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This Week in the Senate

February 20 - 23, 2018



Preparing for Crossover

We completed another four legislative days this week and are now just one legislative day away from Crossover Day which will be next Wednesday, February 28th. Senate committees worked very hard and into late hours each day to properly vet and debate legislation prior to the committee report deadline. Our work was not limited to just committee work; the Senate passed a total of 19 pieces of legislation. The topics ranged from health care to taxes to insurance. Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) presented her first bill to the Senate. Senate Bill 356 would create the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust. This legislation received bipartisan and unanimous support.

Along with debating and voting on legislation, we were honored to have four special guests with us in the Chamber. United States Senator Johnny Isakson (R – GA), United States Congresswoman Karen Handel (GA – 06), United States Congressman Barry Loudermilk (GA – 11) and United States Congressman Jody Hice (GA – 10) all gave us a brief update from Washington, D.C. They also reinforced that we can always do more for the citizens of Georgia if we all put our differences aside and work together to positively impact the lives of all citizens. Additionally, it was an honor to recognize Wednesday, February 21 as Georgia Restaurants Day. I sponsored Senate Resolution 775 to recognize the economic impact Georgia's restaurant industry has on our state. It was wonderful to have their representatives in the chamber with us.

On Wednesday, the Senate and House held a joint session for the State of the Judiciary. Chief Justice P. Harris Hines delivered a positive message focused on a year "of great change and great promise." He provided an overview of the changes that have been made and what is to come for the judicial branch in the future.

Next week, the Senate will be in session for three days with the longest and busiest one being Crossover Day. I want to thank all of the members and staff for their hard work with getting us to this point. We are more than halfway through the session and while the work load increases daily, everyone's efforts for our success have not waivered. To the hardworking staff and our tireless members, I want to say Thank You for all that you do and I wish you the best of luck next week. If our office can do anything to help please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Senator Butch Miller

President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Creating the Integrated Population Health Data Project

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) sponsored Senate Bill 184 which would create the Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project and lay the outline for its governance to be established before January 1, 2019. Under SB 184, the iPHD Project would securely receive, maintain and transmit data within Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act privacy and security guidelines. SB 184 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **SB 184**

Reconsidering New Boundaries for the City of Stockbridge

A motion to reconsider SB 262, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough), was filed on February 15, by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur). SB 262 would deannex territory from the city of Stockbridge and would also give some citizens in Henry County the opportunity to vote on annexation into the city of Stockbridge. The motion to reconsider failed with a vote of 16-34. – **SB 262**



Reconsidering Incorporating Eagle’s Landing

A motion to reconsider SB 263, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough), was filed on February 15, by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur). SB 263 would serve 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 passed, 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. The motion to reconsider failed with a vote of 17-35. – **SB 263**



Expanding Fiduciary Powers

Senate Bill 301, sponsored by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon), would modernize a fiduciary’s legal authority to access digital assets and electronic communications. Under this bill, digital assets and electronic communications would be handled the same way as tangible assets. SB 301 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **SB 301**

The Georgia Agricultural Education Act

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Bill 330 which would create an agricultural education pilot program in several elementary schools throughout the state. Under SB 330,

the Department of Education would also work with local school systems to establish school based agricultural education curriculum for grades six through 12. SB 330 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **SB 330**

Transferring Authority of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust

Senate Bill 356, sponsored by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), would transfer the authority of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust from the Secretary of State to the Department of Community Affairs. Under SB 356, the commission advisory role for legislators is removed and transfers the requirement to the Speaker of the House and Lt. Governor to appoint a member from both the majority and minority parties. In addition, SB 356 authorizes the Commission to create the Georgia Holocaust Memorial in a prominent location. SB 356 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **SB 356**

Allowing Local Governments to Receive Department of Revenue Data

Sen. Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown) sponsored Senate Bill 371 which would give local counties and municipalities the ability to request information from the Department of Revenue to see what businesses within county lines are included on the vendor sales tax certificate. SB 371 passed with a vote of 55-0. – **SB 371**

Extending Domestic Surplus Lines Insurers

Senate Bill 381, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), would allow domiciled surplus lines insurers to extend coverage throughout the state. Under current law, insurance companies headquartered in Georgia are not permitted to extend coverage within the state. SB 381 passed with a vote of 37-17. – **SB 381**

Commending GSU's Advanced Health Policy Institute

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) sponsored Senate Resolution 639 commending the Legislative Health Policy Certificate Program and Advanced Health Policy Institute at Georgia State University (GSU). The institute serves as an educational initiative to inform members of the health care community about pressing issues and has been housed at GSU for 10 years. – **SR 639**

