



Georgia Senate Press Office Staff

Ines Owens
Director

Elisabeth Fletcher
Communications Specialist

Andrew Allison
Broadcast Specialist

Annie Wimbush
Communications Associate

Austin Haygood
Broadcast Associate

Pierce Ostwalt
2018 Legislative Aide

Chelsey Shirley
2018 Legislative Aide

Sabbitha Hames
2018 Legislative Intern

Keenan Rogers
2018 Senate Photographer


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

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This Week in the Senate

March 27 - 30, 2018



Sine Die 2018

The Georgia General Assembly adjourned its 2018 Legislative Session *SINE DIE* at 12:12am Friday, March 30, 2018. Days 39 and 40 are long days. Legislators and staff always work lengthy, hard hours to achieve deadlines and goals. This year was no different. The Senate took up 63 pieces of legislation these past two days along with conference committee reports, agrees and disagrees.

As it was my first session serving as President Pro Tempore, I want to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues for electing me to this position. It has certainly been a busy session and there have been many challenging issues, but I am very proud of the work we accomplished. I am also proud of each and every member for their determination and fight and for their commitment to ensuring that the legislation that we pass will positively affect Georgians, today and tomorrow. Thank you, colleagues, for your time and service to the state of Georgia.

I also want to extend my appreciation to all of the full-time staff and those who join us part-time during session for all of their hard work and perseverance in ensuring this session was a success. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, "The best leader is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and the self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it." While the work you do is behind the scenes, your impact can be felt across the state. During our committee meetings and long hours in the chamber debating and voting on legislation, you are laying the groundwork for our success by handling administrative, constituent and legislative duties. Each of us have a team and support group both at the Capitol and back at home who make us look good and for that we say thank you.

We will soon resume publication of both the state and federal editions of *At Issue*. If you have any topics you would like to see highlighted, please let me know.

Senator Butch Miller
President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

Tax Credits for Historic Structures and Zero Emissions Cars

Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta) carried House Bill 59 which would create an income tax credit for companies that manufacture zero emissions vehicles in Georgia and would increase the yearly tax credit cap for rehabilitation of historic structures to \$40 million for projects more than \$300,000. HB 59 passed with a vote of 47-7. – **HB 59**

Out-of-State Business Sales and Use Tax Requirements

House Bill 61, carried by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), would codify that out-of-state businesses that make \$250,000 or more in revenue or conduct more than 200 individual transactions of goods would be subject to the state sales tax rate of 4 percent. HB 61 would apply to goods that are delivered either physically or electronically. HB 61 passed with a vote of 49-3. – **HB 61**

Hypodermic Syringe Distribution

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) carried House Bill 161 which would allow employees of a registered syringe services program, supervised by the Department of Public Health, to distribute hypodermic syringes. Additionally, HB 161 would create the Commission on Substance Abuse and Recovery, an Executive Director of Substance Abuse, Addiction and Related Disorders and a partnership with providers and communities across Georgia to prohibit patient brokering. Under HB 161, those engaging in fraudulent drug testing of the disabled, elderly or those suffering from addiction would be subject to increased penalties including imprisonment of 10 to 20 years, a fine of up to \$25,000 for fraudulent action, or both. HB 161 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 161**

Divorce Contracts

Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) carried House Bill 190 which would update Georgia code relating to antenuptial agreements and make the language consistent with language for marriage contracts. Under HB 190, both antenuptial agreements and marriage contracts would have to be signed by both parties and attested to by at least two additional witnesses, one of whom must be a notary. HB 190 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **HB 190**



Moving the Board of Nursing and Updating the Preceptorship Tax Credit

House Bill 301, carried by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), would move the Georgia Board of Nursing, which is currently overseen by the Secretary of the State, under the authority of the Department of Community Health. Under HB 301, the existing tax deduction for physicians who conduct a preceptorship, including doctors, physician assistants and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) accredited by a nationally recognized body, is updated from a standard rate to one accrued based on number of rotations completed. For the first through third rotation, a physician's tax deduction would be \$500 and then doubles for rotations four through 10, per year, if the physician does not receive payment for the training of a medical student. The number of rotations for nurse physician assistants and APRNs is the same but tax deductions are \$375 and \$750, respectively. This code section of the bill would be effective until December 31, 2023, and a report of the tax credit should be issued. HB 301 passed with a vote of 49-3. – **HB 301**

