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This Week in the Senate

February 12 - 15, 2018



Past the Halfway Mark

The Senate met this week for days 19-22 of the legislative session with the goal of passing legislation to benefit our state's men and women in blue. Law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day so we can live with the peace of mind we so often take for granted. While law enforcement compensation legislation was the main focus, we also passed other bills covering a wide range of topics.

We also made progress on our only constitutionally required duty, passing a balanced budget, with the passage of the Amended Fiscal Year 2018 Budget. In total, the Senate saw 20 bills passed on the Senate

floor, all of which have been sent to the House for consideration.

Senate Bills 366, 367, 368 and 369 all address law enforcement compensation through various programs and efforts that were brought forth, vetted and refined in the Compensation of Police and Sheriffs (COPS) Task Force created by Lt. Governor Casey Cagle, spearheaded by Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) and made possible with the help of Sens. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), Jack Hill (R – Reidsville), Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonga), John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) and Tonya Anderson (D – Lithonia). Though no amount of money can replace a fallen officer, we hope that passing this legislation, with bipartisan support, will stand as a small token of how much we appreciate, respect and admire their sacrifices and bravery.

In addition to passing legislation, the Senate also heard from several special guests including Reverend Dr. Bernice King, daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr., city of Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and the family of Otis Redding, Jr. On Monday of this week, I sponsored Lake Lanier Day at the state Capitol. Lake Lanier does so much more than just provide our citizens with a place to relax, it provides economic development opportunities and much of the water supply for many north Georgia counties.

We're halfway through the 2018 legislative session and I expect the remaining days of session to be just as busy, if not busier, than this week. I look forward to keeping you updated on legislation and hope you will reach out to my office with any questions, concerns or comments. My phone lines and door are always open.

Senator Butch Miller

President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Creating the State Health Benefit Plan Advisory Council

Sen. Josh McKoon (R – Columbus) sponsored Senate Bill 31 which would create the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) Advisory Council. The Council would advise and make recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Community Health on changes to the SHBP. The bill would require at least two members of the Board of Community Health to be participants in the SHBP. SB 31 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **SB 31**



Updating Georgia's Cybersecurity Laws

Senate Bill 315, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), would create a new cybersecurity crime of unauthorized access of a computer or computer network as a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature which could result in up to a year of jail time, a \$5,000 fine or both. SB 315 passed with a vote of 41-11. – **SB 315**

Penalties for Boiler and Pressure Vessel Regulation Violations

Sen. Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown) sponsored Senate Bill 353 which would create a civil penalty for violations of state boiler

and pressure vessel regulations. SB 353 would establish a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 for individuals who are in violation of Safety Fire Commissioner regulations. SB 353 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **SB 353**

Waiving Medicaid Recipient Estate Claims

Senate Bill 370, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa), would clarify that the Commissioner of the Department of Community Health (DCH) can waive the first \$25,000 against the estate of a Medicaid recipient. Under current law, the DCH may make a claim against the estate of a Medicaid recipient for any amount of medical assistance. SB 370 caps a claim waived at the first \$25,000 of any estate. SB 370 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **SB 370**

Honoring Mountain Education Charter High School

Senate Resolution 692, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega), honors students and faculty from Mountain Education Charter High School (MECHS) for their efforts in providing a non-traditional school environment for students. MECHS was founded in 1993 and now serves more than 2,500 students from 40 counties to offer a high-quality education for students across north Georgia. – **SR 692**

Georgia Suicide Prevention Day

Sen. David Shafer (R – Duluth) sponsored Senate Resolution 693 recognizing February 12, 2018, as the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Georgia Suicide Prevention Day at the state Capitol. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the second leading cause of death among ages 15-24 in the U.S. AFSP has chapters in all 50 states and is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those considering suicide. – **SR 693**