Recognizing the Bleckley County FFA Forestry Team

Senate Resolution 651, sponsored by Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry), recognizes the Bleckley County Future Farmers of America (FFA) Forestry Team for winning first place in the 2017 National FFA Forestry Career Development Event in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Bleckley County FFA team beat the second place team by 137 points. – **SR 651**

FFA Day at the State Capitol

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 654 which recognizes February 20, 2018, as Future Farmers of America (FFA) Day at the state Capitol. FFA is an agricultural education program that prepares students to meet the growing demands in the science, business and technology sectors of agriculture. The Georgia FFA ranks as the third largest state FFA organization in the United States with more than 42,000 current members. – **SR 654**



Research Day at the State Capitol

Senate Resolution 700, sponsored by Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta), commends the University of Georgia, Augusta University, Georgia Institute of Technology and Georgia State University for their research efforts. The University System of Georgia generates more than 157,000 jobs, \$16.8 billion in economic output and works toward preparing students for success in the workforce in all 159 counties in Georgia. – **SR 700**



Celebrating the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce's 80th Anniversary

Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 763 celebrating the 80th anniversary of the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce. In 1938, the DeKalb Chamber was established as the DeKalb County Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce to support local dairy farms. – **SR 763**

Recognizing the DeKalb Chamber and the Dunwoody Perimeter Chamber

Senate Resolution 785, sponsored by Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta), recognizes February 20, 2018, as DeKalb Chamber of

Commerce Day at the state Capitol and celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Dunwoody Perimeter Chamber. The Dunwoody Perimeter Chamber supports more than 300 investing organizations and a business community of more than 3,000 organizations. – **SR 785**

Recognizing the Home Builders Association of Georgia

Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) sponsored Senate Resolution 790 recognizing the Home Builders Association of Georgia for its support of local associations throughout the state. The association was created in 1977 and works to provide safe and affordable housing. – **SR 790**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

The Consolidation of Fire Safety Services in Georgia Act

Senate Bill 319, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell), would consolidate all fire-related safety services across the state under a new Division of Fire Safety, which would be led by the newly created Commissioner of Fire Safety. The new division would fall under the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC). The bill would also create a Fire Safety Advisory Board and transfer all duties related to fire safety from the Commissioner of Insurance to the new division. SB 319 passed with a vote of 49-3. – **SB 319**

Expanding the Sponsorship Ratio for Physician Assistants

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) sponsored Senate Bill 364 which would increase doctor sponsorship of physician assistants from four to eight, if the physician assistant completes a board approved anesthesiology assistant program. SB 364 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **SB 364**

Revising the Official Code of Georgia

Senate Bill 365, sponsored by Sen. William Ligon (R – Brunswick), would amend the Official Code of Georgia Annotated by making revisions, correcting errors or omissions and modernizing language in accordance with annual recommendations from the Code Revision Commission and federal law. SB 365 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **SB 365**



Freedom Creek Name Adoption

Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah) sponsored Senate Resolution 685 which calls on the U.S. Board of Geographic Names to adopt the name 'Freedom Creek' in place of 'Runaway Negro Creek' near Skidaway Island in Chatham County. SR 685 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **SR 685**

Senate Welcomes United States Senator Johnny Isakson

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R – GA) visited the state Senate on Wednesday to thank members for their hard work on behalf of the people of Georgia and congratulate the Senate on its successes so far this year. Sen. Isakson has served as a U.S. Senator from Georgia since 2005 and currently serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Before his election to the U.S. Senate, Sen. Isakson served as a member of both the Georgia Senate and House of Representatives.

United States Congressman Jody Hice Visits Senate

Congressman Jody Hice (GA – 10) visited the state Capitol and thanked Senate members for passing legislation conducive to creating an environment for prosperity and economic growth. Before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2015, Congressman Hice was a pastor and radio show host.



Senate Welcomes United States Congressman Barry Loudermilk

Congressman Barry Loudermilk (GA – 11) visited the Senate to thank members for the positive impact they have made on Georgians this year, specifically relating to tax cuts. Prior to his service in the U.S. Congress, he served eight years in the Georgia General Assembly as both a Senator and Representative.