Creating the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) carried House Bill 332 which would create the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund to fund the protection and conservation of land. HB 332 would require that up to half of the sales and use taxes collected by outdoor recreation establishments and sporting goods stores be dedicated to the trust fund and would fund grants to cities, counties, departments and agencies to support the preservation of state and local parks as well as trails. HB 332 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 332**

Water Vessel Titles

House Bill 357, carried by President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) and presented by Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell), would require all water vessels to be titled if they are subject to numbering required by Georgia law. HB 357 would exempt water vessels that are used for demonstrations or testing from the title requirement. HB 357 passed by a vote of 46-3. – **HB 357**

New Pension System for the Fulton County Board of Education

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 538 which would transfer control of the pension system and retirement plan for Fulton County School District teachers and employees to the Fulton County Board of Education. The bill would give the board autonomy over its own pension system however; any further amendments to the retirement plan must be done by an act of the General Assembly. HB 538 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 538**

Addressing Elder and Disabled Adult Abuse

House Bill 635, carried by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), would establish and outline the membership of the Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Multidisciplinary Team as directed by district attorneys for each judicial circuit throughout the state. Under HB 635, the team would work with local jurisdictions to address suspected incidents of abuse, neglect or exploitation of the elderly or disabled. HB 635 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HB 635**

Pilot Program for Obesity Study

Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah) carried House Bill 647 which would direct the Department of Community Health to create a two-year pilot program to study obesity. The pilot program would work with postsecondary institutions to study management treatment techniques and billing costs related to obesity. No more than 500 participants may apply for the program each year and the department would provide a final report by December 15th of the program's last year to the General Assembly for further review. HB 647 passed with a vote of 49-1. – **HB 647**



Increasing the Penalties for Illegal Acquisition of a Firearm

House Bill 657, carried by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would increase the penalties for individuals who attempt to access a firearm outside of the legal purchasing process. Under HB 657, an individual intentionally providing a firearm to another individual who has been convicted of a felony, or is on felony probation, would be guilty of a felony and imprisonment between one and five years. A second conviction would result in imprisonment between five and 10 years. This legislation would require licensed firearm providers to confirm the felony status of the buyer. HB 657 passed with a vote of 46-6. – **HB 657**

Hotel and Motel Sunset Extension

Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta) carried House Bill 658 which would extend the sunset on certain excise taxes for local hotels and motels to December 31, 2053, for counties that have a coliseum and exhibit hall authority. HB 658 passed with a vote of 43-5. – **HB 658**

Hands-Free Georgia Act

House Bill 673, carried by Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville), would prohibit holding or supporting electronic communication devices on the body, writing or reading electronic communications or watching, recording or broadcasting video while driving. Exceptions would exist for voice-to-text messaging, built-in navigation systems and back-up cameras. Under HB 673, each violation would count as a separate offense with the first, second and third offenses resulting in fines of \$50, \$100 and \$150 respectively. However, first offenders would not receive any penalty if they produce to the court proof of purchase of a hands-free device that complies with the law. HB 673 passed with a vote of 55-0. – **HB 673**

Nonprofit Health Centers Sales and Use Exemptions

Sen. Ellis Black (R – Valdosta) carried House Bill 697 which would extend a sales and use tax exemption for personal property sales to qualified nonprofit health centers from June 30, 2018, to June 30, 2019. HB 697 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HB 697**

Easing Firefighter Certification

House Bill 699, carried by Sen. Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton), would enable those wishing to complete firefighter certification to use proof of military firefighter service to bypass required basic training. In addition, HB 699 would provide the council with discretion to waive the requirement of having a high school diploma or equivalent within 12 months of employment with a fire department. HB 699 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 699**