Lake Lanier Day at the State Capitol

Senate Resolution 742, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville), recognizes February 12, 2018, as Lake Lanier Day at the state Capitol. Lake Lanier provides a majority of the water supply for north Georgia and covers nearly 38,000 acres. Lake Lanier also plays a key role in north Georgia's recreation and tourism industries, with more than 11 million visitors annually and contributing more than \$300 million to Dawson, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall and Lumpkin counties. – **SR 742**

Recognizing Georgia Young Farmers Association

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) presented Senate Resolution 736 commending the Georgia Young Farmers Association and recognizing February 12, 2018, as Young Farmers Day at the state Capitol. The Georgia Young Farmers Association was founded in 1970 and has nearly 6,000 members in 56 chapters throughout the state. The organization aims to promote agricultural best practices among young farmers. – **SR 736**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Alcohol Sales on Sunday

Senate Bill 17, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), would allow local governments to authorize by referendum the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption at wineries, restaurants whose gross revenue is made up of 50 percent food sales and hotels after 11 a.m. SB 17 passed with a vote of 38-18. – **SB 17**

Establishing an Outdoor Recreation Mentor Program

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) sponsored Senate Bill 332 which would establish an outdoor mentorship program within the Department of Natural Resources for those who have never held a fishing or hunting permit. In addition, SB 332 would also allow non-resident youth ages 15 and below to purchase a hunting or fishing permit at a reduced cost. SB 332 passed with a vote of 56-0. – **SB 332**



Revalidating Automobile Registration Decals

Senate Bill 342, sponsored by Sen. Marty Harbin (R – Tyrone), would eliminate a law enforcement officer's requirement to impound a vehicle that doesn't have a current tag registration decal. SB 342 would allow the owner of the vehicle without the required revalidation decal to retain custody of their vehicle until the assigned court date. SB 342 passed with a vote of 56-0. – **SB 342**

The Georgia Measuring Success Act

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) sponsored Senate Bill 378 which would mandate any legislation containing new tax incentives, or the modification of standing tax incentives, to undergo a financial analysis by the bill's author and the state auditor. SB 378 passed with a vote of 55-0. – **SB 378**



Congratulating Delano Massey

Senate Resolution 633, sponsored by Sen. Valencia Seay (D – Riverdale), congratulates Delano Massey for his work with Jacob's Eye, a media communication agency and asset development firm that works with the world's biggest brands to bring innovative solutions to their clients. Massey is also a retired United States Army Judge Advocate General Corps Warrior and has more than 20 years of experience owning various businesses across the country. – **SR 633**

Recognizing the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 638 which recognizes February 13, 2018, as Georgia Farm Bureau Federation (GFBF) Day at the state Capitol. The GFBF was founded in 1937 by 50 farmers in Bartow County advocating for sound public policy in agricultural production. The GFBF has grown to include 158 county chapters with more than 285,000 members. – **SR 638**

Emergency Medical Services Recognition Day

Senate Resolution 674, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell), recognizes February 13, 2018, as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Recognition Day at the state Capitol. Georgia EMS professionals respond to more than 1 million calls for assistance annually. EMS is celebrating its 44th year of service and there are more than 16,000 state EMS personnel who provide essential life-saving services. – **SR 674**

Family and Consumer Sciences Students Visit State Capitol

Sen. Frank Ginn (R – Danielsville) sponsored Senate Resolution 680 which recognizes Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) for its focus on research, knowledge and skills that aid people in making informed decisions regarding their well-being in order to achieve optimal quality of life. FACS education is offered from middle school to college across the state. – **SR 680**



Teachers of Math Day

Senate Resolution 712, sponsored by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), recognizes February 13, 2018, as Teachers of Math Day at the state Capitol. The Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (GCTM) works to promote high-quality mathematics education for all students. GCTM is composed of educators who teach in a variety of classrooms ranging from preschool to graduate school. – **SR 712**