Habersham County Day at the Capitol

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 610 recognizing February 21, 2018, as Habersham County Day at the state Capitol. Established in 1818, Habersham County is known for Tallulah Gorge, as well as for its outdoor recreation and cultural activities. Habersham County is home to Piedmont College and North Georgia Technical College. – **SR 610**



Albany-Dougherty County Day at the State Capitol

Senate Resolution 661, sponsored by Sen. Freddie Powell-Sims (D – Dawson), commends the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce and recognizes February 21, 2018, as Albany-Dougherty County Day at the state Capitol. Now in its 108th year of operation, the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce plays a key role in supporting both small businesses and global industries operating in the region, which include MillerCoors, Pfizer and Procter & Gamble. – **SR 661**

Commending World Wings International, Inc.

Sen. Gail Davenport (D – Jonesboro) sponsored Senate Resolution 704 recognizing and commending the Atlanta chapter of World Wings International, Inc. The global philanthropic organization, made up of former Pan-Am flight attendants, has thousands of members in 31 chapters worldwide. World Wings International, Inc. has given more than \$8 million to charity, including more than \$1.5 million to Atlanta-based CARE and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. – **SR 704**

Recognizing Georgia's Restaurant Industry

Senate Resolution 775, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville), recognizes February 21, 2018, as State Restaurant Day at the state Capitol. With more than 18,000 food and drink establishments statewide, which generate more than \$20 billion annually, the restaurant industry plays a vital part in Georgia's economy. More than 476,000 restaurant professionals in the state provide the highest quality food, drinks and service. – **SR 775**



Commending NASCAR Driver Chase Elliott

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) sponsored Senate Resolution 834 honoring NASCAR driver Chase Elliott. Elliott has been highly decorated in his short career, winning the 2014 NASCAR Nationwide Series Championship as a rookie, the 2016 Sprint Cup Rookie of the Year Award and was voted as NASCAR Xfinity Series' Most Popular Driver in 2014 and 2015. – **SR 834**



Honoring NASCAR Legend Bill Elliott

Senate Resolution 835, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega), commends the career of NASCAR driver Bill Elliott. He boasts more than 40 wins and 300 top 10 finishes. Elliott is one of the most popular NASCAR drivers of all time, being selected Most Popular Driver of the Year a record 16 times throughout his career. He has been named one of NASCAR's 50 Greatest Drivers and was inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame in 2015. – **SR 835**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

State of the 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. Chief Justice Hines spoke about what is to come in 2018, including the appointment of a new Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice. In addition, Chief Justice Hines commended the state for the construction of a first-ever judiciary building that Georgia's appellate courts will call home upon completion.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Day

Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah) sponsored Senate Resolution 707 recognizing February 22, 2018, as Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Day at the state Capitol. Kappa Alpha Psi, which was founded in 1911 by 10 African-American men, now has more than 130,000 members around the world. The fraternity members are involved in causes ranging from social issues to education initiatives around their local communities. – **SR 707**

Gordon Lee High School Fast Pitch State Championship

Senate Resolution 760, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga), congratulates the Gordon Lee High School softball team for their 2017 Georgia High School Association Class A Fast Pitch State Championship. The Gordon Lee softball team defeated Trion High School with a score of 14-4 in the state championship game. – **SR 760**



Recognizing Audraine Jackson and First Responders Day

Senate Resolution 792, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta), recognizes Audraine Jackson for her success as an award-winning marketing communications professional. Jackson is a graduate of the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia and founded the September 11th First Responders Appreciation Program to honor first responders and law enforcement across southwest Atlanta. – **SR 792**

National Coalition of 100 Black Women Day at the State Capitol

Sen. Michael Rnett (D – Marietta) sponsored Senate Resolution 826 recognizing February 22, 2018, as National Coalition of Black Women, Inc. (NCBW) Day at the state Capitol. NCBW works to advocate on behalf of black women in order to promote leadership development and awareness of black culture. – **SR 826**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Raising the Legal Burden of Proof for Minors Seeking Abortion

Senate Bill 74, sponsored by Sen. Josh McKoon (R – Columbus), would raise the legal standard of evidence required for a minor to obtain a waiver to receive an abortion without parental consent. The new legal standard of evidence, clear and convincing, must satisfy the juvenile court in order for the minor to receive the waiver. SB 74 passed with a vote of 33-17. – **SB 74**



Standardizing Poll Closure Times

Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan) sponsored Senate Bill 363 which would direct all polling stations in Georgia to close at 7p.m. for elections, primaries and runoffs. In addition, the bill would allow poll workers to begin tabulation of advance voting ballots at 6p.m. SB 363 passed with a vote of 32-16. – **SB 363**