Office of Public Safety Officer Support

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 703 which would create the Office of Public Safety Officer Support, under the authority of the Department of Public Safety, to oversee “peer counselors” who have experience as a public safety officer and training to provide counseling for trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder. HB 703 passed with a vote of 50-0. – **HB 703**

Updating HOPE Requirements for Homeschoolers

House Bill 713, carried by Sen. Marty Harbin (R – Tyrone), would change the HOPE Scholarship requirements for students who graduated from ineligible institutions. Under HB 713, these students would have to score within the 92nd percentile on the SAT or ACT to be eligible to receive the HOPE Scholarship. HB 713 would also create a new needs-based grant program for students who have been accepted for enrollment at a University System of Georgia school and have an annual household income below \$48,000, receive the Federal Pell Grant and achieve a high school GPA between 2.3 and 3.0. To keep 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. Students participating in this scholarship program would receive up to \$1,500 per semester. In addition, HB 713 would provide that students who attend eligible institutions under the “Move on When Ready Act” may receive payments for five terms annually. Finally, it would establish the percentage of lottery proceeds that must be transferred to the Lottery for Education Account. HB 713 passed with a vote of 44-7. – **HB 713**

Updating Vehicle Safety Regulations

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 714 which would update the safety regulation requirements for commercial vehicles and motor carriers with an effective date of January 1, 2018. HB 714 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HB 714**

Consumer Protection for Autonomous Vehicles

House Bill 717, carried by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlongega), would clarify that purchasers of autonomous vehicles would be extended the same consumer protection laws as purchasers of traditional motor vehicles. HB 717 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HB 717**

Veterans Taxable Income

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 749 which would exempt retirement income received by a family member as a result of the death of a veteran from taxable income. HB 749 passed by a vote of 52-0. – **HB 749**



Electronic Certificates for Motor Vehicles

House Bill 761, carried by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga), would allow motor vehicle dealers who sell no more than 10 motor vehicles per month to apply for a waiver from mandatory electronic filing of title applications with the Department of Revenue. Under HB 761, a motor vehicle dealer who sells a car to a non-resident of the county where the dealership is located may file an application for the title of the car with the tag agent representing the county where the dealership is located. HB 761 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **HB 761**



Charter School Funding

Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta) carried House Bill 787 which would define funding and services for Georgia's charter schools and special charter schools that offer virtual instruction. The school's initial funding would be based on projected enrollment and additional funding would correlate with enrollment growth in addition to certain grant programs based on student performance. HB 787 would also require the Department of Audits and Accounts to issue annual reports on state charter schools that offer virtual instruction. HB 787 passed with a vote of 44-11. – **HB 787**

Prohibiting Trafficking of Disabled Adults, Elders and Residents

House Bill 803, carried by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), would prohibit trafficking of disabled adults, elders and residents. Under HB 803, a person participating in this form of trafficking would be guilty of a felony and serve one to 20 years in prison, receive up to a \$100,000 fine or both. HB 803 passed with a vote of 49-0. – **HB 803**



Waycross Circuit Superior Court Term Changes

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 808 which would change term dates for superior courts within Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Coffee, Pierce and Ware counties. HB 808 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **HB 808**

Solid Colored GSP Vehicles

House Bill 809, carried by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), would allow for Georgia State Patrol vehicles being used to enforce traffic laws to be painted a solid color. HB 809 passed with a vote of 54-1. – **HB 809**

DOR Contracting Abilities

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 811 which would allow the Department of Revenue (DOR) to contract with companies to assist them in the identification of taxpayers who are noncompliant with sales and use taxes. Under HB 811, only the DOR could directly contact taxpayers about noncompliance. HB 811 passed by a vote of 52-0. – **HB 811**

Georgia Masonic Charities License Plates

House Bill 815, carried by Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell), would create a specialty license plate to benefit the Georgia Masonic Charities Foundation. HB 815 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HB 815**

Choosing Insurance Methods for Health Care

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) carried House Bill 818 which would require health care providers to choose the method in which they would be reimbursed by insurers for the health services being performed on a patient covered by the insurance company. HB 818 passed with a vote of 49-0. – **HB 818**

