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This Week in the Senate

March 5 - 9, 2018



House Bills and 2019 Fiscal Year Budget Hearings

During week nine, the Senate switched focus to vetting and debating House Bills. We convened for three days and spent the other two in productive committee meetings, thoroughly reviewing legislation from our friends in the House.

On Wednesday, we had the true privilege of honoring U.S. Army Ranger Daniel Boatwright who is one of the only members of the 2nd Airborne Infantry Ranger Company that is still living. This Com-

pany served during the Korean War and was the United States Army's first, last and only all African-American ranger unit. The Senate gave Ranger Boatwright a standing ovation for his service and dedication to our country.

One particular bill that is very close to my heart was heard during the Economic Development and Tourism Committee meeting that took place on Tuesday, March 6. Representative Terry Rogers (R – Clarkesville) presented House Bill 831, also known as the Georgia's Employment First Act. This important legislation would allow people with disabilities the same working opportunities as others trying to enter the workforce. Under HB 831, supervisors would be trained on how to properly enable individuals with disabilities to perform their work responsibilities efficiently. It was an honor to have my son, Charlie Miller, be able to make the second motion for the bill's passage out of committee. I want to commend Senator Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton) and all of the other committee members for their support and passion in moving this legislation forward.

Along with standing committees, several appropriations subcommittees had meetings for members to review proposed budget allocations for the Fiscal Year 2019 General Budget and consider any necessary changes over the next few weeks. Our focus is now on the general budget since the Fiscal Year 2018 Amended Budget, House Bill 683, received final passage and was signed by Governor Nathan Deal on Friday. The Governor also signed House Bill 159 which will address the adoption and foster care crisis that is affecting our great state.

With eight legislative days left this session, our pace is going to pick up even more as committee members work hard to vet legislation. Please let me know if you have any questions about legislation that has passed or is pending. Don't forget, my staff and I are here to help and our door is always open.

Senator Butch Miller

President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

MONDAY, MARCH 5

Waiving Administrative Collection Fees

House Bill 162, carried by Sen. William Ligon (R – Brunswick), would give the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) discretion when charging administrative fees and would be required to provide quarterly payments to the courts to which the debts are owed. In addition, HB 162 would require an administrative court to place a fee of no more than \$20 per debt. HB 162 passed with a vote of 53-0. – **HB 162**

Exempting Organized Militia Activity

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) carried House Bill 309 which would exempt the state from being held liable for losses resulting from organized militia when engaged in federal or state training or activities. HB 309 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **HB 309**

Donation Receptacle Regulations

House Bill 475, carried by Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry), would establish regulations for placement and collection of outdoor donation receptacles placed on private property. Under HB 475, owners of receptacles must regularly empty and maintain the appearance around the receptacles. HB 475 passed with a vote of 54-1. – **HB 475**

Amended Fiscal Year 2018 Budget

Sen. Jack Hill (R – Reidsville) carried House Bill 683, the Fiscal Year 2018 Amended Budget. The Senate agreed to the House of Representatives substitute and passed HB 683 with a vote of 54-0. HB 683 was then immediately transmitted to the House and signed by the Governor on Friday. – **HB 683**

U.S. Senator David Perdue Visits Senate

Senator David Perdue (R – GA) visited the Senate to thank members for their work on the passage of House Bill 918, the largest individual tax cut in Georgia history. Senator Perdue is the only Fortune 500 Chief Executive Officer in Congress, having worked for 40 years in the business world before being elected to the United States Senate in 2014.

Recognizing Dr. John Harper

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) sponsored Senate Resolution 670 recognizing Dr. John Harper for his service as Superintendent of Bartow County Schools and his work to implement technology in academic curriculum throughout the Bartow County School System. – **SR 670**

Commending Dr. Howard Hinesley

Senate Resolution 690, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), commends Dr. Howard Hinesley for his service as the Superintendent of the Cartersville School System. Dr. Hinesley is credited with starting the Gate-Key Scholarship Program which serves at-risk students. – **SR 690**

Celebrating Senator Nan Orrock

Sen. Valencia Seay (D – Riverdale) sponsored Senate Resolution 737 celebrating Sen. Nan Orrock's (D – Atlanta) induction into the International Center for Civil and Human Rights Museum Walk of Fame. Sen. Orrock's engagement in public policy dates back to 1963 beginning with the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. – **SR 737**



Honoring Mercer University

Senate Resolution 777, sponsored by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon), recognizes Mercer University’s commitment to higher education. Mercer University is a private liberal arts college that was founded in 1833 and has more than 8,000 students among 12 different interdisciplinary schools. – **SR 777**

Council for Quality Growth Day at the State Capitol

Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta) sponsored Senate Resolution 848 recognizing March 5, 2018, as Council for Quality Growth Day at the state Capitol. The Council for Quality Growth works to deliver its mission of advocating for balanced and responsible growth across the state through platforms of advocacy, information and education. – **SR 848**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

New Baiting Regulations

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 275 which would equalize baiting practices across the state. In addition, HB 275 would remove the current prohibition on hunting in wildlife management areas without a permit from Georgia code. HB 275 passed with a vote of 49-5. – **HB 275**

Reconstituting the Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority

House Bill 354, carried by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah) and presented by Sen. Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton), would reconstitute the Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority (GIMTCA) as a public corporation and instrumentality of the state. In addition, the bill outlines GIMTCA’s responsibilities, membership and provides authorization to facilitate economic growth in the state’s import and export markets. HB 354 passed with a vote of 51-1. – **HB 354**

