of the third grade. The program has served 1.4 million children in Georgia and this year marks the 25th anniversary of Georgia's Pre-K program. – **SR 358**

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Therapy Dogs "Canines for Kids"

Senate Resolution 387, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), commends the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta therapy dog program known as "Canines for Kids". The program employs 13 full-time therapy dogs who go through an intensive 18-month training process. The dogs help calm fears, provide comfort and reduce anxiety for children and their families. – **SR 387**



FRIDAY, MARCH 10

Georgia Geospatial Advisory Council

House Bill 183 carried by Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan) would transfer the Georgia Geospatial Advisory Council, including all papers, data and reports, from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Community Affairs. HB183 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 183**

Georgia World Congress Center

Sen. P. K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) carried House Bill 264 which would increase the bonding capacity for the Georgia World Congress Center from \$200 million to \$400 million. The primary purpose of the bonds is to generate revenue for multipurpose stadiums, coliseums and other related facilities. HB 264 passed with a vote of 45 to 9. – **HB 264**

Commending Fairview Elementary School

Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur) sponsored Senate Resolution 302 recognizing Fairview Elementary School's success with its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative. As part of the program, Fairview Elementary revised its school-wide standard to reflect the "3Bs": Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Safe. The 3B's were applied to expectations across a variety of school settings and as a result of the program's implementation and success, the school's ranking was elevated to 4-stars. – **SR 302**

Recognizing "Driller Mike"

Senate Resolution 315, sponsored by Sen. Nan Orrock (D – Atlanta), recognizes the City of Atlanta's efforts to improve its water quality by using a machine named "Driller Mike" to bore a five-mile-long tunnel to fill an abandoned quarry with 2.4 billion gallons of drinking water. The machine was named after the Grammy Award-winning rapper and Atlanta native, Michael Render, also known as "Killer Mike". – **SR 315**

Congratulating Joel Edward Harrell III

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) sponsored Senate Resolution 361 which congratulates Joel Edward Harrell III for his retirement from his career in public relations with Norfolk Southern Railway Corporation. Harrell, who received a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from Virginia Tech University, served as Norfolk Southern's public relations representative for more than three decades. Harrell is also the president of the Georgia Railway Association and is a board member for the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Transportation Alliance. – **SR 361**



The Georgia Senate will reconvene for **DAY 32 at 10:00 a.m. on
MONDAY, MARCH 13.**