Celebrating Georgia Pre-K's 25th Anniversary

Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta) sponsored Senate Resolution 727 which recognizes October 1-5, 2018, as Georgia Pre-K Week. The 2017-2018 school year marks the 25th anniversary of the Georgia Pre-K program, which has prepared more than 1.6 million of Georgia's children for success in kindergarten and beyond. – **SR 727**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Updating Campaign Contribution Disclosure Filing Dates

Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Bill 107 which would revise the filing date of campaign financial disclosure reports. SB 107 would eliminate the December 31 filing date and replace it with a May 10 filing date during an election year. SB 107 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **SB 107**

Requiring Life Insurance Policy Locator Websites

Senate Bill 248, sponsored by Sen. Marty Harbin (R – Tyrone), would require life insurance companies operating in Georgia to review the life insurance policy locator website to aid in finding policies of deceased policyholders. The bill will assist in alerting beneficiaries who may not know about the policy in their possession. SB 248 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **SB 248**

Expanding Jurisdiction for Technical College System Officers

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) sponsored Senate Bill 348 which would allow Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) law enforcement to exercise the same powers granted to University System of Georgia law enforcement. Under SB 348, TCSG officers would be able to enter into agreements with local law enforcement agencies and vice versa. In addition, SB 348 gives campus officers jurisdiction of up to 500 feet from the respective TCSG campus. SB 348 passed with a vote of 48-1. – **SB 348**



Decreasing Wage Disparities for Local Law Enforcement

Senate Bill 366, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonge), would require local governments to submit annual wage compensation information for law enforcement agency employees to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The department would then conduct an analysis of the data and submit the information back to local governments to adopt guidance pay scales. In addition, SB 366 would create a grant program to help designated Tier 1 counties lessen wage disparities among law enforcement officers across county lines. SB 366 passed with a vote of 52-2. – **SB 366**

Supporting Local Law Enforcement Agencies

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) sponsored Senate Bill 367 which would expand the list of qualified individuals who can receive a state indemnification payment to include their estate. SB 367 outlines that the indemnification would be a one time payment made for a law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty. SB 367 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **SB 367**



Providing Technical Support for Local Law Enforcement

Senate Bill 368, sponsored by Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus), would allow the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to provide technical support to local law enforcement agencies by providing equipment, grant funding, operations, training and other local agency needs. SB 368 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **SB 368**

Pre-Trial Fees Helping Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) sponsored Senate Bill 369 which would require \$5 of every pre-trial diversion fee to be paid into the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund. In addition, the legislation would require pre-trial fees to be collected by the clerk of courts. SB 369 passed with a vote of 55-0. – **SB 369**

Incorporating Skidaway Island

House Bill 618, carried by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would provide the charter to incorporate the city of Skidaway Island. In addition, HB 618 lays the groundwork for Skidaway Island's local governmental operations. HB 618 passed with a vote of 43-10. – **HB 618**

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms Visits Senate

Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms was welcomed to the Senate Chamber as a special guest on Wednesday, February 14, 2018. Mayor Bottoms commended the Senate and thanked members for their hard work and dedication to the state of Georgia.

Clark Atlanta University Day

Sen. Horacena Tate (D – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 687 recognizing February 14, 2018, as Clark Atlanta University Day at the state Capitol. Clark Atlanta University was established in 1988 upon the consolidation of Atlanta University and Clark College. Clark Atlanta University is one of three Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the city of Atlanta and one of six in the state. – **SR 687**



Stop The Bleed Day at the Capitol

Senate Resolution 689, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) and presented by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), recognizes February 14, 2018, as Georgia Stop the Bleed Day at the state Capitol. Annually, more than 180,000 people die from blood loss as a result of traumatic injuries sustained in vehicle crashes, natural disasters and mass casualties. Stopping blood loss is one of the most common preventable causes of death and Stop the Bleed aims to educate bystanders on how to help in emergencies before medical professionals arrive to the scene. – **SR 689**

Recognizing Woody Gap School

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonge) sponsored Senate Resolution 709 commending Woody Gap School. This K-12 school in Union County was constructed out of local materials with labor provided by the Works Progress Administration. Now in its 78th year of operation, Woody Gap School is the smallest public school in the state of Georgia with a current enrollment of 59 students. – **SR 709**