Amending NPEC Qualification Exemptions

House Bill 448, carried by Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville), would require certain post-secondary institutions to qualify for exemptions with the Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (NPEC). HB 448 would also amend which for-profit universities are exempt from NPEC regulations and revise the membership of the NPEC and the Tuition Guaranty Trust Fund Board of Trustees. HB 448 passed with a vote of 54-0. – **HB 448**



Commending Stanton Gatewood

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) sponsored Senate Resolution 731 commending Stanton Gatewood for his career and service in the field of cybersecurity. Currently serving as Georgia’s Chief Information Security Officer, Gatewood has over 30 years of cybersecurity experience with the U.S. military, government, higher education and private industries. – **SR 731**

Recognizing Ashley Strong-Green

Senate Resolution 733, sponsored by Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta), recognizes Ashley Strong-Green as the Technical College System of Georgia’s (TCSG) 2017 Rick Perkins Award Winner for Excellence in Technical Instruction. Strong-Green, who works at Augusta Technical College, also earned distinction as this year’s TCSG Instructor of the Year. – **SR 733**

EAGLE Award

Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 734 recognizing Jonathan Swinsburg as 2017’s Exceptional Adult Georgian in Literacy Education (EAGLE) award winner. Swinsburg, an Athens Technical College student, was chosen for his exceptional achievement in adult literacy classes. – **SR 734**

GOAL Award

Senate Resolution 735, sponsored by Sen. Fran Millar (R – Atlanta), recognizes Skylar Huggett as the 2017 winner of the Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership (GOAL). GOAL is the first program in the nation to honor outstanding technical college students for academic excellence and leadership. – **SR 735**

Honoring U.S. Army Ranger Daniel Boatwright

Sen. Ed Harbison (D – Columbus) sponsored Senate Resolution 859 recognizing U.S. Army Ranger Daniel Boatwright and the 2nd Airborne Infantry Ranger Company for their heroism and service during the Korean War. The 2nd Airborne Infantry Ranger Company was the U.S. Army's first, last and only all African-American ranger unit. – **SR 859**

Recognizing the David Shafer Essay Scholarship Winners

Senate Resolution 941, sponsored by Sen. David Shafer (R – Duluth), congratulates the 2017 winners of the David Shafer Essay Scholarship Contest. This year, Liberty Schultz of Providence Christian Academy placed first with an essay on Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Shiloh Smiles of Walton High School placed second with an essay on Sergeant Henry Johnson and Derek Huell of Columbus High School placed third with an essay on former Secretary of State Colin Powell. – **SR 941**

Welcoming Malcolm Mitchell to the State Capitol

Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson) sponsored Senate Resolution 961 welcoming Malcolm Mitchell of the New England Patriots to the state Capitol for Children's Literacy Day on March 7, 2018. In addition to his NFL career, Mitchell previously played football at the University of Georgia and is the founder of Read with Malcolm, a national youth literacy organization. Mitchell is an advocate for youth literacy statewide and author of the children's book, *The Magician's Hat*, for which he received the 2016 Children's Author of the Year Award from the Georgia Writers Association. – **SR 961**



FRIDAY, MARCH 9

Creditable Service for Law Enforcement

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 135 which would allow certain law enforcement officers to buy creditable service through the Employees' Retirement System. Under HB 159, the qualifying law enforcement officers added to the list are Department of Driver Services investigators and any criminal investigator or K-9 handler with the Department of Corrections. HB 135 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 135**



Local Government Authorities

House Bill 257, carried by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), would require a local government authority to register with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) annually on the due date of their annual report in order to receive any allotment of state funds. HB 257 would also prohibit local authorities from acquiring any debt or credit until they have filed an annual report with DCA. HB 257 passed with a vote of 51-0. – **HB 257**

Continuing State Financial Aid for Private Colleges

Sen. Gloria Butler (D – Stone Mountain) carried House Bill 432 which would allow students attending schools that have transitioned into a not-for-profit status to receive tuition equalization grants and the HOPE scholarship if the school has been accredited within the last five years. HB 432 passed with a vote of 44-8. – **HB 432**

Repealing the Historic Chattahoochee Compact

House Bill 777, carried by Sen. Ed Harbison (D – Columbus), would repeal the Historic Chattahoochee Compact which promoted tourism and historic preservation throughout the region. HB 777 passed with a vote of 52-0. – **HB 777**

Pearl Jackson Day at the State Capitol

Senate Resolution 740, sponsored by Sen. David Lucas (D – Macon), recognizes February 22, 2018, as Pearl Jackson Day at the state Capitol. Born in 1887, Jackson was a native of Wellston, Georgia, and served her community as a school teacher and pioneer for equality in education. She was a founder of the original Pearl Stephens School, was inducted into the Houston County Teacher Hall of Fame and in 2012 was the first African-American woman to be inducted into the Warner Robins Hall of Fame. – **SR 740**

Recognizing Tim Harper

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 813 recognizing Tim Harper for being named the Constitutional Officer of the Year in the state of Georgia. Harper has served as the Clerk of Superior Court in Banks County since 1993 and is the former president of the Superior Court Clerks Association of Georgia, Inc. – **SR 813**

Celebrating Scott Winkler

Senate Resolution 872, sponsored by Sen. Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown), celebrates Scott Winkler's successes in the military and the sport of shot put. In 2003, Winkler sustained a spinal cord injury in Tikrit, Iraq, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. He participated in the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, England, and now serves as the field coach for the Harlem Middle School Track and Field team in Harlem, Georgia. – **SR 872**



Senate Agreement

The Senate agreed to the House substitutes or House Amendments to Senate substitutes on the following bill:

SB 317 by a vote of 51-2.

Conference Committee Report

The Senate approved the following conference committee report:

HB 205 by a vote of 51-0.



**The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00a.m. on
MONDAY, MARCH 12.**