Terminating Rental Agreements

House Bill 834, carried by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), would allow for the termination of a rental agreement in instances of family violence and define the proper steps to take in terms of notice and inspection requirements. HB 834 would also clarify that hearings would be held no more than 30 days after filing the petition and would give the court authority to delay dismissal of the petition for an additional 30 days, if a party is avoiding service to delay a hearing. Under HB 834, landlords would be required to create and maintain a comprehensive list of damages to premises under his or her supervision and outlines the process of returning security deposits to a tenant. HB 834 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **HB 834**

Expanding Boundaries for the City of South Fulton

Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta) carried House Bill 870 which would expand the corporate boundaries for the City of South Fulton. The new proposed boundaries would take effect January 1, 2019, if a local constitutional amendment is passed. HB 870 passed with a vote of 35-15. – **HB 870**

Tax Exemptions for Manufactured Homes

House Bill 871, carried by Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan), would create sales and use tax exemptions for manufactured homes being converted into real property. The bill would provide for a 50 percent exemption from state sales and use taxes if the conversion is within 30 days of the sale. HB 871 passed with a vote of 50-2. – **HB 871**

Constructing Broadband Infrastructure

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) carried House Bill 887 which would address the permitting and deployment of a new wireless technology known as 5G – or small cell broadband – for private companies wishing to utilize public rights of way. Under HB 887, construction of small cell wireless technology on existing utility poles and other broadband supporting structures is addressed, as well as construction of new utility poles containing electrical or communication capabilities where ones do not exist. The legislation includes protections for historic districts throughout the state. HB 887 passed with a vote of 38-14. – **HB 887**

Updating the Water and Sewer Projects and Costs Tax

House Bill 929, carried by Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) and presented by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga), would update Georgia code relating to water and sewer projects and costs tax by doubling the number of times a municipality can re-impose its proceedings and renew its expired taxes from three to six. HB 929 passed with a vote of 43-4. – **HB 929**



Licensing Limited Insurance Credit Agencies

Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson) carried House Bill 938 which would change the requirements for licensing limited insurance credit agencies and their employees. Under HB 938, the Commissioner of Insurance would have discretion over applications, which would be submitted by companies seeking to provide this service in place of individual employees. In order to be licensed, a company must provide the commissioner with a full list of employees and their sales locations, require five hours of prerequisite training, two hours of continuing education training and a background check. In addition, HB 938 would provide the commissioner authority in cases where licensing criteria is not met. HB 938 passed with a vote of 50-1. – **HB 938**

Sexual Harassment Policy for Lobbyists

House Bill 973, carried by Sen. Josh McKoon (R – Columbus), would require those registering as a lobbyist to sign a statement annually stating they have received, read, understand and accept the General Assembly's Employee Sexual Harassment Policy. HB 973 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 973**

DFCS Relative Search Cases

Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) carried House Bill 982 which would change provisions of relative searches conducted by the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) in the case of terminating parental rights. In addition, parental rights would be terminated when neglect to remedy circumstances is identified by the court and would require search efforts for a permanent home to be made at periodic review hearings. HB 982 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HB 982**

External Defibrillators at Health Facilities

House Bill 992, carried by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa), would encourage health clubs and rehabilitation facilities to have an external defibrillator at the facility in case of an emergency and would provide certain immunity for individuals who use the defibrillator. In addition, the bill would require at least two Board of Community Health members to be active participants in the state health benefit plan and would create the State Health Benefit Plan Customer Advisory Council to advise the commissioner on improvements to the state health benefit plan. HB 992 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 992**

Constitutional Amendment for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Fund

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) carried House Resolution 238 which would propose a constitutional amendment to allow up to half of the sales and use taxes collected by outdoor recreation establishments and sporting goods stores to be paid into the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund, if approved by referendum. HR 238 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HR 238**

Renaming Roads and Bridges

House Resolution 444, carried by Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta), would rename various state roads, bridges and highways throughout Georgia. HR 444 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HR 444**