Creating an Eleventh Superior Court Judgeship

Senate Bill 373, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta), would create an eleventh superior judgeship on the Cobb Judicial Circuit Court. The judge will be appointed by the Governor and will serve from January 1, 2019, until December 31, 2020, at which point a successor will be elected. SB 373 passed with a vote of 39-0. – **SB 373**

Keep Faith in Adoption and Foster Care Act

Sen. William Ligon (R – Brunswick) sponsored Senate Bill 375 which would permit child placement agencies to make referrals for adoption or foster care services based on the child-placing agency's sincerely held religious beliefs. The bill also stipulates that if a child-placing agency declines to accept a referral from the Department of Human Services, then the services will immediately be referred to another child-placing agency. There would be no adverse action taken against any organization declining services based on its sincerely held religious beliefs. SB 375 passed with a vote of 35-19. – **SB 375**

Transferring Authority of the State Development Workforce Board

Senate Bill 377, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough), would transfer the State Development Workforce Board from the Department of Economic Development to the Technical College System of Georgia. SB 377 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **SB 377**

Changing City Real Estate Disposition Methods

Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah) sponsored Senate Bill 397 which would allow, but not require, municipalities to hire state licensed real estate brokers to assist in real estate property sales. Under the current law, municipalities must dispose of surplus property by either a bidding process or auction. SB 397 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **SB 397**

Achieving Connectivity Everywhere Act

Senate Bill 402, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonge), would lay the groundwork for expanding broadband access to rural Georgia. SB 402 promotes public-private partnerships and gives authority to the Georgia Technology Authority to evaluate communities and create plans for broadband expansion. The bill would also offer incentives for local communities, including a new community designation of "broadband ready," which will allow them to qualify for grant programs and the opportunity for tax exemptions in certain areas. Under the legislation, SB 402 would use existing Department of Transportation right-of-ways to lay fiber. SB 402 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **SB 402**



Creating a Need-Based Scholarship System

Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Bill 405 which would create a new need-based grant program for students who have been accepted for enrollment at a University System of Georgia school. To qualify, the student's household must have an annual income below \$48,000, receive a Federal Pell Grant and achieve a high school GPA between 2.3 and 3.0. In order to maintain the scholarship, the student must maintain a GPA of at least 2.3 and be employed at least 15 hours a week during the semester, unless the student is an athlete. Students participating in the new scholarship program can receive up to \$1,500 per semester. SB 405 passed with a vote of 44-5. – **SB 405**

Revising Child Support Payment Regulations

Senate Bill 427, sponsored by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) would revise Georgia's code relating to child support payments and updates state law to comply with federal regulations. SB 427 would require the court to take into consideration a parent's assets, education level and job skills when making decisions on child support in situations where evidence of income is not shown. The legislation would also specify that incarceration is not treated as voluntary unemployment and increases the standard fee in each case from \$25 to \$35. SB 427 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **SB 427**

Senate Welcomes United States Congresswoman Karen Handel

Congresswoman Karen Handel (GA – 06) visited the state Capitol and spoke to Senate members thanking them for their work to lower taxes on the state level. Before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, Handel served as Georgia's Secretary of State from 2007-2010.

Commending the Byron Elementary Navy Junior ROTC Program

Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) sponsored Senate Resolution 776 which commends Byron Elementary Navy Junior ROTC for its positive impact in shaping the future leaders of the Peach County community. The Navy Junior ROTC program at Byron Elementary teaches students the value of personal responsibility, citizenship and service to the United States. The program has 62 students and aims to cultivate and develop leadership skills. – **SR 776**

Honoring the Life of Scott Selig

Senate Resolution 810, sponsored by Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta), honors the life of Scott Selig, who lost his battle with lung cancer in October of 2017. His legacy lives on through "Scott Strong," a movement created when he began his fight against cancer. Selig has received the State of Georgia Outstanding Citizen Recognition Award and was recognized as a Lung Force Hero by the American Lung Association. – **SR 810**

Commending the YMCA of Georgia

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) sponsored Senate Resolution 824 commending Georgia's Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) for its programs promoting growth and engagement among Georgia's youth. The YMCA's Youth Assembly reflects the General Assembly, allowing opportunities for children to serve as state legislators, learning the political process of their state government and exploring the role of the media by producing a daily newspaper. – **SR 824**

Congratulating Lamar County's Waste Management Program

Senate Resolution 858, sponsored by Sen. Marty Harbin (R – Tyrone), congratulates Lamar County for its revolutionary waste management system. Lamar County is home to the first landfill in the United States to utilize the Biosphere Process, which produces renewable energy from waste. – **SR 858**

**The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00a.m. on
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26.**