Commending Medical Association of Georgia Medical Reserve Corps

Senate Resolution 717, sponsored by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), honors the Medical Association of Georgia Medical Reserve Corps (MAG MRC) for its 2017 emergency disaster response efforts in the state of Georgia. MAG MRC contributes to Georgia's state disaster response plan and sent professionals and personnel to respond to Hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria in 2017. – **SR 717**



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Proposing New Boundaries for the City of Stockbridge

Senate Bill 262, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough), would provide a referendum to some citizens in northern Henry County to revise the boundaries of the city of Stockbridge. The measure would give citizens within the newly proposed city boundaries of Eagle's Landing the opportunity to vote on deannexation from the city of Stockbridge. SB 262 passed with a vote of 30-25. A motion to reconsider was filed by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur) to be heard on February 20. – **SB 262**

Incorporating Eagle's Landing

Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough) sponsored Senate Bill 263 which serves as the charter document for the city of Eagle's Landing. If the referendum offered to the citizens of northern Henry County in SB 262 passes, the provisions in SB 263 would take effect. The charter contains the Eagle's Landing constitution and lays out the basic laws and regulations for the city. SB 263 passed with a vote of 29-23. A motion to reconsider was filed by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur) to be heard on February 20. – **SB 263**

Creating Alternative Assessment Pilot Programs

Senate Bill 362, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta), would create a pilot program in schools to develop and implement alternative assessment and accountability systems. The program is estimated to last three to five years and would be open for application in 10 school districts. The legislation aims to develop highly efficient assessment systems that provide real-time feedback in identifying areas of student mastery and deficiency. SB 362 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **SB 362**

Passing the FY18 Amended Budget

House Bill 683, carried by Sen. Jack Hill (R – Reidsville), is the supplemental appropriations bill for the state of Georgia for the Amended Fiscal Year 2018 budget. The amended budget totals \$25.3 billion for FY18, including \$306 million in new spending. The three largest items in this year's amended budget include \$86.8 million to account for K-12 enrollment growth, \$82.8 million for Medicaid between state and federal funds and \$25.1 million to expand runway lengths at 11 regional airports. HB 683 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **HB 683**

Congratulating Country Music Star John Berry

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 668 congratulating John Berry on the 25th anniversary of his first major label recording contract. Raised in Atlanta, Berry began playing guitar at the age of 12. In 1994, he was nominated for the Academy of Country Music’s Top New Male Vocalist and in 1995 he received a Grammy award for his hit “Your Love Amazes Me.” – **SR 668**

Recognizing Augusta’s Interfaith Coalition

Senate Resolution 721, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), recognizes February 15, 2018, as Augusta’s Interfaith Coalition Day at the state Capitol. Augusta’s Interfaith Coalition works to increase voter awareness and participation. The organization is an outspoken advocate for religious freedom, promoting policies that protect religion and democracy by bringing together diverse voices. – **SR 721**

Plastic Pollution Awareness Day

Sen. Nan Orrock (D – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 741 which recognizes February 15, 2018, as Plastic Pollution Awareness Day at the state Capitol. Each year, Americans throw away billions of water bottles and use more than 500 million disposable straws a day that end up polluting the environment. Plastic pollution, which contains harmful chemicals, can directly and negatively impact life and resources on Earth. – **SR 741**

Honoring the Legacy of Otis Redding, Jr.

Senate Resolution 744, sponsored by Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson), recognizes February 15, 2018, as Otis Redding, Jr. Day at the state Capitol. The Senate welcomed Redding’s family members to honor his life, memory and legacy. Redding rose to prominence in the Macon music scene and wrote, composed and produced many beloved songs over the years. In addition to his success as a musician, he was also a philanthropist and a trailblazer against segregation. – **SR 744**



**The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00a.m. on
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20.**