Conveying Certain State Owned Real Property

Sen. Ed Harbison (D – Columbus) carried House Resolution 1103 which would authorize the conveyance of certain state owned real property within Baldwin, Bryan, Chatham, Dougherty, Fulton, Hall, Jackson, Muscogee, Putnam, Rabun, Rockdale and White counties. HR 1103 passed with a vote of 52-1. – **HR 1103**



THURSDAY, MARCH 29

Recognizing Jon Richards

Senate Resolution 539, sponsored by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), recognizes Jon Richards as an accomplished Georgia businessman, having served as the editor-in-chief of GeorgiaPol.com. Richards served as the front page editor of *Peach Pundit* in addition to his civic involvement with many Gwinnett County organizations. SR 539 passed with a vote of 48-0. – **SR 539**

Urging U.S. Congress to Continue Military Health Care Funding

Sen. Tonya Anderson (D – Lithonia) sponsored Senate Resolution 1058 which encourages the United States Congress to halt the transfer the cost of current and former military members' health care to the state and to establish a resolution to restore data sharing between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and TRICARE. SR 1058 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **SR 1058**

Compensating Insurance Agents

House Bill 64, carried by Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville), would require insurance carriers, who issue health plan rates, to compensate agents who sell individual and group plans in certain situations. Under HB 64, the commission paid to an agent by a carrier would be commiserate of the health benefit plan rate charged. HB 64 passed with a vote of 50-0. – **HB 64**

Updating Utility Services

House Bill 189, carried by Sen. Chuck Payne (R – Dalton), would define procedures for certain utility installations and would allow local governments affected to vote on the construction, transmission and distribution of electric systems unless the cost is more than \$200 million. HB 189 passed with a vote of 31-13. – **HB 189**

Ad Valorem Tax Exemptions for Charitable Buildings

Sen. Nan Orrock (D – Atlanta) carried House Bill 195 which would allow buildings owned by charitable organizations to be exempt from paying ad valorem taxes. HB 195 would require that the buildings must also be used for charitable purposes and have a primary or incidental purpose of securing income. HB 195 passed with a vote of 49-0. – **HB 195**

Addressing Captive Insurance Companies

House Bill 214, carried by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), would define captive insurance companies and provide a legal framework for sponsored captive insurance companies. HB 214 would also address the establishment, maintenance and certain requirements for protected cells and define conservation, rehabilitation and liquidation requirements for companies. HB 214 passed with a vote of 48-0. – **HB 214**

Hidden Predator Act

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) carried House Bill 605 which would extend the statute of limitations for civil penalties to be filed in instances of alleged childhood sexual abuse. HB 605 would raise the age for plaintiffs to be able to bring a civil action for damages resulting from childhood sexual abuse occurring on or after July 1, 2018, from 23 to 30 years of age. In cases occurring before July 1, 2018, individuals who experienced childhood sexual abuse by an entity, which had a responsibility of care and actively and intentionally concealed the abuse, would be able to file civil charges as long as the concealment occurred within 12 years of the case being filed. HB 605 would also establish the criteria for defining an entity and would allow those filing a civil claim under this code section to be eligible to receive compensation through the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund. HB 605 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 605 (Please refer to the Special Order Section for the latest action taken in the Senate on this legislation)**

Updating Ad Valorem Language

House Bill 729, carried by Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell), would remove outdated language related to state ad valorem tax. Removing this language would also remove it from property tax documents. HB 729 passed by a vote of 51-0. – **HB 729**

Updating Governing Bodies

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 783 which would remove certain committees, boards and other governing bodies from Georgia code that are no longer needed or inconsistent with current procedures. In addition, the bill creates the Georgia Commission on African American History and Culture to promote Georgia's African-American heritage and preserve its history. HB 783 passed with a vote of 43-0. – **HB 783**

Updating Recyclable Materials

House Bill 785, carried by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), would update the list of materials that can be recycled in Georgia to include certain plastics, feedstock and solid waste. The bill would also change certain definitions relating to recycling to comply with the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act. HB 785 passed with a vote of 52-2. – **HB 785**

Background Checks for the Department of Labor

Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) carried House Bill 795 which would authorize the Commissioner of Labor to perform criminal background checks on any employee or prospective employee who handles federal return information after January 1, 2019. Such checks would include two sets of fingerprinting, one for the Georgia Crime Information Center and one for the FBI. Both sets of fingerprints would be used for the background check and retained by the respective departments under the condition that the records will not be otherwise distributed. HB 795 would also create the positions of administrative law judge emeritus and director emeritus of the State Board of Workers' Compensation. HB 795 passed with a vote of 53-1. – **HB 795**

Active Duty Military Tax Penalties

House Bill 840, carried by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), would allow military members serving in combat zones to not be penalized for failing to pay business and occupation taxes and would allow them to pay the taxes within 60 days of their return. HB 840 passed by a vote of 47-0. – **HB 840**

Partnership Income Tax

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 849 which would revise the provisions of partnership income tax payments and create the State Partnership Representative position that would act as the representative for partnerships at the state and federal level. HB 849 passed by a vote of 52-0. – **HB 849**



Tuition Exemption for Students in Treatment Facilities

House Bill 853, carried by Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan), would allow students placed in a psychiatric residential treatment facility to be exempt from paying tuition for educational services from the local school system in which the facility is located. HB 853 passed with a vote of 48-0. – **HB 853**

POST Council

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 867 which would change the required quorum during a meeting from seven Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) members to 11. Under HB 867, POST investigators would be able to retain their guns and badges if they retired under honorable circumstances. Additionally, the mandatory 30-day waiting period for those who fail the job related academy entrance exam would be removed and the entrance exam requirement would be waived for those with a degree from an accredited post-secondary institution. HB 867 passed with a vote of 47-1. – **HB 867**

Misdemeanors for Shoplifting

House Bill 890, carried by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), would create a misdemeanor charge for any person convicted of using an emergency exit after shoplifting. HB 890 passed with a vote of 37-15. – **HB 890**

Amending the List of Devices for Prohibited Reproduction

Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) carried House Bill 917 which would amend the list of devices prohibited from reproducing sounds, images or videos without consent under Georgia code by adding memory cards, flash drives, hard drives and data storage devices. Under HB 917, the sale, distribution, circulation or reproduction of any material onto these devices without consent would be subject to civil forfeiture and legal restitution. HB 917 would also not allow local ordinances that subject commercial retail establishments to criminal penalties for the theft of a shopping cart. HB 917 passed with a vote of 49-2. – **HB 917**

Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation

House Bill 951, carried by Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia), would establish the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation and its director, and structure the Georgia Rural Development Council. The center would assume responsibilities of the Centers of Innovation for Agribusiness administered by the Department of Economic Development to provide pilot programs for rural development. HB 951 passed with a vote of 47-2. – **HB 951**

Updating Georgia Veterinary Practices

Sen. Ellis Black (R – Valdosta) carried House Bill 956 which would update the Georgia Veterinary Practice Act's board duties and establish continuing education opportunities. HB 956 would give the board the authority to perform premise and equipment inspections at any time and would remove the limitation on how many veterinarian technicians can work under a licensed veterinarian. In addition, HB 956 would give the board authority to issue temporary licenses to military spouses and transitioning service members. HB 956 would also require vets to disclose an animal's rabies vaccination history if the animal has bitten a person and that a law enforcement officer consult with a vet to decide if the conduct is within practice standards before criminal charges are filed. HB 956 passed with a vote of 46-6. – **HB 956**

Extended Care for Youths

House Bill 972, carried by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), would allow the Division of Family and Children Services of the Department of Human Services to offer extended care to young adults between the ages of 18-21. The services offered would be through a voluntary basis with court oversight. HB 972 would specify information required to be given to the caregiver and provisions of dependency proceedings. The bill also clarifies that DFCS will provide caregivers certain information upon request within 15 days of a child being placed. HB 972 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **HB 972**

School Buses and Automated Traffic Enforcement

Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta) carried House Bill 978 which would allow cars traveling on the other side of a divided highway to continue driving when a school bus is stopped. Under HB 978, the civil offense fee for passing a stopped bus would be reduced to \$250 from \$300, with all fees collected going to law enforcement and public safety initiatives. HB 978 would permit the Department of Revenue to not renew and hold the title of drivers who refuse to pay fines. Additionally, HB 978 would allow automated traffic enforcement devices to be used in school zones during certain hours. HB 978 passed with a vote of 35-19. – **HB 978**

Committee on the Establishment of a State Accreditation Process

House Resolution 898, carried by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta), would create the Joint Study Committee on the Establishment of a State Accreditation Process. The committee would look into a potential state government entity to provide accreditation for primary and secondary schools. HR 898 passed with a vote of 46-0. – **HR 898**

Creating a State-Wide Business Court

Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough) carried House Resolution 993 which would propose a constitutional amendment which, if adopted by referendum, would create a state-wide business court. HR 993 also clarifies that Superior Courts would have concurrent jurisdiction with the proposed business court in equity cases. Judges of the proposed business court would be appointed by the governor and subject to approval of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees. HR 993 passed with a vote of 46-7. – **HR 993**

Former and Current Legislators Honor Lt. Governor Casey Cagle

Senate Resolution 1071, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga), recognizes and honors Lt. Governor Casey Cagle for his career of service to the state of Georgia. Lt. Governor Cagle was first elected to office in 1994 as the state Senator for the 49th District and served five terms before being elected as Georgia's Lt. Governor in 2006. As presiding officer of the Senate, Lt. Governor Cagle has been instrumental in growing Georgia's economy, expanding transportation and increasing funding for education. Former members of the Senate, and former Lt. Governors Pierre Howard and Mark Taylor, joined the Senate to wish Lt. Governor Cagle the best in his future endeavors. Speaker David Ralston later joined the Senate to thank Lt. Governor Cagle for his service and for their many years working together for the people of Georgia. – **SR 1071**



Thanking Governor Nathan Deal

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) sponsored Senate Resolution 1072 thanking Governor Nathan Deal for his lifetime of service to the state of Georgia and congratulating him on his success as Georgia’s 82nd Governor. As governor, he has been instrumental in reforming the state’s criminal justice system, updating vital transportation and infrastructure, maintaining Georgia’s AAA Bond Rating and making Georgia the “#1 State for Business” for five consecutive years. Prior to his service as Governor, he served as a state Senator and U.S. Representative. The Senate wishes both Governor Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal the best in the future, and thanks them for the positive contributions they have made on the lives of Georgians across the state. – **SR 1072**

Recognizing Doorkeeper Wallace Linsey

Senate Resolution 1146, sponsored by Sen. Tonya Anderson (D – Lithonia), recognizes Wallace Linsey on the occasion of his retirement as a Georgia State Senate doorkeeper. Linsey has worked every legislative session since 2008 and is an active member of Warren Memorial United Methodist Church where he has played the organ for 48 years. – **SR 1146**



Commending Senator Josh McKoon

Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored Senate Resolution 1166 commending state Senator Josh McKoon (R – Columbus) for his seven years of service in the Georgia State Senate. Sen. McKoon served as a member of the Economic Development, Ethics, Insurance and Labor, Judiciary and Regulated Industries and Utilities committees. In addition, he was named the “On the Rise Attorney” by the Daily Report in 2013. – **SR 1166**

Recognizing Senator David Shafer

Senate Resolution 1167, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville), recognizes Senator David Shafer (R – Duluth) for his 16 years of service in the Georgia State Senate. Sen. Shafer was elected as the 68th President Pro Tempore of the Georgia Senate in 2013 and was reelected twice. – **SR 1167**

Honoring Senator Michael Williams

Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored Senate Resolution 1168 honoring Senator Michael Williams (R – Cumming) for his service in the Georgia State Senate. Sen. Williams served as secretary of the Banking and Financial Institutions committee in addition to serving as a member of the Appropriations, Ethics, Finance and Public Safety committees. – **SR 1168**

SPECIAL ORDERS

Senate Agreements

The Senate agreed to the House Amendment on the following:

March 29, 2018

SB 397 by a vote of 44-0

Senate Agreements

The Senate agreed to the House Amendment to the Senate Substitute on the following:

March 29, 2018

SB 376 by a vote of 51-0

HR 238 by a vote of 55-0

HB 65 by a vote of 38-14

HB 85 by a vote of 43-1

HB 332 by a vote of 49-0

HB 441 by a vote of 43-6

HB 657 by a vote of 49-1

HB 769 by a vote of 49-2

HB 787 by a vote of 43-7

HB 792 by a vote of 48-4

HB 871 by a vote of 49-2

HB 898 by a vote of 51-0

HB 904 by a vote of 48-2

Senate Agreements

The Senate agreed to the House Substitute on the following:

March 29, 2018

SR 146 by a vote of 55-0

SR 745 by a vote of 50-0

SB 118 by a vote of 50-4

SB 127 by a vote of 54-0

SB 131 by a vote of 49-0

SB 194 by a vote of 45-0

SB 263 by a vote of 33-19

SB 286 by a vote of 49-1

SB 315 by a vote of 42-7

SB 321 by a vote of 45-0

SB 327 by a vote of 47-0

SB 330 by a vote of 49-0

SB 331 by a vote of 50-4

SB 332 by a vote of 43-1

SB 336 by a vote of 46-0

SB 339 by a vote of 35-17

SB 342 by a vote of 48-2

SB 353 by a vote of 45-0

SB 357 by a vote of 53-1

SB 395 by a vote of 54-0

SB 404 by a vote of 39-9

SB 406 by a vote of 51-0

SB 425 by a vote of 50-0

SB 427 by a vote of 47-0

SB 436 by a vote of 53-0

SB 451 by a vote of 47-2

SB 458 by a vote of 46-3

SB 461 by a vote of 48-0

SB 478 by a vote of 45-2

SB 485 by a vote of 53-1

Senate Receded from Disagreement

The Senate receded from its disagreement on the following:

March 29, 2018

SB 385 by a vote of 46-5

Senate Agreements as Amended by the Senate

The Senate agreed to the House Substitute as amended by the Senate on the following:

March 29, 2018

SB 190 by a vote of 51-0

SB 401 by a vote of 47-1

SB 407 by a vote of 49-2

SB 430 by a vote of 32-19 (*Agreed to the House Amendment to the Senate Substitute as Amended by the Senate*)

SB 445 by a vote of 50-0

HB 673 by a vote of 52-1

Conference Committees and Reports

The Senate agreed to the conference committee report on the following:

March 27, 2018

HB 684 by a vote of 54-1 – Senators from the 4th, 46th, 49th

March 29, 2018

SB 402 by a vote of 50-2 – Senators from the 18th, 51st, 56th

HB 217 by a vote of 34-20 – Senators from the 1st, 21st, 52nd

HB 329 by a vote of 49-4 – Senators from the 4th, 40th, 52nd

HB 906 by a vote of 52-0 – Senators from the 17th, 18th, 19th

HB 930 by a vote of 48-6 – Senators from the 21st, 26th, 51st

The Senate insisted on its position on the following legislation and conference committee nominees were appointed but no action was taken on the reports:

March 29, 2018

SB 202 – Senators from the 11th, 33th, 45th

HB 93 – Senators from the 30th, 52nd, 56th

HB 992 – Senators from the 11th, 50th, 56th

Senate Disagreements

The Senate disagreed to the House Substitute/House Amendment to the Senate Substitute or insisted on the Senate Substitute on the following:

March 27, 2018

HB 906

March 29, 2018

SB 202 (Disagree to House Substitute)

SB 319 (Disagree to House Substitute)

SB 338 (Disagree to House Substitute)

SB 367 (Disagree to House Substitute)

SB 403 (Disagree to House Substitute)

SB 432 (Disagree to House Substitute)

HB 93 (Disagree to House Amendment to Senate Substitute)

HB 149 (Disagree to House Amendment to Senate Substitute)

HB 605 (Insisted on Senate Substitute)

HB 878 (Disagree to House Amendment to the Senate Amendment)

HB 992 (Insisted on Senate Substitute)



The Georgia Senate has **ADJOURNED SINE DIE!**